

## Erika B F Tattnall, “Is Blood Thicker than Water?”

On Sunday, May 8, at 1:00 pm via Zoom, AFS will welcome a globally highly regarded, well-known, and quite important speaker, **Erika B.F. Tattnall**. Tattnall will address “Is Blood Thicker than Water?”

Erika B. F. Tattnall (hereafter, “EBFT”) is a collateral and intellectual descendant of Commodore **Josiah Tattnall III**. EBFT, a 1967 graduate of Hypatia College (a division of Epicurus University), famous for scholarship on international diplomacy, is in constant demand as a speaker. EBFT, from Fantastika, Bulgaria, is camera shy and adamantly declines the application of pronouns. AFS member **Dr. Keith Nalumango** counts EBFT as a good friend.

Commodore Tattnall proclaimed on 25 June 1859 (the very same year *On the Origin of Species* was published) that blood *is* thicker and that that made all the difference. The O’Neill twins may be recalled.



**Commodore Tattnall**

The implications of this for Ukrainian refugees will be discussed.

A declaration about human rights by **George Washington** will likely be briefly analyzed.

An LTE from 23/03/90 about EBFT will be discussed, as will the estimates for numbers and extent of slavery and the intense interest (years after the fact) in a history book published back in 2003, or at least intense interest in a 2004 university note about the book.

Race and religion and perhaps humanism will come under scrutiny.

Considerable opportunity for audience participation is assured.

The EBFT program, free and open to the public, will be preceded by a few minutes of social distanced socializing starting about 12:30 P.M., for

## Calendar

Jun 12	General Meeting on Zoom	1 pm
Jul 10	General Meeting on Zoom	1 pm
Aug 14	General Meeting on Zoom	1 pm

All events are via Zoom unless noted and are subject to change.

any interested. The program will start at about 1 P.M. (ET in US) on Sunday, 8 May, via Zoom. We welcome those who are not freethinkers but who just want to know more about what very diverse religions have in common in their histories. All freethinkers are of course welcome—and we hope that they will decide to join as members in due course. See below for the link to attend this meeting online—we look forward to seeing you!

### AFS May Meeting May 8, 2022 1:00-2:30 PM (EST)

To join Zoom meeting go to this link:  
[us02web.zoom.us/j/89006560911](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89006560911)

### Life Celebration for Gean Taylor Sunday, May 29 11-2

Please join family, friends and close associates as we celebrate the life of **Gean Taylor** (1954-2022). Come share some of your favorite memories, and hear about the adventurous, and daring life of this wonderful man.

There will be a brief and informal program, followed by food, music, and fellowship. Safety protocols will be observed.

If you cannot attend in person, please tune in via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85454890230>.

Space is limited at the venue, so please RSVP on **Facebook** as soon as you can!!!

Gean Taylor’s Life Celebration is brought to you by the **Atlanta Freethought Society**, **Black Nonbelievers**, and the **Taylor and Townsley families**.

**For the latest in upcoming AFS events, join our Meetup group!**  
[meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society](https://www.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 presented online due to global pandemic (see link on page 1). Programs start at 1:00 PM, but feel free to arrive at 12:30 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.

8 May	Erika B F Tattnell
12 June	Phil Gorski
10 July	Carlos Hoyt
14 Aug	Nick Fish
11 Sept	Ben Burgis, "Christopher Hitchens: What He Got Right, How He Went Wrong, and Why He Still Matters"
9 Oct	Massimo Pigliucci, "Skepticism as a Philosophy of Life"
13 Nov	Valerie Tarico

### AFS Email List

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To keep up to date on the Atlanta Freethought Society calendar of upcoming events, please join our Meetup group: [meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society](https://meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society).

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*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. 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.

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### Atlanta Freethought News

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## Guest commentary: Tripoli treaty shows US was founded as a secular state

By Ed Buckner

Galveston County Texas - *The Daily News* 04/19/21

The best evidence that the US is a free country, not a Christian nation, is our god-and-religion-free Constitution. But a US treaty, the Treaty with Tripoli, is also clear evidence. It's of little importance as a legal document (it was superseded nine years later by another treaty). The relevant language in the treaty, written in 1796 and ratified in 1797, is here:



Ed Buckner

**Article II.** As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion.—as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility of Musselmen [Muslims],—and as the said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mehomitan [Muslim] nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.

The treaty was between Tripoli (now Libya) and the US in late 1796 at the very end of the second term of **George Washington**. It grew out of negotiations between Tripoli and the US and was intended by the Americans to protect American shipping interests and American seamen, then and for some years before that under serious attacks and threats, partly grounded in religion, that included selling seamen into slavery.

The reference to Tripoli in the famous line of the Marine Hymn, “From the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli,” refers to Marine participation in the war against the pirates of the Barbary States (1801–1805) in **Jefferson’s** administration.

Objections to the treaty as evidence of the non-Christian nature of the American government have been raised, but all fail.

The current importance of the treaty with the famous language is, it must be remembered, not formal or legal, but historical. The “*not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion*” wording merely reinforces what the US Constitution had established—a secular basis for government.

President **John Adams**, newly inaugurated, sent the treaty to the Senate in May 1797. Copies were printed for the Senate. The Committee reported favorably to the Senate a week later and on June 7, 1797, the Senate voted to ratify, unanimously. There was no debate or dissension in the Senate on the treaty.

Adams signed and proclaimed the treaty to the nation on June 10, 1797 (225 years ago).

The wording of the treaty, including its now famous Article II, was printed in the newspapers of the day. Originals of some of those newspapers and copies of others can be read at the US Library of Congress. The treaty was short—only three or four pages long in most texts—so the famous Article II was not likely to have been overlooked. Searches of the newspapers in the days and weeks after the treaty language was published revealed no record of any public dispute or protest over Article II.

There was no confusion then about whether the American government is and should be secular.

*Ed Buckner lives in Atlanta; he grew up in League City.*

## Nonreligious Women Face Greater Discrimination, Seek Community

atheists.org

On March 22nd, the secular organizations American Atheists and Secular Woman released *Nonreligious Women in America*, a report based on a survey of 13,522 nonreligious women, drawn from a larger survey of nearly 34,000 nonreligious people living in America, organized by a team of researchers at Strength in Numbers Consulting Group. The *Nonreligious Women in America* report raises awareness about nonreligious women, highlights their priorities and needs, and proposes solutions to reduce the stigma and discrimination they face. The full report can be read [here](#).

“Nonreligious women are a growing and politically engaged population, yet they still too often face ridicule, negative stereotypes, and marginalization with their families, in broader society, and even within atheist communities,” said **Alison Gill**, Vice President for Legal and Policy, who authored the report. “Discrimination isolates secular women and contributes to economic insecurity. It must end.”

Compared to other participants, women reported more discrimination because of their non-religious beliefs in nearly every area of their lives. A significantly higher proportion of nonreligious women had negative experiences in reproductive care (18.9% versus 9.5%), and this discrimination was markedly higher in very religious communities than less religious communities (25.3% versus 15.8%). Participants who experienced discrimination related to reproductive care were 44.9% more likely than other participants to screen positive for depression.

“Atheism is a politically active movement. We must engage more to protect abortion access,” said **Stephanie Zvan** of Secular Women, the only organization exclusively dedicated to representing the interests of nonreligious women. “Women-led groups have already been very active on reproductive rights. Yet other groups have questioned whether religious attacks on abortion should even be considered a secular issue.”

The report found that nonreligious women prioritize policy issues that directly impact them, their families, and their communities. Women participants were more likely than other participants to consider access to abortion and contraception a top-three priority issue (48.0% versus 31.4%) and to consider it a “very important” issue (93.4% versus 81.5%). Nonreligious women were also more likely than other participants to

Secular Women cont. pg 5



# Once Again, David Barton Proves He's The True Home Of The Whopper

au.org

By Rob Boston - Wall of Separation Blog

Our friends at Right Wing Watch have caught Christian nation advocate and pseudo-historian **David Barton** spreading another myth from the founding era.

In March, Barton spoke in Memphis at a luncheon for pastors sponsored by Bott Radio Network. There he spun a creative tale about how the U.S. Constitution was ratified. According to Barton, it had to be approved first by churches.

"Once they got the Constitution finished – it's not the document of the nation yet – you have to have it ratified," Barton told the pastors. "You've got to send it to the 13 states and get it ratified. And so, they sent it to the 13 states. If you're going to receive a government document and have a debate over whether to ratify it, where are you going to send it? The state capitol? No, it's not the way it happened. North Carolina, Connecticut, Massachusetts – the ratification conventions were held in churches. They sent it to churches to ratify the Constitution? Yeah."

Barton added, "Forty-four of the constitutional ratification delegates were ministers of the gospel. So again, preachers were highly, highly involved."

As Kyle Mantyla points out, this is all baloney. What really happened is that in a handful of states, ratifying conventions were held in churches simply because they were the only buildings large enough to accommodate everyone.

Were 44 ministers involved? Sure. But what Barton omits is that more than 1,750 people took part in state ratifying conventions. As Mantyla notes, this means ministers accounted for less than 3% of the total number of delegates. (A shout-out to secularist blogger **Hemant Mehta**, whose [take on this](#) reminds us of Barton's long litany of falsehoods.)

Here's an additional factor to consider: Some conservative ministers and their allies *hated* the Constitution and attacked it after ratification. They disliked the document's secular nature and were furious that our governing charter contained no references to God or Jesus Christ and that it failed to give any preference to Christianity.

In Boston, an anonymous writer [assailed language at the end of Article VI](#) of the Constitution, which bans religious tests for public office. "All religion is expressly rejected, from the Constitution," he carped. "Was there ever any State or kingdom, that could subsist, without adopting some system of religion?" (Gee, that argument sounds familiar – because we're still hearing it today.)

The Constitution was ratified in spite of, not thanks to, Christian nationalists of the 18th century. Will Barton ever tell that story? Don't hold your breath.

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# Fox News Personalities Call For Abolishing Public Education To Resolve Case Over Football Coach's Prayers

au.org

By Rob Boston - Wall of Separation Blog

On April 25, Americans United Legal Director **Richard B. Katskee** argued *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* before the U.S. Supreme Court. The case concerns **Joe Kennedy**, a high school football coach in Bremerton, Wash., who insists he has the right to pray with players and students on the 50-yard-line after games. AU is representing the school district, which wants to ensure that no young person is subjected to unwanted forms of religious pressure from a coach, an authority figure who has the power to determine whether players spend the game running on the field or sitting on the bench.

We never expected opponents of public education to agree with us on this case. One of the reasons many of them despise America's public schools is that our schools are by law secular and welcome children of all faiths as well as those who come from nonreligious families.

But their argument took an even more alarming turn recently on the Fox News Channel, where hosts and guests on the show "Outnumbered" openly called for abolishing public schools in light of the *Kennedy* case.

Kennedy's attorneys have constructed a false narrative about the case, insisting that his prayers were solitary and private. Ample evidence shows that this isn't true, but the Fox News personalities (naturally) swallowed it entirely and spent several minutes regurgitating Kennedy's lawyers' spin as facts.

But they didn't stop there. According to the Fox crew, what happened to Kennedy is another sign that it's time to ditch public education altogether.

"This will be a very important case for religious liberty, but also may be a great time in our country's history where we rethink whether or not we have public schools," remarked panelist **Lisa Kennedy Montgomery**, an anti-government talking head. "Maybe we should not have the government involved in education at all so parents and teachers and administrators can make those decisions themselves instead of having the government impose it on them because it is the public school aspect of this that is creating the legal challenge."

Another panelist, **Harris Faulkner**, noted that not everyone can afford private school and opined, "Each state allots some money so they would get that money, I would assume," which led panelist **Kayleigh McEnany** to say, "You could do vouchers. That's what Florida did."

Montgomery, who often goes by the name "Kennedy," later issued a tweet citing the Bremerton case as justification for "getting government out of schools." She included a link to a Fox News segment during which several panelists promoted that view. **Jeff Deist** of the libertarian Mises Institute put it bluntly: "It's too late. Public schools are too far gone. You don't have time to wait for the Supreme Court. ... You don't have time to wait for vouchers or school choice. Just get your kids out." (**Christopher Hahn**, a progressive podcaster and attorney, was repeatedly shouted down when he tried to defend public schools.)

Public schools serve 90% of America's children. They serve them no matter their race, socio-economic status or religious views. The American people value public schools and know that this system is one of our nation's greatest accomplishments and vital to our nation's success. Yet some on the far right would blithely toss it aside in the name of ideology – and they're not above distorting the *Kennedy v. Bremerton* case to mislead Americans in pursuit of that extreme goal.

## Secular Women from page 3

consider as "very important" issues: comprehensive and medically accurate sex education (90.8% versus 81.9%), LGBTQ equality (88.8% versus 76.8%), and protecting the environment against climate change (88.5% and 82.4%).

"The secular community must actively include women and listen to what they have to say," said **Debbie Goddard**, Vice President for Programs at American Atheists. "Already, the stereotype that only men are atheists leaves nonreligious women feeling invisible, ignored, and unlikely to want to participate in the secular community. Atheist groups can engage and retain women members by prioritizing their needs."

Despite the challenges secular women face in atheist spaces, they are far more likely than other nonreligious people to seek out and value membership in local and national groups. Women participants were more likely than other participants to be a member of a local secular organization (25.0% versus 20.1%). The report found that membership in national or local secular organizations was an important protective factor against depression. Women who were members of national or local organizations were about one-third less likely than nonmembers to be depressed. In very religious areas, where nonreligious people are subject to greater stigma, women were more than 1.5 times as likely to be members of local organizations in less religious communities (31.0% versus 22.0%).

"Access to the secular community can protect nonreligious women. However, secular groups drive women away when they fail to clearly prohibit unwanted sexual attention, sexist humor, or even inappropriate physical contact," said Zvan. "In order to create welcoming spaces for nonreligious women, organizations must establish standards of behavior and ensure that consequences for violations don't fall on victims."

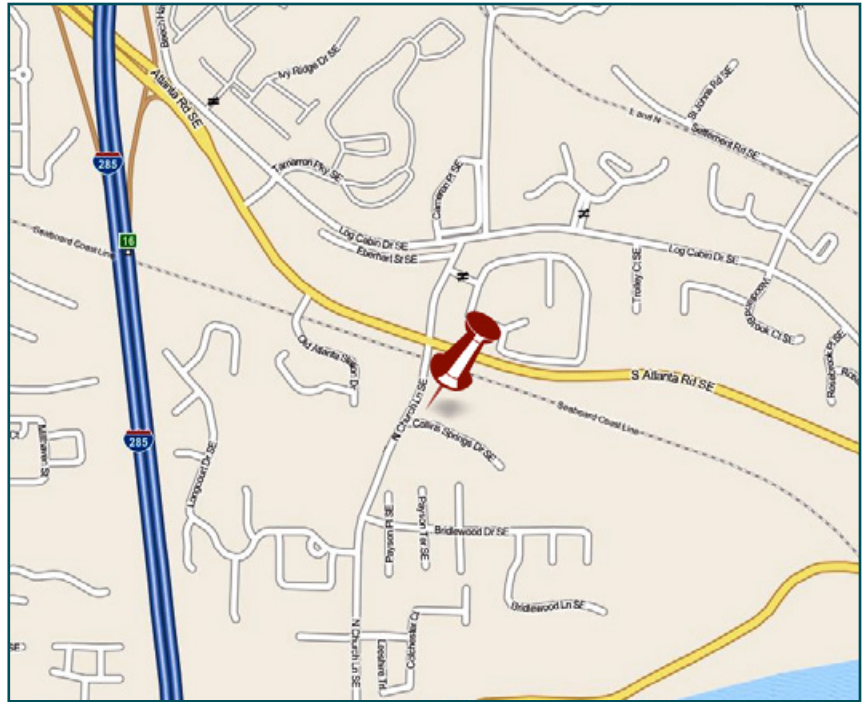
The report includes a number of recommendations for nonreligious community groups: disrupting sexism and creating welcoming environments for women, prioritizing inclusion of nonreligious women in activities and opportunities for engagement, and recognizing that protecting access to abortion and reproductive services and other issues that disparately impact nonreligious women are secular issues.

*Dare To Think  
For Yourself!*



**AF Hall  
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**Erika B F Tattnall  
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(via Zoom)**



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