

WEB: NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG

Cooper Station — P.O. Box 93, NY, NY 10276-0093

212-330-6794

FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

OCTOBER

October 1	Friday 8 P.M.	Comedy Club Night Out – Location: 1568 2nd Ave. (81/82)
October 7	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
October 9	Saturday 10 A.M. – 6 P.M.	NYC Atheists Street Tabling – Location: TBA
October 10*	Sunday 12:30 P.M.	NYC Atheists Sunday Brunch (NEW LOCATION)
October 14	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
October 17	Sunday 10AM – 6 P.M.	NYC Atheists Street Tabling — Location: TBA
October 19**	Tuesday 7 P.M.	NYC Atheists Meetup
October 21	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
October 28	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
October 28***	Thursday 6:30 P.M.	Paul Grosswald: <i>Cults</i>
October 30	Sunday TBA	Halloween Day Parade — Details: TBA

NOVEMBER

November 4	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
November 11	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
November 14*	Sunday 12:30 P.M.	NYC Atheists Sunday Brunch (NEW LOCATION)
November 16**	Tuesday 7 P.M.	NYC Atheists Meetup
November 18	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
November 19***	Friday 6:30 P.M.	NYC Atheists Monthly Meeting — Thomas Paine
November 20	Saturday 10:00 A.M.	NYC Atheists Field Trip to Thomas Paine Museum
November 25	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)

* Brunch Location: EURO Diner at **738 Eighth Avenue. (Between 45th and 46th Street.)**

Brunch Cost: Order from Menu — Reservations not required.

** Meetup Location: Manhattan Lounge 1270 Second Ave (Between 89th and 90th Street).

*** Meeting Location: 352 7th Avenue/16th Floor (Between 29 and 30th Street)

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NYC Atheists Inc. is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational association. Its meetings and membership are open and all are welcomed (both nonbelievers and believers), *i.e.* atheists, agnostics, humanists, free thinkers, skeptics, separation-of-church/state advocates, and individuals who are questioning and searching beliefs.

SEE PAGE 8 FOR SPECIAL YEAR END MEMBERSHIP OFFER



Ken Bronstein

PRESIDENT'S SERMON

NYCA Demonstration at the Republican Convention

NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG

SEPARATION



CHURCH/STATE

About 40% of our membership participated at our Republican National Convention demonstration. This was an good turnout, but not good enough. In today's environment, **our adversaries do not make excuses, they are involved.** In the United States, there are an estimated 15 million fundamentalists compared to an estimated 30 million non-believers. We should be able to hold them in check, but because of their dedication, compared to the indifference and lack of involvement of non-believers, they are in command. The demonstration went very well (See photo on Page 8). Our poster signs looked terrific (see above), we received lots of compliments, we wore our new NYCA hats proudly and handed out newsletters. Four individuals became new NYCA members. After the demonstration, we went for brunch.

EVERYBODY PLEASE VOTE

NO VOTE/NO COMPLAINT

Contact me with your comments: Ken Bronstein at NYCATHEISTS@AOL.COM or 212-535-7425.

PAST EVENTS/MEETINGS

Sept. 2 — Cable show #11 8:00 — 8:30 P.M. Manhattan Cable: Ch. 67 Leonid Hambro — NYC Atheist member: His path to Atheism.

Sept. 9 — Cable show #12 8:00 — 8:30 P.M. Manhattan Cable: Ch. 67 Harvey Osgood, NYC Atheist member: His path to Atheism.

Sept. 12 — Brunch 12:30 P.M. — Euro Diner, 126 East 28th St. (Park/Lexington)

Sept. 16 — Cable Show #13 8:00 — 8:30 P.M. Peter Kramer — NYC Atheist member: His Road to Atheism.

Sept. 19 — Tabling 10:00AM — 6:00 P.M. Location: Columbus Circle in front of Time Warner Building. Great day – four new members.

Sept. 21 — NYC Atheists Meetup 7:00 P.M. Manhattan Lounge 1720 Second Ave. (Between 89th and 90th Street)

Sept. 23 — Cable Show #14 8:00 — 8:30 P.M. Manhattan Cable Ch. 67 Paul Grosswald: Cults

Sept. 26 — Monthly Meeting 1:00 – 5:00 P.M. Ed Stephens MD: Subject: *Psychiatrist's Perspective: Why Atheism Is a Tough Sell* Outstanding Meeting — *Great Q&A*

Sept. 30 — Cable Show #15 8:00 — 8:30 P.M. Manhattan Cable Ch. 67 Paul Grosswald: *Cults*

If you want to know what God thinks of money, just look at the people he gave it to.

— *Dorothy Parker*

FUTURE EVENTS

October 1, (Friday) Comedy Club Night Out — 8 P.M.
Location: Comic Strip Live 1568 2nd Ave. (81/82nd St.)
Cost: \$ 23 — Includes admission, 2 Drinks, Tax, Tip.

October 7, (Thursday) 8 P.M. NYC Atheists Cable Show #16 (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Guest: Mildred Vargas — NYC Atheists member — Her road to atheism.

October 10, (Sunday) 12:30 P.M. NYC Atheists Sunday Brunch
Location: Euro Diner
738 Eighth Ave. (45th and 46th Street)

October 14, (Thursday) 8 P.M. NYC Atheists Cable Show #16 (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Guest: Massimo Pigliucci

FUTURE EVENTS (CONTINUED)

October 19, (Tuesday) 7 P.M.
NYC Atheists Meetup
Manhattan Lounge
1720 2nd Avenue (89/90th St.)

October 21, (Thursday) 8 P.M.
NYC Atheists Cable Show # 17
(Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Guest: Massimo Pigliucci

October 28, (Thursday) 8 P.M.
NYC Atheists Cable Show #18
(Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Guest: TBA

October 28, (Thursday) 6:30 P.M.
Monthly Meeting
Guest: Paul Grosswald: *Cults*

October 30, (Sunday) — TBA
Halloween Day Parade Planning
NYCA members participation in
the NYC Halloween Parade
Details: TBA

2004 Republican Platform: The Overt Christian-Right Wing Agenda

By Ron Widelec

“Government does have a role to play [in charities], but as partner, not a rival, to the armies of compassion.” — GOP Platform

Charities are not businesses; they do not compete! Government programs are not in competition with religious charities. Giving federal money to churches doesn't make them “allies” with the so-called armies of compassion. It causes legitimate government programs to lose funding and forces citizens in need to seek help from religious organizations — organizations that often proselytize in addition to providing aid.

“Their [religious organizations] leaders are people

to whom the disadvantaged are not statistics, but neighbors, friends and moral individuals created in the image of god”

Apparently, non-religious people only see the disadvantaged as statistics. Thus, only religious groups can offer the help needed. People being created in the image of god is an expressly Judeo-Christian principle, and perfectly in tune with the Republic party line of a Christian nation.

“The president established the office of faith-based initiatives to...coordinate efforts to tear down the barriers that have prevented religiously affiliated groups from applying for government grants...”

Another clear and blatant attack on Separation of Church and State, often called the Wall of Separation. These “barriers” protect all Americans from the religious discrimination.

“We also affirm that the hiring rights of religious organizations must be maintained so that religious charities do not have to abandon their religious character in order to provide publicly funded services.”

This statement is a clear example of why the Separation of Church and State exists: to avoid such inconsistencies. Religious groups use federal tax money, from all citizens, and use it to hire only people of one religion, eliminating all others. This is, of course, the right of all religious groups, but federal money cannot be used for such discrimination. When coupled with the fact that 90% of faith-based funding went only to Christian groups, it becomes clear that these programs are using

federal money to discriminate against all non-Christians.

“...a handful of activist judges threaten to overturn common sense and tradition”

What the Republicans call common sense and tradition is hanging the Judeo-Christian Ten Commandments in our courts and coercing students into professing a belief in god in order to be a patriot, regardless of their personal beliefs.

“...the self-proclaimed supremacy of these judicial activists is antithetical to the democratic ideals on which our nation was founded.”

What the Republicans call self-proclaimed supremacy of judges is what our founding fathers called the Checks and Balances and the Separation of Power, which was developed to make sure no single branch of the government becomes too powerful. This attack on judges who disagree with the Radical Conservative agenda is an attack on our founding principals and the very founding fathers themselves.

“We support... the successful Ugandan model promoting the “ABC” approach to prevention that encourages abstinence and being faithful to one lifetime partner”

A is for abstinence, B is to Be Faithful, and C is for Condom. Notice how that last part was not present in the Platform. Despite the realization that ABC programs, like those in Uganda, are the most successful, the president and Republicans will “double the amount spent on abstinence-only education...” AIDS rips through African nations and funding is denied too much needed programs

because of the Radical Christian Conservative ban on condom use.

“...every child deserves the chance to be born and grow up in a loving family.... While families exist in many different forms, there are ideals to strive for.”

In other words, if your family doesn't meet *their ideals* then your children are not getting the chance to “be born and grow up in a loving family.” The main target of the day is homosexuals who, according to Republicans, cannot raise children or even form families.

“We support the president's strong efforts to promote adoption through increased tax incentives and bonuses to states that place older children in permanent family homes...”

Except, or course, if you are homosexual, in which case the conservative agenda thinks you unsuitable for parenthood.

“We oppose school-based clinics that provide referrals, counseling, and related services for contraception and abortion.”

They support doing nothing for young adults other than telling them that if they are sexually active they are sinners, and should stop, and if pregnant, have the child regardless of their ability to take care of the child.

“We will continue to work for the return of voluntary school prayer to our schools... We strongly support voluntary student-initiated prayer in schools...”

Voluntary prayer already exists in schools. Students can pray without interference from school officials. What the Republicans

call voluntary prayer is more aptly called “coercive prayer”: Students are subjected to prayer whether or not they want to pray and whether or not the prayer reflects their own beliefs. These students feel coerced into prayer so as not to be singled out.

“We know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the *Almighty's* gift to every man, women, and child in the world.”

The Republicans again justify their “crusade” as a mission to spread what they see as the gifts of god.

The Presidential Prayer Team is currently urging us to:

“Pray for the President as he seeks wisdom on how to legally codify the definition of marriage.”

Pray that it will be according to Biblical principles. With many forces insisting on variant definitions of marriage, pray that God's Word and His standards will be honored by our government.” Any good religious person believes prayer should be balanced by action. So here, in support of the Prayer Team's admirable goals, is a proposed Constitutional

Amendment codifying marriage *entirely on Biblical principles:*

- A. Marriage in the U.S. shall consist of a union between one man and one or more women (Genesis 29:17-28; II Samuel 3:2-5).
- B. Marriage shall not impede a man's right to take concubines in addition to his wife or wives (II Samuel 5:13; I Kings 11:3; II Chronicles 11:21).
- C. A marriage shall be considered valid only if the wife is a virgin.

If the wife is not a virgin, she shall be executed (Deuteronomy 22:13-21).

- D. Marriage of a believer and a non-believer shall be forbidden (Genesis 24:3; Numbers 25:1-9; Ezra 9:12; Nehemiah 10:30)
- E. Since marriage is for life, neither this Constitution nor the constitution of any State, nor any state or federal law, shall be construed to permit divorce (Deuteronomy 22:19; Mark 10:9).
- F. If a married man dies without children, his brother shall marry the widow. If he refuses to marry his brother's widow or deliberately does not give her children, he shall pay a fine of one shoe and be otherwise punished in a manner to be determined by law (Genesis 38:6-10; Deuteronomy 25:5-10).
- G. In lieu of marriage, if there are no acceptable men in your town, it is required that you get your father drunk and have sex with him. Of course, this rule applies only if you are female (Genesis 19:31-36).



WOODY ALLEN

If only God would give me some clear sign! Like making a large deposit in my name at a Swiss bank.

Not only is there no God, but try getting a plumber on weekends.

HUGE [History of Universal and Global Evolution]

Global History Project.

HUGE, a project organizing curriculum and emphasizing critical thinking for a post-religious society at all levels of schooling, needs volunteers:

Immediate Tasks: Prepare general outline, recruit help and interest; demonstration projects (materials and video prep); and computerization of materials.

Analyze major obstacles: overloaded curriculums, social focus; psychological resistance.

Research: updated materials, copyrights, support sources, actual school conditions.

Contacts: Allen:

allengardner817@msn.com OR
Bob: *xchangebob@nyc.rr.com* OR,
if without e-mail, send a stamped envelope to: Allen Gardner, 4177 Bronxwood Ave, Bronx NY 10466.

WIN A NYCA HAT

Supernatural Fill-ins

Rock and Roll _____
The _____ Worker
Charlie's _____
_____ Superstar
Four ___ in Three Acts
Tampa Bay ___ Rays
_____ Boy
The ___ Wears Prada
Beat the _____
Don Juan in _____
The ___ and Mrs. Muir
Oh _____
New Orleans _____
_____ with Dirty Faces
Thank ___ for Little Girls
The ___ Daniel Webster
California _____
Stairway to _____
Blithe _____
_____ in America

_____ on 34th Street
When the _____ Go Marching In
The _____ Brigade
My Blue _____
The _____ of the Rings
_____ Rib
All About _____
_____ in the Outfield
East of _____
Children of a Lesser _____
Present at the _____
Eva Marie _____
The Three Faces of _____
The Old _____
The _____ of Small Things
The _____ Road

Send your answers to: NYCA
Cooper Station — P.O. Box 93
NY, NY 10276-0093.

ALL CORRECT ANSWERS WIN
AN NYCA HAT — ONE HAT
PER PERSON.

Book Review by Pat Berger

God? A Debate Between a Christian and an Atheist

by William Lane Craig and
Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

156 pp. Oxford University Press.
\$ 19.95

William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California. He lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with his wife Jan and their two teenage children, *Charity and John*. At the age of sixteen, as a junior in high school, he first heard the message of the Christian gospel and yielded his life to Christ.

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong is Chair of the Philosophy Department, Professor of Philosophy and Hardy Professor of Legal Studies at Dartmouth College

This book is organized in debate format; Craig presents his arguments:

1. God makes sense of the origin of the universe
2. God makes sense of the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life
3. God makes sense of objective moral values in the world
4. God makes sense of life, death and the resurrection of Jesus
5. God can be immediately known and experienced

Sinnott-Armstrong responds, disputing each individual argument. He discusses Morality, Miracles, Experiences, and Mathematical Twists. Armstrong also states that even if you believe that there is truth in any of Craig's points, they do not prove the existence of an omnipotent, omnibenevolent, eternal, effective, and/or personal god. Craig and Armstrong go through a couple of more rounds of debate. There is an abundance of meatiness presented in the arguments from both sides.

This book should be on an Atheist's bookshelf because it touches on many of the discussions we have among ourselves about morality, suffering, good and evil, the big bang, and miracles. The structure of the book – chapter and verse – makes the arguments easy to follow and comprehend. Each chapter also has a helpful index and notes that are a good source for additional references about Atheism.

**JOIN
NYC ATHEISTS**

NYC ATHEISTS LIBRARY

We are establishing a NYC Atheists Library. Pat Berger has agreed to be our librarian and will house our collection in her apartment.

Your **tax deductible** donations of books, articles, monies, etc. are greatly appreciated.

After the first of the year, we will list the available items for loan on the NYCA website

MY PATH TO ATHEISM

by C. W. "Barney" Burgis

A progressive and rapid series of emotionally scarring childhood incidents lead to my current belief system, that of Atheism. Our household in Wilson's Point (South Norwalk) Conn., never recognized any religious observance; we never attended church, and I was never indoctrinated as a Christian. We did celebrate both Christmas and Easter; however these celebrations revolved around Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny; basically presents under the tree and candy hidden around the house. As a child I truly and honestly believed in Santa Claus, The Easter Bunny and even the Tooth Fairy. A product of the first generation of Holiday TV Specials, the only real indoctrination I ever received was that of Charlie Brown, Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer and Santa Claus versus the Martians. To me these were real physical entities that made my innocent life magical. I even believed in the Martians! Certainly there was religious content in these shows but I never made any connection between religion and the holidays. My school was very progressive but never introduced any notion of religion into our proper education. I even participated as both an

Angel and as a Wiseman in our lower-school pageant, but again, the baby Jesus never meant anything to me, I truly didn't understand and was too timid to ask. None of these people were ever described to me by my parents as having any connection with Judeo or Christian belief systems; I never asked anyone, and they never volunteered to tell. Around Christmas, when I was maybe five or six years old, in the midst of a messy divorce from my father, my Mom pulled the car over one day and looked at me and said, "Grow up, there is no Santa Claus or Easter Bunny."

I was extremely upset for days. My mom realized her mistake and sat me down one day and with great care explained to me that there were such things as "Stories" which people made up to be entertaining, and that she and my dad were in fact Santa, the Bunny and the Fairy, and that these were all stories for children. After that, I guess I was OK with everything because they, the mythical beings that is, were never a household issue again until I was about nine or ten.

Separated and still in the process of divorce from my dad, my mom went through some difficult times. I was shuttling between both parents on opposite sides of the Atlantic and the only real friends I had were books. Mom went out of her way to watch TV with me and our favorite show was Star Trek. She also re-enforced my developing reading skills by buying me adult reading material, real classical authors and current hard science fiction. At an extremely early age, seven or eight, I was reading Dickens, Steinbeck, Richard Wright, C.S. Lewis, Isaac Asimov, Robert



Andrew Carnegie

"I don't believe in god. My god is patriotism. Teach a man to be a good citizen and you have solved the problem of life."

Heinlein and Larry Niven. I was self indoctrinating myself in science fiction and fact.

I think my Mom felt that I was becoming introverted, reading book after book, and she thought that it would be good for me to have a male role model. Mom had a recruiter, a teenage Eagle Scout, for the Boy Scouts come to the house to talk to me. When he came, we had a discussion about what being a Boy Scout meant. He left the Boy Scout handbook as well as a piece of paper with the oath that I had to remember.

I was extremely excited, I wanted to tie knots, build and start fires using only wood, camp out, and earn merit badges. After reading the material, I was very troubled and upset but I didn't tell mom. I wanted to be a Boy Scout more than ANYTHING. Growing up in our house, the greatest "sin" was to lie. Certainly I lied occasionally, but mom and dad would spank me if I did so. (Please note that I believe that responsible parental spanking of children is NOT abuse.) The lesson learned: I have been an honest individual (mostly) ever since. So when the

Boy Scout Eagle Scout returned and met with my mom, and me they were both very surprised when I started to cry. When they asked me why, I explained my dilemma by reciting the Scout Oath:

“On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law...”

After saying “Law” I began to weep very openly. I don’t remember his name, but the young man, the Eagle Scout, I was talking to was really freaking out about my emotional state. Eventually they calmed me down and asked why I was so upset. I explained that I could not be a Scout because if I obeyed the Scout Law and I was to be trustworthy, I would have to tell the truth. They both laughed nervously, trying to be comforting, but they didn’t understand why I was so upset.

I explained that I had to tell the truth but that I couldn’t be a Boy Scout because I didn’t believe in God, and that if I took the oath I would be liar. My Mom laughed, and hugged me, but the young man said nothing more and left. My Mom then started crying too. We never spoke about it again.

There are more events in my life that have defined my Atheistic beliefs, such as attending Catholic boarding school at a Benedictine Abbey, but they are too painful to relate, especially having just dredged this painful episode of my life out into the open.

I really have not enjoyed remembering and writing this but perhaps it may be important for others to read in the future.

MY PATH TO ATHEISM

By *Saúl Sibirsky*

I have always felt that I was born to be an atheist: I could never accept what I could not experience directly through my senses. Of Jewish extraction, in Uruguay, at the age of six or so, having been told by my Catholic friends that praying by your bedside at night would help you get what you longed for, I beseeched a divinity until I said to myself, “What are you doing? This is silly. There is no one out there.” I received no real information on the Jewish faith at home, where it was assumed we were Jewish, whatever that meant, which to me was mostly anti-Semitism, being accused of being a “Christ killer” and only interested in making money at the expense of others (even though we were extremely poor) and the wonderful ethnic food my mother prepared.

During my first two years in the United States (1948-50), at Boy’s High in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, I discovered the scientific approach to reality (naturalism), the meaning of the words “superstition” and “the supernatural,” and the beauty of reasoning. I also realized we are one race in one planet (now I say one universe), and since then I have worked on refining my inner (mental and emotional) process of discarding ethnic preferences (mostly Jewish and Latin American) from my understanding of reality while retaining my love for them and all positive human cultural manifestations (the universal in culture can only manifest itself through particularities). During those years I also realized that borders and frontiers were artificial, human made, even though most of

humanity was still entering Nationalism.

During my first four university years (1950-54), I sought to find Truth in vain. Because of professors and my frequent visits to Greenwich Village, I learned of philosophy and to appreciate the arts, literature in particular. Through both I sought to understand what science and philosophy had managed to learn and what was meant by “spirit” and “spiritualism” within one. I read the Spanish and German mystics, and all about the major and many minor religions. Even though I sympathized with those who had found “spiritual” beliefs and nurturing, I was the loner, the atheist, and never in a closet about it. And then I was drafted by the American Army for two years and one morning, in Germany, unable to go back to sleep, I read on my bunker that a commercial plane had crashed in New Mexico and all 32 passengers and crew had died, including a baby who had been born on the plane 30 minutes earlier. I underwent a severe crying fit that lasted a good hour and ever since then I have not bothered with the issue of religiosity, the spirit, and so on. Not for me!

And now at 71, with a M.A. in Spanish literature and a Ph.D. in Latin American literature and voracious reading into philosophy, I have realized that the road to Truth lies through what science can find out. Naturalism. What science does not yet know, which I believe includes something coming out of nothingness, I just wrap up in a huge question mark... but please, let us leave out divinities with human characteristics. So, in a few words, this has been my path to atheism (and naturalism and humanism).

NYC-ATHEIST ACTIVITIES



August 29 — Republican Convention
Demonstration

NYC Atheists Members Demonstrating at the Republican National Convention.



August 29 — Republican Convention
Demonstration

NYC Atheists Members Demonstrating at the Republican National Convention.



August 17 — Meetup

NYC Atheists Members and guests enjoying a beverage at the Manhattan Lounge



August 26 — Monthly Meeting

Dr. Ed Stephens our September Monthly Guest Speaker

NYC ATHEISTS: SPECIAL 2004 YEAR END MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

First Name: _____ **Last Name** _____

Street Address: _____ **Apt No.:** _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Email: _____ @ _____ **Phone:** (____) _____ - _____

NYC Atheists Inc. is a non-profit (501c), non-partisan, and educational association with the purposes and goals:

1. To promote the total and absolute separation of church and state
2. To educate and inform the public about Atheism
3. To provide a forum for examination and discussion about Atheism
4. To develop and engage in educational, cultural, charitable, and social activities that are beneficial to the members of NYC Atheists Inc., the Atheist community, and the community at large.

YOUR 2004 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

\$ 10 — SPECIAL 2004 YEAR END MEMBERSHIP — \$ 10

DONATION: \$ _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____