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NEWS RELEASE—for immediate release

Massimo! Author, author!
The Relevance of Philosophy:
A Systematic Answer to the Ultimate Annoying Questions
(The AFS Zoom Program on Sunday, 10 April)

(Atlanta) **Laura Ross**, President of the Atlanta Freethought Society, announced today that AFS will welcome back “another popular repeat speaker, a nationally highly regarded and quite important one, for our Zoom meeting for April, **Dr. (thrice over: three doctorates in two broad subjects—biology and philosophy—and in two different languages—Italian and English) Massimo Pigliucci.**” He will address “The Relevance of Philosophy: A Systematic Answer to the Ultimate Annoying Questions.”

Massimo Pigliucci is a prolific writer, with dozens of significant publications to his credit, including *Tales of the Rational: Skeptical Essays About Nature and Science* (Freethought Press, 2000)—one of AFS’s own book publications. He is also a blogger, podcaster, as well as the K.D. Irani Professor of Philosophy at the City College of New York. His academic work is in evolutionary biology, philosophy of science, the nature of pseudoscience, and practical philosophy. His other books include *How to Be a Stoic: Using Ancient Philosophy to Live a Modern Life* (Basic Books) and *Nonsense on Stilts: How to Tell Science from Bunk* (University of Chicago Press). His forthcoming book is *The Quest for Character: What the Story of Socrates and Alcibiades Teaches Us about Our Search for Good Leaders* (Basic Books). More by Massimo at <http://philosophyasawayoflife.blog/>.

For this talk/discussion, Pigliucci says, “I find it profoundly disturbing that I live in an anti-intellectual society where people simply cannot fathom the value of philosophical inquiry and study. Even more disturbing is the fact that scoff and contempt often originate from within the academy, particularly from a number of my colleagues in the sciences, even though they have never bothered to read a technical paper in philosophy and therefore literally do not know what they are talking about. Elementary training in philosophy is, I think, crucial for a

functional democracy, as it teaches our citizens how to think while at the same time acquainting them with some of the most influential ideas in the history of human kind. Studying philosophy is also a proven gateway to very practical things, such as entrance to law, business or medical school. And philosophy has given humanity some of its profoundest achievements, from logic itself to the concepts of democracy, women rights, and animal rights. So in this talk I will finally address some of the most annoying questions I regularly get, such as: What is philosophy? What has philosophy ever done for humanity? What is philosophy good for, in practice? Who did I ever hear of that actually studied philosophy? What have philosophers ever written that is worth reading? How come I never hear about philosophy in the press?

Expect to learn much more about philosophy and therefore about pretty much everything that matters. There will be time for some questions—though maybe avoid the annoying ones.

Ross also said, “We’re always proud to provide great programs for our members and visitors, and this will be another example of that. It’ll be great to have Dr. Pigliucci back after a long absence.”

The Pigliucci program, free and open to the public, will be preceded by a few minutes of social distanced-socializing starting about 12:30 P.M. EDT in US, for any interested. The program will start at about **1 P.M.** (EDT) on Sunday, 10 April, via Zoom. “We welcome those who are not freethinkers but who just want to know more about human thought in general. All freethinkers are of course welcome—and we hope that they will decide to join as members in due course,” said Ross. Details (the same as last month) on the Zoom meeting number, etc. can be had from Pigliucci or from any member of the AFS Board or from Program Chair Ed Buckner.

The Atlanta Freethought Society is a member-run (all volunteer) non-profit, 501(c)(3) educational organization. The freethought hall that AFS owns and restored was a church from 1866, when it was built, until 2001. The hall will be available for rent, post-Covid-19, at a modest fee on request. Regular AFS meetings, free and open to the public, are held on the second Sunday afternoon of every month, with a variety of other events and activities each month as well. The regular meeting usually features a speaker (often nationally known) on religion, freethought, science, history, or some combination of these. AFS has published, under the auspices of its press—Freethought Press—seven books (including one by Pigliucci) and dozens of calendars, brochures, and flyers. AFS has often led protests against church-state violations.

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For more information, on this program or on AFS more generally, please visit the AFS website, www.atlantafreethought.org, or call either of these AFS leaders:

Laura Ross, AFS President, (404) 825-0258
Ed Buckner, Program Chair, (678) 662-3857

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