

## Kenan Holland: Cooking and Freethinking

AFS has the joy and pleasure to have an Atlanta activist, freethinker, and great cook, Kenan Holland, of Vinings Central, talk with us. The talk, as Kenan Holland described it: "Cooking is one of my great passions, second only to my love for my husband, Mike May. But Mike and I share an abiding interest in free-thinking, church-state matters, and religious liberty. What does cooking have to do with freethinking? Come Sunday and find out!" (See Kenan's article on page 3 to find out more about him and his life!)



**Kenan Holland**

We most often hear talks on religion, freethought, philosophy, and science, but we're delighted that we'll learn something about cooking as well as freethinking, from someone who understands both. Having great programs like this one for our members and visitors always makes us proud, and we expect to continue doing that through the rest of 2023 and beyond.

The Holland program, free and open to the public, will be preceded by a potluck lunch starting around 11:30 for those interested and at the hall. The program will start at about 1 P.M. (EDT) on Sunday, 12 November, via Zoom and at AFS Hall. We welcome those who are not freethinkers but who just want to know more about cooking, freethought, secular humanism, and church & state. All freethinkers are of course welcome—and we hope that they will decide to join as members in due course. If you are joining us via Zoom, the meeting link is below:

**AFS November 12 Meeting  
Nov 12, 2023 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)  
Also at Atlanta Freethought Hall

### Calendar

Nov 12	Potluck Live	11:30 am
Nov 12	General Meeting Live/Online	1 pm
Dec 10	Board Meeting Live/Online	11 am
Dec 10	General Meeting Social (Live)	1 pm

All events are combo Live/Zoom unless noted and are subject to change.



Atlanta Freethought Society will run our Board Elections a little late this year due to intense life events for the President and the Secretary knocking a month out of ballot preparation time. But the good news is, you can still go ahead and renew your membership for 2024 and the ballots will be sent to you in December in time for the January meeting! To vote, you'll need to be a paid member in good standing. It's also not too late to run as a candidate for the Board of Directors. Just let a Board member know.

### The November Potluck

Before the Nov 12th meeting we will have a Potluck Lunch, starting at 11:30. 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 dessert**

AFS will provide drinks, plates and silverware.



For the latest in upcoming AFS events, join our Meetup group!  
[meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society](https://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 and also presented online (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. Announced events are subject to change.



12 Nov	Kenan Holland on Freethinking and Cooking
10 Dec	No speaker — social gathering only
14 Jan	TBA
11 Feb	Antonio Daza
10 Mar	TBA
14 Apr	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@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 [facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought](https://facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought). For calendar information on AFS activities, please join the [Meetup group](#). The AFS website is [www.atlantafreethought.org](http://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](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 An AFS Publication

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### Atlanta Freethought News

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Membership in AFS is \$50/year per person,  
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Membership includes voting privileges and  
AFNews by email/USPS (indicate preferences).

Sustaining Membership is \$100.

Life Membership is \$1000.

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# My “Chopped” Story in a Nutshell: My Wildest Dreams Have Come True

by Kenan Holland

And I couldn't have done it without the love and support of my family and friends.

On June 6th at 8 pm Eastern Daylight Time (US) “my” episode of “Chopped” on the Food Network—this episode titled “Fanatics”—will [did] air, and I'm over the moon.

I've always been a true foodie—to eat, to cook, to present, to have people I care about eat food I made up for them—has long thrilled me.



I would post my recipes on my social media and that's where my family-to-be at the Food Network found me. They saw my love of food and wanted to know my story about my late brother Akeyy (who I grew up watching “Chopped” with) and when he passed away five years ago it really sent me into a very dark place.

I felt the better half of me was forever gone. But with the love and support of my husband (love you, Mike, for always standing behind me—see pics), family, and friends, I channeled my sadness into the joy of cooking (which would have made my brother proud).

Yep—that's Mike back there!

And the producers of the show gave me the greatest gift ever and that was to dedicate my episode to my late brother Akeyy Holland.

May all my friends enjoy the show on June 6th and my food many times to come.



Akeyy, my mom, and me in happier days



You can tell which one is me by the apron—and that's Mackenzie's mom (Carol)—like a second Mom to me, Mike, and Mackenzie (my best friend)

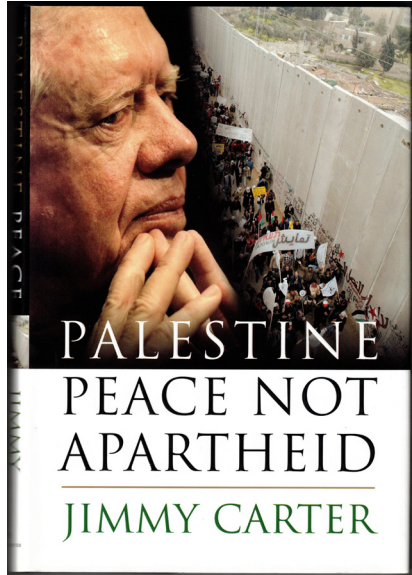
**Assertions on the Middle East**  
by Ed Buckner • Letters to a Free Country

Following is a series of assertions (numbered for the convenience of anyone who wants to comment, ask a question, or argue about any of them; these are not necessarily in any meaningful order). I present these as things I *think* are true, based on what I know now. I don't insist that all are indisputably true or that I necessarily have all the facts.

My purpose in doing this is just to write down where my views are right now, so I can come back to them, revise them, or point others to them—and not to pretend to be wise or well informed about matters on which I'm not.

I am not Jewish or Muslim, Israeli, Palestinian, Arab, or in any sense a Middle Easterner. I am not religious—Christian, Jewish, Islamic, or “spiritual,” etc.

I've never set foot in the Middle East except for three or four hours when I wandered around the port area in Port Said, Egypt, in 1966 (I think it was) when I was young, naive, and absurdly ill-informed. And the ship I came in on—a commercial tanker carrying grain to India—went through the Suez Canal thereafter and a month or so later came back through it. (This was not long before war led Egypt to close the Suez Canal for 7 or 8 years.)



If you review these assertions of mine, you will not then know what should be done—I don't know and I'm not even hopeful. Some of these are probably contradictory to others of these—I don't claim to be consistent and coherent. As long as anyone is civil about it, I'm willing to entertain followup comments, questions, and argument.

Former President Jimmy Carter wrote, in his 2006 book (I'm reading it but nowhere near finished and I'm not yet persuaded that “Apartheid” in the title is reasonable), *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid*—

There are two interrelated obstacles to permanent peace in the Middle East:

- 1 Some Israelis believe they have the right to confiscate and colonize Palestinian land and try to justify the sustained subjugation and persecution of increasingly hopeless and aggravated Palestinians and;
- 2 Some Palestinians react by honoring suicide bombers as martyrs to be rewarded in heaven and consider the killing of Israelis as victories.
- 3 The murderous, barbaric, up close and personal, gleeful attacks by Hamas terrorists on Israelis on 7 October, killing 1400 and taking hundreds of hostages seem to be well

**Middle East Continued pg. 5**

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**Sustaining memberships:** One person can become a sustaining member for \$100 per year.

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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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## Middle East Continued from pg. 4

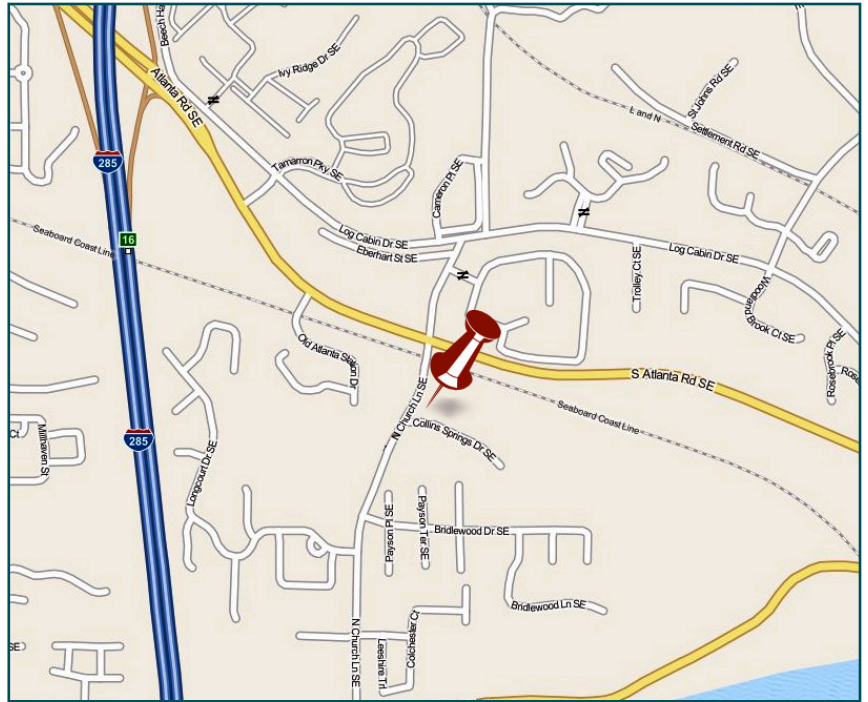
- documented, including by the terrorists themselves.
- 4 **Benjamin Netanyahu** and the current Israeli government have been quite wrong about many things, including regarding Palestinians—but have not even come close to doing things that justify the 7 October atrocities.
  - 5 Accurate information of any kind in war time is hard to come by; great skepticism about it is warranted. In nations like Israel or the US, where there is an independent press, information is at least more likely to be trustworthy.
  - 6 An example of untrustworthy information came when Israel was accused of bombing a hospital in Gaza and killing over 500 people there. The bombing turned out to be—according to multiple sources and reliable information—of a hospital parking lot, with the deaths and horrific injuries of far fewer people, and by a Hamas rocket gone astray, not by an Israeli targeting of a hospital. Not only was there grievously incorrect information put out—it was accepted without proper skepticism by governments all over that are unsympathetic to Israel.
  - 7 Freedom of conscience/religious liberty for every individual human being is important and no perceived religious truth justifies denying individuals that freedom.
  - 8 Freedom of conscience is at significantly greater risk in any theocratic or faith-based society. And this is so whether the religion in question is Christian, Muslim, or Jewish. It is certainly much more likely to be at risk in undemocratic nations.
  - 8 I prefer to live in and support a society with liberal/Enlightenment values: equality for men and women, gay rights, civil rights for all racial or ethnic or religious or irreligious individuals, political equality regardless of wealth or income, and free expression. And I am unwilling to be completely tolerant and supportive of societies where intolerance is the official norm.
  - 9 I am utterly unconvinced by any arguments about Israeli or Palestinian claims to the territory in dispute based on what God or Allah or Jehovah is supposed to have declared.
  - 10 Who has occupied territory for more generations or by more people for more years or “originally” is not the basis of any persuasive claim to me.
  - 11 Since the US sends a great deal of money to Israel for military use, the US bears significant responsibility for how it is used; Israel nevertheless bears ultimate responsibility and has ultimate right/duty to use it well.
  - 12 Since Iran and other nations send a great deal of money to Hamas for military use, Iran and these other nations bear significant responsibility for how it is used; Hamas nevertheless bears ultimate responsibility and has ultimate right/duty to use it well.
  - 13 Hamas should have used the many millions it has gotten in foreign aid more to provide for the needs and legitimate wants of the people of Gaza and less (none) for rockets and offensive weaponry.
  - 14 It is not necessarily antisemitic to criticize **Netanyahu** and the Israeli government—but it can be.
  - 15 Kidnapping people to use as hostages is an evil, immoral act of war.
  - 16 For the relatives and friends of those killed, raped, or captured on 7 October, hatred and desire for revenge seem inevitable, whether wise or not.
  - 17 For the relatives and friends of people, especially children, killed or maimed by bombing of Gaza, hatred and desire for revenge seem inevitable, whether wise or not.
  - 18 Israel has a legitimate case for attempting to destroy Hamas, especially given the terrorism and official promise of more terrorism from Hamas against Israelis.
  - 19 Those who declare that Israel may be creating more terrorists than they destroy by what the Israeli Defense Force is doing in Gaza have a point.
  - 20 Those who declare that Israel should not bomb Gaza, killing civilians, in their pursuit of Hamas terrorists should suggest plausible alternatives.
  - 21 No one should use inhumane weaponry like rockets armed with white phosphorus.
  - 22 Israeli settlers in the West Bank should be effectively restrained by the government of Israel from appropriating Palestinian land or attacking Palestinians.
  - 23 Dignity matters (see my earlier Letter on “Dignity”). Assaulting or undermining dignity, as Israel has to the Palestinians, is dangerous and unjust.
  - 24 Trust matters. If Hamas attacked on 7 October with apparent detailed knowledge in advance of Israeli homes and events, no one should be surprised if Israelis are now more suspicious of Palestinians who live and work in Israel, whether or not the particular Palestinians are trustworthy. If Palestinian schools teach Palestinian children that hating Jews is righteous and necessary, no one should be surprised if Jewish Israelis are less trusting of Palestinians and more likely to harbor possibly unreasonable hatred and mistrust of all Palestinians.
  - 25 Significant numbers and proportions of Israeli citizens and members of the Knesset (parliament) are not Jewish. Jews make up the majority of Israel’s population at 73.5% (about 7 million individuals). The Arab community, spanning various religions excluding Judaism, accounts for 21% (around 2 million). An additional 5.5% (roughly 500,000 individuals) are classified as “others.” There have been Arabs in the Knesset since the first elections to it in 1949.
  - 26 Calling Israel no better than the Nazis in 1930s Germany is absurd, ahistorical, and antisemitic.
  - 27 I don’t know **Jack Arthurton** of Roswell, Georgia, but I agree with this from his letter to the editor in Sunday’s (5 November) *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*—  
*If you are attacking American Jews or American Muslims, not only physically but verbally, you are evil.*

*Dare To Think  
For Yourself!*



**AF Hall  
4775 N. Church Lane SE  
Atlanta, GA 30339**

**Kenan Holland  
11/12/23 1:00 pm EST  
(also via Zoom)**



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