3 - March 2019 Number **AFS Publication - Volume**

March AFS Meeting

Mandisa Thomas of Black Nonbelievers: "We Still Have Work to Do!"

Mandisa Thomas, famous for informative, gracious, and engaging talks and as a key organizer for atheism and nonbelief, will give us a talk called

"We Still Have Work to Do!"



Mandisa Thomas

Thomas said about her talk will focus on "The atheist/secular community has expanded and made great strides in the past few years. We are seeing growing numbers of organizations, people of color, women and young people who are getting involved. Yet with these developments, there are still some improvements needed if we are to succeed."

Mandisa Thomas, a native of New York City, is the founder and President of Black Nonbelievers.

Although never formally indoctrinated into belief, Mandisa was heavily exposed to Christianity, Black Nationalism, and Islam. As a child she loved reading, and enjoyed various tales of Gods from different cultures, including Greek and Ghanaian. "Through reading these stories and being taught about other cultures at an early age, I quickly noticed that there were similarities and differences between those deities and the God of the Christian Bible. I couldn't help but wonder what made this God so special that he warrants such prevalence today," she recalls.

Mandisa has a number of media appearances to her credit, including CBS Sunday Morning, CNN.com, and Playboy, The Humanist and JET Magazine. She has been a guest on podcasts such as The Humanist Hour and Ask an Atheist, as well as the documentaries Contradiction, My Week in Atheism, and Racial Taboo. Mandisa currently serves on the Boards for American Atheists, and previously for Foundation Beyond Belief and the Secular Coalition for America. She also is an active speaker and has presented at conferences/conventions for Freedom from Religion Foundation, Secular Student Alliance, and many others.

Calendar

Mar 10 AFS Board Meeting II:00 a.m.
Mar 10 AFS General Meeting I:00 p.m.
Bring canned goods for Atlanta Food Bank!

Mar 16 FFRF/AFS Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Apr 14 Potluck Lunch 12:00 p.m.

Apr 14 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: www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought

Mandisa has been named the Freedom From Religion Foundation's Freethought Heroine for 2019. She was named the Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association's 2018 Person of the Year.

As President of Black Nonbelievers, Mandisa encourages more Blacks to come out and stand strong with their nonbelief in the face of such strong religious overtones. "The more we make our presence known, the better our chances of working together to turn around some of the disparities we face. We are NOT alone."

F.F.R.F. / A.F.S. meeting

At this month's FFRF/AFS meeting on Sat, March 16, 7-9 pm, **Freya Harris** will be doing a talk about the "Knowledge Ark" Project. We can all help to preserve the acummulated knowledge of Humanity. In our world today there are numerous information storage and retrevial systems. Many of them are not compatible with the others. Formats and system architecture are constantly changing and this has led to some serious loss of information: 8 MM movie film, VHS video cassettes, floppy discs, and Zip Drives! We need to try to collect & preserve what we can so it will not be lost to future generations.

FFRF will provide hot chocolate, coffee, and soft drinks. Please bring snacks (chips & dip, cookies, appetizers) and your favorite beverage. Doors open @ 6 PM.

For the latest in upcoming AFS events, join our Meetup group!

meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society [1]

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.

Apr 14: Scott O. Lilienfeld, PhD - "Intellectual Humility: Research, Theory, and Implications for Skepticism"

May 12: Jenny Brown of National Women's Liberation on her book Birth Strike: The Hidden Fight over Women's Work

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 calender 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 friend-ships, 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. Any who are like-minded are welcome to join us.

Because we are designated by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) educational organization, contributions to AFS are tax deductible.

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

Membership includes voting privileges and AFNews by email/USPS (indicate preferences).

Sustaining Membership is \$100.

Life Membership is \$1000.

Subscriptions only are \$30 for 12 issues.

Please make checks and money orders payable to
Atlanta Freethought Society

(or Paypal to afs@atlantafreethought.org).

Visit our Meetup page at meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society.

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

University of Phoenix (IRB@phoenix.edu), Doctoral of Management in Organizational Leadership Student Seeks Research Participants

(Second Notice-Please help this wonderful lady)

Workplace discrimination in Metro Atlanta against people who are atheist will be explored using a qualitative grounded theory study. One-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with adult, self-identified atheists living in Metro Atlanta and who have had experience with workplace discrimination because they are atheist.

Collected data will be used to develop theory about why people who are atheist decide whether or not to report workplace discrimination and to raise awareness about workplace discrimination against atheists. The developed theory may lead to an understanding about reporting decisions and may help employers better appreciate how atheists experience workplace discrimination in Metro Atlanta. Understanding and appreciation may reduce instances of discrimination through changes in employment policy and improved workplace conditions.

Your participation will involve an interview session to explore your experiences with discrimination in the workplace because you are atheist. The face-to-face interview will take place at a safe location agreed to by both of us, such as a private room at the Cobb County Library or at Starbucks. The interview will be scheduled for 45 minutes during which open-ended questions will be asked. The session will be digitally recorded (audio only), and field notes will be taken. Once the interview is transcribed, the digital recording will be deleted. Also, you will be given a chance to review the interview transcript. Taking into consideration your privacy, the information you choose to share will not be used for any other than the stated purpose.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may decline to participate or withdraw from the study, at any time, without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. The results of the study may be published, but your identity will remain confidential and your name will not be disclosed to any outside party.

Eligibility Criteria

If you are an adult, self-identified atheist who has experienced workplace discrimination while living and working in Metro Atlanta and are interested in participating in this study, please contact the researcher below. Also, if you know of anyone who is an adult, self-identified atheist who has experienced workplace discrimination while living and working in Metro Atlanta and who might be interested in participation in this study, please have them contact:

Jessica Williams 229.300.6551 WIIIams37@email.phoenix.edu



Don't forget! We are having a food drive at the March 10 meeting for Atlanta Community Food Bank. Here are the most needed items: engage.acfb.org/site/TR/FoodDrives/FoodDrives



NaNoCon is coming up, Saturday March 23 from II - 9 at Glencliff High School, I60 Antioch Pike, Nashville, TN! The Nashville Nones Convention (NaNoCon) is a secular extravaganza for those of us who, when asked what religion we prefer, select "none". This nickname Nones applies whether you're just questioning your beliefs or you're happily religion-free — NaNoCon is an event for you — friendly, affordable (tickets are \$20 to free), and fun. Let's throw a party celebrating good people like us!

This year, let's talk about the important stuff... What brings us happiness? What makes life more meaningful? What values are important to us as secular people? How can we be our best selves in this one life we know we have? Let's explore the wisdom we've learned that helps us be better human beings... Interestingly, the name of our species, homo sapiens, means "the humans who are wise." Sapiens, wise humans... A great place to start.



Do you care about science?

Do you want to help fund science education?

Do you want to support evidence-based policy?

Join the March for Science March 23!

Starts: 10am in
Historic Fourth Ward Park
Ends: 12pm at the
Atlanta Science Festival Expo in
Piedmont Park

Everyone is welcome. All you need to do is show up.

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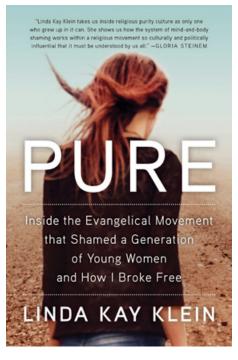
Pure: Inside the Evangelical Movement That Shamed a Generation of Young Women and How I Broke Free

by Linda Kay Klein Touchstone, New York, 2018 **Book Review by Charles Shapiro**

Telling children that sex is bad will make them believe that sex is bad. When they grow up, they will either still think that sex is bad or they will discover that you are a liar. Judging from this book, a whole subculture grew up denying this simple truth, and the result was a generational cohort of women who

even today struggle with the belief

that sex is bad.



Pure: Inside the Evangelical Movement That Shamed a **Generation of Young Women** and How I Broke Free, by Linda Kay Klein, is a well-researched, fascinating, and ultimately upsetting book about the "Purity movement", an Evangelical Christian culture built around the idea that making young people deathly afraid of sex is a great idea. With a powerful combination of personal memoir, conversations with over 100 evangelical Christians, and in-depth interviews with 20 Christian women, Klein shows both the false claims of the "Purity" movement and the lasting damage those lies did. The book focuses specifically on the consequences of the purity movement

for women, but from the glancing references to men in it it's clear that the "Purity" movement had bad effects on both sexes.

Pure begins with Klein's own story. She grew up influenced by her mother, a very religious evangelical Episcopalian. At 13, she responded to an altar call (a ceremony in which a preacher calls people from his audience to come forward to profess their faith publicly) and became a devout evangelical Christian. As she explains in the book, 'sexual purity' is a primary way that evangelical Christians differentiate themselves from the larger culture. In particular for her, that meant viewing herself and her body as a dangerous temptation which she was duty-bound to keep from men. Klein shares some horrifying anecdotes about kids being shown candy which is then thrown on the floor and kicked around to illustrate the difference between pure, virginal women and women who have been 'soiled' by premarital sex. This was apparently a regular feature of various 'abstinence based' sex education programs, possibly including ones funded by the US government.

The teachings of the Purity movement had a dramatic effect on Klein's development. As she and her fellow Evangelicals grew, they were taught to view any and all sexual contact—even the most benign and minor—as a gateway to sin and hell. For Klein, that meant being lectured by her elders on resisting temptations she wasn't even old enough to understand and, later, breaking off with boyfriends precisely because she felt attracted to them. In this environment, the most chaste kiss or hug becomes a matter to agonize over for days or weeks. According to her memoir, the church's message was

that when she was married, all of this craziness would magically fall away and she would have a wonderful physical and romantic relationship with her husband. Oddly enough, this did not happen.

Klein bolsters her memoir with some 20 detailed interviews with various peers in the evangelical movement. Among others, she talked to a woman who found she was a lesbian, a victim of incest, and several heterosexuals who were forced from the church by their anger and pain over how sex was presented to them. One of the more powerful stories in the book is of a woman raised in the Purity movement who had a wonderful, romantic one-night stand with a man immediately followed by a life-threatening allergic reaction, apparently to unprotected sex. The guy, to his credit, got her to the hospital and stayed with her through a chaotic and traumatic emergency room visit. He even saw her again (once).

Linda Klein writes a good sentence, and Pure is absorbing

and



Linda Klein

a relatively quick read. To someone far from the tribe, it appears to confirm some of the worst rumors about Christianity, in spite of Klein's emphasis that she still believes in a Christian god and in Jesus Christ. She is no longer associated with an organized church. Klein does praise some elements of the Metropolitan Christian Church and the Unitarians, who have created a sex education program which at least acknowledges that people are going to have sexual experiences, and perhaps sex, before or without marriage.

From the evidence in Pure, the best thing about 'Purity culture' is that it is self-limiting. If you really believe all that crazy stuff, you won't be having kids. The book is currently available in the Dekalb library system. It's worth picking up wherever you find it.

No Mr. Trump, the Women's Suffrage Movement Was Not Religious

By Annie Laurie Gaylor • Freethought Now!

www.patheos.com/blogs/freethoughtnow

Fact-checkers surprisingly overlooked President **Trump's** breathtakingly false claim at last month's National Prayer Breakfast that "extending the vote for women" was "led by people of faith and started in prayer."

Trump made this bald-faced lie during his remarks at the annual pander-fest the nefarious Fellowship organizes every year, an event that, unfortunately, attracts bipartisan political support.

No, Mr. Trump, the women's suffrage movement was not "led by people of faith and started in prayer." It was led by dissenters. With the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment ensuring women's right to vote fast approaching next year, it's time for the freethinking community to claim its historic role in winning women's franchise.

The very first woman in the United States — and probably the world — to publicly call for the female vote was **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, a confirmed agnostic. Stanton instigated and planned, with **Lucretia Mott, Mary Ann McClintock, Jane Hunt** and **Martha C. Wright**, the historic first women's rights convention on July 19-20, 1848. Stanton's call for



women's suffrage at the Seneca Falls Convention was considered almost too shocking to utter. The suffrage plank, though much-disputed, not only won endorsement there but would galvanize women for the next 72 years.

Although it was dubbed the "Susan B. Anthony Amendment," Stanton wrote the very text of the 19th Amendment, sadly dying long before it was ratified in 1920. It is no coincidence that it took an "infidel" like Stanton to defy the many biblical edicts to keep women in silence and subjection. The untold story of the feminist movement is that it was sparked and nurtured by religious nonconformists: the unorthodox,

the heretics, the freethinking skeptics, rationalists, agnostics and atheists. Women of today owe an enormous debt to the freethinking founders and foremothers of the women's movement who dared question and confront the religious status quo, which demanded women's servitude.

The experiences of women abolitionists — who were routinely vilified and muzzled by clergy — soon opened their eyes to the role of religion in sub-

jugating women. Stanton's own consciousness-raising moment occurred on her honeymoon in London, where she and her husband attended the 1840 World's Anti-Slavery Convention. Men voted on the basis of scriptural edicts to exclude women



from participation, relegating them to a curtained-off area. In *The History of Woman Suffrage*, Stanton recalled the religion-incited mobs that greeted women speakers: "I saw that the greatest obstacle we had to overcome was the bible. It was hurled at us on every side."

Elizabeth Cady Stanton went on to edit *The Woman's Bible* in the 1890s, then found herself repudiated by the very women's movement she had founded. Stanton wisely counseled:

"I have endeavored to dissipate these religious superstitions from the minds of women, and base their faith on science and reason, where I found for myself at least that peace and comfort I could never find in the bible and the church. . . . The less they believe, the better for their own happiness and development."

Stanton would be shaking her head over the regressive, woman-hating platform of the Christian supremacists and fundamentalists, who form President Drumpf's base and to whom he vowed at the prayer breakfast, "I will never let you down." And she would be urging on today's women to use their vote

to take back our country.

Annie Laurie
Gaylor is co-founder
and co-president of
the Freedom From
Religion Foundation,
ffrf.org the nation's
largest association of
freethinkers working to
keep state and church
separate. She is author
of the book Woe to

The Bible and the Church have been the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of women's emancipation.

-Elizabeth Cady-Stanton

the Women: The Bible Tells Me So and editor of the first anthology of women freethinkers, Women Without Superstition: No Gods — No Masters: The Collected Writings of Women Freethinkers of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

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Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

The Atlanta Science Tavern has several meetings planned. Please check meetup page for more information. (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 similar to 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 participate in social and educational activities such as dinners, lunches, coffees, outdoor recreation, discussion groups, and book clubs with topics that include science, psychology, philosophy. (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)

Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter meets monthly at Barnes & Noble Booksellers Southlake, 1939 Mount Zion Road, Morrow, GA. Join the Meetup group for more information. 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 Decatur Atheists Sun, Mar 10, 6 pm, Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists)

GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths)

will meet at 7-9 pm, Mon, Mar II at UUCG, I2 Bethesda Church Rd, Lawrenceville. The topic was not posted at press time. (www.meetup.com/brights-295)

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Freedom From Religion Foundation of Georgia and AFS will have a movie night at Atlanta Freethought Hall from 7 pm on Sat, Mar 16. The speaker is AFS member Freya Harris. (www.ffrfga.org - email is ffrfofga@gmail.com)

Black Nonbelievers will combine their General Meeting with Atlanta Freethought Society on Sun, Mar 10 1 pm at at Atlanta

Freethought Hall. See page I. www. meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers

Sunday Assembly Atlanta's upcoming assembly is Sun, Mar 17, 5:30 pm at First Existentialist Congregation, 470 Candler Park Dr NE, Atlanta. At press time the topic had not been determined.

This is also a potluck supper. All are welcome. SAA is an extremely active community with a large number of upcoming events including rock chorus, secular support, mindfulness meditation, wonder club, urban wonder, book club, volunteering, queer beyond belief group, public speaking series, etc. (www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly)

Ethical Humanists of Atlanta: Next meeting is Sun, Mar 31 12:30-2

pm at Manuel's Tavern, 603 N. Highland Ave, Atlanta. "Our shared task is to live

decently, compassionately, and caringly in the world we inhabit." Come join the conversation. Ethical living is the philosophy of making decisions for daily life which take into account ethics and moral values, particularly with regard to consumerism, sustainability, environmentalism, wildlife and animal welfare. (www.meetup.com/Ethical-Humanists-of-Atlanta)

Meetup for Atlanta Atheists Sun, Mar 24, 4 pm, Mellow Mushroom, 6200 Roswell Rd, Sandy Springs. (www.meetup.com/

Atlanta-Atheists)

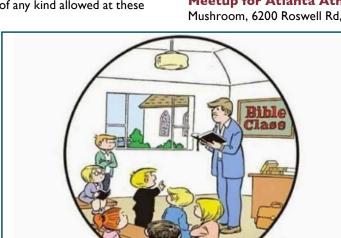
Atlanta Skeptics has

"Drinking Skeptically" on the first Friday of each month at 7 pm. As 5 Season's Brewing is now closed, they are meeting at Marlow's Tavern, 5590 Prado Pl, Sandy Springs, though location is subject to change. (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)

Fellowship of Reason is going into their 21st year and 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)



SO THE GOD WHO TEACHES US TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES WILL TORTURE HIS ENEMIES IN HELL . . . FOREVER?

Atlanta Astronomy Club will meet on the third Friday at 7:30 pm each month at Fernbank Science Center, 156 Heaton Park Dr, Atlanta, GA 30307 unless otherwise noted. Check website for more info. (www.atlantaastronomy.org)

Become a Member!

(Or renew your membership with this form or online at www.AtlantaFreethought.org!)

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

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.

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.) Paper newsletter: We encourage members to receive the newsletter by email. This avoids the printing

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

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Individual \$50	 	Name	Display dates:
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AFS Art Display Program

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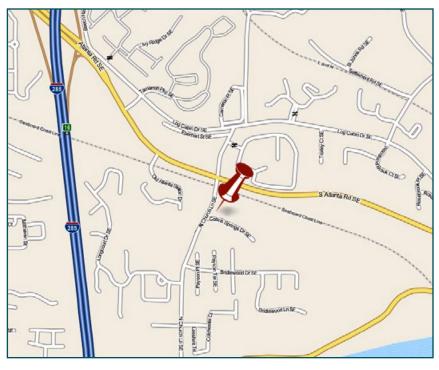
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Phone(s):Email:
Description of artwork (subject, color, dimensions, weight, frame, price, materials, other info — list on separate page if necessary):
Display dates: from to to
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ls artwork for sale? 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@atlantaf-reethought.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 posession.
Owner agrees to terms: Signature/date



March 10th meeting 1:00 at AF Hall 4775 N. Church Lane SE Atlanta, GA 30339

Mandisa Thomas



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Atlanta Freethought News
Atlanta Freethought Society
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