

# New York City Atheists Inc. September 2005

Serving the Tri-State area • An affiliate of American Atheists and Center For Atheism Vol. II Issue No. 9

WEB: NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG COOPER STATION - PO Box 93, New York, NY 10276-0093 212-330-6794

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

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## FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER

Sept.	1*	Thursday	6:00 / 7:30 P.M.	NYCA Dinner & Movie Nite (See page 2)
Sept	1**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Sept.	8**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Sept.	10*****	Saturday	10:00AM- 6:00 PM	NYCA Street Tabling
Sept	11***	Sunday	12:30 P.M.	NYCA Brunch (New Location), Library, Book Club
Sept.	15**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Sept.	20****	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
Sept.	22**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Sept.	29**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Sept.	29*****	Thursday	6:30 P.M.	NYCA Monthly Meeting

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### OCTOBER

Oct.	6*	Thursday	6:00 / 7:30 P.M.	NYCA Dinner & Movie Nite
Oct.	6**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Oct.	9***	Sunday	12:30 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
Oct.	13**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Oct.	18****	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
Oct.	20**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Oct.	27**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Oct.	30*****	Sunday	12:30 P.M.	NYCA Monthly Meeting

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### November

Nov.	8	Tuesday	B.L.O.O.D. Program (See page 3)	
Nov.	10/11	Thursday / Friday	Washington D.C. – Atheists in Foxhole Rally (See page 4)	

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**CHECK FOR LAST MINUTE CHANGES CALL 212-330-6794**

- \* **Dinner: Pier 17 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Food Court – South St. Seaport**
- \* **Movie: Southbridge Towers – 66 Frankfort St. - Community Room**
- \*\* **Manhattan Cable Channel 67 / RNN Cable Channel 109**
- \*\*\* **Garden Restaurant – 145 East 60th St. ( Lexington / Third)**  
**Brunch Cost: Order from Menu — Reservations not required.**
- \*\*\*\* **MANHATTAN LOUNGE - 1720 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. ( 89 / 90<sup>th</sup> St. )**
- \*\*\*\*\* **352 7th Avenue / 16th Floor (29 / 30th Street)**
- \*\*\*\*\* **Columbus circle – Broadway / 60<sup>th</sup> St. – in front of Time Warner Bldg.**  
**First shift: 9:45AM – 1:30PM / Second shift: 1:30PM – 6:00PM**

**SEE PAGE 8 FOR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**



**PRESIDENT'S SERMON**  
**Code Of Conduct for Responsible Atheism**

A Code of Conduct does not require the fear of god or the concept of heaven and hell. Because Atheists have dismissed these fears, they gain a freedom that others lack. The Atheist Conduct of Conduct is based on the concept of respect. Respect includes:

- (1) Respect for oneself: You are important and responsible for your actions.
- (2) Equality: Even though you realize that not everybody is equal in our society, you should treat all others as your equal.

(3) Respect for those in need: Support them by sharing and caring. The true test of a compassionate society is how it supports those most in need.

(4) Respect of other's property including home and personal possessions.

(5) Respect the planet: Leave the earth in a better condition than when you joined it.

(6) Respect others even if their beliefs and traditions are different than yours. Pluralism is a must.

This is my initial attempt to outline a Code of Conduct. I would greatly appreciate your comments. Once we have finalized a Code of Conduct, we will have a foundation for defining responsible atheism. **ONLY THROUGH A LARGE AND INVOLVED MEMBERSHIP CAN WE CONTINUE OUR PROGRESS AND HAVE AN IMPACT.**

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

**PAST EVENTS**

**Aug. 4 Thursday**  
**NYCA Dinner & Movie Nite**  
After dining at the South Street Seaport foodcourt, we all watched the PBS-Nova movie *Origins*. The movie explained how the universe, our planet and life began.

**Aug 4, 11, 18, 25 Thursday**  
**8:00 P.M. NYCA Cable Show**

**Aug. 7 Sunday**  
**NYCA Street Tabling**  
**Columbus Circle, Broadway/60<sup>th</sup>**

**Aug. 13 Saturday**  
**NYCA Street Tabling**  
**Columbus Circle, Broadway/60<sup>th</sup>**

**Aug. 14 Sunday**  
**NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club.**  
After brunch, we moved to the NYCA Library and Book Club Meeting.

**Aug. 16 Tuesday**  
**NYCA Meet-Up**  
NYCA Members and guests engaged in lively discussions.

**Aug. 27 Saturday**  
**NYCA Second Annual Boat Cruise**  
We observed the world's greatest skyline as we cruised around Manhattan Harbor aboard the retired New York City Fireboat, Harvey. The Fireboat Harvey is on the National Registry of Historic Places.

**JOIN**  
**NYC ATHEISTS**  
**SEE PAGE 8**  
**FOR APPLICATION**

**FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Sept. 1 Thurs. 6:00 / 7:30 P.M.**  
**NYCA Dinner & Movie Nite**

**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 food stalls and look for us sitting at the tables that have a harbor view of the Brooklyn Bridge. You'll recognize us by our blue Atheist baseball caps

**Movie Info:**

**Movie:** *The Crucible*  
**Time:** 7:30 P.M.

This film, based on a play by Arthur Miller, is set in 17<sup>th</sup> century Salem, Massachusetts. A group of teenage girls are seen at a secret

ceremony by the town's minister and he accuses them of witchcraft. Soon the entire village is consumed by hysteria and innocent victims are put on trial, leading to a devastating climax.

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

**Directions:** 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 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 buildings in the complex. Walk straight through two courtyards, to 66 Frankfort. The Community Room is located on the first floor.

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**Sept. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 Thurs. 8:00 P.M. NYCA Cable Show Manhattan Cable # 67**  
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**Sept 11 Sunday 12:30 P.M. NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club**

**NEW LOCATION**

**When:** Sunday, Sept. 11, 2005, 12:30 P.M.  
**Location:** Garden Restaurant @ 145 East 60th St (Between Lexington and Third)  
**Reservations:** Not Required  
**Cost:** Individual Checks

After brunch, we will go to the NYC Atheists' Library on West 48th Street. You will have an opportunity to borrow and return books, followed by the book club meeting.

**September 11 – Book Club Readings**

We are finishing reading the book from *Science and Religion* edited by Paul Kurtz. Pages 333 - 359: *A Way of Life for Agnostics, Celebrating Creation, Science and Religion In an Impersonal Universe and Afterthoughts*

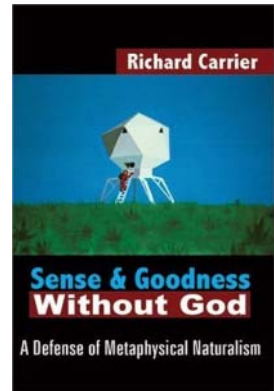
**NYC ATHEISTS LIBRARY / RESOURCE CENTER**  
  
The NYCA Library / Resource Center is open every Sunday that NYCA has a meeting or event. Only NYCA members have library privileges.

**BOOK CLUB**

**NEW BOOK SELECTION**

Our NYCA Librarian, Pat Berger, has selected our next book club selection: *Sense & Goodness Without God* by Richard Carrier.

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**JOIN  
NYC ATHEISTS  
SEE PAGE 8  
FOR APPLICATION**  
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We will begin discussing this book at our October 9<sup>th</sup> Book Club meeting.

Available at Amazon.com

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**Sept. 20 Tuesday 7:00 P.M. NYCA Meet-Up (Third Tuesday of the month)**

Casual conversation and drinks with your fellow freethinkers. Register at <http://atheists.meetup.com>.

**Location:** Manhattan Lounge, 1720 Second Avenue (Between 89 and 90th Street)  
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**Sept. 29 Thursday 6:30 P.M. NYCA Monthly Meeting**

**Guest:** Henry Kalow  
**Subject:** Mr. Kalow, a practicing attorney, will explain why all atheists must have a Living Will, Health Proxy, Power of Attorney and a Final Will. He will give us copies of forms that he uses and take us through an practical exercise of completing them. Without these, you're at the whim and mercy of unknown decision makers.

**Location:** 352 Seventh Ave. 16th Floor between 29th and 30th Streets, just south of Penn Station.  
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**Nov. 8 Tuesday  
B.L.O.O.D. PROGRAM**

On Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> the secular community will initiate the B.L.O.O.D. (Benefiting Lives Of Others Donations) program. The program consists of two activities, (1) the donation of blood (2) signing up for an organ donation program. Specifics will be announced shortly.

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**Atheists in Foxholes  
Banquet and Rally  
November 10-11, 2005  
Washington, D.C.**

**Thursday Night, November 10  
Welcome Banquet 7:30PM**  
Contact The Washington Plaza Hotel (202-842-1300) directly, to reserve your room(s) and mention Group #4515 to qualify for special Rates.

**Veterans Day  
Friday Nov. 11, 2005  
The Mall in Washington, DC**  
We salute and celebrate Atheists in Foxholes as we parade down the National Mall!

**If you are interested in participating, please contact me, Ken Bronstein 212-535-7425.**

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**Jawaharlal Nehru  
Indian statesman (1889-1964).**

A self-professed atheist, Nehru said of India, "No country or people who are slaves to dogma and dogmatic mentality can progress." [*Key Ideas in Human Thought*]



**Percy Shelley**

Shelley's letters fetch £45,600 (\$ 82,000)  
A recently discovered set of letters by the poet Percy Shelley have sold for £45,600 at a London auction.

The letters were written to Ralph Wedgwood, a member of the pottery family, between December 1810 and February 1811.

Shelley was studying at Oxford University at the time. The letters, which provide an insight into Shelley's views on atheism, were destined for a garage sale until the owner contacted the auction house.

**Rebel Poet**

The letters were found in a trunk at a house in south-west London alongside four written by Shelley's best friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg, and were expected to fetch £30,000.

The finder, thought to be a descendant of the Wedgwood family, then left the letters to a neighbor who contacted Christie's auction house.

Shelley and Hogg were expelled from Oxford University in 1811 for writing a pamphlet about atheism.

Both men were summoned before the authorities when the pamphlet was circulated. Shelley refused to co-operate and Hogg protested.

The eight letters by the pair shed light on Shelley's eventual emergence as a rebel poet and the theme of atheism in his work.

**Famous Author**

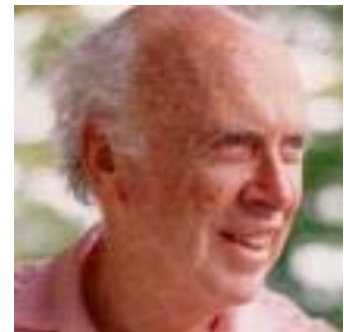
In one letter he wrote: "Christ never existed... the fall of man, the whole fabric indeed of superstition which it supports can no longer obtain the credit of philosophers."

Christie's Auction House said the correspondence fills an important gap in historians' understanding of Shelley's intellectual development and his expulsion from Oxford.

Christie's head of books, Crispin Jackson, said the letters were kept for the Wedgwood connection rather than their famous author.

They were sold for £45,600, including buyer's premium, in a valuable books and manuscripts sale.

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**Dr. James Watson,  
American biologist,  
(Discoverer of DNA.)**

"I don't think we're here for anything, we're just products of evolution. You can say 'Gee, your life must be pretty bleak if you don't think there's a purpose' but I'm anticipating a good lunch."

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## Satire From The Onion

### KANSAS CITY, KS-

As the debate over the teaching of evolution in public schools continues, a new controversy over the science curriculum arose Monday in this embattled midwestern state. Scientists from the Evangelical Center For Faith-Based Reasoning are now asserting that the long-held "theory of gravity" is flawed, and they have responded to it with a new theory of Intelligent Falling.

Rev. Gabriel Burdett explains Intelligent Falling: "Things fall not because they are acted upon by some gravitational force, but because a higher intelligence, 'God' if you will, is pushing them down," said Gabriel Burdett, who holds degrees in education, applied Scripture and physics from Oral Roberts University.

Burdett added: "Gravity--which is taught to our children as a law--is founded on great gaps in understanding. The law predicts the mutual force between all bodies of mass, but it cannot explain that force. Isaac Newton himself said, 'I suspect that my theories may all depend upon a force for which philosophers have searched all of nature in vain.' Of course, he is alluding to a higher power."

Founded in 1987, the Evangelical Center for Faith-Based Reasoning (ECFR) is the world's leading institution of evangelical physics, a branch of physics based on literal interpretation of the Bible.

According to the ECFR paper published simultaneously this week in *the International Journal Of Science* and the adolescent magazine *God's Word For Teens!* cannot be explained by secular gravity alone, including such mysteries as how angels fly, how Jesus ascended into Heaven, and

how Satan fell when cast out of paradise.

The ECFR, in conjunction with the Christian Coalition and other Christian conservative action groups, is calling for public-school curriculums to give equal time to the Intelligent Falling theory. They insist they are not asking that the theory of gravity be banned from schools, but only that students be offered both sides of the issue "so they can make an informed decision."

"We just want the best possible education for Kansas' kids," Burdett said.

Proponents of Intelligent Falling assert that the different theories used by secular physicists to explain gravity are not internally consistent. Even critics of Intelligent Falling admit that Einstein's ideas about gravity are mathematically irreconcilable with quantum mechanics. This fact, Intelligent Falling proponents say, proves that gravity is a theory in crisis.

"Let's take a look at the evidence," said ECFR senior fellow Gregory Lunsden. "In Matthew 15:14, Jesus says, 'And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.' He says nothing about some gravity making them fall--just that they will fall. Then, in Job 5:7, we read, 'But mankind is born to trouble, as surely as sparks fly upwards.' If gravity is pulling everything down, why do the sparks fly upwards with great surety? This clearly indicates that a conscious intelligence governs all falling."

Critics of Intelligent Falling point out that gravity is a provable law based on empirical observations of natural phenomena. Evangelical physicists, however, insist that there is no conflict between

Newton's mathematics and Holy Scripture.

"Closed-minded gravitists cannot find a way to make Einstein's general relativity match up with the subatomic quantum world," said Dr. Ellen Carson, a leading Intelligent Falling expert known for her work with the Kansan Youth Ministry. "They've been trying to do it for the better part of a century now, and despite all their empirical observation and carefully compiled data, they still don't know how."

"Traditional scientists admit that they cannot explain how gravitation is supposed to work," Carson said. "What the gravity-agenda scientists need to realize is that 'gravity waves' and 'gravitons' are just secular words for 'God can do whatever He wants.'"

Some evangelical physicists propose that Intelligent Falling provides an elegant solution to the central problem of modern physics.

"Anti-falling physicists have been theorizing for decades about the 'electromagnetic force,' the 'weak nuclear force,' the 'strong nuclear force,' and so-called 'force of gravity,'" Burdett said. "And they tilt their findings toward trying to unite them into one force. But readers of the Bible have already known for millennia what this one, unified force is: His name is Jesus."



### Friedrich Nietzsche

"Faith means not wanting to know what is true."

## JUST ASKING

*Is it OK to bring religion to the office?*

Interviews by Marcie Samartino

Newsday - July 23, 2005

Ken Bronstein, a retired executive from Manhattan who is president of the New York City Atheists:

"There should be no religious displays, organized prayer activities or on-site religious facilities in the workplace. Full-time employed Americans work about 20 percent of the year. There is plenty of time to practice your religion before work, during lunch or after work. Individuals should not be entitled to special rights because of their religion or beliefs. For example, pharmacists must distribute all legal medications, and taxi drivers cannot deny a passenger's request to go to an abortion clinic. In the workplace, there should be no religious displays, organized prayer activities or on-site religious facilities. We do not suggest any restriction of private prayer or meditation as long as it is not organized group prayer."

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**Walter "Walt" Disney, American cartoonist, showman, and film producer (1901-1966).** Disney was non-religious. He was not a member of any religion and did not attend services. Also, he

had an entirely secular funeral. It was "very private" and off-limits to the press, perhaps to conceal that it was not religious. There is no "In God We Trust" on Disney Dollars!

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### Guess Who Doesn't Believe In God?

Ten percent of Protestants, 21 percent of Roman Catholics, and 52 percent of Jews do NOT believe in god.

That's the surprising word from a new survey by Harris Interactive of 2,306 adults that shows belief in god varies quite widely among different segments of the American public. How often do we go to a place of worship? Not much. Most people attend a religious service less than once a month. Still, Americans are far more likely to believe in god and to attend religious services than people in most other developed countries, particularly in Europe.

#### Who believes in God?

While 79 percent of Americans believe there is a God, only 66 percent are absolutely certain of it. Nine percent do not believe in God and 12 percent aren't sure. And strangely, not everyone who calls himself or herself a Christian or a Jew actually believes in God.

#### Who worships at a religious service?

Just over half (55 percent) attend a religious service a few times a year or more. Thirty-six percent attend once a month or more often, and just 26 percent say they attend every week. Forty-one percent of women and 31 percent of men attend once a month or more. Protestants (47 percent) are more likely to go to church once a month or more often than are Roman Catholics (35 percent). Jews are

least likely to go with 16 percent saying they go to synagogue once a month or more. Church attendance is highest in the Midwest and lowest in the West.

#### Belief in God by geography and age:

Eighty-two percent of Midwesterners and Southerners believe in god, compared with 75 percent in the East and West. Our beliefs get stronger as we age. Of those 25 to 29 years old, 71 percent believe in god. That number jumps to 80 percent for people over 40, and hits 83 percent for those 65 and over.

Other fascinating facts about who believes in God:

- 84 percent of women believe in God, compared with 73 percent of men.
- 91 percent of African Americans believe in god, compared with 81 percent of Hispanics and 78 percent of whites.
- 87 percent of Republicans believe in god, compared with 78 percent of Democrats and 75 percent of Independents.
- 82 percent of those with no college education believe in god, compared with 73 percent who went to college

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**"Freedom has never been free.  
Sometimes it costs everything you've got."**

Eric Schaub –  
Individualist, activist, speaker, author.

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## Armstrong Reaching The Top Without God

By ZACH WALLENS

[www.HumanistNetworkNews.org](http://www.HumanistNetworkNews.org)

July 27, 2005

For the past few months Lance Armstrong has been in the media nearly every day. While Armstrong's pursuit of his seventh consecutive Tour de France victory has dominated the news, the media have not made much of an issue of his nonbelief.

On Sunday, July 24, Armstrong won his last Tour and announced that he would be retiring with "Absolutely no regrets."

In 1996, Armstrong was diagnosed with testicular cancer that spread to his lungs and brain. After undergoing chemotherapy, he became a hero by coming back to win his first of seven Tour victories.

Armstrong does not hesitate to answer questions about his beliefs, but does not seem to make a big deal about the issue.

In his book *It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life*, Armstrong wrote about the night before undergoing brain surgery: "I asked myself what I believed. I had never prayed a lot. I hoped hard, I wished hard, but I didn't pray. I had developed a certain distrust of organized religion growing up, but I felt I had the capacity to be a spiritual person, and to hold some fervent beliefs. Quite simply, I believed I had a responsibility to be a good person, and that meant fair, honest, hardworking, and honorable."

In an interview with *TIME*, Armstrong said: "I don't have anything against organized religion per se. We all need something in our lives. I personally just have not accepted that belief. But I'm one of the few."

Even though he wears a crucifix around his neck (a link with a fellow cancer patient), Armstrong is very suspicious of organized religion. According to an article in the *UK Times Online*, he believes it is possible to be a good person while not believing in god. "I think we all have obligations to be good, honest, hard-working, caring and compassionate," he said.

*ET Magazine* quoted Armstrong saying, "If there was a god, I'd still have both nuts."

*Zach Wallens is a communications intern for the Institute for Humanist Studies. This fall he will be a senior at Bethlehem Central High School -*

**"I never give them hell. I just tell the truth and they think it's hell." - Harry Truman**

**ATHEISTS HAVE FAITH IN THEMSELVES**

**BELIEF GETS IN THE WAY OF LEARNING**

**THE PURPOSE OF LIFE: EXPERIENCE IT**

**THE REAL RAPTURE IS BEING ALIVE**

**MAN CREATED THE THEORY OF GOD**

**PRAYER: TALKING TO ONE SELF**

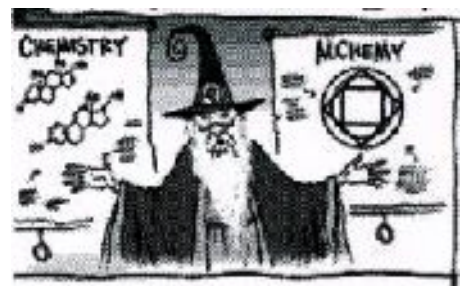
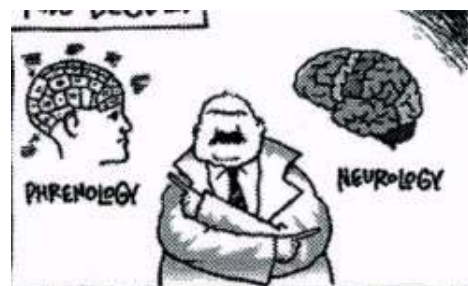
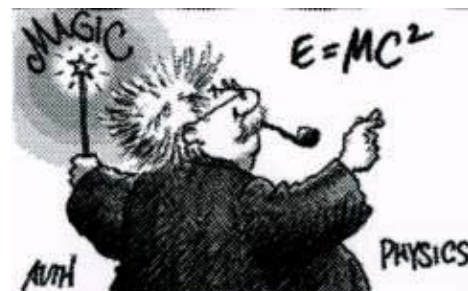
**MAKE THEM PROVE THE THEORY OF GOD**

**WHO / WHAT CREATED THE CREATOR?**

**ATHEISM IS A CONCLUSION NOT A BELIEF**

**SCIENCE EDUCATION OPTIONS**

Source Unknown





**July 28, 2005 Monthly Meeting**

L.-R. Casey Karr (NYCA Essay Winner, Dennis Horvitz (NYCA Cable Show Host)



**NYCA — Individual Street Tabling Setup**

Harvey Osgood's Portable NYCA Street Tabling Setup.



**NYCA Cable Show**

Guest: Faye Girsh, Spokesperson for Final Exit Program



**August 20, 2005 Street Tabling**

L.-R. Ben Forman, and wearing their new NYCA blue caps: Peter Kramer, Howard Charcofosky, Jay Gumbiner.

**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**