

FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

JUNE

June 2*	Thursday 6 & 7:30 P.M.	NYCA Dinner & Movie Nite (See Page 3)
June 2**	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
June 5*****	Sunday 9 A.M. – 6 P.M.	NYCA Street Tabling
June 9**	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
June 12***	Sunday 12:30 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
June 16**	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
June 21****	Tuesday 7 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
June 23**	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
June 23*****	Thursday 6:30 P.M.	NYCA Monthly Meeting
June 26*****	Sunday 10 A.M. – 6 P.M.	NYCA Street Tabling

JULY

July 4	Monday 1 & 9 P.M.	NYCA Barbeque/Fireworks (see page 3)
July 7*	Thursday 6 & 7:30 P.M.	NYCA Dinner & Movie Nite
July 7**	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
July 10***	Sunday 12:30 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
July 14**	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
July 19*****	Tuesday 7 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
July 21**	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
July 28**	Thursday 8 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
July 28*****	Thursday 6:30 P.M.	NYCA Monthly Meeting

CHECK FOR LAST MINUTE CHANGES CALL 212-330-6794

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- * Dinner: Pier 17 — 3rd Floor Food Court — South St. Seaport.
Movie: Southbridge Towers — 66 Frankfort St. — Community Room.
 - ** Manhattan Cable Channel 67 (RNN Cable Channel 110).
 - *** Palace Diner — 122 East 57th Street (Between Lexington and Park Avenue).
Brunch Cost: Order from Menu — Reservations not required.
 - **** Manhattan Lounge 1720 Second Avenue (Between 89th and 90th Street).
 - ***** 352 7th Avenue, 16th Floor (Between 29 and 30th Street).
 - ***** Broadway (Between 74 and 75 St.) — First Shift 8:45 A.M. – 1 P.M. — Second Shift 1P.M. – 6 P.M.
 - ***** Columbus Circle (Between Broadway & 60th St. in front of the Time Warner Building.)
First Shift 9:45 A.M. – 1:30 P.M. — Second Shift 1:30 P.M. – 6 P.M.

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

SEE PAGE 8 FOR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

PRESIDENT'S SERMON
THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR US TO GO ON THE OFFENSIVE



The "New Puritans" (religious right) have lost much public support because of their extreme position and aggressive legal actions involving the Terry Schiavo situation. Congress (even many *pro-lifers*) now supports federal funding of Embryonic stem cell research. Moderate Republicans and Democrats have negotiated a non-Nuclear Option Treaty. George W.'s Iraqi War has become a quagmire and his private investment account Social Security proposal has fallen on deaf ears. Finally, after the mid-term 2006 elections, George W. will become a lame duck President.

Our priority one: We need to dramatically increase our membership. We need people to commit an hour or two a week to distribute NYC Atheists' newsletters and literature to the public. (Street Fairs and high street-traffic locations are good venues.) There are millions of non-believers and separation of church / state advocates in America who need to be reached.

Our priority two: We need your financial support. As we grow, our operating costs have grown significantly. For example: Our monthly meeting costs are about \$300 (room rental, etc.). Our monthly newsletter costs about \$450 to print and distribute. We need individuals to help pick up partial, monthly, or annual expenses.

Our priority three: We need people to help us with our NYC Atheists' Cable Show video editing, lighting, audio, etc. We need someone to be our new newsletter editor. We need someone to help us with public and press relations. We need volunteers to coordinate NYC Atheists events. We need a NYC Atheists facility.

ONLY THROUGH A LARGE AND INVOLVED MEMBERSHIP CAN WE CONTINUE OUR PROGRESS AND HAVE AN IMPACT.

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

PAST EVENTS

May 5, Thursday
NYC Atheists Movie Nite
We began our first Thursday of the month Movie Nite with *Inherit The Wind*.

May 5, 12, 19, 26 Thursday
NYC Atheists Cable Show

May 8, Sunday
NYC Atheists Brunch / Library / Book Club.
Richard Carrier, our book club guest, discussed his new book, *Sense & Goodness Without God*.

May 17, Tuesday
NYC Atheists Meet-Up

May 29, Sunday
NYC Atheists Monthly Meeting
Our speaker was Janice Rael, president of the Delaware Valley Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Janice Rael discussed her activism in the separation of church and state effort.

**ATHEISM IS A CONCLUSION
NOT A BELIEF**

FUTURE MEETINGS

**NYC ATHEISTS DINNER
AND MOVIE NITE**

Date: June 2, (Thursday)

Dinner Info:

Time: 6:00 - 7:15pm
Location: Pier 17 - 3rd floor food court Pier 17 is the building on the East River pier at South Street Seaport.
Purchase your meal at one of many counters and look for us sitting at the tables overlooking the harbor.

Movie Info:

Movie: *Elmer Gantry*

Time: 7:30 P.M.

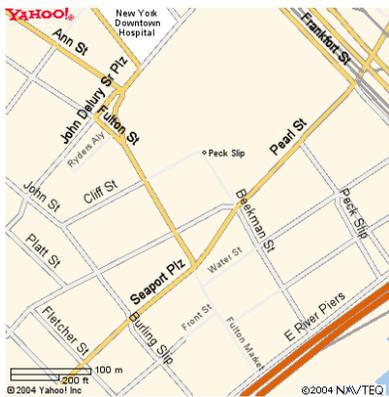
Where: Southbridge Towers Complex - 66 Frankfort Building. The complex is located between Water/Pearl and Fulton Street near the South Street Seaport.

Directions: See map below.

Southbridge is easily reached by Mass Transit: (within easy walking distance)

Subway: Fulton Street Station – A,C, J, M, Z,3, 4, 5; City Hall Sta.

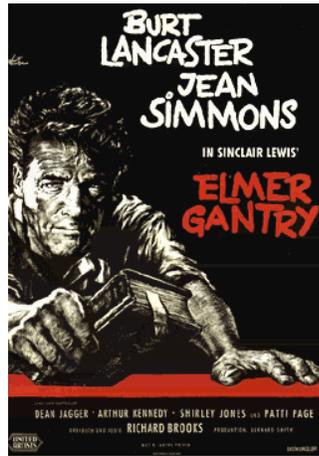
6. Buses: B51, M1, M15, M22, M103



The easiest / best way to enter the complex is to walk east along Fulton Street (towards the South Street Seaport), then through the walkway on Fulton Street by the side of the Footlocker store.

As you enter the walkway, (notice the large map on the wall that locates the complex's buildings). Walk straight through two courtyards, to 66 Frankfort. The Community Room is located on the first floor.

BELIEF GETS IN THE WAY OF LEARNING



Elmer Gantry (1960) is a film of Sinclair Lewis's novel regarding the charismatically engaging but scandalous Midwestern salesman turned preacher in the 1920s.

Elmer Gantry (Burt Lancaster) is a huckster who sells shoeshine and vacuum cleaners. Gantry is lustful, coarse, loud, ambitious, motivated by an easy dollar, golden-tongued, and often drunk.

The opportunistic Gantry becomes infatuated by a touring tent ministry evangelist-healer, the beautiful, pure, and dedicated Sister Sharon Falconer (Jean Simmons), and she is charmed by him as well: "You're amusing and you smell like a real man." He joins her tent ministry and becomes her lover.

Gantry turns into an evangelizing, Bible Belt revivalist preacher. Exhibiting tremendous showmanship, Brother Gantry, with rolled up shirt-sleeves, preaches hellfire and brimstone, thumps his Bible, performs miracles, and leads repentant sinners to conversion in the Bible Belt tent meetings.

His popularity helps to increase her fame and fortune, and she is able to realize her dream of building her own tabernacle of worship.

In an act of revenge, one of his old girlfriends, minister's daughter-

turned-prostitute Lulu Bains (Shirley Jones) sets him up and frames him with photographs taken in a compromising situation, ruining his reputation. The new tabernacle opens, but Sister Falconer tragically dies in a blazing tent fire. When asked if he will carry on Sister Sharon's work in the lucrative revivalist business, Gantry quotes scripture to explain how experiences have matured him, and why he will not continue.

NYC ATHEISTS: BRUNCH / LIBRARY / BOOK CLUB

Date: Sun., June 12, 12:30 P.M.

Where: Palace Restaurant
122 East 57th St. (Lexington / Park)
After brunch, we will move to the NYC Atheists' Library and hold our Book Club meeting.

We continue reading *from Science and Religion* edited by Paul Kurtz. Pages 243-272: *Does The Soul Exist?* by Jerome W. Elbert, *Efficacy of Prayer* by Irwin & Jack Tessman, *Science Versus Shroud Science* by Joe Nickell.

NYC ATHEISTS MONTHLY MEETING

Date: Sun., June 23, 12:30 P.M.

Where: 352 7th Ave. (29/30)

Subject: The threat of Dominionism

JULY 4th BARBEQUE AND FIRE WORKS BARBEQUE

Time: 1:00 – 5:00 P.M.

Location: Stone's House
(914-238-4803)

76 Devoe Rd., Chappaqua,
(Westchester County)

Car Directions: On Saw Mill
Parkway exit RT-120 /
CHAPPAQUA.

Stay on RT/120S – HUNTS-
QUAKER RD - GREELEY- KING
St - BEDFORD RD. for about 1.4
miles and then turn left onto
DEVOE RD.

Members:\$10 / Non Members:\$20

Train Directions: From Grand
Central Station – Harlem Line
11:30AM (Meet in Grand Hall at
the round info booth).

FIREWORKS

Time: 9:00 P.M.

Location: Meet at the Northeast
Corner of Second Ave. / 34th Street.
Manhattan.

Evolution v. Intelligent Design: Debate?

By Ron Widelec

The battle between science and
religion in our schools is still
raging across the nation. The
conservative advocates of
Intelligent Design, the idea that life
is so complex, there must be a
creator, are winning a battle in
Kansas City. The school board of
Kansas City is debating the issue
even though the board members
have already said their votes cannot
be swayed and Intelligent Design
will be brought into the classrooms
to challenge the long held scientific
theory of Evolution.

Advocates of Evolution have
decided, however, not to engage in
this discussion, believing that by
giving Intelligent Design a podium
next to Evolution in a debate will
give the impression that Intelligent
Design has scientific credibility, a
notion that nearly all experts deny.

As religious fundamentalists
attempt to take over the school
curriculum and turn American
education into a factory for the

production of fundamentalists, is
this the right position to take?
Intelligent Design is gaining
ground and the scientific
community is taking the position of
silent protest. This approach
cannot succeed. The only way to
thwart the advances of creationism
is to challenge their absurd
argument point by point in front of
the national audience. To call the
Kansas City board meetings
“propaganda” and yet remain silent
is to forfeit our science classrooms
and the future of American
education. The American
Association for the Advancement
of Science (AAAS) declined to
enter the discussion claiming that
“the hearing would most likely
serve to confuse the public.” The
AAAS should be ashamed of
themselves, electing to retreat and
allow the public to be mis-educated
and indoctrinated rather than risk
“confusion.”

Luckily, during the Scopes Trial
some Americans showed a bit more
mettle. Going to war over
Evolution doesn't mean real
science will win, but truth and
evidence should not be so easily
surrendered. As Galileo might say
if he was alive today and battling
for science “nevertheless, we did
evolve....”

**THE PURPOSE OF LIFE
EXPERIENCE IT**

**THE REAL RAPTURE
IS BEING ALIVE**

**MAN CREATED THE
THEORY OF GOD**

PRAYER;

TALKING TO ONESELF



Arthur Rubenstein, Polish-
American pianist (1886-1982).

During a radio interview with
Rubenstein the conversation took a
sharp turn away from music when
the interviewer suddenly asked,
"Mr. Rubenstein, do you believe in
god?" Rubenstein calmly replied,
"No. You see, what I believe in is
something much greater."

**MAKE THEM PROVE
THE THEORY OF GOD**

**WHO / WHAT
CREATED THE CREATOR?**



John Lennon, British musician
(1940-1980).

Lennon rejected religion and
dogma, but he was not really an
atheist - he espoused a sort of
vague spirituality.

From the song "Imagine";
"Imagine there's no heaven,
It's easy if you try,
No hell below us,
Above us only sky,
imagine all the people Living for
today. . .
Imagine there's no countries,
It isn't hard to do,
Nothing to kill or die for,
No religion too ."

From the song, "god,"
"god is a concept by which we
measure our pain
I don't believe in magic
I don't believe in I-Ching
I don't believe in Bible
I don't believe in Tarot
I don't believe in Hitler
I don't believe in Jesus."

And, from the song, "I Found Out"
"There ain't no Jesus gonna come
from the sky
Now that I found out I know I can
cry,
I found out! "

WEBSITE ENHANCEMENTS

We have enhanced the NYC
Atheists website to include:

FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

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.

Links to:

[The Declaration of Independence](#)
[The United States Constitution](#)
[Amendments to the Constitution](#)

JOHN ADAMS' A DEFENCE OF THE CONSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA [1787-1788].

**James Madison's Memorial and
Remonstrance Against Religious
Assessments . [1785]**

**The Thomas Jefferson Papers -
(American Memory from the
Library of Congress)**

Federalist Papers

The Treaty of Tripoli Art. 11.

As the Government of the United
States of America is not, in any
sense, founded on the Christian
religion; as it has in itself no
character of enmity against the
laws, religion, or tranquillity, of
Mussulmen; and, as the said States
never entered into any war, or act
of hostility against any Mahometan
nation, it is declared by the parties,
that no pretext arising from
religious opinions, shall ever
produce an interruption of the
harmony existing between the two
countries.

AND LINKS TO THE KEY U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISIONS OF SEPARATION OF CHURCH / STATE

McCullum v. Board of Education
Dist. 71, 333 U.S. 203 (1948)

Court finds unconstitutional
(violation of the Establishment
Clause) religious instruction in
public schools.

Burstyn v. Wilson, 72 S. Ct. 777
(1952)

The court rules that Government
may not censor a motion picture

because it is offensive to religious
beliefs.

Torcaso v. Watkins, 367 U.S. 488
(1961)

Court finds unconstitutional
(violates the Establishment Clause)
that applicants for public
office must swear that they believe
in the existence of God.

Engel v. Vitale, 82 S. Ct. 1261
(1962)

Court rules that any kind of prayer,
composed by public school
districts, even nondenominational
prayer, is unconstitutional
government sponsorship of
religion.

Abington School District v.
Schempp, 374 U.S. 203 (1963)

This is the Madalyn Murray Prayer Case

Court finds unconstitutional bible
reading over school intercom and
Murray v. Curlett, 374 U.S. 203
(1963) finds unconstitutional;
requiring a child to participate in
Bible reading and prayer .

Epperson v. Arkansas, 89 S. Ct.
266 (1968)

Court finds unconstitutional the
banning of the teaching of
evolution. A state cannot alter any
element in a course of study in
order to promote a religious point
of view.

Lemon v. Kurtzman, 91 S. Ct.
2105 (1971)

Court ruled unconstitutional using
tax money to subsidize religious
schools, which led to the creation
of the "Lemon Test," that states
that any government practice:

- Must have a secular legislative purpose;
- Must have the principal or primary effect of neither advancing nor inhibiting religion;
- Must not foster “excessive entanglement” between church and state.

Stone v. Graham, 449 U.S. 39 (1980)

Court rules unconstitutional posting of the Ten Commandments in schools.

Marsh v. Chambers (1983)

Court rules state legislature may pray and have a chaplain.

Wallace v. Jaffree, 105 S. Ct. 2479 (1985)

Court rules unconstitutional the public school moment of silence statute where legislative record reveals that motivation for statute was the encouragement of prayer. Court majority silent on whether "pure" moment of silence scheme, with no bias in favor of prayer or any other mental process, would be constitutional.

Edwards v. Aquillard, 107 S. Ct. 2573 (1987)

Court rules unconstitutional the requirement of the teaching of "creation science" in all instances in which evolution is taught.

Allegheny County v. ACLU, 492 U.S. 573 (1989)

Court rules unconstitutional (Establishment Clause) nativity scene displayed inside a government building.

Lee v. Weisman, 112 S. Ct. 2649 (1992)

Court rules unconstitutional for a school district to provide any clergy to perform nondenominational prayer at school graduation. (Particularly concerned about psychological coercion to which children, as opposed to adults, would be subjected.)

Church of Lukumi Babalu Awe, Inc. v. Hialeah, 113 S. Ct. 2217 (1993)

Court rules that ban on killing animals for religious sacrifices, while allowing sport killing and hunting, was unconstitutional.



Paul Davies

Professor of natural philosophy at the Australian Center for Astrobiology, at Macquarie University, in Sydney. He is the author of twenty-five books, including *Are We Alone?* (1995) and *The Fifth Miracle: The Search for the Origin and Meaning of Life* (1998). Davies won the 1995 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion

"god of the gaps"

From his article *E.T. and God*, Atlantic Monthly, September 2003.

Ascribing the origin of life to a divine miracle not only is anathema to scientists but also is theologically suspect. The term "god of the gaps" was coined to deride the notion that god can be invoked as an explanation whenever scientists have gaps in their understanding. The trouble with invoking god in this way is that as science advances, the gaps close, and god gets progressively squeezed out of the story of nature. Theologians long ago accepted that they would forever be fighting a rearguard battle if they tried to challenge science on its own ground. Using the formation of life to prove the existence of god is a tactic that risks instant demolition should someone succeed in making life in a test tube. And the idea that god acts in fits and starts, moving atoms around on odd occasions in competition with natural forces, is a decidedly uninspiring image of the Grand Architect.

The theological battle line in relation to the formation of life is not, therefore, between the natural and the miraculous but between sheer chance and law like certitude. Atheists tend to take the first side and theists line up behind the second but these divisions are general and by no means absolute. It's perfectly possible to be an atheist and believe that life is built ingeniously into the nature of the universe. It's also possible to be a theist and suppose that god engineered just one planet with life, with or without the help of miracles.

Though the discovery of microbes on Mars or elsewhere would ignite a passionate theological debate, the truly difficult issues surround the prospect of advanced alien beings in possession of intelligence and

technology. Most scientists don't think that such beings exist, but for forty years a dedicated band of astronomers has been sweeping the skies with radio telescopes in hopes of finding a message from a civilization elsewhere in the galaxy. Their project is known as SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence).

Because our solar system is relatively young compared with the universe overall, any alien civilization the SETI researchers might discover is likely to be much older, and presumably wiser, than ours. Indeed, it might have achieved our level of science and technology millions or even billions of years ago. Just contemplating the possibility of such advanced extraterrestrials appears to raise additional uncomfortable questions for religion.

The world's main faiths were all founded in the pre-scientific era, when Earth was widely believed to be at the center of the universe and humankind at the pinnacle of creation. As scientific discoveries have piled up over the past 500 years, our status has been incrementally diminished. First Earth was shown to be just one planet of several orbiting the Sun. Then the solar system itself was relegated to the outer suburbs of the galaxy, and the Sun classified as an insignificant dwarf star among billions. The theory of evolution proposed that human beings occupied just a small branch on a complex evolutionary tree. This pattern continued into the twentieth century, when the supremacy of our much vaunted intelligence came under threat. Computers began to outsmart us. Now genetic engineering has raised the specter

of designer babies with superintellecets that leave ours far behind. And we must consider the uncomfortable possibility that in astrobiological terms, god's children may be galactic also-rans.

Theologians are used to putting a brave face on such developments. Over the centuries the Christian church, for example, has time and again been forced to accommodate new scientific facts that challenge existing doctrine. But these accommodations have usually been made reluctantly and very belatedly. Only recently, for example, did the Pope acknowledge that Darwinian evolution is more than just a theory. If SETI succeeds, theologians will not have the luxury of decades of careful deliberation to assess the significance of the discovery. The impact will be instant.



Frank Zappa, American musician

"If you want to get together in any exclusive situation and have people love you, fine-- but to hang all this desperate sociology on the idea of The Cloud-Guy who has The Big Book, who knows if you've been bad or good-- and CARES about any of it-- to hang it all on that, folks, is the chimpanzee part of the brain working. "

Letter to Ex-NYC Mayor Koch by Edith Amster, NYCA member

I firmly disagree with you that god created evolution. What created god in order for god to create evolution? The whole idea is so absurd since there is no empirical evidence that any god or gods existed in the heavens that you can quote here. Science, when confronted with evidence, changes and is ever evolving. Religion has no such testable device and too many clerics in too many religions say they have the answers, and you will be saved (I don't know from what) and god had spoken to them personally. Who are these men to have the arrogance of claiming their right to profess what a deity said or did not say to them?

Idols and visions to not perform miracles. Science does! No one has yet proven to me that god exists; there is no evidence of a god, there are too many gods around and so many man-made different beliefs and interpretations, that I could never subscribe to the god notion. Man made god/gods-- not the other way around and, although I respect your intellectual capabilities and respect you as Mayor in New York City, but I challenge you to prove to me and others with concrete evidence the existence of any god of any religion. How men can worship idols and dead men in devotion, is beyond my rational thought! It is up to the religious to prove there is a god, not the other way around! The written scriptures and the Bible were written by scribes and men-- not god!
Respectfully,
Edith Amster, a Positive, Jewish Atheist, Humanist, Rational Thinker, Teacher

NYC-ATHEIST ACTIVITIES



April 24 — Monthly Meeting

L. to R. Dennis Himes, guest speaker, and Dennis Horvitz, NYCA Cable Show Host.



May 8 - Book Club

Richard Carrier, guest author, Sense & Goodness Without God.



May 22 — Street Tabling

Barbara Donaldson, with one of her creative posters.



May 22 — Street Tabling

Street tabling in front of the Time Warner Building, Columbus Circle, Manhattan.

NYC ATHEISTS — 2005 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 2005 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Basic – \$ 25 Supporter – \$ 100 Founder – \$ 250 Patron – \$ 500 Life – \$ 1000
 Senior (Age 65 or greater) – \$ 20 Full Time Student – \$ 10 Military (Active) – \$ 15

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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