

WEB: NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG

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

212-330-6794

FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Nov. 2	Tuesday	ELECTION DAY — VOTE — ELECTION DAY
Nov. 4	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Nov 11	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Nov 14*	Sunday 12:30 P.M.	NYC Atheists Sunday Brunch (OLD LOCATION)
Nov 16**	Tuesday 7 P.M.	NYC Atheists Meetup
Nov 18	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Nov 19***	Friday 6:30 P.M.	NYC Atheists Monthly Meeting — Thomas Paine
Nov 20****	Saturday 8:45 A.M.	NYC Atheists Field Trip to Thomas Paine Museum
Nov 25	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)

DECEMBER

Dec 2	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Dec 9	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Dec 12*	Sunday 12:30 P.M.	NYC Atheists Sunday Brunch
Dec 16	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Dec 21**	Tuesday 7 P.M.	NYC Atheists Solstice Dinner: Location — TBA
Dec 23	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Dec 30	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)

* Brunch Location: EURO Diner at **126 East 28th Street (Between Lexington and Park Avenue)**
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)

**** Meet at Grand Central Station — Main Hall — Round Info Kiosk
Museum Donation: \$ 10 — Rail Ticket: Roundtrip \$10 – 14, Senior \$ 7

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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

VOTE — VOTE — VOTE

NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG

SEPARATION



CHURCH/STATE

I am deeply concerned that in these *United States*, the Separation of Church and State is quickly eroding. That is why it is so important to vote on November 2nd. As I stated in last month's sermon: *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.*

This last week, we interviewed Michael Newdow for an upcoming NYC Atheists Cable Show. Dr. Newdow has pursued the "under god" flag case singlehandedly and without any financial support from the non-believers community. (He has not had a paying job for the last six years during this period.) NYC Atheists is planning a fund raiser for Dr. Newdow this Spring.

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

October 1, (Friday) Comedy Club Night Out — 8 P.M.

We began the evening at a local Chinese Restaurant for dinner, then went to the comedy club for more than two hours of laughs.

October 7, (Thursday) — 8 P.M.

NYC Atheists Cable Show #16 (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)

Mildred Vargas — NYC Atheists member — Her road to atheism.

October 9, (Sat) 10 AM-6 P.M.

NYC Atheists Street Tabling Set up in front of the new Time Warner Building at Columbus Circle. We had an excellent day.

October 10, (Sunday) 12:30 P.M.

NYC Atheists Sunday Brunch We decided that our new location did not meet our standards. We will be returning to our original location at 126 East 28th Street.

October 10, (Sunday) 2:30 P.M.

NYC Atheists Library Dedication Pat Berger, our librarian, invited NYCA members to her apartment for the dedication of the NYC Atheists Library.

The library is available to NYCA members. It will open after the Second Sunday Brunch, by appointment.

October 14, (Thursday) 8 P.M.

NYC Atheists Cable Show #17 (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67) Guest: Massimo Pigliucci

October 17, (Sun) 10 AM-6 P.M.

NYC Atheists Street Tabling We again set up in front of the new Time Warner Building at Columbus Circle. It was chilly, but we still had an excellent day

October 19, (Tuesday) 7 P.M.

NYC Atheists Meetup Manhattan Lounge 1270 2nd Ave.

October 21, (Thursday) 8 P.M.

NYC Atheists Cable Show # 18 (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67) Guest: Massimo Pigliucci

October 28, (Thursday) 8 P.M.

NYC Atheists Cable Show #19 (Manhattan Cable Ch. 67) Guest: Massimo Pigliucci

PAST EVENTS/MEETINGS
(CONTINUED)

October 28, (Thursday) 6:30 P.M.

Monthly Meeting Paul Grosswald:
Cults.

Paul discussed how cults recruit unsuspecting individuals, their mind control techniques and methods of escape.

October 31, (Sunday)

Halloween Day Parade/Party NYC Atheists participated in the NYC Halloween Parade in the Chelsea Area of Manhattan.

Our group carried two banners: the NYC Atheists banner and a second one that portrayed the evolution of man.

After the parade, we partied at Harry Osgood's apartment late into the night.

FUTURE EVENTS

November 4, (Thur.) 8 P.M. NYC Atheists Cable Show #20:
(Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Guest: Massimo Pigliucci

November 11, (Thur.) 8 P.M. NYC Atheists Cable Show #21:
(Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Guest: Massimo Pigliucci

November 14 (Sun.) 12:30 P.M. NYC Atheists Sunday Brunch:
Location: Euro Diner 126 E28 St. (Lex/Park)

November 16, (Tuesday) 7 P.M. NYC Atheists Meetup:
Manhattan Lounge
1270 2nd Ave. (89/90th St.)

November 18, (Thursday) 8 P.M. NYC Atheists Cable Show #22:
(Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Guest: Massimo Pigliucci

November 19, (Fri.) 6:30 P.M.: Monthly Meeting:
Subject: Thomas Paine **Location:** 352 7th Ave. 16th Floor (29/30th St.)

November 20, (Sat) 8:45 A.M. Field Trip:
Thomas Paine Museum
Meet: Grand Central Station Round Info Kiosk

November 25, (Thursday) 8 P.M. NYC Atheists Cable Show #23:
(Manhattan Cable Ch. 67)
Guest: Massimo Pigliucci

Supreme Court Takes On the Commandments

By Ron Widelec

Amid a slew of court cases and proposed bills in congress, the Supreme Court has decided to hear two cases dealing with the displaying of the Ten Commandments in public buildings, such as courts. This issue received national attention recently when Judge Moore in Alabama refused to remove a large display of the Ten Commandments after being ordered to do so by a U.S. District Court. Moore became a hero with conservative fundamentalist activists when he was removed from his position due to his refusal.

The court has dealt with this issue once before, in 1980, when it overruled a law in Kentucky that ordered a display of the Ten Commandments in public classrooms. This time the court is looking at the constitutionality of

allowing courts or other public facilities to display the Commandments at all. The last religiously motivated case of this magnitude was the recent Newdow case calling for the removal of "under god" from the pledge of allegiance. In the Newdow case, the court dodged the issue completely by claiming that Newdow, who sued in the name of his daughter over whom he did not have custody, had no right to sue in his child's name. It is not clear what the court's opinion would have been had they actually tackled the issue at hand.

Many believe that the court did not render a decision in the Newdow case because they could not make a constitutional argument for keeping the "under god" statement in the pledge but did not want to make the unpopular move of removing it. It does appear, however, that the court is willing to deal with the Ten Commandment issue. Unlike the "under god" statement, the Ten Commandments are religion-specific to the Jewish and Christian religions. This clear violation of the Separation of Church and State doctrine laid down in the Bill of Rights will likely be shot down. Except for Justice Scalia, it is hard to see the Judges attempting to make a case for what is unequivocally counter to the establishment clause of the first amendment. Hopefully, this case will bring the nation one step closer to a true separation of church and state and a real religious freedom as promised in the Constitution.

Questions or comments...Email me at Beowolf88@aol.com

**NYCA POETRY CLUB
CALL : 212-535-7425**

Aside from the Judeo/Christian mythology, many other mythologies have had their devotees. Match these gods or goddesses with the appropriate mythology.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Eros_____ | 1. Celtic |
| Yemaya____ | 2. Norse |
| Coatlucue__ | 3. Egyptian |
| Lempo_____ | 4. Native-American |
| Diana_____ | 5. Chinese |
| Ixchel_____ | 6. Greek |
| Loki_____ | 7. Aztec |
| Bochica____ | 8. Mayan |
| Set_____ | 9. Finnish-Lapp |
| Kwatee_____ | 10. Roman |
| Cuchuliann__ | 11. African |
| Dao_____ | 12. Incan |
-

**Review Delayed on Sale of
Creationist Book at Grand
Canyon**

By Kimberly Edds

Special to The Washington Post
Friday, October 15, 2004

Visitors to the information plaza at Grand Canyon National Park are told how the Colorado River carved the great chasm over millennia through the rocks of the Colorado Plateau. But nestled among the hiking guides and souvenirs sold at the plaza bookstore is a book that tells a very different story of how the canyon came to be.

The book asserts that the canyon was created in a matter of days as a result of the same flood that had threatened to sink Noah and his ark. A federal review of whether the book should be sold at the park has been delayed for months as officials wrestle with the issue of separation of church and state.

Grand Canyon: A Different View, compiled by Colorado River guide Tom Vail, includes essays by creationists who maintain that the canyon's sedimentary strata were formed by deposits from Noah's flood and that the canyon's age should be based on a biblical rather than an evolutionary timeline — making it just thousands of years old, not the six million years that geologists say.

Critics believe the creationist book should not be sold by a shop on government property because it contradicts the park's mission to teach science.

In January, David Shaver, the chief of the Geologic Resources Division of the National Park Service, issued a memo recommending that the book be pulled because it "purports to be science when it is not, and its sale in the park book store directly conflicts with the Service's statutory mandate to promote the use of sound science in all its programs, including public education." Vail's book was sent to the national headquarters for a review of the appropriateness of its sale at the park. The Interior Department, which oversees the Park Service, expected a final decision in February, but it has been delayed as lawyers at the Interior and Justice departments tackle the issue, Park Service spokeswoman Elaine Sevy said.

No deadline has been set for a final ruling, and the book will continue to be sold until a decision is made, she said.

"It's difficult deciding on where to draw the line on these issues," she said. "This could be precedent-setting and we are

moving very carefully and very cautiously."

Jeff Ruch, executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, a nonprofit advocacy group, said the Park Service "in essence made the decision to keep the book on sale."

Meanwhile, the book has been moved from the natural science section to the inspirational section in the store.

A nonprofit group runs the bookstore, but park officials approve which books can be sold there. Several other books have been rejected in past months for including outdated or inaccurate information. Members of the scientific community are questioning why Vail's book was approved.

"The science presented is substandard, inaccurate and greatly at variance with the mainstream scientific view presented at Grand Canyon National Park," said Eugenie C. Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education. "Nobody is saying this book should be taken out and burned," Scott said. "But it should not be sold at this bookstore."



**"All thinking men are
atheists."**

Ernest Hemingway, American
author (1899-1961)

NYCA LIBRARY

DONATE ATHEISM RELATED BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS.

Bush and Kerry Put Their Faith on Display

TEMPE, Ariz. (Reuters) — President Bush and Democratic challenger John Kerry put their faith on display on Wednesday as Bush linked his foreign policy to a belief that “God wants everybody to be free” and Kerry tied his faith to a fight for equality and justice.

In the third and final debate between the two candidates, the Republican president, a Methodist who speaks often of his faith on the campaign trail, was asked how his religion influenced his decision-making.

Bush said his faith gives him “calmness in the storms of the presidency.”

He emphasized that he does not seek to impose his religion on others.

“But when I make decisions, I stand on principle, and the principles are derived from who I am,” Bush said.

“I believe that God wants everybody to be free. That’s what I believe. And that’s been part of my foreign policy,” he added.

Kerry, a Roman Catholic, said he agreed with Bush on the importance of faith but said he differed on how to put that into practice. The Massachusetts senator faulted Bush for policies that he said promoted economic inequality in the United States.

“I think that everything you do in public life has to be guided by your faith, affected by your faith,

but without transferring it in any official way to other people,” Kerry said. “That’s why I fight for equality and justice.”

The Massachusetts senator has come under criticism from some members of the Catholic hierarchy for his support for a woman’s right to choose on abortion — a stance at odds with church doctrine.

Kerry reaffirmed his position on abortion in the debate, saying he does not believe in legislating faith.

“I believe that choice (on abortion) is a woman’s choice. It’s between a woman, god and her doctor,” the Senator said. “And that’s why I support that.”

Scientists Downsize the Human Genome

We have far fewer genes than we thought: 20,000 or so

The Associated Press
Oct. 20, 2004

NEW YORK — How many genes does it take to make a human? Only about the same number it takes for a small flowering plant or a tiny worm, says a new estimate that’s sharply reduced from just three years ago. Number of Genes: Fruit Fly: 13,600 C. Elegans 19,500 Humans 20-25,000 Rice 45,000 Maize 50,000 *Source: Nature*

“We (humans) don’t look very impressive in the competition,” said Dr. Francis Collins, co-author of the new analysis by the international group that decoded the human genome.

The new estimate is 20,000 to 25,000 genes, a drop from the 30,000 to 40,000 that the same group of scientists published in 2001.

By comparison, the tiny roundworm *C. elegans*, a favorite research subject, has around 19,500 genes. A small flowering plant in the mustard family, *Arabidopsis*, has about 27,000.

But the complexity of the human body arises from more than just its genetic parts list, experts said.

“It’s not just the number of genes that matters,” said another co-author, Eric Lander of the Broad Institute in Cambridge, Mass. “It really is how nature uses these genes.”

Scientists have long speculated about how many genes people have. Some have put it at 100,000 or more, and the genome project’s initial figure fell in the low end of estimates when it was announced.

In a betting pool among scientists that ran from 2000 to 2003, the average guess before the consortium published its estimate in 2001 was about 66,000 genes. Afterward, the average dropped to about 44,000.

Collins, director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, put his money on about 48,000 genes when the contest began. That’s about twice the new estimate.

“Oh well,” he said this week, “live and learn.”

Like the betting pool, the new estimate deals only with genes that tell cells how to make proteins. It is reported in a recent issue of the journal *Nature* by the International Human Genome Sequencing Consortium, which had determined the sequence of nearly all of the three billion-plus chemical building blocks that make up the human DNA code. Certain sequences of these building blocks

make up genes, just like certain sequences of letters create words.

When the consortium produced its 2001 gene count estimate, it still had many gaps in the DNA sequence it had determined. Now the scientists have closed those gaps as much as they can with current technology.

The finished version reveals that many DNA sequences originally counted as genes were actually non-functioning copies of real genes and that sometimes parts of the same gene were counted as two genes, Lander said.

Scientists said the new range appears to be firm, especially with 20,000 at the lower end, because laboratory work has independently demonstrated that 19,599 genes exist.

Gerald Rubin, a gene expert at the University of California at Berkeley who did not participate in the analysis, said the result “is as good a guess as one can make at this point.... I think the estimate is unlikely to change very much.”

“We just have to get used to the fact that we don’t have many more genes than a worm,” Rubin said.

So how can humans be so complex with relatively few genes?

In comparison to simpler organisms, Collins said, humans benefit more from genes that turn out multiple proteins rather than one, and from complex proteins that do more than one job. And anyway, lots of biological complexity is based not on individual proteins but on combinations, which can create lots of variety from the proteins found in people, he said.

Lander said he’s not concerned

that the number of human genes has turned out to be so limited.

“To the contrary, I think it’s great news,” he said, “because what it means is we already know a lot about most human genes.

Only in NYC

By Ken Bronstein

I live in Manhattan and have been parking my car on the NYC streets for more than twenty years. The word *garage* is not in my vocabulary.

As you may know, alternative street parking is a way of life for many of us New Yorkers, We park on the South side of the street on Monday and Thursday, on the North side on Tuesday and Friday. Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday are days of grace. On Monday, October 18th, I went to move my car just before the 9:00 AM north side restriction; and noticed that the hood of my car was open and the driver side door was ajar. I immediately thought that someone had stolen my battery. I lifted the car’s hood and everything looked okay — the battery was still there.

I looked into the car and noticed that my glove compartment contents were scattered all over the passenger side seat.

I tried to start the car — no response. I thought that they probably cut the wires of my alarm system. So I called AAA for a tow truck. In about 25 minutes, AAA arrived. The mechanic said, *lets try jumping the battery*. The dashboard lit up but the car would not start. The mechanic looked around the engine compartment and discovered that my battery cable was loose. He tightened the cable and the car started.

I looked around the car to see what had been stolen. Initially everything looked okay. Then I remembered — *where was my NYC Atheists cap ?* Nowhere to be found. **THE ONLY THING STOLEN WAS MY NYC ATHEISTS CAP!**

I sent an urgent email to the NYC Atheists membership alerting them to the theft of my NYC Atheists cap.

Reward is being offered.

We have established a NYC Atheists **BLUE ALERT SYSTEM** modeled after the amber alert system.

Ruling Guides Orthodox Sites’ Sabbath Sales

By Nicholas Zamiska

Because of the biblical prohibition against working on the holy day, Orthodox Jews must close their stores on the Sabbath. But does that also apply to their Web sites? With the rise of electronic commerce, that question has long been brewing in Orthodox Jewish circles.. Rabbi Heinemann one of a handful of rabbis in the United States recognized as having mastered the minutia of Jewish law. He is consulted frequently by Orthodox Jews — who number some 600,000 in the U.S. — seeking guidance with the wave of new technology never anticipated by the strictures of Judaism, especially when it involves the Sabbath, which begins at sunset Fridays and ends an hour after sunset Saturdays.

With the dilemma over Web-based businesses before him, Rabbi Heinemann recalled a 45-year-old related ruling that Orthodox-owned vending machines must be closed, because

even though the owner isn't present to make the exchange, he still collects the money. The parallel precedent seemed clear, so Rabbi Heinemann's answer was that Web sites, too, must be unplugged, even though the owner isn't technically doing anything.

A Web site operated by an Orthodox Jew could remain open only "if the shopping cart on the Web site is shut down," ensuring that no actual transactions took place, Rabbi Heinemann ruled in his group's small but influential newsletter *Kashrus Kurrents*.

The article spurred a storm of protests from Orthodox businessmen concerned that Rabbi Heinemann's ruling, which several rabbis say has the force of law among observant Jews, would mean a loss of online orders.

The 66-year-old Rabbi Heinemann travels around the world certifying everything from ovens manufactured by General Electric Co. that can be programmed to go into "Sabbath mode" — meaning that food can be kept warm because Orthodox Jews aren't allowed to turn things on by pressing buttons on the Sabbath — to legal arrangements in which a Jew transfers formal ownership of his business to a gentile one day a week so it can stay open on Saturday..

Paul Mendlowitz, senior vice president of DiamondCard Processing Corp., a credit-card processing company in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. who is Orthodox, and others countered that since most Web sites don't process transactions on Saturdays, no money changes hands, so the sites should be able to remain open. Israel Sendrovic, a retired executive vice president of the

Federal Reserve Bank of New York, weighed in with the protesters, confirming that credit-card transactions over the Internet aren't generally processed Saturdays.

"One of my hottest business days was on Rosh Hashana," says Rabbi Mayer Pasternak, who created Jewishmusic.com, an online emporium of aural Judaica. "I felt a twinge of guilt coming back and there were a couple hundred orders." The guilt was especially strong, he says, because he assumed that visitors to his site were nearly all Jewish, and should not be browsing the Internet on the Sabbath and holidays at all.

The Talmud, the collection of writings that make up the body of 3,000-year-old Jewish civil and religious law, weighs in on many of the finer points of the Sabbath, but not all of them, and could never

have anticipated the explosion of Internet shopping, to name only one technological development that would have confounded the ancient patriarchs.

An infertile Jewish couple once asked the rabbi whether their child would be Jewish if they used a surrogate mother who wasn't. To the couple's relief, Rabbi Heinemann ruled that their child would indeed be Jewish, as the host mother would simply be an "incubator." He even developed an Orthodox procedure for ensuring the paternity and maternity of a baby conceived in a test tube: An Orthodox Jew must be on hand to collect the sperm and the egg and to seal the contents of the test tube.

The rabbi heard from an array of people who disagreed with him on the Web site issue. He was

inundated with phone calls both at work and his home, and after mulling over the decision, he handed down a rare reversal in the newsletter's latest issue in May.

"Technically speaking," he wrote, "the vendor's monetary acquisition, the *kinyan kesef*, happens on a weekday so there is no issue, prohibition of *mekach umemkar*, business sale transactions, on Shabbos."

The issue has quieted down, but the rabbi, who has reversed himself only a handful of times in his 40-year career, says it deserved the attention: "This is something you have to know. Keeping the Sabbath in a proper way is very important to us."

Library Resource Center Rules

1. Must be a NYCA Member
2. Open: After NYCA Sunday Events
3. Open: By Appointment Call: Pat Berger (Librarian) 212-489-5644 (3 days in advance)
4. Arrangements for items to be delivered and returned at NYCA Events. Call: Pat Berger (Librarian) 212-489-5644 (3 days in advance)
5. Length of Loan: One Month
6. Waiting List

The goal of the Center is to have an eclectic assemblage of materials about Atheism and issues of concern to Atheists. Donations are encouraged. Sufi anyone?

NYC-ATHEIST ACTIVITIES



**September 10 — NYCA Library
Dedication**

NYC Atheists Members at the dedication of the NYC Atheists Library



**September 10 — NYCA Library's
First Loaned Book**

(L) Pat Berger (NYCA Librarian) holds the first NYC Atheists' Library loaned book to (R) Mildred Vargas



September 17 — Street Tabling

NYC Atheists Street Tabling at Columbus Circle



September 22 — Michael Newdow

We taped Dr. Newdow (under god — pledge case), for future NYC Atheists Cable Shows. (Mid December)

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:** _____