

WEB: [NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG](http://NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG)

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

212-330-6794

## FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

### DECEMBER

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

### JANUARY

Jan. 7	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Channel 67)
Jan. 9*	Sunday 12:30 P.M.	NYC Atheists Sunday Brunch
Jan. 14	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Channel 67)
Jan. 18**	Tuesday 7 P.M.	NYC Atheists Meetup
Jan. 21	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Channel 67)
Jan. 28	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYC Atheists Cable Show (Manhattan Cable Channel 67)
Jan. 30***	Sunday 1:30 P.M.	NYC Atheists Annual Meeting

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\* 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 Avenue (Between 89th and 90th Street).

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

\*\*\*\* Solstice Dinner Location: Minado Restaurant at 6 East 32nd Street (Between Madison and Fifth Avenue)

Dinner Cost: \$ 35 (includes Buffet, Tax, Tip, and Soft drink) — Wine Extra. Reservations are not required.

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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, seculars, separation-of-church/state advocates, and individuals who are questioning and searching beliefs.

**SEE PAGE 7 FOR NEW MEMBER 2005 MEMBERSHIP OFFER**  
**SEE PAGE 8 FOR SPECIAL RENEWAL 2005 MEMBERSHIP OFFER**



**Ken Bronstein**

**PRESIDENT'S SERMON**

**IS THE GLASS HALF FULL OR HALF EMPTY?**

The good news: there are only about 1,500 days until George W. Bush's second term of office will end.

The bad news: He could cause a lot of mischief between now and then.

The question: Is the glass half full or half empty?

Assumption: Bush will be faced with uncontrollable crises such as terrorism, globalization, balance of payments and the deficit. Iraq is beginning to look more like Vietnam. The difference is that Vietnam was localized, this war is global. So what is Bush to do? He cannot leave Iraq in the near term; Europe hates him, no relief there. He will have to slug it out, hoping for no major terrorist attacks in the U.S.

Our problem: Since he cannot control the international scene, he will mask his impotence by selecting domestic issues like gay marriage, faith-based initiatives, etc., to satisfy Middle America and the religious right.

What then should NYC Atheists be doing? We should be building our organization, being prepared to protest, keeping the dialogue going, writing letters to the editor, getting our message out: *The separation of church and state*. We have lots of support by both believers and non-believers. We probably will lose some battles, but in the end we will win...because we are right.

**Contact me with your comments: Ken Bronstein at [NYCATHEISTS@AOL.COM](mailto:NYCATHEISTS@AOL.COM) or 212-535-7425.**

**PAST EVENTS/MEETINGS**

**November 4, (Thursday) 8 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Cable Show #20:**  
(Manhattan Cable Channel 67)

**Guest:** Massimo Pigliucci

**November 11, (Thursday) 8 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Cable Show #21:**  
(Manhattan Cable Channel 67)

**Guest:** Massimo Pigliucci

**November 14 (Sunday) 12:30 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Sunday Brunch**  
**Location:** Euro Diner  
126 E28 St. (Between Lexington  
and Park Avenue)

We returned to the Euro Diner, all had a good time. After brunch, we went to the NYC Atheists Library.

**November 16, (Tuesday) 7 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Meetup:**

Manhattan Lounge  
1270 2nd Avenue (Between 89th  
and 90th Street)

**November 18, (Thursday) 8 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Cable Show #22:**

(Manhattan Cable Channel 67)  
**Guest:** Massimo Pigliucci

**November 19, (Friday) 6:30 P.M.**  
**Monthly Meeting:**

**Subject:** Thomas Paine  
**Location:** 352 7th Avenue  
16th Floor (Between 29 and  
30th Street)

Brian McCartin was outstanding in describing Thomas Paine's life, his contribution to the Declaration of Independence, individual rights, labor rights, etc.

**November 20, (Saturday) 8:45 A.M.**  
**Field Trip:**

Thomas Paine Museum

Seven NYC Atheists members made the field trip to the Thomas Paine Museum and cottage. After visiting the Paine site, Bob Curci, one of our Members and a member of the Bronx Botanical Gardens, took our members to their Toy Train Display.

**November 25, (Thursday) 8 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Cable Show #23:**

(Manhattan Cable Channel 67)  
**Guest:** Massimo Pigiucci

**JOIN NYC ATHEISTS**

## FUTURE EVENTS

### **December 2 (Thursday) 8 P.M. NYCA Cable Show #24**

(Manhattan Cable Channel 67)  
Guest: Michael Newdow

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### **December 9 (Thursday) 8 P.M. NYCA Cable Show # 25**

(Manhattan Cable Channel 67)  
Guest: Michael Newdow

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### **December 12 (Sunday) 12:30 P.M. NYC Atheists Sunday Brunch**

**Location:** EURO Diner 126 East  
E28 St. (Between Lexington and  
Park Avenue)

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### **December 16 (Thursday) 8 P.M. NYC Atheists Cable Show**

(Manhattan Cable Channel 67)  
**Guest:** Michael Newdow

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### **December 21, (Tuesday) 7 P.M. NYC Atheists Solstice Dinner:**

**Location:** Minado Restaurant 6  
East 32nd St. (Between Madison  
and Fifth Avenue)  
**Cost:** \$35 (includes Buffet, Tax,  
Tip, Soft Drink,) Wine Extra.  
Reservations not required

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### **December 23, (Thursday) 8 P.M. NYC Atheists Cable Show**

(Manhattan Cable Channel 67)  
**Guest:** Michael Newdow

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### **December 30, (Thur.) 8 P.M. NYC Atheists Cable Show**

(Manhattan Cable Channel 67)  
**Guest:** TBA

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Many mythologies have had their devotees. Match these gods or goddesses with the appropriate mythology.

- Eros \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Celtic  
Yemaya \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Norse  
Coatllicue \_\_\_\_\_ 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
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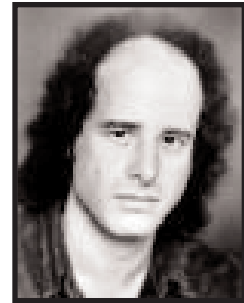
### **My Journey to Atheism**

*by Margie Wait*

I didn't discover my atheism until I was in my mid-thirties, which is late in life when you compare it to others who have found their way to enlightenment in their teens or as young children. But better late than never.

Before I began my journey to atheism, I lived in a moderately Christian home, was baptized in the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), took part in the youth groups at the church, then attended a Presbyterian college in my native state of Nebraska—not for the religion, but for its outstanding music department. Then, as a young adult, I attended various Protestant churches, where I enjoyed singing in the choirs.

I even had a stint as a “born-again Christian,” but quickly saw the hypocrisy of it all when I attended a service where they were



**IF HEAT RISES — THEN  
HEAVEN MUST BE HOTTER  
THAN HELL — Steven Wright**

speaking in tongues. What a bizarre experience that was!

It wasn't until I was a graduate student, attending library school at the University of Denver and working in the main library, that my journey to atheism really began. I encountered the book *Why I Am Not a Christian* by Bertrand Russell while checking for another book in the stacks. I scanned it to find out what Russell had to say on the subject. That brief moment with Russell started me thinking about religion.

I had always had questions about the Christian religion, especially when I was taking classes for my baptism in the church. I was greeted only with gentle laughter as the minister moved on to other stories in the bible that we were supposed to accept as fact. It was Bertrand Russell who introduced me to the idea that there are legitimate reasons why some people don't accept the hype of Christianity.

During my time at Denver University, while cataloging books in the library, an encyclopedia of mythology passed through my hands. I glanced at the contents and discovered that an item called “Christianity” was listed in this book on mythology! I mentioned it to the freethinking women in my

department and we all had a good laugh. That was the first time I heard anyone say, “One man’s religion is another man’s mythology.”

I finished my studies for my Master’s degree in librarianship and moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to my first professional library position at the University of Tulsa. Through my work at the university, I was asked to consult with a Jewish cantor on organizing his library. I lived most of my life in a small town with very few Jewish people, so this was my first experience working with anyone who actually practiced Judaism. I came away from that experience thinking that there’s more than one way to look at the world.

Later I joined Al-Anon because I was in a relationship with someone who revealed to me that he had an addiction problem. He joined Alcoholics Anonymous and started the 12-step program. To understand what my friend was going through, I joined Al-Anon. As a member of Al-Anon, I was required to go through the same 12-step program that my boyfriend was going through. It was during that time that I came to the conclusion that I really didn’t believe in a personal god. I didn’t know what my “higher power” was, but it wasn’t the god of the Christian bible. So I stopped going to church. The relationship with my boyfriend ended and I quit going to Al-Anon as well.

Less than a year later, I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. I was angry at the “higher power” as I perceived it and asked “Why me?”

My life was in transition. I had moved to a state closer to my

childhood home for a one-year contract position at the University of Wyoming. Therefore, I was looking for a new job, knowing I had MS and sensing that I wasn’t going to be getting any help or understanding from anyone in my family. There was an opening at a library in Utah and I applied for it. My thinking was, maybe I should move to Utah. After all, I had worked with several Mormons and they seemed like nice, caring individuals. I thought that if anything were to happen to me, surely the Mormons would be able to help me. So, I took the job and moved to a small town where the state university was located, which was primarily populated with Mormons.

I immediately suffered from culture shock. The entire activities of the town centered around the church. If you didn’t belong to a church in town, you quite literally had very few activities available to you to meet people outside of work.

It wasn’t until I was there for a few months that I met someone at work; we happened to hit it off and we went to dinner one evening. Naturally, we started discussing religion, specifically the Mormon religion. I discovered that my new friend wasn’t a Mormon, although he was raised in the Mormon church. Before that night was over, my new friend gave me some brochures from American Atheists. Although I had encountered several atheists and agnostics during my lifetime, I had never investigated the subject before that night.

I read the brochures and thought to myself, “I’ve had these thoughts before, but I’ve NEVER expressed them to anyone.”

Reading the Atheist brochures was definitely a turning point for me.

My new friend invited me to attend the monthly brunch and meeting of the Utah Chapter of American Atheists. Although I was somewhat cautious on my first visit, I discovered a group of intelligent, interesting people who were interested in life and living. I knew almost immediately that I was an atheist, too. I attended several more meetings and felt I had finally found where I belonged.

After a few months, I considered joining American Atheists, but I asked myself if the relationship with my friend were to not work out, would I still want to be a member of this atheist organization. I decided that it was important enough to me because it wasn’t just about atheism, but activism and preserving the constitutional separation of state and church.

The more I read, the more I learned about atheism, our constitution and the idea of separation of the church and state, the more I became aware of what was at stake in the real world. I recognized that Utah was actually a theocracy. (I bought a T-shirt that stated “Before Moving to Utah, I lived in America” and got dirty looks from the townsfolk when I went to the store.)

Through the co-directors of the Utah Chapter of American Atheists, I became more involved with the “movement” to keep the church separate from the government. It was, and still is, a difficult job in Utah to keep the church from running the state and stepping on the rights of every other religion, as well as those of



atheists, agnostics and other non-believers. Since that time (1986-1987) I have been active with American Atheists, including during the Murray-O’Hair era.

What I have learned from being an atheist is that humans must depend on each other, for there is no magical, mythical being in charge of our lives. I have learned much more about the world since becoming an atheist because I’m more interested in life and living here and now than in a “hereafter.” All we can do as enlightened people is to work toward leaving this place we call Earth a better place for the generations that will follow.

When I became an Atheist, the anger I had towards the “higher power” at the time I was diagnosed with MS went away, because you can’t be angry at something that doesn’t exist.

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"Life’s journey is not to arrive at the grave safely in a well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, totally worn out, shouting what a ride!"

— Anonymous

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### **Theocracy on the March: Four More years of Wall- Crushing**

*By Ron Widelec*

The first term of the Bush administration has been dedicated to breaking the legal wall between church and state. Four years have produced some of the most ardent attacks upon the wall, a wall developed by the mind of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison (who, by the standards of the Christian Right, would be considered un-American. Of course the Christian Right tries to

cover up these little facts about our founding fathers). Such attacks include, but are not limited to, anti-gay laws and amendments, most importantly the ban on same-sex marriage, and the sprawling faith-based initiative sending countless millions of dollars into the hands of fundamentalist Christian groups.

Those groups have now repaid their debt by sending the Bush Theocrats to another term. Sounds about right: all of our tax money is filtered into the hands of Ultra Conservative churches who then vote in droves to re-elect the president. Our tax dollars hard at work.

Four more years of President Bush promises increased assaults upon the wall. With Bush winning by a significant majority of the popular vote, conservatives see a new mandate to press even harder than before. President Bush himself declared that he gained “political capital” that he intends to spend. Hard as it is to believe, he was holding back in the last few years. One of the many things he will spend his new capital on will undoubtedly be siege towers, battering rams, and catapults with which to pulverize what remains of Jefferson’s Wall.

The Christian Right-wingers are licking their chops as Fundamentalist bigwigs, like Jerry Falwell, are preparing for an all-out assault. In the name of freedom and family (the ultimate attempt at honor I suppose), Falwell and his crusaders have started yet another right-wing attack group with the hopes of using the new Republican mandate to spread their biblical agenda.

Falwell declared that an evangelical revolution is occurring and they must continue to vote Christian. Of course, Falwell believes that to be Christian you must vote a certain way. Evangelicals now make up a large number of the Republican Party, enough to claim almost complete control over the nation’s domestic agenda, as evidenced by the call for a return of school prayer in the 2004 Republican Party Platform. The new group, known as the Faith and Values Coalition, has a very old goal: conservative judges who intend to make the constitution a carbon copy of the bible, passing the ban on same-sex marriage and electing conservative politicians. Falwell wants to continue his earlier mission of “reclaiming American for god.”

This is nothing new, however. The past 30 years have seen the Republican Party pandering to the Christian Right wing fundamentalists and little has changed in the aspect. The downright scary issue is that now, in an attempt to gain some of the evangelical vote, the Democrats have begun talking biblical as well. America’s government, (well known for being the most religious of all western industrialized nations) is becoming one in which political ambition must go hand in hand with being versed in bible studies and willingness to pander to the growing fundamentalist in the nation.

This is not an attack on Evangelical beliefs. Like all Americans, we have the right to believe whatever we want and practice any religion. However, the Christian Right wing does not want religious freedom, they want religious domination. The

Christian Rightwing believes they have the right to enforce their narrow idea of morality on a whole nation, and of course they feel no need to justify such beliefs other than to quote a biblical verse or two. The message from the Christian Rightwing to America is clear: "You have the right to believe what you want, as long as you follow our bible's rules and don't do anything that displeases us." Unfortunately, with a legitimate Republican victory this year, and a weak Democratic party playing the role of imitator, they may prove right! That wailing you sometimes hear at night is not the wind; it is Jefferson and Madison weeping for America.

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## RENEW YOUR NYC ATHEISTS MEMBERSHIP

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### 2005 Membership Renewals

NYC Atheists annual memberships cover the period from January 1 to December 31. Therefore all memberships will expire as of December 31, 2004.

NYCA is offering a special renewal Membership Program incentive: Between December 1, 2004 and January 30, 2005 membership for \$10. We continue to offer our new member membership categories — see below. Life memberships are now available.

<b>Basic</b>	<b>\$ 25</b>
<b>Supporter</b>	<b>\$ 100</b>
<b>Fellow</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>
<b>Patron</b>	<b>\$ 500</b>
<b>Life</b>	<b>\$ 1000 – 5000</b>

Remember you must be a paid up 2005 member to vote at the January 2005 Annual Meeting.

With membership, you will receive a mailed copy of the NYC Atheists Newsletter, discounts at special events, voting privileges, Library access and Yahoo group privileges.

After January 30, 2005 we will return to our new member membership fees.

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### SEE 2005 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORMS: PAGE 7 (REGULAR APPLICATION PROGRAM)

### PAGE 8 (SPECIAL RENEWAL PROGRAM)

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### SOLSTICE DINNER

Our second Solstice Dinner will be Tuesday, December 21 at 7:00 P.M. All are invited, NYC Atheists Members, their guests, and non-members. **The cost is \$ 35 per person which includes selections from the 100-foot-long buffet, tax, tip, and soft drink.**

This year dinner will take place at the Minado Restaurant, which is located at 6 East 32nd Street (Madison/Fifth Avenue).

The Minado is a Japanese Style Buffet which offers over 30 varieties of Sushi and Sashimi, many beef, chicken, fish, dumpling and noodle dishes, including a variety of crabs, lobster, clams, oysters, and shrimp, gourmet salads and numerous desserts.

Reservations are not required.

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Claims of speaking with god or hearing from god are delusional, dishonest or both. Such claims are made by the same people who, when things go bad, say, *it's god's will*, and when they go well, *My prayers were answered*. Prayer is like a rocking chair: gives you something to do, but does not get you anywhere. — Anonymous

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### NYCA LIBRARY

Remember we meet at the NYC Atheists Library after every second Sunday Brunch and when we have Sunday Meetings.

We will posting our Book List on our NYC Atheists Website: NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG on or before December 10th.

**We are always looking for donations for our library. Remember all donations are tax deductible.**



As democracy is perfected, the office of president represents, more and more closely, the inner soul of the people. On some great and glorious day, the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last, and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron.  
— H.L. Mencken (1880 – 1956)

# NYC ATHEISTS INC. 2005 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

WEB: NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG

PHONE: (212) 330-6794

(January 1 to December 31, 2005)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Required) First Last

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Required) Number Street P.O. Box/Apt.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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 2005 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

I support NYC Atheists Inc. purposes and goals and apply for membership which entitles me to voting and nominating rights (except organizations\*) and a mailed copy of the newsletter as an:

Individual member:  (\$ 25)  (\$ 100)  (\$ 250)  (\$ 500)  (\$ 1000)  
Basic Supporter Fellow Patron Life

Senior (Age 65 or greater):  (\$ 20) Full Time Student:  (\$ 10)

ADDITIONAL DONATION:  (\$ \_\_\_\_\_ ) TOTAL AMOUNT:  (\$ \_\_\_\_\_ )

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Where you a 2004 NYC Atheists Member? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about NYC Atheists? \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for joining NYC Atheists? \_\_\_\_\_

Skills/Interests? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know any NYC Atheists Members? \_\_\_\_\_

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CHECK PAYABLE TO: NYC ATHEISTS INC. — SEND APPLICATION TO:  
NYC ATHEIST INC. MEMBERSHIP — COOPER STATION P.O. Box 93 NY, NY 10276-0093

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NYC-ATHEIST ACTIVITIES



October 8 — Monthly Meeting

Paul Grosswald our October featured speaker.



November 16 — Meetup

L-R: Josh Karpf, Jay Gumbiner, Ben Forman.



November 19 — Monthly Meeting

Bryan McCartin our November featured speaker.



November 19 – 21 — Street Tabling

L-R: Susan Lanza, Dennis Horvitz, Pat Berger.

**NYC ATHEISTS: SPECIAL RENEWAL 2005 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt No.: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

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**YOUR 2005 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

**\$ 10 — SPECIAL 2005 YEAR END MEMBERSHIP — \$ 10**

**DONATION: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_