

The February AFS Meeting

Jennifer Taylor: “Increasing Diversity & Building Community Within the Secular Movement”

Jennifer Taylor was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and raised within a dual-religious family (Jehovah’s Witness and Baptist); she was skeptical from a young age with an inquisitive nature. She



Jennifer Taylor

considers herself both an Atheist as well as a Secular Humanist with a strong interest in community service, social justice, and separation of church and state issues.

She currently serves as the organizer for Black Atheists of Philadelphia; a group that both welcomes and encourages non-theists

of diverse backgrounds to become both open and active within the Greater Philadelphia area. Black Atheists of Philadelphia is affiliated with African Americans for Humanism and the Greater Philadelphia Coalition of Reason (PhillyCor).

In addition, she is an organizer for the newly formed group, Humanists of East Tennessee. She is also a board member of the Freethought Society and an active member of the New Jersey Humanist Network. Furthermore, she is an avid Jazz enthusiast who also organizes the Philadelphia Jazz Meetup.

Jenn is presently employed within corporate America, has a background in management and has more than seventeen years of diverse management level experience. Jenn regularly visits several groups within the Pennsylvania/New Jersey/Tennessee area and has also attended numerous secular events, conferences and rallies including The Reason Rally, the Blackout Secular Rally and has also participated in the Madison Atheists booth during the group’s “Ask An Atheist” event. In addition, she has been a guest on the Black Freethinkers Radio show and The Forbidden Fruit Radio Show, and has served as a guest panelist during the People of Color Beyond Faith conference.

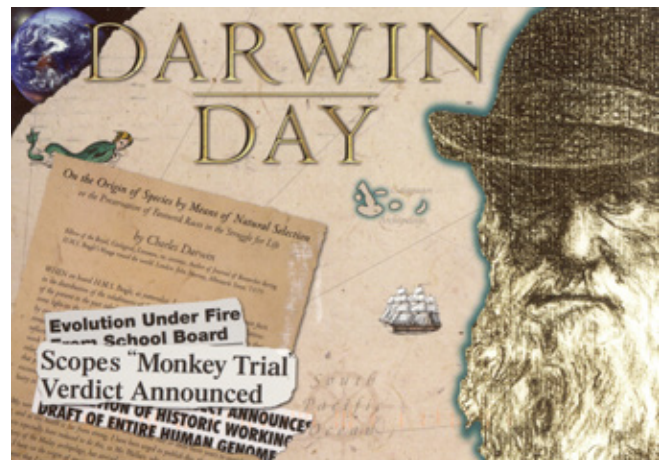
Calendar

- 2/14 AFS Board meeting 11:00 a.m.
 - 2/14 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.
 - 2/26 Game night at AF Hall! 7:00 p.m.
 - 3/13 AFS Potluck 12:00 p.m.
 - 3/13 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: www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought

Her short term goals are promoting diversity within the secular community and being an encouraging force and support to members of the secular community that have not publicly proclaimed their skepticism about religion.

Long-term her mission is to help move the world towards accepting valid information related to decisions that affect us all and to help provide networking opportunities, information and support to those who have yet to discover their voice within the secular community.



 **For the latest in upcoming AFS events, join our Meetup group!**
meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society

Programs and Speakers

All programs are on the second Sunday of each month at AF Hall, 4775 N. Church Lane SE, Atlanta, GA, 30339 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.

Feb 14: Jennifer Taylor “Increasing Diversity and Building Community Within the Secular Movement”

Mar 13: Bea Brown

Apr 10: Bharat Bhatia

May 8: TBD

We are always interested in finding new speakers. If you have an idea for a speaker, let a board member know. AFS pays an honorarium.

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 facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought. For calendar information on AFS activities, please join the [Meetup group](https://Meetup.com). The AFS website is www.atlantafreethought.org.

To keep up to date on the Atlanta Freethought Society calendar of upcoming events, please join our Meetup group: meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society.

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.



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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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See AFS events and member views at:
facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought.

Send E-mail to
afs@atlantafreethought.org.

AFS Wordpress specialist: Dwight Lyman
AFS Facebook page: Laura Ross

Clean Up Day at AF Hall

On Saturday, January 30, several volunteers spent the day cleaning up the grounds around Atlanta Freethought Hall. Leaves were raked, fallen limbs were carried away, and holes were prepared to plant groundcover and hollies in the spring. A delicious lunch consisting of real and faux turkey sandwiches, chips, and mandarine oranges was enjoyed by the group.

Participants were led by Mark Banks and included Nicola Mazbar, Paddy Rama, Venkat Krishna, Dwight Lyman, and Laura Ross.

Come see how much better everything looks! Photos by Laura Ross.



Freedom From Religion Foundation to Obama: Please welcome nonreligious to “American Family”

ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/25699-ffrf-to-obama-please-welcome-nonreligious-to-american-family

February 4, 2016

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent its letter to President Barack Obama (on the same day he addressed the National Prayer Breakfast).

**The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500**

Re: Please also welcome nonreligious to the “American family”

Dear Mr. President:

To help counter anti-Muslim bigotry, you spoke at a mosque yesterday. Last week, you spoke at the Israeli embassy and, in a show of solidarity with the Jewish minority, said, “I, too, am a Jew.” It is laudable for the President to embrace citizens of all colors and religious viewpoints as being part of “one American family” and to caution citizens not to be “bystanders to bigotry.” But there is one U.S. minority that has been consistently excluded from such notice: nonreligious Americans.

We respectfully invite you, in your final year in office, to do something no American president has ever done: reach out to secular America. Such attention from the Office of the President would demonstrate that freethinkers, atheists, agnostics, secular humanists and rationalists are accepted citizens. As you pointed out in your first inaugural address: “We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus — and nonbelievers.”

On June 4, 2016, as you are aware, America’s “Nones” will gather at the Lincoln Memorial for the Reason Rally, sponsored by major secular organizations, including Freedom From Religion Foundation. On behalf of our 23,500 members around the nation, we add our voice to those encouraging you to make a historic appearance

at what will be the largest event for secular Americans. This would provide an ideal opportunity for the Office of the President to welcome and address tens of thousands of good citizens who reflect the 23 percent of the adult population who identify as nonreligious. “Nones” are the fastest growing segment in the U.S. population by religious identification. More than a third of Millennials — 35 percent — identify as nonreligious. In fact, “Nones” have recently surpassed Roman Catholics as the largest “denomination” in the United States.

Yet reprehensible prejudice and ubiquitous social stigmatization dog U.S. freethinkers, atheists and agnostics. Those of us who are nonreligious daily encounter unwarranted stereotypes, putdowns and assumptions that we cannot be good people or good citizens. A December 2011 study in the *Journal of Personality and Psychology* found, appallingly, that atheists rank, with rapists, as least trustworthy!

The University of Minnesota found that atheists are at the bottom of the totem pole when it comes to social acceptance, in comparison to a variety of minorities often typified as “other,” including gays, Muslims, recent im-

migrants, Jews and racial minorities. “Acceptance of religious diversity does not extend to the nonreligious.” The study, published in the *American Sociological Review*, April 2006, even reported that atheists are the people they would least like their children to marry.

Only in the past few years has a slim majority polled by Gallup even agreed it would consider voting for an atheist. It is sad that in a nation with a secular Constitution barring religious

tests for public office, a de facto religious test is being imposed. Boy Scouts of America, of which the President is the nominal “commander in chief,” recently lifted its hurtful membership ban against gays, but continues to brag about excluding nonreligious boys and to maintain “that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing his obligation to God.”

Thomas Jefferson, a Deist, famously pointed out: “It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.” Yet too many Americans appear to have imbibed the lessons found in the untrue condemnations in Psalm 14: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.” We’re sure you agree that it isn’t what you profess that makes you a good person — it is what you do.

Freethinkers and nontheists have made and continue to make unheralded contributions to U.S. society, beginning with patriot Thomas Paine, an



Another winter game night? AFS is doing it again!

Do not pass GO!
Do not go STRAIGHT TO JAIL!
 Head on over to
ATLANTA FREETHOUGHT SOCIETY'S
GAME NIGHT!
Friday, February 26th, 7-11 (or so) p.m.
 Bring board games, card games,
 snacks, sodas, beer, wine, drinks, money for pizza!
 Let us know if you can come: afs@atlantafreethought.org
 or <http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society/>

archcritic of biblical claims who sparked support for the revolution and gave our nation its very name. The first to speak out for abolition of slavery and capital punishment, for women's right to vote, for the right to reproductive freedom, have been freethinkers. The ranks of U.S. nonbelievers include legendary social reformers (**W.E.B. DuBois, Clarence Darrow, Frederick Douglass, Margaret Sanger, Elizabeth Cady Stanton**), scientists (**Luther Burbank, Albert Einstein, Richard Feynman, Steven Pinker, Carl Sagan, Neil deGrasse Tyson**), philanthropists (**Jane Adams, Warren Buffett, Andrew Carnegie, Bill Gates**), literary luminaries (**Isaac Asimov, Pearl Buck, Nora Ephron, Myla Goldberg, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Ursula K. LeGuin, Sinclair Lewis, James A. Michener, Ayn Rand, John Steinbeck, Kurt Vonnegut**), songwriters, musicians and composers (**Irving Berlin, Aaron Copland, Stephen Foster, the Gershwins, Billy Joel, Scott Joplin, Thelonious Monk, Paul Robeson, Pete Seeger, Charles Strouse**)

and so many others who have brought beauty, art, progress, knowledge, compassion and reason to our society. As John Stuart Mill observed, "The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments — of those most distinguished even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue — are complete skeptics in religion."

By showing up on June 4, as you did at the mosque, and addressing nonbelieving Americans, you can send a signal that the marginalization of a quarter of the U.S. population is unacceptable. Please use your "bully pulpit" to help erase harmful attitudes toward the nonreligious minority in the United States, as you have done for religious minorities. Please address the Reason Rally on June 4 or speak at our auditorium in Freethought Hall (our offices) any time. We look forward to your reply.

Most respectfully,

Dan Barker Annie Laurie Gaylor

Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor
 Co-Presidents
 Freedom From Religion Foundation

Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

The Atlanta Science Tavern no longer meets at Manuel's Tavern as it has closed for renovations for the next few months (and as it is cutting out the "new" large bar and the North Avenue room, don't expect to meet there anymore). However several events are listed—check the meetup page. (www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern)

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

We Agnostics Atlanta meets on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Galano Club, 585 Dutch Valley Rd NE, Atlanta, GA 30324. Clubhouse phone number: (404) 881-9188. This is an Alcoholics Anonymous group.

Alpharetta Freethinkers Humanists & Atheists Meetup is a brand-new group meeting on the north side. Be sure to check out their meetup page for upcoming events. (www.meetup.com/Alpharetta-Freethinkers-Humanists-Atheists-Meetup/)

Marietta Skeptic/Humanist Meetup has various get-togethers and discussion groups. Several upcoming events. (<http://www.meetup.com/Marietta-Atheists-Meetup/>)

The Peachtree City Humanists meet often for discussions at Starbucks, lunch, dinner at She's Bistro, and more. Several upcoming events each month. (www.meetup.com/Peachtree-City-Humanists-PTCH/)

The Southern Crescent Freethinkers sponsor Navigators, Owl & Ibis: A Confluence of Minds, and meet for dinner, etc. Several upcoming events each month. (www.meetup.com/Southern-Crescent-Freethinkers)

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. (www.fellowshipofreason.com)

The Georgia chapter of **Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF)** meets on the first Sunday of each month at AF Hall from 2:00 to 4:00. You can learn more about their topics at www.meetup.com/Freedom-From-Religion-Foundation-of-Georgia.

GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths) has their monthly meeting on Monday, Feb 8, 7:00 p.m. at UUCG, 12 Bethesda Church Road, Lawrenceville. The topic is "Cognition and cognitive bias." (www.meetup.com/brights-295/)

Recovery from Religion - Atlanta Northside is a brand new group that will have its first meeting at 7 p.m. Feb. 10 at Harry's Market, 70 Powers Ferry Road, Marietta, GA but is looking for a permanent home. For more information and resources, please visit www.recoveringfromreligion.org. (www.meetup.com/Recovering-from-religion-Atlanta-northside/)

Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter meets on the second Saturday of each month 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. (www.meetup.com/Recovering-From-Religion-Morrow-Chapter/)

Atlanta Astronomy Club will have their general meeting on the second Saturday of the month 3-5 pm at Fernbank Science Center, 156 Heaton Park Drive, Atlanta, GA. Lots more events are available so check out the website (www.atlantaastronomy.org)

Secular Atheist Study the Scripture (SASS) - Announced a new meeting for Sat. Feb 13 at Lake Lanier Club: Business Center,

2350 Avonlea Way, Gainesville, GA. The topic is "Exodus: Gods and Kings!" Check their meetup page for more info. (www.meetup.com/Secular-Atheist-Study-the-Scriptures-SASS-Gainesville)

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta Atheists** on Sunday, Feb. 14, at 6:00 p.m. at Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/)

Black Nonbelievers does not have a general meeting listed yet, but they usually meet on the third Sunday of the month. Check their Meetup page for more info. (www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/)

Atlanta Atheists Parents Meetup will have a play date at Medlock Park, 874 Gaylemont Cir, Decatur near the North Decatur/Embry Hills area Feb. 21 from 11-2. If the weather is too cold or rainy it will be at Leapin Lizards, 185 Sams St, Decatur, GA 30030. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheist-Parents-Meetup)

The Third Sunday meetup for **Atlanta Atheists** is on Sunday, Feb 21, at 2:00 p.m. at Pub 71, 4058 Peachtree Rd NE, Brookhaven, GA. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/)

Sunday Assembly Atlanta will have their general meeting on Sunday Feb 21 at 6 p.m. Dr. Jim Sowell will be discussing "Space Invaders - Citizenship in the Universe." What happens to life in the universe when we find it? How fundamentally would our understanding shake if we found microbial life in our solar system, or if we heard an intelligent signal from a distant star? How should we even responsibly approach the search for such things when our investigations could tamper with discoveries? Dr. Sowell is an astronomer at Georgia Tech, where he is the Director of the Campus Observatory and a K-12 outreach telescope in Hawaii. In addition to teaching and research, he performs public outreach and education, including Public Nights, presentations at schools, workshops for teachers, and distance-learning video conferences across the globe. He teaches three astronomy courses and directs students in research. Jim was honored with an Undergraduate Educator Award in 2009.

Sunday Assembly will collect supplies for compassion bags for the homeless during the evening. When you're next out at the store or buying groceries, consider grabbing a little extra of anything you believe would help these people in need. There will also be a potluck, and First Existentialist Congregation is wheelchair friendly. Please check out the meetup page for more information. (www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly/)

Atlanta Atheists Parents Meetup will have a play date at East Cobb Park, 3322 Roswell Rd, Marietta, near Marietta and Sandy Springs, Feb. 28 at 11-2. If the weather is too cold or rainy it will be at Catch Air at Town Center Market, 2505 Chastain Meadows Parkway Northwest, Suite #103, Marietta, GA 30066. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheist-Parents-Meetup)

Another **meetup for Atlanta Atheists** is scheduled for Sun., Feb 28 at 4:00 p.m. at Five Seasons Brewing, 5600 Roswell Rd, Sandy Springs. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists)

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

Atlanta Skeptics - At press time, the only upcoming meetup for Atlanta Skeptics is Drinking Skeptically at 5 Seasons Brewing, Mar. 4 at 7 pm. They are looking for a place to start having regular meetings again. Check their meetup page for more info. (www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics)



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!

Annual dues are:

Membership Dues# of mems Total

Individual \$50 _____ Name _____
 Low Income \$20 _____ Address: _____

Sustaining Member \$100 _____ Phone: H _____ W _____
 Life Member \$1000 _____ Email: _____

Subscription only \$30 _____
 Books \$ _____ Any other things you'd like to tell us? _____

Shipping and handling for Books \$ _____
 Extra donation (Thank you!) \$ _____
 Total: \$ _____

Receive newsletter by email (No charge for members)

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Save time and postage by making a payment via **Paypal** to: afs@atlantafreethought.org

AFS Art Display Program

4775 N. Church Lane SE Atlanta, GA 30339
www.atlantafreethought.org afs@atlantafreethought.org

Person or entity displaying art: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____

Email: _____

Description of artwork (subject, color, dimensions, weight, frame, price, materials, other info — list on separate page if necessary):

Display dates: from _____ to _____

Owner if other than above: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____

Email: _____

Is artwork for sale? Yes / No \$ _____ Upon sale owner agrees to pay AFS a 33.3% fee.

Terms: All artwork displays will be submitted to Atlanta Freethought Society art committee for approval (afs@atlantafreethought.org). Installation & removal will be done by artist/owner overseen by AFS art committee. Damage to building will be repaired by artist/owner. The owner assumes all risk for artwork at all times. AFS will not be responsible for any damage or loss while artwork is in our possession.

Owner agrees to terms: _____

Signature/date _____

AFS Art Committee approval: _____

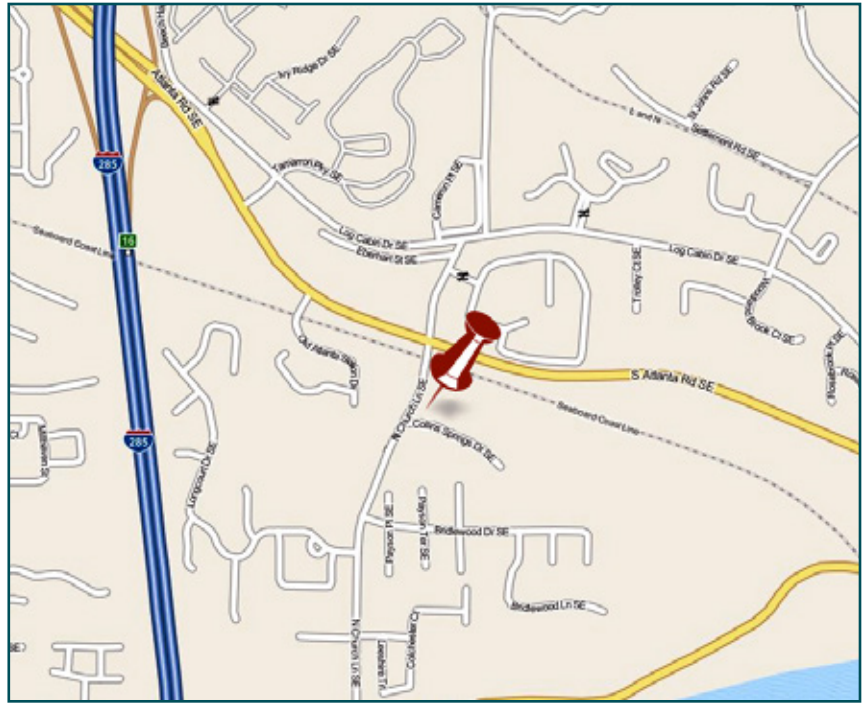
Signature/date _____

Dare To Think
For Yourself!



**February 14 meeting
1:00 at AF Hall,
4775 N. Church Lane SE
Atlanta, GA 30339**

Jennifer Taylor



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Atlanta GA 30339

