

The August AFS Meeting

Dr. Steven Bell, Emeritus Professor of Psychology

Emeritus Professor, Steven Bell will be discussing the current situation of Palestinians living under the Israeli Occupation. Dr. Bell has been to Palestine four times, including a five month sabbatical working as a psychologist in 2010.



Steven Bell

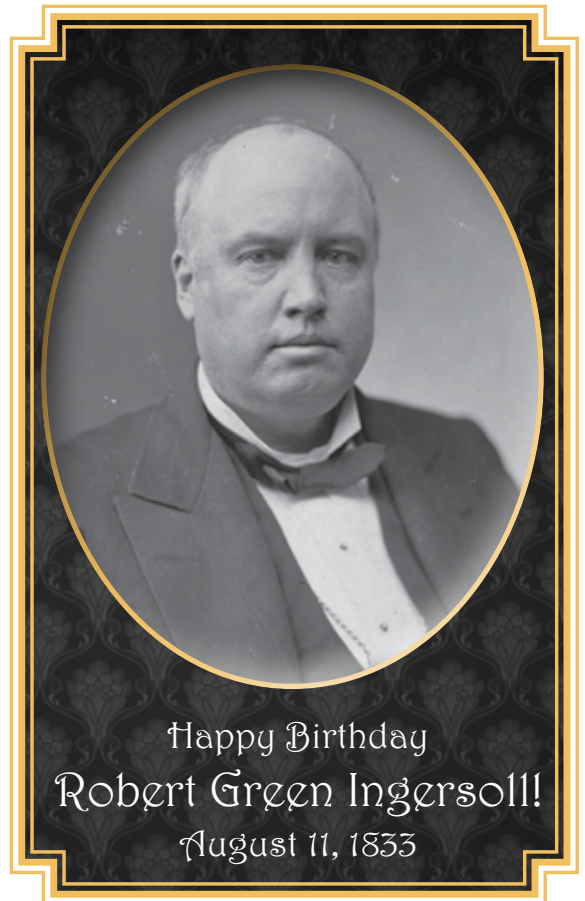
Bell is an observant Jew and two time President of Rodeph Shalom Synagogue in Rome, Georgia. He is an active member of **Jewish Voice for Peace** and **The Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East**.

There will be plenty of time for Q and A.



Give to every human being every right that you claim for yourself.

~ Robert Green Ingersoll ~



Calendar

- 8/13 Game Afternoon 2:00 pm
- 8/14 AFS General Meeting 1:00 pm
- 8/20 Board meeting (special) 12:00 pm
- 9/11 Potluck Lunch 12:00 pm
- 9/11 AFS General meeting 1:00 pm
- 10/2 Barry Lynn from AU: Fellowship of Reason/AFS joint event 10:00 am

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

Be sure to like AFS's Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought



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.

Aug 14: Steven Bell “*The West Bank*”

Sep 11: TBA

Oct 2: Fellowship of Reason & Atlanta Freethought Society present **Barry Lynn** of Americans United for Separation of Church and State

Oct 9: 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@yahoogroups.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. The AFS Facebook page is at facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought. For calendar information on AFS activities, please join the [Meetup group](#). 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.

Views, opinions, positions or strategies expressed by authors are theirs alone and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, positions or strategies of the Atlanta Freethought Society or any member thereof. The editors of *Atlanta Freethought News* reserve the right to edit or alter in any manner it sees fit any articles deemed to be obscene, offensive, defamatory, threatening, in violation of trademark, copyright or other laws, or is otherwise unacceptable; and also to correct grammar and to conserve space.



Atlanta Freethought News An AFS Publication

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Atlanta Freethought News

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Sustaining Membership is \$100.

Life Membership is \$1000.

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Send E-mail to
afs@atlantafreethought.org.

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

We get “fan” comments! (From Facebook)

I've just perused a number of your organization's posts. Your ignorance of and misunderstanding of authentic Biblical Christianity is staggering. As well, it's striking how much time and energy you put into pushing back against something you allegedly do not believe exists. It's deliciously ironic to me that your organization's reason for being centers around a being that you don't believe exists...

...If you do not believe that a transcendent Creator (or first cause) created the universe but rather everything sprang from nothing then your belief is irrational. In other words—and I don't mean this pejoratively—you are a fool. If you have issues with as you put it, the “atrocities” of people who believe in a non-existent god, it is the inherent wickedness of the person you have an issue with just as you would and should have with a wicked atheist, or Buddhist or Muslim or vegan or new ager.



The hypocrisy of Hines should be of no concern to Smyrna police

By Ed Buckner

Marietta Daily Journal
August 3, 2016

Dear Editor:

In the Sunday July 31 edition, the *Marietta Daily Journal* reported that columnist **Roger Hines** took objection to the Smyrna Police appointing, as a matter of “best practices,” a liaison officer to the LGBT community, someone responsible for “diversity training.” It seems that Mr. Hines suffers from serious hypocrisy—not “seems,” does—for we have his column as clear evidence of the fact.

Mr. Hines thinks that Mayor **Max Bacon** could direct his police to give advice about the IRS to churches, as well as to protect Smyrnans from the evil effect of pro-gay stances on the “children and youth.” Mr. Hines thinks that we should be a nation of laws and equal justice for all—but as he takes strong issue with the police liaising with a community or with them being treated with respect as merely “bowing to the god of diversity.”

But—and this is where the strong hypocrisy of Mr. Hines is on full display—there is not a word in Hines' column about the special, substantial privileges long afforded the churches he now claims are being treated so poorly. Those conservative churches receive now—and have for decades—both automatic social prestige and tax advantages available to no other groups. Those churches, as churches, pay not a dime for fire and police protection, paved roads, or towards the maintenance of the civilization that protects their views (rational or not). That protects them, please note, in the holding and expressing of opinions destructive to citizens elsewhere in the community and the nation.

The mayor of Smyrna has not sought my advice and is not likely to, but if he did, I'd urge him to recognize and learn about *all* groups in the Smyrna community, and to direct his police officers to continue to serve and protect *all* law-abiding citizens—even Mr. Hines and the preachers of conservative churches who don't pay their fair share.

Ed Buckner
Smyrna, GA

Satanic Temple trolling proves that there should be no religious afterschool programs

By Ed Buckner (unpublished)

Dear Editor:

The *Marietta Daily Journal* editorial on the Satanic Temple (5 August) was poorly written, illogical, and even poorly edited, but it did have one thing right: “The Cobb School District is under no obligation to allow any after-school clubs in its schools and needs simply give the word to shutter them.” I'm no lawyer, but the Cobb Board could probably simply disallow clubs related to religion at all elementary schools—and should.

I'm in no way affiliated with the Satanic Temple and cannot speak for them, but it seems pretty clear that their objective, however provocative their approach, is to enforce the First Amendment and keep government and religion separate. This goal is, it is worth noting, a quintessentially American one and is aimed at limiting governments, not citizens. By the way, I'm an atheist, not a Satanist—some Christians believe in the existence of an actual Satan who personifies evil, but I don't.

Your editorial ridicules the Satanic Temple for wanting to indoctrinate young children, when in fact they are plainly striving to eliminate such indoctrination by the government or on government property. I'm nearly certain that neither the *MDJ* nor anyone on the school board complained when The Good News Club set up shop at Still Elementary to do exactly that. **Katherine Stewart** has written a compelling warning book about the group, *The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children* (Public Affairs Books, 2012). When Still Elementary got a Good News Club, did the *MDJ* declare that “the shattering sound is our culture, in free-fall since the 1960s, striking rock bottom”?

Does the *MDJ* honestly think that defending the First Amendment and religious liberty, as board members like **David Banks** and **Susan Thayer** seem inclined to do, is a “Neville Chamberlain approach”?

As board member **David Chastain** noted, in an earlier *MDJ* article, the crucial question may be “Why elementary students?” But that question applies equally to the Good News Club and to the proposed Satan club. As a wise friend suggested, maybe these groups should seek members at high schools instead. The Marietta High Blue Devils would be a good place to start.

Ed Buckner
Smyrna, GA

American Atheists: Trump's Pledge to Allow Church Politicking is a Disaster

news.atheists.org



In his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention Thursday, July 21, Republican presidential nominee **Donald Trump** pledged to end the long-standing ban on churches engaging in political activities.

Since 1954, the so-called "Johnson Amendment" has banned political activity for churches, other houses of worship, and all other tax-exempt organizations. This requirement applies equally to religious and secular nonprofit organizations. Repealing this critical protection of our nation's secular character would fundamentally undermine the First Amendment's Establishment Clause and upend more than 60 years of law.

Pastors and religious leaders are free to endorse candidates and engage in politics—and frequently do. But we draw the line when it comes to taxpayer subsidized tax-exempt organizations climbing into the political arena.

Churches already flaunt the law and engage in politics from the pulpit while the IRS does nothing. Repealing this law would turn religious organizations into political ones. American Atheists opposes Mr. Trump's pledge.

Action Alert: Commend Tennessee county commissioners for stopping land transfers to churches

ffrf.org

The commissioners of a Tennessee county need to be thanked for stopping the giveaway of land to churches.

The Shelby County Board of Commissioners had repeatedly transferred land to churches for nominal sums under a Tennessee provision that permitted this for nonprofits. For example, the county conveyed eight parcels of land to Memphis' Kingdom Fellowship Baptist Church in 2012 and a further four parcels to the same church in 2015.

When FFRF informed Shelby County that it was violating both the U.S. and Tennessee Constitutions by its actions, county officials heeded FFRF's advice and suspended the land transfers for the time being. County commissioners need to be thanked for being willing to mend their ways, especially since they'll likely get blowback from the Religious Right.

CONTACT

Please contact the Shelby County commissioners to tell them they're doing the right thing. Urge them to make the moratorium permanent.

TALKING POINTS

Personalize your statement if possible, or feel free to cut and paste the wording below.

Thank you for halting Shelby County's unlawful transfer of land to religious institutions. The Tennessee Constitution guarantees that no citizens may be compelled to attend, erect or support any place of worship, and you're adhering to the national and state constitutions by halting the gifts of land to churches. The moratorium must be made permanent.

Smoky Mountains Freethought Advance (not retreat!)

The Rationalists of East Tennessee will hold a freethought advance in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, in Townsend, TN, September 3 and 4th, 2016.

Come to beautiful East Tennessee and enjoy a weekend filled with enlightening talks, camaraderie and entertainment in the tradition of the Lake Hypatia Freethought Advance.

The "Advance" will be held at Tremont Lodge and Resort, 7726 E Lamar Alexander Parkway, Townsend, TN 37882-4039 (865) 448-3200 / (844) 448-3200 used for days before and after the "Advance."

Ed Buckner, former president of American Atheists is once again the MC!

Featured speakers are **Patrick Horst**, Freethought Jeopardy with **Martin** and **Cheryl Lewison**, **Sincere Kirabo**, **Jon Webster**, **Karon Park**, **Aleta Ledendecker**, **Herb Silverman**, **Matt Dillahunty**, **Shannon Nebo**, **Usama al-Binni**

Register online at www.rationalists.org/event-2300725/Registration



September events at GA Tech

For people who live in the Atlanta/GA Tech area, a heads up on two events to be held at GA Tech in September (more details later: room numbers, times, etc.)

On 9th September, Friday evening, **Ed Buckner** and **Wallace Marshall** of Reasonable Faith/Charleston will settle, once and for all,

Is America a Christian nation?

Was it ever? Should it be?

(event sponsored by Why Should I Believe at Georgia Tech)

On 14th September, Wednesday evening, **Ed Buckner** will talk with—and answer questions from—the Campus Freethinkers of Georgia Tech about the debate and, more specifically, about the 1796-1797 Treaty with the Bey and People of Tripoli.

Both events are free and open to the public.

Staver's Switcheroo: Religious Right Attorney Who Said Satanic Clubs Have A Right To Meet In Schools Now Might Sue To Stop Them

by Simon Brown in *Wall of Separation*

www.au.org/blogs

In a predictable twist, a prominent Religious Right attorney who recently said after public school Satanic clubs have a “right to meet” is now threatening to sue if those clubs are actually allowed to form.

As we reported earlier this week, the Satanic Temple is seeking to create “After School Satan Clubs” in public schools in several states in response to the activities of local Good News Clubs.

The Satanic Temple is a humanist group that supports separation of church and state and rebellion against traditional religious dogma. Its proposed after-school sessions would emphasize things like critical thinking and science.

Good News Clubs, which also meet after school hours, are run by an outside organization, Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), which works aggressively to indoctrinate children into fundamentalist Christianity. CEF members believe that children as young as 5 are sinners who can make faith professions; they even use “wordless books” aimed at children who haven’t yet learned to read.

Even though such clubs operate in public schools, the U.S. Supreme Court said back in 2001 that if public schools have a policy of allowing outside groups to use their space, they must treat all equally. This means that schools with these policies cannot exclude religious clubs, but it also means that schools cannot give them special treatment.

Initially, at least, it seems Liberty Counsel head Mat Staver didn’t have a problem with the concept of After School Satan Clubs. Staver, who represents anti-gay Rowan County, Ky., Clerk Kim Davis, said just last month that there is no legal basis for preventing the clubs from meeting after school.

“I would definitely oppose after-school Satanic clubs, but they have a First Amendment right to meet,” Staver said. “I suspect, in this particular case, I can’t imagine there’s going to be a lot of students participating in this. It’s probably dust they’re kicking up and is likely to fade away in the near future for lack of interest.”

It seems this week things have changed in Staver’s world. Now he’s looking to sue, having offered his services for free to any school that receives a request to form a Satan club.

“The so-called Satanist group has nothing good to offer the students and its entire reason for existence is to be disruptive,” Staver thundered in a media

statement. “Schools do not have to tolerate groups which disrupt the school and target other legitimate clubs. No sane parents would consent to allow their child to attend this group. Full of sound and fury, this group will soon fade away.”

It’s nice to see that Staver knows some Shakespeare. And while it’s difficult to say if any schools will take Liberty Counsel up on its offer, given Staver’s own admission that Satan clubs have the right to meet, it seems unlikely that he will succeed.

The Religious Right fought hard to make sure Good News Clubs can meet in public schools. The tradeoff for that victory was the right to equal access—meaning if an evangelical Christian club can meet, a Satan club has that same right. It’s all or nothing.

But as usual, the Religious Right wants it all while conceding nothing to its opponents. Sorry to break it to you, Mat, but that’s not how this works. You pried open the door so the Good News Club could enter public schools. You shouldn’t be surprised that others want to come in as well.

The image shows a board game board with a central white area containing text. The board has various colored squares and icons like a train, a question mark, and a 'GO' arrow. The central text reads:

DO NOT PASS GO
DO NOT GO STRAIGHT TO JAIL
GO PLAY GAMES AT ATLANTA FREETHOUGHT HALL
Two Upcoming Events!
Game Afternoon - Sat. Aug. 13 2:00 p.m.
Game Night - Fri. Aug. 26 around 7-7:30 p.m.
Bring board games, card games, snacks, sodas, beer, wine, drinks!
 Let us know if you can come: afs@atlantafreethought.org or www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society. Or just show up!

Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

The Atlanta Science Tavern has not been meeting at Manuel's Tavern as it has closed for renovations for the past few months. However several events are listed—check the meetup page. And Manuel's just re-opened! (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 donnajgore@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 like an Alcoholics Anonymous group.

Marietta Skeptic/Humanist Meetup has various get-togethers and discussion groups. Several upcoming events. (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)

N. Georgia Free-thinkers Secularists & Humanists

Non-religious freethinking adults who, at times, feel somewhat isolated in this little corner of Georgia to forge friendships,

meet for drinks, have dinner parties, chat over coffee, practice debating skills, laugh, hold game nights, etc. (www.meetup.com/North-Gwinnett-Freethinkers-Atheist-Agnostic-Meetup)

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)

Freedom From Religion Foundation of Georgia meets on the first Sunday of every month at 2:00 at AF Hall, with a lively meet and greet starting at 1:30 pm. FFRF is back from its summer break! (www.meetup.com/Freedom-From-Religion-Foundation-of-Georgia)

GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths) meets on the second Monday of every month at 7:00 pm at UUCG, 12 Bethesda Church Road, Lawrenceville, unless otherwise indicated. Check the meetup page for more information. (www.meetup.com/brights-295)

Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter meets on Sat, Aug 13 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)

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta Atheists** on Sunday, Aug 14, at 6:00 p.m. at Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur.

(www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists)

Secular Atheist Study Scriptures (SASS), Gainesville, will meet Sat., Aug 20, 12-4, at Hall County Library, 127 Main St., NW, Gainesville. The topic will be: "Does God Exist? Ask an Atheist!" (www.meetup.com/Secular-Atheist-Study-the-Scriptures-SASS-Gainesville)

Third Sunday meetup for **Atlanta Atheists** on Aug 21, at 2:00 p.m. at Gordon Biersch, 3242 Peachtree Road NE, Atlanta, GA. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists)

Atlanta Astronomy Club is scheduled to have their general meeting on Sat. Aug 20 3-5 pm at Fernbank Science Center, 156 Heaton Park Drive, Atlanta, GA 30307. Lots more events are available so check out the website (www.atlantaastronomy.org)

Black Nonbelievers will have their general meeting 3:00 p.m. Sun. Aug 21 at Atlanta Fulton Public Library - Central Branch - 3rd Floor Conference Room, 1 Margaret Mitchell Square, Atlanta, GA. Topic:

"Black Church Inc. - Dissecting the Documentary"

Black Church, Inc. is an investigative documentary that was released in 2014. It examines the excess of the black church and its present day relationship with serving the community. The documentary compares the black church's origins to its modern day cultural relevance. The film focuses on modern mega-churches and asks questions about service vs. the extravagant lifestyles of its million dollar ministers and ministries.

This feature will be watched as a group, followed

by what is sure to be a lively discussion. BN will be located in the large meeting room, and refreshments will be provided, along with a variety of BN merchandise available for sale. (www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers)

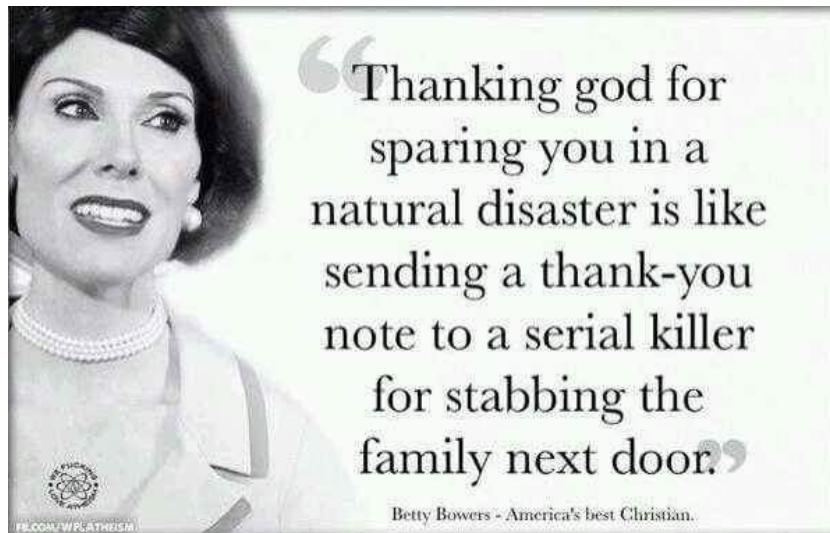
Sunday Assembly Atlanta will have a general meeting on Sunday Aug 21 at 6 p.m. at The Phillip Rush Center Meeting Annex, 328 Mell Ave NE, Atlanta. At press time, the meeting is still in the planning stages, so be sure to check back.

Assemblies, and the potlucks afterward, are open to the public and free to attend! They are an extremely active community with a large number of upcoming events including Rock Chorus, Secular Support, Mindfulness Meditation, book club, makers night out, volunteering, LGBT discussions, trivia nights, etc. (www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly)

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

Atlanta Skeptics wishes to announce that now that Manuel's Tavern has re-opened, Skeptics in the Pub programs will be starting up again soon. Be sure to check the meetup page. (www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics)

Atlanta Atheists has first Sunday meetups each month: the place varies. Check Meetup for info on the get-together. (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!

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)

Receive paper newsletter by mail (No charge for members)

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: _____

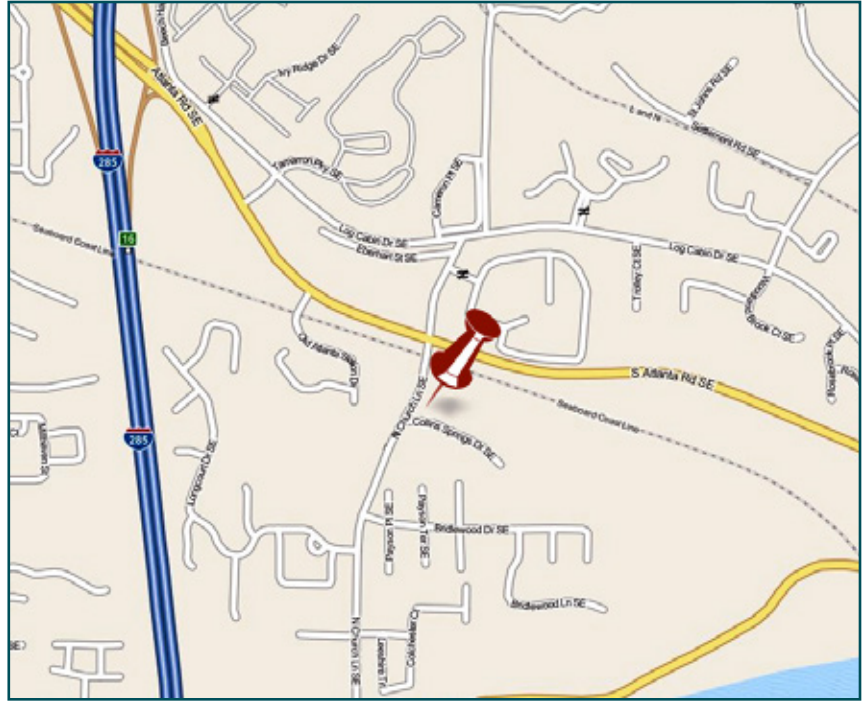
Signature/date _____

*Dare To Think
For Yourself!*



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

Steven Bell



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