

# The Atheist Voice

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE METROPLEX ATHEISTS

JULY 2009, VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1

PUBLIC RELATIONS

## Billboards take center stage

Donations from individual members of Metroplex Atheists, Dallas-Plano Atheist Meetup Group and the United Coalition of Reason paid for the billboards placed in Dallas and Fort Worth.

They were sponsored by the Dallas Fort Worth Coalition of Reason (DFWCoR), an organization which seeks to promote the growth, visibility and acceptance of nontheists by facilitating communication and cooperative action among atheists, agnostics, humanists, freethinkers, secularists, skeptics and other like-minded individuals and organizations.



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## Not So Intelligent Designer

Lester Goldstein

**T**he notion of American Exceptionalism has received abundant press these past eight years, but what makes for this exceptionalism is not clear. We can be sure that the boast is not because the United States leads all industrialized nations in the acceptance of the biblical story of God's creation. Nor is it likely to be based on the majority's rejection of scientific evidence showing that all living things, including humans, have evolved from earlier forms of life.

Despite many setbacks—legal, intellectual, and even

theological—the believers' devotion to creationism refuses to die. The latest resuscitation involves disguising creationism under a cloak named Intelligent Design (ID), sometimes called, by ill-mannered critics, white collar creationism or creationism in a cheap tuxedo.

You may recall that Intelligent Designists (IDists) do not deny that some modest changes in living things might have occurred over time. But they assert that many features of living creatures, e.g., the human eye, are so complex that they could not have evolved by natural selection of random mutational changes, the view of Charles Darwin and millions of later sci-

entists. So IDists say, unburdened with any evidence, there had to have been a supernatural Intelligent Designer (IDer). If that's true, you would expect to see flawless design—but you'd be very disappointed.

Looking solely at humans, it is painfully evident that the IDer either flunked out of or went to a wretched engineering school. How else can you account for the presence of undeveloped mammary glands on males? Or, for the existence of a common throat passage used for ingesting food and for breathing, thereby creating a substantial risk of choking?

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# Genesis Revisited: A Scientific Creation Story

Copyright 2007 Michael Shermer, courtesy of [www.skeptic.com](http://www.skeptic.com) and [www.michaelshermer.com](http://www.michaelshermer.com)

In the beginning — specifically on October 23, 4004 B.C., at noon — out of quantum foam fluctuation God created the Big Bang, followed by cosmological inflation and an expanding universe. And darkness was upon the face of the deep, so He commanded hydrogen atoms (which He created from Quarks) to fuse and become helium atoms and in the process release energy in the form of light. And the light maker he called the sun, and the process He called fusion. And He saw the light was good because now He could see what He was doing, so He created Earth. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

And God said, Let there be lots of fusion light makers in the sky. Some of these fusion makers He grouped into collections He called galaxies, and these appeared to be millions and even billions of light years from Earth, which would mean that they were created before the first creation in 4004 B.C. This

was confusing, so God created tired light, and the creation story was preserved. And created He many wondrous splendors such as Red Giants, White Dwarfs, Quasars, Pulsars, Supernova, Worm Holes, and even Black Holes out of which nothing can escape. But since God cannot be constrained by nothing, He created Hawking radiation through which information can escape from Black Holes. This made God even more tired than tired light, and the evening and the morning were the second day.

And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the continents drift apart by plate tectonics. He decreed sea floor spreading would create zones of emergence, and He caused subduction zones to build mountains and cause earthquakes. In weak points in the crust God created volcanic islands, where the next day He would place organisms that were similar to but different from their relatives on the continents,

so that still later created creatures called humans would mistake them for evolved descendants created by adaptive radiation. And the evening and the morning were the third day. And God saw that the land was barren, so He created animals bearing their own kind, declaring Thou shalt not evolve into new species, and thy equilibrium shall not be punctuated. And God placed into the rocks, fossils that appeared older than 4004 B.C. that were similar to but different from living creatures. And the sequence resembled descent with modification. And the evening and morning were the fourth day.

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath life, the fishes. And God created great whales whose skeletal structure and physiology were homologous with the land mammals he would create later that day. God then brought forth abundantly all creatures, great

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## Metroplex Atheists New Business Meeting Location

**METROPLEX ATHEISTS HAS MOVED THE TIME OF ITS REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING TO 1:00 P.M. THE MEETINGS ARE STILL HELD ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH.**

**THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED AT:**

**J. Gilligans Bar & Grill  
400 E. Abrams  
Arlington, Texas**

## Do you know of any Church/State separation violations?

Some things to look for are the posting of the ten commandment in public (government) buildings including public school buildings, city parks, municipal buildings, and libraries.

To voice your concerns, please email the Metroplex Atheist Director:  
[director@metroplexatheists.org](mailto:director@metroplexatheists.org)

# METROPLEX ATHEISTS

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## About

Metroplex Atheists is affiliated with both American Atheists and Atheist Alliance International and is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

## Chairman’s Corner

It’s been over a year since we’ve published a newsletter. Much has happened since then.

First is this newsletter itself, the restart of a noble tradition by the hard work of our new editor, Randy Word. We congratulate Randy on this success and look forward to many engaging newsletters in the future.

We also have had a restart of another noble tradition, our website. Many thanks to John Hattan for his past work to establish and maintain that tradition. We also owe a large debt of gratitude to Chris Abichandani for creating a new and exciting website that will keep our online presence informative and interesting. It was good when it went up in October and it gets better all the time. Thank you, Chris, for your continuing hard work.

Another noteworthy achievement this year was our billboard campaign. Members of Metroplex Atheists and the Dallas-Plano Atheist Meetup Group contributed to the billboards and attracted a further donation by the newly forming national group, the United Coalition of Reason. Thanks are due to the man from the Dallas-Plano group who had an idea for a billboard in Dallas that blossomed into the reality of billboards on both sides of the Metroplex. And thanks are due to the many contributors in both organizations who contributed their personal money to make this dream a reality.

Related to the billboards is Metroplex Atheists’ lead role in the creation of the Dallas Fort Worth Coalition of Reason. DFWCoR has only helped put up the billboards so far but will continue to bring together nontheist groups throughout the Metroplex.

Thanks to Will Crowley for organizing the DFWCoR telephone number and to Angel Crowley for being the voice of DFWCoR. We have had several successful outings this year. Randy Word’s Winter Solstice Celebration continues to be a resounding success every year. Thanks to Randy for making this fabulous outing possible.

Our canoeing organizer, Shawn Ruzek, has put together several lively trips and the last one down the Brazos included a large and fun group of splashers.

We now have a Meetup group thanks to Linda Sharlow letting us tag along on her Dallas-Plano group. And many thanks are also due to Will Crowley for his continuing work to organize and maintain the notices.

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## To Lead or Not to Lead – That Is The Question

By: The Freethinkers

The church ladies at book club are all a-twitter about The Shack.

“Shack? What is this shack business?” queries Ms. Free-thinker.

“It blasphemes the Lord!” they exclaim almost in unison.

Blasphemy? Mercy! Ms. Freethinker is like a hunting dog on point in a meadow full of nervous quail. It appears that the church ladies want The Shack by W. Paul Young to be reviewed at book club, but none will lead the discussion. “My pastor wouldn’t approve,” sniffs one old Christian blue-hair.

Ms. F is intrigued. She is the only non-believer in book club and deep in the closet about it with these church ladies for obvious reasons. With no pastor or God to please, Ms. F probes further for details. The bravest soul in the group offers

this tidbit: A man travels to a shack deep in the Oregon woods where his daughter was murdered four years prior. Inside the shack, God appears to the man in the form of...drum roll please...Aunt Jemima!

Yes brethren, you read that correctly. Not to give away the plot, but it seems that the book’s protagonist has so much wounded soul baggage that he can only handle a supernatural appearance in the form of a large jolly black mammy cooking up soul food in a warm kitchen surrounded by yummy odors. Clearly, Ms. F must read this book.

She logs onto the Big City library home page & searches for The Shack. There are twenty copies. All are out. She places an electronic hold on the next available copy. Yikes! There are 32 people in front of her on the waiting list. She picks up the phone & calls a

book club matron who has a home library that just may be the 8<sup>th</sup> wonder of the world. Yes, Ms. F may borrow the ma-tron’s copy of The Shack.

Two days later, Ms. F cracks open the tome & reads the For-ward. Seems innocuous enough; how bad could it be? A few chapters later, she hates the writer’s sloppy handling of the daughter’s murder. After all, Ms. F is no stranger to the rules of writing fiction. Then the weird stuff at the shack begins. The freaky description of the Trinity & all the Christian double talk served up by Mammy Pancakes and ladled onto the book’s un-suspecting protagonist prompts Ms. F to RSVP for the weekly Metroplex Atheist meet-up on Wednesdays. After reading this, she needs a drink with her non-theist buds and will gladly drive 60 miles to do just that.

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### *Genesis from page 2*

and small, declaring that micro-evolution was permitted, but not macroevolution. And God said, “Natura non facit saltum” — Nature shall not make leaps. And the evening and morning were the fifth day.

And God created the pongidids and hominids with 98 percent genetic similarity, naming two of them Adam and Eve. In the book in which God explained how He did all this, in one chapter He said he created Adam and Eve together out of the dust at the same time, but in another chapter He said He created Adam first, then later created Eve out of one of Adam’s ribs. This caused confusion in the valley of the shadow of

doubt, so God created theologians to sort it out.

And in the ground placed He in abundance teeth, jaws, skulls, and pelvises of transitional fossils from pre-Adamite creatures. One chosen as his special creation He named Lucy, who could walk upright like a human but had a small brain like an ape. And God realized this too was confusing, so he created paleoanthropologists to figure it out.

Just as He was finishing up the loose ends of the creation God realized that Adam’s immediate descendants would not understand inflationary cosmology, global general relativity, quantum mechanics, astrophysics, biochemistry, paleontology, and evolutionary biology, so he

created creation myths. But there were so many creation stories throughout the world God realized this too was confusing, so created He anthropologists and mythologists.

By now the valley of the shadow of doubt was overrun-neth with skepticism, so God became angry, so angry that God lost His temper and cursed the first humans, telling them to go forth and multiply themselves (but not in those words). But the humans took God literally and now there are six billion of them. And the evening and morning were the sixth day.

By now God was tired, so He proclaimed, “Thank me its Friday,” and He made the week-end. And that was good.

# A quick guide to being an atheist volunteer



It is an incredible feeling to be able to provide skills and abilities for the greater good of an atheist community. If you've ever wondered how you can volunteer with an atheist organization, here's a quick guide that will open your eyes to a whole new world of possibilities. If you have free time there's an opportunity for you to help, all you have.

A quick guide to get you started to do is reach out and grab it. This guide is not inclusive of all opportunities out there, but a mere few to get you started.

## **Locate your local organization**

You should already be part of your local organization, there is

no reason you should be "homeless". All big cities have an organization and/or groups. When it comes to smaller cities and towns, you would have to dig deeper. Being part of any local organization or a group is a good way of socializing with like-minded people. They won't judge your beliefs, they won't laugh at you, they won't ask you a million times why humans stopped evolving, and they won't tell you to accept late JC as your personal savior. On the contrary, they will extend their hand and welcome you. Local groups usually provide support, help when you need it, they hold meetings, invite speakers, and even travel. Depending on how big and involved your organization is they even might do activism in your city. For example, NYC Atheists does tabling all summer long where people can ask questions and sometimes come to a realization that they are not alone.

There are many sources that you can use to locate an atheist organization or a group in your

area. Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science compiled and maintains a very comprehensive list of local organizations all over the world. American Atheists have an affiliate program with many affiliate organizations all over the US. Atheist Alliance International maintains Freethought Directory, which has many groups listed all over the world as well as their member organizations built on democratic principles. If you can't find, or even if you did, local organization or a group don't forget to visit Meetup.com. It is an incredible resource that you can use to network and socialize on any given topic. Lastly, a new social networking site exclusively for non-believers can help you locate local atheists. Atheist Nexus, almost one year old, is enjoyed by over 8,000 members – all non-believers!

If, with God's help, you were unable to find any local organiza-

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## **Chairman from page 3**

We had a very successful Garage Sale thanks to members who contributed unwanted items and many thanks to Ron Steinke for allowing us to store the items in his garage and use his house for the sale.

Our group has grown in the year since our last newsletter. Our Wednesday evening "prayer meetings" are exciting events that attract new people almost every week. The feedback I have received tells me that we are playing an important role in the "coming out" of many atheists in the Metroplex.

Let's have another great year.

Terry McDonald

## **FAMOUS QUOTES**

### **Thomas Jefferson**

*"I have recently been examining all the known superstitions of the world, and do not find in our particular superstition (Christianity) one redeeming feature. They are all alike founded on fables and mythology."*

## Volunteer from page 5

tions or groups why not make one? Do you really think you're the only one in your town? Think again! If you have some money to spare, consider starting Meetup group. Usually there are people waiting on a group to be started, and once someone takes initiative to do so – they join. Let's say you're tight on the money in this turbulent economy, then start Atheist Nexus group and use your local Craigslist to attract atheists. There are many ways you can do it, but someone needs to make that first step.

### National atheist organizations

You've found your local organization, but you have more time on your hands and you want to find some more volunteer opportunities. National atheist organizations are an excellent source of volunteer opportunities. This guide will cover only several national organizations that do offer volunteer opportunities, all organizations mentioned are non-profit unless otherwise mentioned.

### Atheist Alliance International

AAI has a bold vision, To transform society into one that supports and respects a worldview based on the values of reason, empiricism and naturalism, and respects and protects the separation of religion and government.

What is even more fascinating AAI is run by volunteer staff. Headquartered on the world wide web, the world is its playground. AAI offers, probably, the most comprehensive list of opportunities for volunteers. From web design to marketing, from press releases to strategic planning, from convention planning

to writing for Secular Nation magazine. The experience you get being part of AAI transcends that of mere volunteering. It is an experience that you can apply directly to your job and career. Employers are always looking for volunteer work on the resume. Why not make yours stand out with job related volunteering with a non-profit international organization? If you're a student this is a great experience, just like an internship. Anyone can be part of AAI and help out - be it an hour per day or an hour per week. Visit AAI website to learn more about awesome opportunities they offer.

### Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science

You already know who Richard Dawkins is, and you should be familiar with his website and forum. The foundation is always looking for volunteers. It releases many videos and DVDs of Richard Dawkins and other prominent scientists. Well, if you ever saw any of them with subtitles in other languages it was done by volunteers. They are always looking for bilingual individuals who would be able to translate transcripts. But don't be discouraged, if you don't speak anything but English there's still an opportunity for you with RDFRS. Stop by their website and check out what you can do to help.

### Reason Project

You might not be familiar with Reason Project. It is a new non-profit foundation that is "*devoted to spreading scientific knowledge and secular values in society,*" according to the Project's website. It was founded by Sam and Annaka Harris. You can fill out volunteer application and as

the foundation grows it will call on you when the need arises. Stop by their website and check it out, you will find it very interesting and informative.

### American Atheists

American Atheists are always on the look out for violations of church and state (SOCAS) in your state. If you ever feel that your state violated any principals of SOCAS, contact American Atheists and they will help you evaluate the situation.

### Secular Coalition for America

You should already know what SCA does, they're the ones who lobby for your rights in DC. Due to the work they do, SCA is not a non-profit organization but an advocacy organization. If you are interested in volunteering in anyway with SCA drop them an email and they will let you know if they need your help.



AP Photo/Dusan Vranic

### Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers

Are you in the military or a veteran? Well, don't forget to visit MAAF website and find out how you can help them protect nontheists who face inequality and violation of their rights while serving in the military. MAAF is always looking for volunteers to help, especially if you're still serving and can be a point of contact on your base and in your region.

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## *Designer from page 1*

How come the IDer granted (or burdened) males with lots of facial hair and deprived females of the same? Was it (we don't know the gender, if any, of the great Designer, which IDists say is un-

known) in a bad mood when it decided to have newborns come through a pelvic birth canal that would ensure much agony for the mother? Was it being sadistic when it created the menstrual cycle?

It seems evident that something went askew when the IDer drew plans for insertion of wisdom teeth into jaws ill-constructed for that many teeth. Engineering professors likely would be greatly embarrassed if one of their students designed a lower back with a bend that allows for an upright stance (and much grief for many), while the pelvis slants forward as it does for knuckle dragging primates. Which primates, by the way, scientists have shown—believe it or not!—are descended from an ancestor common to apes and humans.

Males feel particularly put upon by the design that leads, during in utero development, to testicles descending through the abdominal wall and coming to rest outside the body. The result of this unfortunate strategy is to make men particularly susceptible to hernias and their testicles vulnerable to physical assault.

One has to wonder what the IDer had in mind when it introduced into humans the useless appendix and tonsils, both of which serve only as potential reservoirs of infection in adults. Surely not to generate work for surgeons who remove unneeded organs that become inflamed? The bible doesn't tell us

that our ancestors made a living climbing trees, so just what is the function of our toenails? To create artistic opportunities for pedicurists?

If there was one design plan that seemed destined to earn an A+, it is that for the human immune system. This system normally does a splendid job of attacking and destroying foreign invaders, such as bacteria and viruses, that enter our bodies. This elegant machinery must be able to recognize its own body, to ensure that it doesn't treat its own tissues as foreign and destroy itself. But the IDer blew it again; for many individuals the system does turn on itself and produces such autoimmune diseases as lupus, multiple sclerosis, and rheumatoid arthritis. Lastly for now (one could fill volumes with descriptions of bungled designs in humans and other creatures), it's worth considering the human eye, which IDists claim is so extremely complex that it could not be a product of evolution, but had to be created all at once by a supernatural designer. The interior of the adult eye is filled with what is called the vitreous gel. Yet, clinical scientists note that a simple salt solution would serve as well—or better. Better, because the vitreous gel can often change in ways that disrupt features of the inner eye, such as the retina, that can lead to seriously impaired vision. That would not happen if the ocular interior were filled with a saline solution. What was the great IDer thinking? Those who doubt that the great IDer could be so incompetent or so sadistic may wonder how so many blunders could have occurred. Perhaps they can be comforted with the knowledge that in the course of over three billion years of evolu-

tion of living creatures by natural selection, favored organisms acquired characteristics that benefited them and their descendants and thereby enhanced their survival. In the course of such selection, other traits that were no longer needed might be carried along so long as they were not harmful. Later some of those traits might prove to be undesirable burdens, but not necessarily so burdensome as to lead to the extinction of the species that carried them. Hence, the persistence of the kinds of "blunders" described above.

Oh, by the way, why did the Intelligent Designer allow random mutations of DNA (its fundamental plan) to occur and thereby allow its wondrous designs to become muddled and usually harmful?

*Lester Goldstein is a Lifetime Member and Board Member of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. Prof. Goldstein was born in 1924, served in the U.S. Army from March 1943 to April 1946, and received a B.A. degree from Brooklyn College in 1948, thanks to the GI bill. He attended graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, again with the help of the G.I. Bill, but also with fellowship support. He received a Ph.D. in biology in 1953, and spent 1953-1959 doing research at the University of California at Berkeley and San Francisco. In 1959, he returned to the University of Pennsylvania to replace his dissertation professor in the Biology Department. In 1967, he was appointed professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and in 1982, was appointed director of the School of Biological Sciences, University of Kentucky. He retired in 1992 and has lived in Seattle ever since.*

## "Controversial" Sign Recognizes Humanity of Atheists; Christians Protest

By [Austin Cline](#), About.com Guide to Atheism since 1998

Monday July 6, 2009

In Fort Lauderdale, the Florida Atheist and Secular Humanist Society has paid for a billboard stating: "Being a good person doesn't require God. Don't believe in God? You're not alone." There shouldn't be anything the least bit controversial or problematic about this, a simple statement that atheists are not alone and atheists aren't bad people.

There are Christians in Fort Lauderdale, however, for whom such simple statements are just

horrible — and the presence of such a billboard near Christians is utterly intolerable. It's not merely "controversial" to say that atheists exist and that atheists can be good people, but it is in fact an insult to these Christians to learn that they don't have a lock on morality and that there might be atheists lurking in their midst. How do they manage to sleep through the night now?

*The community said there are two main problems: The business right next to the billboard is owned by born-again Christians, and the billboard is right in the*

*middle of an African-American community.*

*After seeing the controversial billboard, Big Mama brought her students out to protest it. "Nothing else matters, but that sign needs to come down. In the name of Jesus," Big Mama chanted as she led her students in protest.*

*Neighboring businesses has called to try to get the sign removed. "Muslim, Jew, Hindu, Christian, whoever you are, we all believe in a spiritual higher being. When you have some-*

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### *Volunteer from page 6*

#### **Secular Student Alliance**

If you're still in school, you should definitely find out if your school has any atheist or free-thought groups on campus. SSA is an umbrella organization for many student organizations all over the world. If you don't have anything on your campus, contact SSA and they will help you set one up. It is very important to make sure that your campus has some sort of secular or atheist presence. Especially if you noticed that you get many preachers on campus. Becoming active while in school helps you shape your values and ethics, that eventually shape you as an individual.

#### **Online social networking**

If you don't really feel like volunteering with national atheist organizations than check out Atheist Nexus, premier social

network exclusively for non-believers. It is not non-profit, yet. It is moderated and directed by Brother Richard, who has a strong vision for A|N to become the social hub for all non-believers around the world. Almost one year old, A|N was able to attract over 8, 000 members. It's free and they're always looking for volunteers. It doesn't matter what your skills are, you can definitely volunteer here. Be it marketing, promotion, graphic design, web design, moderators, and much more. The best part, it's all done online so you don't have to leave your home (unless it's something that does require it), and pretty much you can do it in your pajamas.

These are just a few pointers to get you started in the right direction. The best part - a lot of volunteering is done online these days, so it's very easy to be part of atheist movement and help leave your mark in the history.

If you are way too busy to volunteer, consider donating to one of these organizations or even joining. Many of them offer great services and products that come along with your membership. Just remember what Terry Pratchett, English writer, said, It's not worth doing something unless you were doing something that someone, somewhere, would much rather you weren't doing.

You know volunteering with an atheist organization is worth it, many believers would rather you not do it.

You will meet a lot of awesome people while volunteering, attend excellent events, and live knowing that you took part in creating history for your kids to enjoy. Children make future worth fighting for.

## Atheists are Coming to a Restaurant Near You

Since you can't come to a Metroplex Atheist event, why not have Metroplex Atheist events come to you?

We now have a Metroplex Atheists Meet-up Group on [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com). Over the years we've had many folks lament that they couldn't come to a MA social event because of time/location of our normal Wednesday get together.



### *Why not start one of your own?*

If you have a good meeting place and you're willing to show up to be somewhat of a host, then just contact Metroplex Atheists and we can put an announcement out on the web.

All it takes is for you to say, "Hey, why don't we meet at X?" and show up!

We'd like to have a number of social groups that meet informally (because, let's face it, the business meetings are only just so much fun). The real fun lies in meeting other like minded people.

### *Where do YOU want to meet up?*

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Business Meeting**

#### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING:**

**What:** Meeting to decide general business of the group and to discuss current events

**Date:** Third Sunday of the month

**Time:** 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

**Place:** J. Gilligan's Bar & Grill

### **Social Meetings**

#### **DALLAS / PLANO ATHEIST MEETUP DAY:**

**What:** Meet with other local Atheists to talk about your beliefs

**Date:** Every Tuesday

**Time:** 7:00 PM

**Place:** TBA; For locations near you visit: [atheists.meetup.com](http://atheists.meetup.com)

#### **MA ATHEIST MEETUP:**

**What:** 'My dinner with Atheists,' social time with a bunch of heathens

**Date:** 2nd, 3rd, 4th, (& 5th) Wednesday

**Time:** 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

**Place:** J. Gilligan's Bar & Grill (Meet on the grill side)

400 E. Abram Street  
Arlington, TX

#### **MA ATHEIST MEETUP:**

**What:** 'My dinner with Atheists,' social time with a bunch of heathens

**Date:** 1st Wednesday of the Month

**Time:** 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

**Place:** Blue Danube  
2230 West Park Row  
Pantego, TX

#### **INFIDEL'S BASH - SUMMER SOLSTICE PARTY**

**What:** Join us for a fun and food with fellow atheists.

**Date:** TBA

**Time:** TBA

**Place:** TBA, <http://www.metroplexatheists.org>

#### **To have your events listed email:**

*The Atheist Voice Editor at*  
[editor@metroplexatheists.org](mailto:editor@metroplexatheists.org)

***THE ATHEIST VOICE is a bi-monthly publication of Metroplex Atheists.***

For more information, please visit our website: [www.metroplexatheists.org](http://www.metroplexatheists.org)

To submit an article or letter to the editor, please email us.

*The Atheist Voice Editor: [editor@metroplexatheists.org](mailto:editor@metroplexatheists.org)*

**Sign from page 8**

*thing like this here, people don't want to come and patronize us anymore," said Theodore Hamilton. "We don't agree with this. We don't like this here in our community, and this is a spiritual based community."*

Source: [WSVN News](#)

I wonder what Big Mamma is so afraid of? Does she fear what will happen when her students finally do learn that atheists exist, that atheists surely live in their neighborhood, and that atheism doesn't mean a person is immoral or evil? Does she fear that some of her own students might seriously consider atheism when they come

to realize that there is nothing wrong with it?

I find it interesting that some Christians sincerely believe that customers won't come to their stores simply because someone else paid for a nearby billboard stating nothing more than atheists exist and aren't immoral. Does this reflect their own personal attitudes — which means that they are so bigoted that they wouldn't shop anywhere near where atheism is mentioned — or does it reflect their knowledge of how bigoted their own customers are?

Either way it's a very negative statement — whether about themselves, their customers, or both — but apparently Christians like Theodore Hamilton are unable or unwilling to recog-

nize this. Imagine complaining that white customer will stop coming to your business because the NAACP put up a billboard and insisting that one lives or works in a "white based community." Imagine if white people and white students protested that presence of a BET billboard and demanding that it had to come down.

I suspect that most people would recognize the bigotry of such behavior and attitudes, but here we have Christians who consider such bigotry against atheists to not only be unproblematic, but even perhaps a religious and social duty. It's a sign, I think, of just how deeply immorality, injustice, and irrationality have seeped into American Christianity.

**To Lead from page 4**

So here it is in a nutshell: The shack located deep in the Oregon woods is an allegory for the soul-wounded protagonist in *The Shack*. His abusive alcoholic father & his daughter's murderer represent evil. Mammy Pancakes represents good. There is forgiveness & redemption for all in *The Shack*. But author Young is covering ground already trod by Stephen King in the 1978 novel *The*

*Stand* that is later a TV miniseries on ABC in 1994 starring Molly Ringwald, Gary Sinise, Ruby Dee, and Jamey Sheridan. Mother Abigail (Ruby Dee) is a big black woman who personifies good. Randall Flagg (Jamey Sheridan) is a middle-aged white man who personifies evil. No forgiveness or redemption in *The Stand*.

And that, my atheist brethren, is the difference in how two authors deal with similar subject matter. W. Paul Young is a di-

vinity school graduate and Stephen King is, well, Stephen King. Guess it all depends on your point of view, huh?

The question is...will Ms. F dare to lead a book club discussion of *The Shack* for the church ladies? She is not inclined to reveal her alternative life to these folks. After all, Hood County is smack in the heart of the Texas Bible belt. Best to stay under the radar, she thinks, but then, maybe not. Stay tuned.

***Our Local Atheists in Foxholes:***

**WWII & Korea:**

**James Hardwick (Ret), Navy**

**Korea:**

**Chris Gregory, Air Force**

**Viet Nam:**

**Randall Gorman (Ret), Air National Guard**

**Iraq:**

**Brian McIntosh (Ret), Marines**

**Shawn Ruzek, Marines**

**Deanne Dice**

*Thank you for your  
unselfish sacrifice so  
that we may all live in a  
safer world.*

## FFRF Sues to Stop Religious Engravings at Capitol Visitor Center

July 14, 2009

The Freedom From Religion Foundation, a state/church watchdog and the nation's largest association of atheists and agnostics, filed a federal lawsuit today to stop the prominent engraving of "In God We Trust" and the religious Pledge of Allegiance at the Capitol Visitor Center in Washington, D.C.

The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in the western district of Wisconsin in the courtroom of Judge Barbara Crabb.

Last week, the House and the Senate passed resolutions directing the Architect of the Capitol to engrave "In God We Trust" and the Pledge of Allegiance in prominent places in the Capitol Visitor Center, which is "the entrance for the thousands of tourists who visit the Capitol every day." The engraving project is expected to cost up to \$150,000, a figure attributed to U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., the Senate sponsor.

DeMint had threatened to hold up the opening of the Capitol Visitor Center last December, because he said the Center failed to recognize the purportedly integral role of religion in our federal government. DeMint said the cost of the mandated engraving would correct the alleged historical whitewash of the original design, welcome God back into the Center and highlight the "all important relationship between faith and freedom

in America."

U.S. Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, claimed that without the engravings of "In God We Trust" and the Pledge of Allegiance, the Visitor Center would reflect an effort "to scrub references to America's Christian heritage" and to eradicate "the role of Christianity in America."

The Madison, Wis.-based Foundation, with 13,500 members, including members in every state and in the District of Columbia, is an organizational plaintiff, along with taxpayers and Foundation Co-Presidents Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor.

The suit names Stephen Ayers, acting Architect of the Capitol, who is responsible for the U.S. Capitol Complex, including the Capitol Visitor Center. The Foundation's legal Complaint points out that the Center is "conceived as an extension of the Capitol rather than a stand-alone facility; the Capitol Visitor Center is intended to be and is the sole point of entry to the seat of American government."

The Complaint notes that the selection of "In God We Trust" as a motto, and the insertion of "under God" into the formerly secular Pledge of Allegiance, were both adopted belatedly in the 1950s during the Cold War. The godly motto, adopted in 1956, did not appear upon pa-

per currency until 1957. The pledge was tampered with by Congress in 1954, after generations of schoolchildren had learned the original, godless version composed in 1892. Both changes were the result of religious lobbying. The Congressional Report accompanying the 1954 pledge act, which openly disapproved of atheism, read: "The inclusion of God in the pledge . . . would serve to deny the atheistic and materialistic concepts of communism."

The Foundation Complaint said the Congressional appropriations "will give actual and apparent government endorsement and advancement of religion," while excluding nonreligious Americans.

"'In God We Trust' excludes and treats as outsiders the millions of adult Americans, including as many as 15% of all adults, who are not religious, i.e., atheists, agnostics, skeptics and freethinkers, none of whom possesses a belief in a god; the mandated language diminishes nonbelievers by making god-belief synonymous with citizenship."

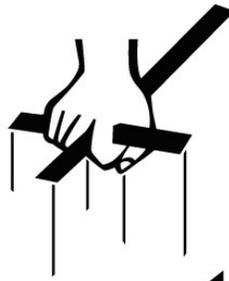
The lawsuit seeks a judgment declaring the Congressional directive unconstitutional and an order enjoying the defendant from engraving "In God We Trust" and the Pledge of Allegiance in the Capitol Visitor Center.



## WHY DO WE FIGHT?

‘Because we must. Because we have the call. Because it is nobler to fight for rationality without winning than to give up in the face of continued defeats. Because whatever true progress humanity makes is through the rationality of the occasional individual and because any one individual we may win for the cause may do more for humanity than a hundred thousand who hug superstition to their breasts.’

– Isaac Asimov, when asked why he fights religion with no hope for victory



**Metroplex**  
**Atheists.org**  
**NO STRINGS ATTACHED.**