### **October AFS Meeting**

### Dale McGowan, "Getting Past Small Things Like God"

**Dale McGowan** is our speaker for October 14th. He will explore a fast-growing gap between the written beliefs of Christian Churches and the actual beliefs of their member. This fact has provided the non-religious with natural allies—if only

we will notice.

Dale Mc-



Gowan is author of several books related to nonreligious life. His most recent—In Faith and In Doubt: How Religious Believers and Nonbelievers Can Create

Dale McGowan

Strong Marriages and Loving Families and Sharing Reality: How to Bring Secularism and Science to an Evolving Religious World — reflect his work on building better understanding between people of different world views.

Dale was Harvard Humanist of the Year in 2008 and created and led Foundation Beyond Belief, now the world's largest humanist charity.

Be sure to come at noon for the potluck lunch in the newly re-roofed pavilion! Thank you Steve Yothment, Dennis Martin, and Mark Banks!

### The October Potluck

Before the October 14th meeting we will have a Potluck Lunch in our newly re-roofed pavilion, starting at noon. Join AFS members and guests for some good food and great socializing. Please bring food according to the first letter of your last name:

A-G: Bring a side dish H-P: Bring a main dish Q-Z: Bring a desert

AFS will provide drinks, plates and silverware.

### **Calendar**

Oct 14 Potluck lunch 12:00 p.m.
Oct 14 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.
Oct 20 FFRF/AFS Movie Night 7:00 p.m.
Nov II AFS Board Meeting II:00 a.m.
Nov II AFS General Meeting I: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



### Freedom From Religion Foundation-GA and AFS joint movie night

On Saturday, October 20th at 7:00 p.m. FFRF and AFS invite you to view a documentary called "Merchants of Doubt." This film is about how megacorporations pay scientists to create a campaign of misinformation/disinformation and doubt about important scientific issues. They then, in collusion with industry lobbyists and politicians, use this campaign to obstruct needed regulations, public policy, and laws to protect our citizens. The film starts with the tobacco industry & concludes with climate change denial. We will then follow with a discussion on the subject.

FFRF will provide coffee & soft drinks. Please bring snacks (chips & dip, cookies, appetizers) and your favorite beverage.

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.

### Nov II: Jonathan Burman, "Overcoming the Allergy to Truth"

Dec 9: Nick Fish, President, American Atheists

Jan 13: TBA

Feb 10: TBA

Mar 10: TBA

### **AFS Email List**

The AFS Announcements email list provides subscribers with reminders and updates on AFS activities. Send an email to AFS-Announce-subscribe@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.

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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.

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

Send E-mail to afs@atlantafreethought.org.

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### The AFS Library

By Dennis Martin



Atlanta Freethought Society recently received a generous donation of books from **Robert Collins**, all fairly recent titles. I agreed to oversee re-vamping the library and the library space in the back of AF Hall. The books are organized in the following sections, alphabetical by author/editor within each section. Also shown is the number of titles in each.

- 116 Atheism/Humanism/Religious Criticism
- 32 Philosophy
- 74 Natural Sciences
- 30 Psychology, Health, Abortion, Euthanasia
- 27 Social, Church & State, General History
- 33 Other Non-fiction, Humor & Fiction
- 29 For & About Children
- <u>71</u> Myths, Religion, History of Religion

412

- 135+ Monographs & Pamphlets
- 75+ DVDs & CDs
- 16+ Audiotapes
- 79+ VHS tapes

A shelf order list of all of these manuscripts is available in the library. A list can also be emailed to any AFS member. See any Board member. To check out a book, leave book title, your name, and either a phone or email address on the list in the library. If you would like to donate books to AFS, there is a location in the library. Books that aren't used by the library will not be returned. They will be traded for books that the library can use.

I'd like to encourage you to use the AFS Library. We have many books by the Four Horseman of the New Atheism – Dawkins, Hitchens, Dennett, and Harris. We have lots of books on evolution (in the Science section), including some books refuting evolution (in the Religion section). Joe Lieberman's book *The Gift of Rest* (2011) looks interesting, if you can ignore the religion parts. There are several books on how to raise freethought children, as well as books for children that teach humanist values.

Sometimes I forget how humorous freethought

writing can be. We have books from Mark Twain (1880s) and Ambrose Bierce's The Devils' Dictionary (1911) to Penn Jillette's God No! Signs You Already May Be An Atheist (2011). And don't miss The Two Kings: Jesus and Elvis. (I laughed out loud several times.)

There are books on the Jonestown disaster, UFO investigations, and how people are manipulated by church and media. Other books vary from Ballen's Terrorists in Love: True Life Stories of Islamic Radicals (2011) to MacIver's Kill the Stupid and Other Musings (2017). There's an array of books on the separation of church and state, including two by our own Ed and Michael Buckner.

Our largest section is Atheism, Humanism, and Religious Criticism. I'm guessing we have every book ever published by Prometheus Books. Many authors have spoken at Atlanta Freethought Society: McGowan, Barker, Buckner, McKown, Parsons, Whitehead, and others. There are several books on contradictions in various scriptures, and a couple of books on the X-rated sections of the Bible. Recent books include Boston's Taking Liberties (2014), Ehrman's Jesus Interrupted (2010), Murphy's The Everyday Atheist (2013), Wenke's You've Got to be Kidding (2012), and Mnookin's The Panic Virus (2011).

See you in the stacks . . . .



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### In The Religious Right's Bizarro World, Brett Kavanaugh Is The Victim

### By Rob Boston/Wall of Separation Blog

www.au.org

When we last left the Religious Right, its leaders were huffing and puffing and threatening the Republican Party leadership with the political equivalent of eternal damnation if they failed to get **Brett Kavanaugh** on the Supreme Court. One thing they were not doing was showing any concern or sympathy for **Prof. Christine Blasey Ford** or any of the other women who have courageously come forward with their own stories of sexual assault in the wake of her going public.

Since then, I am sorry to report, things have only gotten worse.

Let's start with **Jerry Falwell Jr.**, perhaps the biggest of the **President Donald Trump's** Religious Right sycophants, who in a tweet called on conservative Christians to stop electing "nice guys" and go with more street fighters like Trump.

Jerry Falwell @jerry-FalwellJr: "Conservatives & Christians need to stop electing "nice guys". They might make great Christian leaders but the US needs street fighters like @ realDonaldTrump at every level of government blc the liberal fascists Dems are playing for keeps & many Repub leaders are a bunch of wimps!"

Jerry Falwell (a) @JerryFalwellJr

Conservatives & Christians need to stop electing "nice guys". They might make great Christian leaders but the US needs street fighters like @realDonaldTrump at every level of government b/c the liberal fascists Dems are playing for keeps & many Repub leaders are a bunch of wimps!

9:50 PM - Sep 28, 2018

© 66.4K Q 42.4K people are talking about this

Somehow, I'm having a hard time imaging Jesus offering the same advice, but let's put that aside for a moment. I've not heard one peep from Falwell about Ford's ordeal, and his call for more obnoxious people in government is hardly a balm to other women who have been victimized. (By the way, who are these "nice guys" right-wing Christians supposedly love to elect? **U.S.** 

Sen. Lindsey Graham, perhaps? Maybe U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz?)

Next out of the gate is the always-appalling **Franklin Graham,** whose tweet bemoaned that the hearing "ruined [Kavanaugh's] reputation and devastated his family." Graham said not one word about what Ford has been going through. Nothing about the death threats, the fact that she had to flee her home, split up her family and hire security guards.



He's oblivious to the anxiety she faced as she appeared before a panel composed of the some of the most powerful men on the planet, men who hired an aggressive professional prosecutor to cross-examine her.

**Franklin Graham** @Franklin\_Graham: "Yesterday's hearing was an embarrassment. Let's pray that our country will do better than this. Judge Brett Kavanaugh said this has ruined his reputation and devastated his family. Unfortunately, I'm afraid that is exactly what the minority leadership wanted to do."

Someone must have told Graham that he looked insensitive because a few minutes later he issued another tweet calling for prayers for all involved – first for the Kavanaughs, then for Ford and then for Judiciary Committee members. Yes, it felt perfunctory.

Then our old friend TV preacher Pat Robertson struck. Fresh off of his latest hurricane-diversion triumph – Robertson prayed that Hurricane Florence would not hit his empire in Virginia Beach, but unfortunately, he failed to use his awesome powers to send it out to sea, and the storm slammed into the Carolinas, killing 42 people and leaving thousands homeless – the volatile televangelist asked God to "throw confusion" into Kavanaugh's opponents.

He went on to rant, "The Supreme Court of the

United States is the power center of the liberal left. They have done their bidding for years and years and years, and now comes a decisive moment as to whether they will lose control of that particular body and they are putting an all-out assault to destroy the reputation of one of the finest judges in America. It is a pre-planned plot, it is unbelievable, and if anybody buys it, they'd be willing to buy the story of

the Great Pumpkin and any other myth that you can think of."

It was vintage Robertson. I have no doubt that he did manage to draw up a generous amount of confusion, but it's not afflicting the people he thinks. (A hat tip to the folks at Right Wing Watch for capturing the video.)

I just got back from a series of speaking engagements in Sarasota, Fla., and the Orlando area. At every event, I was asked questions about Kavanaugh. People were familiar with these antics by the leaders of the Religious Right and are rightly appalled by them.

I reminded people that this incident is yet another reminder of the amorality of these alleged "values voters"; it's another example of

how they'll excuse pretty much anything from this president as long as he keeps dishing out the treats. The Religious Right is salivating over the possibility of a right-wing high court giving them more power to meddle in our lives and usher in their neo-Puritan Handmaid's Tale-lite society, and they simply do not care about the human cost.

Remember that the next time you run into a moral majoritarian eager to lecture you about how everything would be great if we'd just get back to "traditional values."

### Remember, Alabama: When You Listen To Roy Moore, Bad Things Happen

### By Rob Boston/Wall of Separation Blog

www.au.org

When we last left "Ten Commandments" judge **Roy Moore**, he was licking his wounds after being defeated for a U.S. Senate seat by **Doug Jones** in Alabama.

Well, kind of. See, Moore insisted he hadn't really lost. Nefarious forces had bused people in from out of state, suppressed the vote or done something like that to cause Moore to lose. His defeat certainly wasn't because reports surfaced of him allegedly assaulting a teenage girl in the 1980s and harassing others at a mall.

Moore raised money claiming he was going to expose the plot that kept him from office, but suddenly he's gone quiet about that. Now Moore has decided on another flim-flam operation: bringing prayer back to public school football games in Alabama.

"Nobody stands up for the students of this state and we're going to do that," Moore vowed during a press conference last week. He announced that the Foundation for Moral Law, a group his wife supposedly runs, was sending memos to all Alabama school districts advising the superintendents on ways they can supposedly allow prayers before games.

It came out during his Senate campaign that Moore's foundation is little more than a grifting operation, so I'd be highly skeptical of any advice it's peddling. In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court settled this business of school-sponsored prayers before public school football games back in 2000 in a case called Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe. The high court ruled that broadcasting prayers over a loudspeaker was coercive and put a stop to it.

Moore also has a rather checkered history when it comes to following the law, to put it mildly. After Americans United and its allies successfully sued him over a Ten Commandments display at a judicial building in Montgomery in 2001, he defied the federal court's order to remove the monument. The incident led to Moore, who was then chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, being removed from that body.

For some reason, Alabama voters saw fit to return Moore to the Alabama high court in 2012. Three years later, after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld marriage equality, Moore again engaged in judicial defiance. He ordered probate judges in the state not to recognize the ruling. This stunt led to Moore's second removal from the court.

To sum up: What we have here is a man who has been accused of sexually assaulting a teenage

girl, a man who founded a charity and then used it to pay himself a handsome salary, a man who was twice removed from Alabama's highest court because he would not follow the rulings of higher courts. (Have I mentioned that he also writes really bad poetry?)

Here's a little suggestion for school superintendents in Alabama: You know that letter you just got from Roy Moore? Turn it into a paper airplane, recycle it, use it to line a birdcage, etc. Do anything but listen to it.

### Prayer at football games in Toombs Co, GA ffrf.org

The FFRF is calling timeout on a Georgia school district for its multiple violations of the U.S. Constitution. Not only are coaches and an outside pastor praying with the high school football team, religious propaganda is also being posted on its official social media.

Football coaches at Toombs County High School (located in Lyons, Ga.) have been promoting religion to students. A video posted on Facebook shows coaches making religious statements and initiating a religious chant with students after a game. In the video, each coach makes a statement before reciting the phrase, "God is good," to which the students respond: "All the time." Each coach then says, "All the time," and the students respond: "God is good." This is repeated a dozen times. A coach tells students to "know who you are and know He's given you purpose" while pointing to the sky. After each of the coaches repeat this religious chant, one of the coaches says, "Pastor Toole, pray us out." Pastor Steven Toole then leads the team in an elaborate prayer that includes the following language: "God, I thank you that I see wins every day. And God, as you work in them and you show them purpose in their lives beyond ... God, I just pray for your protection on everyone as we return home. And God, in everything that we do ... so that you receive all glory. In Jesus' name, amen."

Toole is apparently a local pastor who the school employs to pray with and promote religion to the team.

"The Supreme Court has continually struck down school-sponsored prayer in public schools," FFRF Legal Fellow **Chris Line** writes to Toombs County Schools Superintendent **Barry Waller**. "It is unconstitutional for public school employees to participate in the religious activities of their students. Federal courts have held that even a public school coach's silent participation in student prayer circles is unconstitutional."

The district's employment of a chaplain is an additional constitutional violation. Public schools cannot appoint or employ a chaplain, seek out a spiritual leader for students, or agree to have a volunteer teach other people's children that character centers on religious belief, because public schools may not advance or promote religion. The school's endorsement of Christianity is particularly troubling for those parents and students who are nonreligious or not Christian.

The Toombs County High School football program also regularly posts religious messages and bible verses on its official Twitter account, another unlawful and disturbing practice.

It is well settled that public schools may not advance, prefer or promote religion. Advancing, preferring and promoting religion is exactly what a school district does when its employees post religious messages on official public social media pages. These proselytizing messages give the appearance of district endorsement of religion over nonreligion, and Christianity over all other faiths.

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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 gettogethers 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)

**GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths)** 

will meet at 7-9 pm, Mon. Oct 8 at UUCG, 12 Bethesda Church Rd, Lawrenceville. The topic is "Dialogues with Believers" - As nonbelievers (new and old), what's the best way to talk to believers and to either challenge their beliefs or find common ground? How is it different when it's a family member as opposed to a stranger making conversation? (www.meetup.com/brights-295)

There will be a **meetup for Decatur Atheists** Sun, Oct 14, 6 pm, Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists)

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. This month's meeting will be Oct 19. Check website for more info. (www.atlantaastronomy.org)

Freedom From Religion Foundation of Georgia will have a movie night/meeting on Sat, Oct 20, at Atlanta

Freethought Hall from 7-9 pm. See page I for more info. (www.ffrfga.org - email is ffrfofga@gmail.com)

**Sunday Assembly Atlanta**'s upcoming assembly will be held on Sun. Oct 21, 5:30 pm at First Existentialist Congregation, 470 Candler Park Dr NE, Atlanta. At press time the subject had not yet been announced.

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, makers night out, volunteering, queer beyond belief group, public speaking series, trivia nights, etc. (www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly)

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta Atheists** Sun, Oct 28, 4 pm, 5 Seasons Brewing, 5600 Roswell Rd, Prado Shopping Center, Sandy Springs. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists)

**Ethical Humanists of Atlanta:** Next meeting is Sun, Oct 28 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.

Any recently made decision have you questioning its ethical or moral value?

Maybe you're teetering or avoiding making a choice due to uncertainty.

There's no guarantee questions will be answered, nor an action plan fully evolved, but trust good conversation to occur. Come and let's learn from one another; building forward one step at a time. (www.meetup.com/

Was that today?

Oh, crap!

Ethical-Humanists-of-Atlanta)

Atlanta Skeptics has "Drinking Skeptically" on the first Friday of each month. 5 Seasons Brewing, Prado Shopping Center, 5600 Roswell Rd, Sandy Springs. (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** 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)

**Black Nonbelievers** will have a BN general meeting on Sun, Oct 2I from 3-5pm at The Bakery ATL, 825 Warner St. Atlanta, inside the boardroom, which is to the left once you come in through the main entrance. The topic is still to be determined at presstime, but will be updated on Meetup shortly. (www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers)

## 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.

send it to you at no additional charge. (You can also pick up a paper newsletter at any AFS meeting.) and mailing expenses. But if you really want the paper version of the newsletter, just let us know and we will 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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## **AFS Art Display Program**

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

Person or entity displaying art:

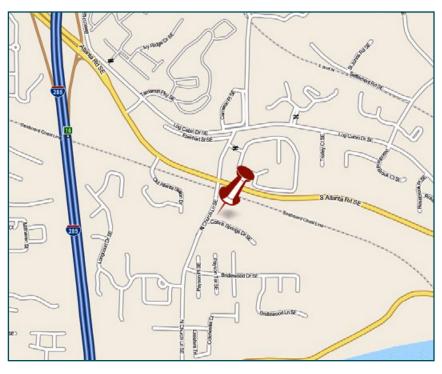
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s artwork for sale? Yes / No \$Upon sale wner agrees to pay AFS a 33.3% fee.
Ferms: All artwork displays will be submitted to Atlanta reethought Society art committee for approval (afs@atlantaf-eethought.org). Installation & removal will be done by artist/wner overseen by AFS art committee. Damage to building will be repaired by artist/owner. The owner assumes all risk for rtwork at all times. AFS will not be responsible for any damage or loss while artwork is in our posession.
Owner agrees to terms: ignature/date



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

### **Dale McGowan**

ALSO POTLUCK LUNCH!



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