

## The July AFS Meeting

### Teresa MacBain, American Atheist's "Atheist of the Year"

**Teresa MacBain** is a former Methodist pastor and the first female member of the Clergy Project to publicly 'come out' as a nonbeliever. During the 2012 American Atheist Convention, she bravely shared her true identity—a pastor who no longer believes—with the large crowd. News of the event spread, bringing worldwide attention to the Clergy Project. The following year, she was named "Atheist of the Year" for her tireless efforts to help pastors and others



Teresa MacBain

dealing with their changing beliefs. She is the Director of the Hotline Project, Communications Chair for the Reason Rally, and is writing her first book.

Teresa has spoken at conferences all across the U.S. and Canada. She's appeared on CNN's Faces of Faith, NPR's All Things Considered and The Voice Of the Nation, and The O'Reilly Factor as well as being featured in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, and many other news outlets. She has appeared in the documentary, *A Path Less Taken* and the independent film, *Hug an Atheist*.

Most importantly, Teresa is working diligently to create a future where people are not judged by what they believe. Through speeches, articles, interviews, and workshops, Teresa is dedicated to helping make it safe for people to be their true self without fear of persecution, hatred, or rejection.

Teresa lives down an Alabama dirt road with her better half, two great kids, several 'grand-kittens' a black lab, and her baby—Nicky (her Yorkie).



## Calendar

7/12 AFS Board Meeting 11:00 a.m.

7/12 Silent Auction starting 12:00 noon

7/12 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: [www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought](http://www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought)

# Silent Auction



A group of AFS members cleaned Atlanta Freethought Hall in June and found a treasure trove of unsold and valuable items that were donated for silent auctions and rummage sales.

There isn't enough space in the hall to continue storing these items, so they must go. We will have a silent auction on Sunday, July 12 at noon before the actual lecture at 1:00 p.m. Bring your money and check out what we've found! Anything unsold will be donated to a local charity.

If you bid, be sure to leave contact information in case you win a particular item but are not able to stick around to claim it, or if the original winner decides that he or she doesn't really want the item (These things have happened in the past and it makes everything difficult to sort out.)

## 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.



**Jul 12: Teresa MacBain**, American Atheists “Atheist of the Year”

**Aug 9: Todd Daniel**, Sierra Club “Population Control and Family Planning”

**Sep 13: Dr. Jill Dermyer**, Clinical Psychologist and Certified Secular Therapist in Georgia  
(Also AFS Board Nominations)

**Oct 11: Atlanta Pride**, No meeting - Go to Pride instead!

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:AFSForum-subscribe@yahoo.com). The AFS Facebook page is at [www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought](http://www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought). For information on other AFS email groups, visit the AFS website at [www.atlantafreethought.org](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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AFS Webmaster: **OPEN - PLEASE HELP!!!**  
AFS Facebook page: Laura Ross

# Resistance Is Futile: Some County Clerks Say ‘I Won’t’ To Marriage Equality

Rob Boston in Americans United for Separation of Church and State - Wall of Separation 7/2/15

<https://www.au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/resistance-is-futile-some-county-clerks-say-i-won-t-to-marriage-equality>

One week ago, the U.S. Supreme Court extended [marriage equality](#) nationwide. So where are we now?

To no one’s surprise, leaders of the Religious Right and some of their political allies have been [huffing and puffing](#). The U.S. Catholic bishops [didn’t much like it](#) either.

That was to be expected. To me, the more interesting question was how government officials would react. I don’t mean the governors of red states or would-be GOP presidents. I’m interested in the reaction of the people on the ground.

Before this decision came down, some local officials were bloviating about how they would never abide by it. Some county clerks began arguing that they have a “religious freedom” right to refuse to deal with same-sex couples.

Some are still arguing that. In Rowan County, Ky., Kim Davis, the county clerk, has been turning away same-sex couples. She tells them to go to another county.

“It’s a deep-rooted conviction; my conscience won’t allow me to do that,” the Associated Press [quoted Davis](#) as saying. “It goes against everything I hold dear, everything sacred in my life.”

Other clerks in the Bluegrass State started off talking about how they would refuse but have accepted reality and are now issuing licenses to all couples, opposite-sex and same-sex. A few others have quit rather than follow the ruling.

Katie Lang, a clerk in Hood County, Texas, is refusing to issue licenses to same-sex couples. Lang has received support from one cleric who doesn’t even live anywhere near her: Thomas J. Tobin, the Catholic bishop of Providence, R.I., [called Lang “courageous”](#) and urged others to emulate her.

In Alabama, probate judges, county-level officials who are responsible for issuing marriage licenses, are slowly coming around. But it hasn’t been easy. Americans United, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Southern Poverty Law Center and the National Center for Lesbian Rights are representing five same-sex couples in the state who were denied the right to marry prior to the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling. The groups had to go back to court and ask a federal judge to issue a new statement making it clear that these probate judges must follow the law.

U.S. District Judge Callie V.S. Granade [did so immediately](#). But, remarkably, a handful of probate judges continue to hold out. Their defiance may have consequences. AU Legal Director Ayesha N. Khan told the Montgomery Advertiser, “If any probate judges persist in violating it, we would seek a finding of contempt from the court, which would result in the imposition of fines for every day of noncompliance, an award of attorneys’ fees for litigating the motion, and any remedies the court deems appropriate.”

(If you ever wonder if your support of AU and other groups makes a difference, just read [this story](#).)

AU doesn’t intend to let up in Alabama or in other states. These people are government employees. They have two choices: follow the law and serve everyone who is legally qualified to marry or resign.

In Grenada County, Miss., Circuit Clerk Linda Barnette did [just that](#). In a letter of resignation she wrote, “The Supreme Court’s decision violates my core values as a Christian. My final authority is the Bible. I cannot in all good conscience issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples under my name because the Bible clearly teaches that homosexuality is contrary to God’s plan and purpose for marriage and family.”

While I disagree strongly with Barnette’s theological views on marriage equality, I acknowledge that she did the right thing here. Rather than try to hang on and feed at the public trough when she was not willing to serve all of the public, she quit.

Religious Right groups are [portraying these clerks](#) as martyrs and heroes. These people are neither. Rather, they are simply fundamentalist zealots who have decided that their personal biases should trump secular law. The sooner they quit, the better off we’ll all be.



## Anne Gaylor, Freedom From Religion Foundation principal founder, dies

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/23049-anne-gaylor-ffrf-principal-founder-dies>

**Anne Nicol Gaylor**, 88, the principal founder of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, died just before midnight on Sunday, June 14, at a hospice in Fitchburg, Wis. She was hospitalized May 30 after a bad fall in her independent living apartment in Madison.

Anne and her daughter, **Annie Laurie**, then a college student, formed FFRF in 1976, with an elderly Milwaukee friend, **Jon Sontarck**, also lending his name. After a series of impressive successes, Anne was asked to go national with FFRF in 1978 and served as its president until November 2004. A commemorative slideshow about Anne and FFRF can be viewed here - <http://ffrf.org/legacy/about/anne/tribute/tribute2.php>. Her biography in her daughter's anthology of women freethinkers, *Women Without Superstition: No Gods — No Masters*, can be read here - <http://ffrf.org/images/annel.png>.

A master of “sound bites” with media savvy, Anne quickly took FFRF from a tiny organization to the largest association of freethinkers (atheists and agnostics) in North America. Highlights of her freethought career include *Gaylor v. Reagan*, FFRF's suit against declaring 1983 to be “The Year of the Bible,” a litigation victory declaring Wisconsin's Good Friday holiday to be unconstitutional, and making sparks fly in interviews and national media appearances, including “The Phil Donahue Show.” She authored “Lead Us Not Into Penn Station,” a short book of provocative essays. Among her well-known aphorisms: “Nothing fails like prayer.”

“Because Anne was not afraid to make known her unorthodox views, and was plain spoken in her dissent from religion, many people were surprised to find how slender, almost frail, she was in person, how quiet and unassuming, how soft her voice, how gentle and gracious her manner. Those who knew her, and her family, found her unfailingly loving and supportive,” said Annie Laurie. “She has built a legacy, but will leave a hole that cannot be filled, as **Oliver Sacks** has noted about their generation.”

Anne lived long enough to enjoy FFRF's growth to about 23,000 members this summer and its major building expansion. The first event at Freethought Hall's new addition belatedly celebrated her 88th birthday in the just-completed Charlie Brooks Auditorium on Feb. 13.

Proving that atheists do indeed run charities, Anne also co-founded the Women's Medical Fund with Professor **Robert West**, an FFRF member, and the late Peg West in the mid-1970s. The fund is considered the oldest continuously operating abortion rights charity in the country and has served well over 20,000 indigent women in Wisconsin.

In 1989, Anne and the Women's Medical Fund successfully sued Wisconsin Attorney General **Donald Hanaway**, forcing him to remove Wisconsin's name from a friend of the court brief to the U.S. Supreme Court seeking to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Anne served as the fund's administrator, personally helping tens of thousands of women, handling their applications by phone, until retiring after nearly 40 years of volunteer work in March, following two mini-strokes. She continued to follow the news, watch “Jeopardy,” play Scrabble and read as voraciously as the limited offerings in large-print books permitted.

An entrepreneur, Anne founded the first temporary employment agency in Madison in the 1950s, when “working mothers” were a rarity. She and her husband **Paul Gaylor** co-owned the *Middleton Times-Tribune* for several years in the late 1960s. Her editorial proposing legalized abortion created such shock waves it propelled her into abortion rights activism. She founded the Wisconsin Commit-

tee to Legalize Abortion, served on the national board of NARAL (1972-78) and was active with other feminist groups.

She wrote a book *Abortion Is A Blessing* in 1975 about the battle to legalize abortion in Wisconsin. She was the first to call for the recall of Dane County Circuit Judge **Archie Simonson** when he termed rape a “normal reaction” in 1977 and wrote the official petition that led to his successful, history-making recall.

In 1994, Anne and her daughter helped spearhead the rescue of Forward, a replica of the Jean Miner sculpture displayed at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, when then-Gov. **Tommy Thompson** proposed removing it from the State Capitol grounds.

Anne was born “Lucie Anne” Nicol on Nov. 25, 1926, in rural Tomah, Wis., to **Lucie Sowle Nicol** and **Jason Theodore Nicol**. Her mother died before



she was 2 years old. A second-generation freethinker, Anne began first grade at age 4 in a one-room school, graduated from high school at 16 and worked her way through college, graduating in 1949 with a degree in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

She married Paul J. Gaylor, of Springfield, Mo., the same year. Paul, who became FFRF's chief volunteer, died in 2011. The couple's four children — **Andrew**, twins **Ian** and **Annie Laurie**, and **Jamie** — survive her. Her two granddaughters are **Sabrina Gaylor**, 25, and **Lily Gaylor**, 13. Survivors include her daughters-in-law, **Lisa Strand**, **Nancy McClements** and **Carrie Gaylor** and son-in-law **Dan Barker**, current FFRF co-president with Annie Laurie. One of her three brothers survives, **Tom Nicol**, 89, of Minnesota, a longtime FFRF member. Her dear friend since high school, **Isabel Regan**, an FFRF member, also survives her.

Her awards include 1994 Feminist of the Year from the Wisconsin chapter of the National Organization for Women, the 1985 Humanist Heroine Award of 1985 from the American Humanist Association and the Zero Population Growth Recognition Award in 1983.

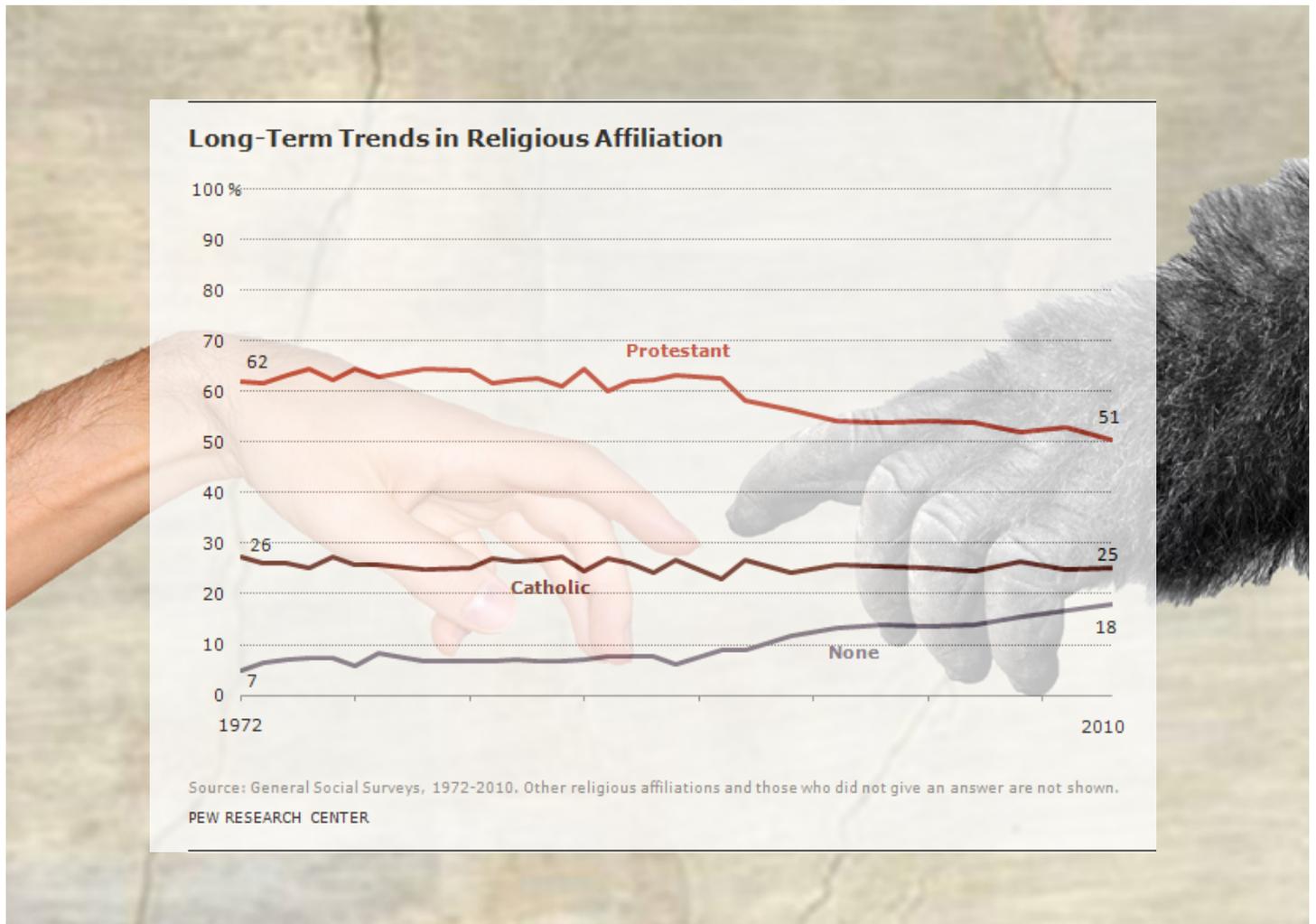
Anne's tombstone in the Nicol family plot in Sparta, Wis., will read at her

direction: "Feminist – activist – freethinker." She requested no memorial service. A full "In Memoriam" feature will appear in the August issue of *Freethought Today*, FFRF's monthly newspaper.

The dining room table on which FFRF (and several other organizations) were founded by Anne will be kept in use in the newly renovated Freethought Hall.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Women's Medical Fund, Box 248, Madison, WI 53701, <http://wmfwisconsin.org/>, or to the newly created Anne Nicol Gaylor Memorial Scholarship, to reward freethinking feminists, Freedom From Religion Foundation, Box 750, Madison, WI 53701, <http://ffrf.org/donate>.

Both groups are 501(c)(3) charities. The Women's Medical Fund is all-volunteer.



# 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](mailto:donnaigore@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.

**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/](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. ([www.fellowshipofreason.com](http://www.fellowshipofreason.com))

**Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter** meets on Sat. July 11 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.recoveringfromreligion.org). ([www.meetup.com/Recovering-From-Religion-Morrow-Chapter/](http://www.meetup.com/Recovering-From-Religion-Morrow-Chapter/))

**Atlanta Astronomy Club** will meet at Fernbank Science Center, 156 Heaton Dr, Atlanta for their July 11th meeting at 3-5 pm. For more information, check out the website ([www.atlantaastronomy.org](http://www.atlantaastronomy.org))

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta atheists** on Sunday, July 12, at 6:00 p.m. at Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. ([www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/](http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/))

**GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths)** has their monthly meeting on Monday, July 13, 6:00 p.m. at UUCG, 12 Bethesda Church Road, Lawrenceville. The topic is "Science vs. Anti-Science." Attacks on science have become more common in our society, from creationism being taught in the classroom to anti-vaccination groups. How big a problem is it? What can we do to promote science? Come discuss. ([www.meetup.com/brights-295/](http://www.meetup.com/brights-295/))

**Atlanta Skeptics** is scheduled to have its meetup on Sat. July 18 at Manuel's Tavern, 602 N Highland Ave NE, Atlanta. At presstime, the meeting had not been announced. They will be in their usual North Avenue room, from the front door turn right and head all the way back. Social hour and dinner starts at 6pm, presentation at 7pm. Be sure to check with the Meetup page. ([www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics/](http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics/))

There will be a **Third Sunday meetup for Atlanta Atheists** on Sunday, July 19, at 2:00 p.m. at Publik Draft House, 654 Peachtree Street, Atlanta. ([www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/](http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/))

**Black Nonbelievers** will meet on Sunday, July 19 3-5 p.m. at Atlanta Public Library Main Downtown Branch, 1 Margaret

Mitchell Square. This month, BN is pleased to feature **Cheryl Abram**, the author of *Firing God*, a chronicle of her journey out of religion. A native of southern Louisiana, she resides in the Washington DC area, holds Master's degrees in Social Work and Quality Systems Management, and is passionate about spreading the good news that belief is not necessary to lead a fulfilling life. *Firing God* is available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and more information is at [www.cherylabram.com](http://www.cherylabram.com). As always, there will be refreshments and BN merchandise for sale. ([www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/](http://www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/))

Another **meetup for Atlanta Atheists** is scheduled for Sun., July 26 at 4:00 p.m. at Five Seasons Brewing, 5600 Roswell Rd, Sandy Springs. ([www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists](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. July 25. The topic is "Using digital images and supercomputers to help create drought-resistant crops" given by **Alexander Bucksch**, a Research Scientist in the School of Biology and School of Interactive Computing, GA Tech.

As a consequence of climate change, regions of low soil fertility are expanding, creating a need for the development of stress tolerant food crops to meet the increasing global demand for agricultural products. A key to addressing this problem is understanding the link between how the shapes of plant organs, such as their roots, in vary in different environmental conditions and the genes responsible for

these variations.

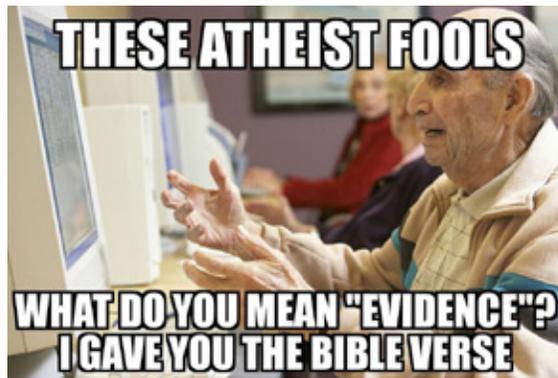
The cost is \$3.00 per non-student. See the meetup page for more info. Note that Science Tavern also has quite a few other listed events. ([www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern](http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern))

**Sunday Assembly Atlanta** will meet at First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, 470 Candler Park, Atlanta, GA 6:00 p.m. Sun, July 19. At presstime, the topic had not yet been announced, but it will be great. Don't forget our fabulous potluck following the assembly! Please bring a dish to share and a healthy appetite.

Please ask one of their volunteer helpers if you need assistance in any way. Their venue is wheelchair accessible and there is always a potluck supper afterwards.

Besides their Sunday meeting, this month, SA also has a range of other events, such as *Mindfulness Meditation*, *Transhumanist Discussion*, *What Technology Wants*, *First Sunday Small Group & Potluck*, *Artist's Meetup*, *hikes and camping*, *book clubs*, and *Help Often projects*. Please check out the meetup page for more information, and get involved! For more about the global movement, check out: [sundayassembly.com/about/](http://sundayassembly.com/about/) ([www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly/](http://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly/))

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



# 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!

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**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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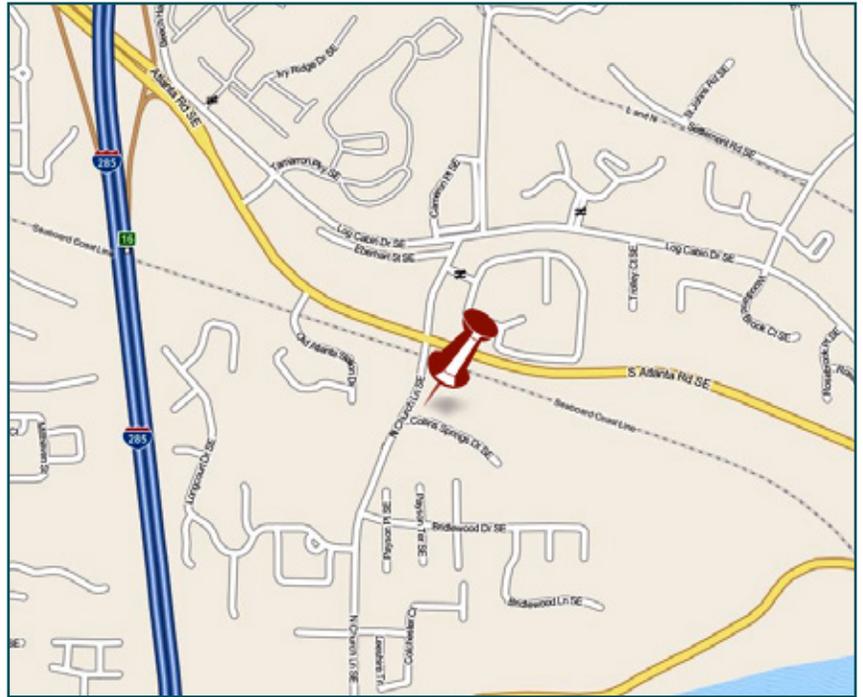
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*Dare To Think  
For Yourself!*



**The July 12th  
Meeting:  
1:00 at AF Hall,  
4775 N. Church Lane SE  
Atlanta, GA**

**This Month's Speaker:  
Teresa MacBain**



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