

New York City Atheists Inc.

Serving the tri-state area • An affiliate of American Atheists

January 2004

(212) 330-6794 P.O. Box 1187, New York, NY 10013
HTTP://NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG INFO@NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG

The following events
Will be held at
352 7th Ave. btw. 29/30th
16th floor
just south of Penn Station
Suggested donation \$10

Sun, Jan. 25, 2004, 1:00 P.M.
January Annual Membership
Meeting, Charter Signing, Book
Club Meeting

Annual Membership Meeting (voting for officers, bylaws, etc.) and Members Charter Signing Ceremony (membership application and dues must be received on or before January 25th to vote and sign the charter). Book club meeting to follow.

Thur, Feb. 12, 2004, 6:30 P.M.
Charles Darwin Day

Guest: Richard Milner, contributing editor and writer for Natural History Magazine and Scientific America. See and discuss his appearances on A&E and the History Channel's Charles Darwin Programs.

Thur, Feb. 26, 2004, 6:30 P.M.
February Monthly Meeting

Guest: Richard Carrier

Subject: Miracles: Fact or Fiction He has published several articles for the Skeptical Inquirer, Editor in Chief of The Secular Web for many years, Carrier has published several articles for the Skeptical Inquirer.

This evening Carrier will describe a "tool kit" for examining miracle claims in history.

Thur, Mar. 25, 6:30 P.M.
March Monthly Meeting

Guest: Roger Foster
Subject: TBD

Ask for a non-smoking
— non-bible room.

Tue, Apr. 13, 2004, 6:30 P.M.
Madalyn Murray O'Hair

On Madalyn Murray O'Hair's birthday, meet with individuals who worked with and knew her. Who was the real Madalyn Murray O'Hair? Video, Q&A, etc.

Sun, Apr. 25, 2004 1:00 P.M.
April Monthly Meeting

NYC Atheists Inc. Goals 3 Committee (a forum for examination and discussion about Atheism) will review their activities. The committee will then hold a public forum on Atheism.

Thur, May 27, 2004, 6:30 P.M.
May Monthly Meeting

Guest: Bob Simon of End of Life Choices (formerly the Hemlock Society) will discuss living wills, health care proxies, caring friends, legality of suicide, and assisted suicide issues.

Atheist Meetups
(3rd Tuesday of the month)

Event: Casual dining or drinks with your fellow freethinkers.

Manhattan location to be chosen by registering and voting at <http://atheists.meetup.com>. Atheist Meetups in Westchester, Long Island, and northern NJ will be promoted if enough people register.

Tue, Jan. 20, 2004, 7-9 P.M.
Tue, Feb. 17, 2004, 7-9 P.M.
Tue, Mar. 16, 2004, 7-9 P.M.
Tue, Apr. 20, 2004, 7-9 P.M.
Tue, May 18, 2004, 7-9 P.M.

Membership has Privileges

- Mailed Copy of Newsletter
- Nominating and Voting Rights
- Charter Member Signer



Bill Baird at the November Meeting.

Donations

You may now make tax-deductible donations via credit card on our Web page: (NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG). Try it — its fun and painless.

We also except checks, money orders, etc. — send to New York City Atheists, P.O. Box 1187, New York, NY 10013.

Some individuals are sending us monthly donations to move up to higher membership levels.

All donations of \$25 and over will receive a formal donation receipt.

Who Said?????

"Creeds have been the bane of the Christian church . . . made of Christendom a slaughterhouse."

— Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Waterhouse, Jun. 26, 1822

SEE: NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG
Our Updated Web Site

November Meeting Bill Baird

Bill Baird, the nationally known reproductive rights activist and long a friend to atheist and other free thought groups, spoke to us at our November meeting.

Since 1963, Baird has fought for women's reproductive rights on every level from the abortion clinic to the Supreme Court. After establishing the nation's first nonprofit birth control and abortion facility in 1964, he was jailed eight times in five states for lecturing on birth control and abortion rights. He has received death threats and had his clinic attacked by fire and chemical bombs. The only non-lawyer in American history with three Supreme Court victories — all concerning reproductive rights — Baird is responsible for legalizing birth control for unmarried people. Illegal in 26 states before 1972's *Baird v. Eisenstadt* overturned this law, the decision paved the way for 1973's *Roe v. Wade*. His two other Supreme Court victories, *Baird v. Bellotti* I & II, gave minors the right to an abortion without parental veto.

Baird described his abuse by police and suffering in prison, and his frustration in being on the streets protesting the church, but getting no notice from media that didn't want to air criticism of religion, and no support from reproductive-rights or free thought groups.

Baird concluded by stating that coming to a meeting is fantastic; I'm glad that you're here, but "I need all of you out on a picket line and to write letters to legislators," "I need you," Baird continued. We need each other. It's a tough fight, gang. The stakes are high. They really want to Christianize this country. They want to take away your freedom, there's no denying that. They treat atheists, agnostics, humanists. . . with such disrespect., All I say is, Believe in yourself. Fight back, and stand up for freedom.



Leonid Hambro

Solstice Dinner

On December 22, 2003 was held the first annual NYC Atheist Solstice Dinner and Party. Twenty eight non-believers meet and had a fabulous three course MSG (minus spiritual gods) Chinese feast at the Hunan 5th Avenue Restaurant and were entertained by Leonid Hambro (bred, born, and continues to be an Atheist into his ninth decade).

After dinner and wonderful entertainment, most of us went across the street and went up to the top of the Empire State Building. The visibility was fabulous; allowing us to see over the horizon and allowing us to visually verify that the earth is not flat, looking up we saw no heaven, and looking down we saw no hell. The conclusion; lets do it again next year — same place.

The winter Solstice is the moment when the earth is at that point of its orbit; which is most tilted away from the sun. Solstice means "The Sun stands still".

Discussing Non-Believers in Schools:

Contributing editor: Ron Widelec

Our children are constantly being bombarded with information from an innumerable amount of sources every day. That is why I have always considered it my responsibility, as a social studies educator, to develop critical thinkers who can sort out, process, and analyze information.

One important source of information, however, is all too often exempted from critical thought: church and religion. For some reason, this topic is often considered something separate from the social studies curriculum. But religion is a *social* force, and must be examined in *social* studies. Many right-wingers love the idea of religion being taught in school, but cringe at the idea of students being asked to critically think about religion, for fear of the results.

When teaching about culture, I often use America as a case study. Obviously, as religion is a major part of our culture, we discuss many different religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Most kids are accepting of these religions, however, when I inform them that there are large numbers of Americans who do not practice any religion or are non-believers such as Atheists, agnostics, humanists, and freethinkers many of the students express shock and disgust.

While many students accept the idea that people can have differing religions and beliefs, most of them do not accept the idea of non-believers. This brings up a serious question affecting non-believers in America. With over 30 million atheists and agnostics in America today, shouldn't our students be made aware of their existence? Why is it that students are taught to have acceptance for everyone's beliefs, but not for those without beliefs? Should we fail to remedy this situation, we can fully expect future generations to continue ignoring, marginalizing, and detesting us.

Schools must teach acceptance of both believers and non-believers. Any Questions or comments... Email me at Beowolf88@aol.com

WANTS AND NEEDS

Newsletter Editor and Contributors

New York City Atheists urgently needs a monthly newsletter editor. We are also looking for article, cartoon, and feature, etc. contributors.

Free Printing and Copy Services

One of our major expenses is printing, copying, and the distribution of newsletters, flyers and press releases. We are looking for free or extremely low cost printing, copying, and distribution sources.

Press Releases and Publicity

Experience in press releases and publicity.

Please call Ken Bronstein 212-535-7425 if you can help in any of the above.

**Give children
logical explanations
not magical ones**

Book Club

The next scheduled meeting of the book club is January 25, 2004 (Sunday); right after our monthly meeting.

We will be discussing the introduction "An Overview of the Issues" (pages 11-14) from the book "Science and Religion" edited by Paul Kurtz.

Books are available at \$15, including shipping by contacting Ken Bronstein at 212-535-7425. We will use this book for next four to five Book Club Meetings.

Prizewinning Letter to the Editor

Mario DeOliveira's letter to the editor, which mentions NYC Atheists by name, was published in the Journal News (Westchester) of November 5, and has won \$50 in the NYC Atheists "Dollars for Letters to the Editor" program (see page 4 for details):

Why Shouldn't Church Have to Prove Claims?

Regarding Gary Stern's Sunday article, "Critics: Claims in 'DaVinci Code' not fair to Catholicism":

Why is it that when any theory seems to critique religious institutions, it must require evidence? On the other hand, when religious institutions put forward their theories ("virgin births," "resurrections of the dead," etc.), no evidence is required? It is accepted on "faith."

Perhaps you should feature an article by experts in biology and science to critique the precepts of the Catholic church and the likelihood of virgins having children 2,000 years ago and men coming back from the dead. It would only be fair.

Mario DeOliveira, Yonkers
The writer is a member of New York City Atheists.

Atheists Linguistics

**When someone sneezes
many people say:
"God Bless You"**

**As an Atheist
how do you respond
when someone sneezes?**

Comments:

NYCATHEISTS@AOL.COM

Charles Darwin Day Thursday, February 12th, at 6:30 P.M.

Richard Milner who will discuss his appearances on A&E "Biography of Charles Darwin" and the History Channel.

RICHARD MILNER is an author, anthropologist, historian of science, and songwriter. Based at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, where he is a Contributing Editor and writer for Natural History magazine, Milner also frequently contributes to Scientific American, the Journal of the Linnean Society of London, and other periodicals.

Trained in anthropology at the University of California (both UCLA and Berkeley), he is the author of The Encyclopedia of Evolution: Humanity's Search for its Origins (1993), an award-winning collection of 650 original essays on evolutionary biology and its impact on Western culture. Milner's account of Darwin's life — Charles Darwin: Evolution of a Naturalist — is considered the finest short biography of the great naturalist. Milner also studied songwriting on a scholarship to the Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI) Musical Theater Workshop. He is currently at work on a new book entitled "Darwin's Universe: Evolution from A to Z."

Charles Darwin



Tuesday, February 26th at 6:30 P.M.

Richard Carrier is a graduate student at Columbia University currently writing his Ph.D. dissertation on Roman Science. He has published several articles for the Skeptical Inquirer, Editor in Chief of the

Secular Web for many years, and forthcoming book "Sense and Goodness without God: A defense of Metaphysical Naturalism is nearing completion.

His competency in English, German, French, Latin, and Greek (Ancient) has greatly enhanced his extensive study of philosophy and world religions.

This evening Carrier will describe a "tool kit" to examine miracle claims in history

Quotes/Humor

Submit your quotes and humor for Prizes of little or no value.

- Churches reduce property values.
- Faith based education does not pass the grade.
- Schools need a moment of science.
- Faith does not have a warranty
- God: trademark@make.believe
- Bible: scribes@fantasy.books
- Creationism: denial@get.real



Madalyn Murray O'Hair

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Be eligible to win up to \$100 for your published letter to a New York City area newspaper or magazine!

Eligible publications: Daily, weekly, or monthly print newspapers and magazines published and distributed in the New York City metropolitan area.

Awards: \$100 for a published letter in the New York Times, the New Yorker, New York, or Time Out. \$75 for a published letter in the Daily News, New York Post, or Newsday. \$50 for a published letter in the New York Press, Village Voice, New York Observer, The Sun, or The Resident, or Westchester, New Jersey, or Long Island daily newspapers. \$25 for a published letter in other journals. \$100 for the best published letter of the year.

Rules:

- 1) You must be a member of NYC Atheists Inc.
- 2) The letter must be related to NYC Atheists Inc.'s purposes and goals:
 - To promote total and absolute separation of church and state.
 - To educate and inform the public about atheism.
 - To provide a forum for the inquiry and discussion of atheism.
 - To develop and engage in educational, cultural and social activities that are beneficial to the members of NYC Atheists Inc. and atheism.
- 3) An original, dated copy of your published letter must be submitted to NYC Atheists Inc., P.O. Box 1187, New York, NY 10013.

The decision of the NYC Atheists Inc. board of directors is final.

Letters should respond to a journal's specific article or general coverage, and opinion/"op-ed" commentaries should reflect a journal's general style. When writing, include your name, address, and daytime and evening phone numbers. The shorter the letter or commentary, the better the chance it will be used. All journals reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity. For further details and contacts see our web site: NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG

First Amendment Bill of Rights

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Feedback and Input

We would appreciate your feedback and input concerning the newsletter, web page, meetings, speakers, subjects, etc.

We are always looking for new ideas.

For example: A member proposed that we should celebrate Charles Darwin (Feb. 12th) and Madalyn Murray O'Hair's Birthday (Apr. 13th). (See page 1)

Others Individuals?

Russell, etc.?

What Subjects?

Speakers?

Send your proposals to:

NYCATHEISTS@AOL.COM