

The March AFS Meeting

Ed Buckner on “What Would You Say If...?”

Our program for March 8th will be a discussion led by our own **Ed Buckner**. Ed has been invited to offer a noncredit course this summer at Emory for seniors (50+ years old)—a part of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)—on atheism and secularism.

He's roughed out a very general outline (see below) as to how he'll use the six hours available (an hour a week) to enlighten these folks. But he wants your advice and help, at the March meeting, to make what he's going to say to them effective. So, “What would you say if you had six hours to talk with some mature adults on atheism and secularism?”



Ed Buckner

Below are the six sections (corresponding more or less to the six days of class) that Ed will probably follow:

- I. Introduction: purposes, labels, definitions, questions.
- II. Major philosophical arguments for theism and for atheism.
- III. Secularism—history and logic of church/state separation.
- IV. Religion and morality.
- V. History of atheism.
- VI. Resources: organizations, websites, people, books. Questions and conclusion.



Do those categories seem reasonable? Would you change any of them? Within each, what would you be sure to include or be sure to avoid? Any ideas you have, about broad areas accidentally omitted or pet peeves you have about how some present atheism to the world or anything in between will be appreciated.



Calendar

3/8 AFS Board Meeting 11:00 a.m.

3/8 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.

4/12 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.

All events are at AF Hall unless noted and are subject to change.

Be sure to like AFS's Facebook page for updates: <https://www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought>

Grounds Committee

Soon we will need help keeping the lawn mowed and weeded. Any help you can offer will be much appreciated.

Let Mark Banks know if you can. Thanks to the volunteers!



“There can be no peace until they renounce their Rabbit God and accept our Duck God.”

Programs and Speakers

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

The views and opinions expressed by speakers at AFS do not necessarily reflect those of AFS members or its policy.



Mar 8: Ed Buckner “What Would You Say If...”

Apr 12: TBA

May 10: TBA

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.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@yahoo.com. The AFS Facebook page is at <http://www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought>. For information on other AFS email groups, visit the AFS website at <http://www.atlantafreethought.org>.

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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Membership in AFS is \$50/year per person,
\$20 for low income.

Membership includes AFNews by email or mail.
(Tell us which one you want.)

Sustaining Membership is \$100.

Life Membership is \$1000.

Subscriptions only are \$30 for 12 issues.

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afs@atlantafreethought.org.

AFS Webmaster: Paul Broman
AFS Facebook Site: Laura Ross & Rick Pace

Top Scholars Form “Secular Policy Institute” A Think-Tank to Promote Separation of Church and State

<http://secularpolicyinstitute.net/news/#sthash.kaDlmupK.dpuf>

At last, many of the world's most highly regarded thinkers will work together to compile and disseminate the latest research in support of a secular society. Upholding the viewpoints of a diverse global community, the **Secular Policy Institute (SPI)** will serve as an advocate for scientific and rational principles in U.S. Congress and in governments abroad.

Edwina Rogers, a 20-year public policy expert and former Presidential Economic Advisor, will serve as CEO for a coalition of 30 fellows, including well-known authors and speakers such as **Stephen Pinker, Carolyn Porco, Richard Dawkins, Lawrence Krauss, Rebecca Goldstein, Taslima Nasrin, Daniel Dennett, Amatzia Baram, Sam Harris, and Elizabeth Loftus**. All Fellows hold doctorates or other qualified degrees in areas including Law and Public Health, International Studies, Sociology and Moral Philosophy, History and Logic, Cultural and Biological Evolution, Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience, Ecology and Geology, Physics and Education. Their mission is to promote comprehensive and unbiased dialogues on topics of political import (i.e. the separation of church and state) that will help to inform and influence decision makers.

“The resources we can now provide will be invaluable to legislators,” Ms. Rogers commented, “And also to secular and nonreligious people around the globe. Many feel that their

governments are not looking out for them, and some even live in fear of persecution for their beliefs. We have long been needing to give these people a voice, in a big way.”



“This has been a project in the making for quite some time,” echoed **Steve Rade**, the Chairman and Founder of SPI. “The reality is that secular projects encounter much more resistance than those that are faith-based. We finally have a strong infrastructure here, and we’re excited about our team, and the possibility of changing the game in Washington.”

Among its many initiatives, the Institute will host Congressional briefings in the U.S. Capitol Building and will plan an annual conference of the Fellows, open to both policymakers and the public.

On the international front, SPI will actively seek UN Observer Status.

Throughout the year, the tank will fund original studies and compile peer-reviewed reports on global trends in religiosity and belief.

“Polling data already indicates that the number of nonreligious Americans has increased fourfold since the 1960s, but we’re still fighting for a seat at the table” Rogers added. “With the Institute up and running, we can hope to carry more clout with both our politicians and our compatriots.”

The Institute hosts a virtual platform at <http://secularpolicyinstitute.net>. Publicly available there are various resources tapped into a worldwide pool—from articles, surveys, academic papers, and books, to secular group and event listings—as well as an informal forum (Blog) for the Fellows.

As a nonprofit, SPI also accepts donations on the website in any amount.
CONTACT: Madeline Schussel, SPI Policy Director, at madeline.schussel@secularpolicyinstitute.net.

“Protecting Religious Freedom” By the People Lobby Day, March 17

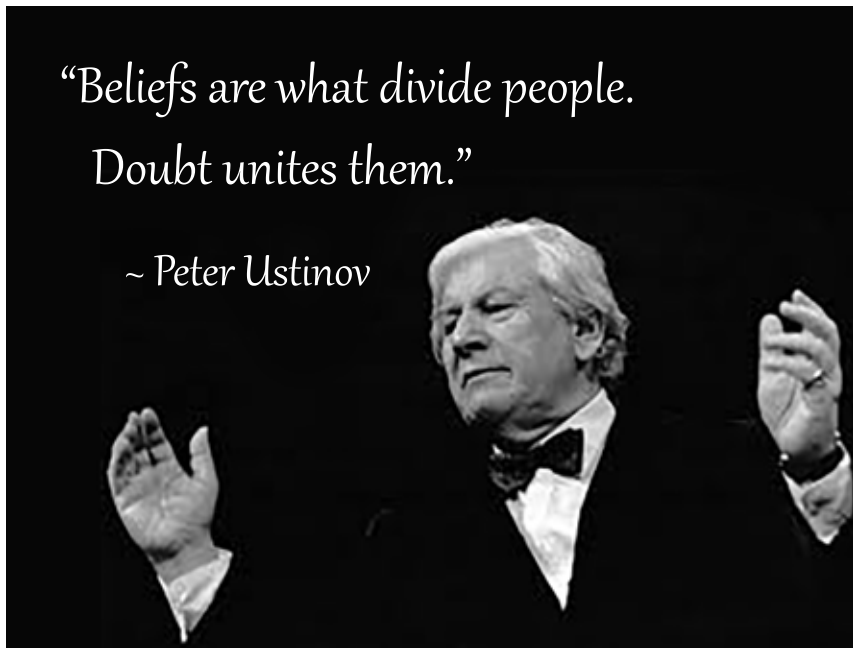
Ayman Fadel of Augusta, GA is a member of the Central Savannah River Area chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. In coordination with the two other chapters in Georgia and the ACLU Foundation of Georgia, AU is conducting a “Protecting Religious Freedom” By the People Lobby Day at the capitol on Tuesday, March 17, 2015 from 9am - 12 noon.

For more information, visit <http://www.amunit-edcsra.org/lobby/>. Would we as a group like to support this effort?

If you want more information or you wish to be involved in the planning of this event, please feel free to call Ayman Fadel at (706) 284-3002.

*“Beliefs are what divide people.
Doubt unites them.”*

~ Peter Ustinov



AFS is noted on American Family Association's "Bigotry Map"

<http://www.afa.net/bigotrymap>

The American Family Association has helpfully created a map of "Anti-Christian Bigotry Groups" in the United States. It's a proud day for Atlanta



Freethought Society, as we have made it onto the map! We have arrived!

From their website:

"The American Family Association has identified groups and organizations that openly display bigotry toward the Christian faith."

"These groups are deeply intolerant towards the Christian religion. Their objectives are to silence Christians and to remove all public displays of Christian heritage and faith in America."

"A common practice of these groups is threatening our nation's schools, cities and states. By threat of lawsuit, they demand prayer removed from schools and city council meetings, Ten Commandments monuments stricken from courthouses and memorial crosses purged from cemeteries and parks."

"Because of anti-Christian bigotry, private business owners have been sued and forced to close their business. Families and businesses that express a Christian worldview on social issues often face vicious retaliation from bigoted anti-Christian zealots."

"Some members or supporters of these groups have committed violent crimes against Christians and faith-based groups. Physical and profane verbal assaults against Christians are methods frequently exercised in their angry methods of intimidation."

Of course, AFS does not advocate committing violent crime, and you can see our purposes which are listed on page 2. We would say that it is actually religious groups (think ISIS, Boko Haram, etc.) committing violent crimes in the name of their religion.

From the website, here's what the legends mean:



HOMOSEXUAL AGENDA

Advocates for the legalization and promotion of same-sex marriage and viciously attacks Christians who exercise their First Amendment right to voice support for God's plan for marriage as between one man and one woman.



ATHEIST

Does not believe in God and is critical of those who express their faith in public.



ANTI-CHRISTIAN

Actively engages in the complete eradication of the Christian faith from society, government and private commerce. These groups file lawsuits and use intimidation to silence any reference to Christianity from the public square.



HUMANIST

Believes critical thinking and physical evidence are the sole basis for beliefs. Humanists believe science triumphs faith in issues of morality and decision-making.



HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

The nation's largest homosexual organization in America. Part of HRC's driving agenda is legalizing homosexual marriage by judicial activism, bullying American corporations to embrace sexual perversion and encouraging lawsuits against Christian-owned businesses and states.



GLSEN

Infiltrates public schools with pro-homosexual indoctrination tactics, confusing many young people and misleading them into making dangerous and unhealthy lifestyle choices that will negatively affect their entire lives.



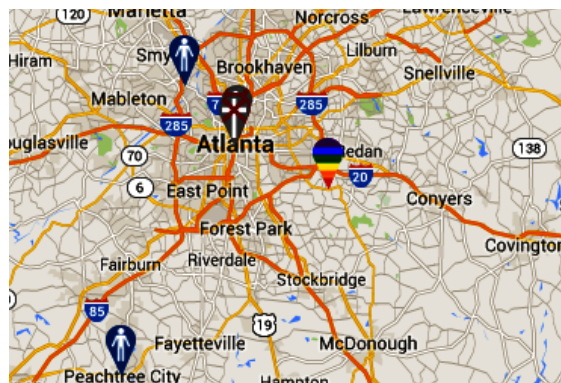
SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

Labels Christian organizations who support the Biblical definition of marriage as "hate" groups and falsely disseminates this information to liberal news media, and military and law enforcement training sessions. SPLC's listing resulted in the violent shooting attack against a pro-family group's office in 2012.



FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

Threatens, intimidates and sues local governments and public schools to abolish all public references to the Christian faith. Most notably, FFRF targets displays of crosses, the Ten Commandments and public prayer (city council meetings and high school football games).



FFRF, NPR, Doctors Without Borders and 7 others receive \$83K from Reddit

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/22486-ffrf-npr-doctors-without-borders-and-7-others-receive-83k-from-reddit>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation was chosen from more than 8,000 charities to receive an \$82,765.95 donation from Reddit, the social networking and news website. The social media giant decided to donate 10% of its 2014 gross ad revenue to 10 charities selected by its users. Over 80,000 users voted.

Reddit partnered with Charity Navigator, a nonprofit that evaluates charities, to vet potential awardees. (Charity Navigator rates FFRF a 97.06 out of 100, and "exceptional" with four out of four stars.)

FFRF is a national nonprofit with more than 21,500 members across the country that works to educate the public about matters of nontheism and to uphold the constitutional separation between state and church.

Of the 8,000 charities nominated, the top 10 received awards, including Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Doctors Without Borders,

the Wikimedia Foundation, National Public Radio and FFRF.

"We're so pleased to be in such illustrious company," said FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor. "FFRF strives to do for the secular movement what charities like Planned Parenthood, Doctors Without Borders and NPR do for their respective fields. We're honored that Redditors recognize our contribution."

Other winners include the Electronic Frontier Foundation, which defends

civil liberties in the digital world, and the Tor Project, which works to protect online privacy. The full list of 10 winners is available here: <http://www.redditblog.com/2015/02/announcing-winners-of-reddit-donate.html>.

"The Internet is one of

the few places some atheists feel comfortable being open about their atheism," said FFRF Co-President Dan Barker. "This award is an honor, but also a symbol that secularism is gaining strength and acceptance wherever ideas can be freely exchanged."

FFRF and its staff would like to thank all the wonderful Redditors who voted for us. Upvotes for you all.



reddit

Statement from Secular Student Alliance at NC State University

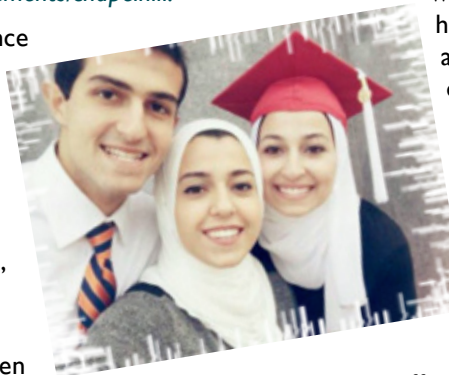
<https://secularstudents.org/statements/chapelhill2>

The Secular Student Alliance at North Carolina State University is an autonomous affiliate of the Secular Student Alliance. This is their statement regarding the recent triple homicide in Chapel Hill. To read the statement by our national office, you can find it here: <https://secularstudents.org/statements/chapelhill>.

The members of the Secular Student Alliance at NC State grieve the murders of Yusor Abu-Salha, Deah Barakat, and Razan Abu-Salha in Chapel Hill yesterday. We are dismayed and saddened by the loss of these members of our community and the trauma it has caused. The SSA at NC State condemns these killings without reservation, and offers our deepest sympathies and condolences to the victims' families and friends.

The SSA at NC State's leadership has spoken out about this tragedy.

"I am deeply saddened by the loss of my fellow students, and angered by this act of cruelty. It is unthinkable to me that lives can be taken so senselessly," says Nick Freeman, undergraduate advisor of the SSA at NC State. "Although I didn't know them personally, it is clear that Deah, Yusor, and Razan cared about their community and had hearts for service and good works. My thoughts go out to their friends and families."



"These senseless murders are horrifying," says Jonathan Otten, president of the SSA at NC State. "The loss of fellow students, especially ones with whom I attended both high school and college, hurts deeply. They cared deeply about service and improving our world. We offer our solidarity and support, and my thoughts are with their families, friends, and community. Violence like this is never a solution to anything, and there is profound need for dialogue, deeper understanding, and acknowledgment that, because we're all valued parts of the same world, hate and intolerance can't be options."

We recognize that intolerance is a problem affecting many communities, and this tragedy is a reminder that there are some who do not feel that all people can coexist. We strive to combat this view, and we offer our solidarity to those affected by this terrible act of violence. The SSA at NC State strives to work with all students to foster a community in which all voices are heard and respected, and in which all people are safe, regardless of religious differences.

Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

The SOS (Secular Organizations for Sobriety) meets on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. in Roswell. For more information, send an email to donnaigore@yahoo.com.

The Fayette Freethought Society hosts lunches, dinners, book discussions, civic activities and more. (<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. Several upcoming events in January. (<http://www.meetup.com/Peachtree-City-Humanists-PTCH/>)

Fellowship of Reason meets on the first Sunday of every month at 10:30 AM at AF Hall. There are meetings for book discussion, philosophy, a classic film course, and other events. (<http://www.fellowshipofreason.com>.)

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta atheists** on Sunday, Mar. 8, at 6:00 p.m. at Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. (<http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/>)

GUST (Gwinnett: Under-standing Secular Truths) has their monthly meeting at UUGC, 12 Bethesda Church Road, Lawrenceville, GA on Monday, Mar. 9 at 7 p.m. The topic is "Pro-Human vs.

Anti-Religious." (<http://www.meetup.com/brights-295/>)

Atlanta Astronomy Club meets on the second Saturday of each month. For more information, check out the website (<http://www.atlantaastronomy.org>)

Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter meets on Sat. Mar. 14 at 1 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Booksellers Southlake, 1939 Mount Zion Road, Morrow, GA.

There is no proselytizing of any kind allowed at these meetings. For more information and resources, please visit www.recoveringfromreligion.org. (<http://www.meetup.com/Recovering-From-Religion-Morrow-Chapter/>)

IIG Atlanta will have its monthly meetup on Sat. Mar. 21 at 4:30 at Manuel's Tavern, 602 N Highland Avenue Northeast, in the Crows Nest. Check the meetup group or contact Shaune Beattie at shaune.beattie@gmail.com for more information: <http://www.meetup.com/IIG-Atlanta/>.

Atlanta Skeptics is will have its Sat. Mar. 21 regular meeting at Manuel's Tavern in the North Avenue room (come in the front door, turn right and head all the way back). The topic will be announced. Social and dinner starts at 6 pm. Be sure

to check with the Meetup page. (<http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics/>)

Black Nonbelievers will have a special edition meeting on Sun, Mar. 15 from 2-4 pm at Starbucks by Steinmart, Hwy. 54 East, Peachtree City, GA. Please join them for a Special Edition General Meeting as they meet with the Sunday Seculars down in Peachtree City! BN President **Mandisa Thomas** will discuss the growing diversity within Metro Atlanta's secular community, as well as promote the Atlanta Coalition of Reason. Please come and represent your group(s), as well as meet more like minded people! (<http://www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/>)

Sunday Assembly Atlanta will meet at First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, 470 Candler Park, Atlanta, GA 6:00 p.m. Sun, Mar. 15. The topic has not been posted yet.

Please ask one of their volunteer helpers if you need assistance in any way. Their venue is wheelchair accessible.

Besides their Sunday meeting, this month, SA also has a range of other events, such as *Mindfulness Meditation*, *Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions Lecture Series*, *Book Club on "The Better Angels of Our Nature"*, and *An Evening With Neil deGrasse Tyson*.

For more about the global movement,

check out: <http://sundayassembly.com/about/> (<http://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly/>)

Freedom From Religion Foundation will meet on Sunday, Mar 22 at 2:00 at Atlanta Freethought Hall.

Check Meetup for more info. <http://www.meetup.com/Freedom-From-Religion-Foundation-of-Georgia/>

Another **meetup for Atlanta Atheists** is scheduled for Sun., Mar. 22 at 4:00 p.m. at Five Seasons Brewery, 5600 Roswell Rd, in Sandy Springs. (<http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/>)

The Atlanta Science Tavern is having a meeting at Manuel's Tavern, 602 N. Highland Ave NE, Atlanta, GA from 7-10 p.m. Sat. Mar. 28 but at press time, the topic has not yet been announced. The cost is \$3.00 per non-student. See the meetup page for more info. Note that Science Tavern also has other listed events. (<http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern>)

Atlanta Atheists has first Sunday meetups each month: the place varies. Check Meetup for info on the March get-together. (<http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/>)



Become a Member!

(Or renew your membership with this form or online at 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!

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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 Faulken-berry); 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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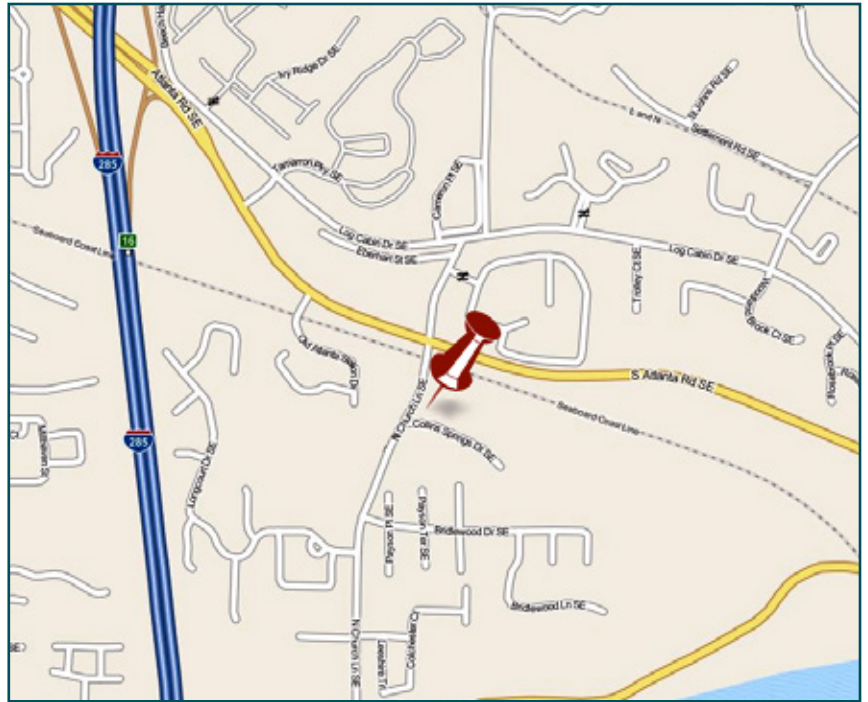
ATLANTA FREETHOUGHT SOCIETY
4775 N. Church Lane SE, Atlanta, GA 30080-7224

*Dare To Think
For Yourself!*



**The March 8th
Meeting:
1:00 at AF Hall,
4775 N. Church Lane SE
Atlanta, GA**

**This Month's Speaker:
Ed Buckner**



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