

New York City Atheists Inc.

December 2005

Serving the Tri-State area • An affiliate of American Atheists and Center For Atheism Vol. II Issue No. 12

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

!!! SPECIAL !!!

\$10 – 2006 NYCA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL - \$10
USE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PAGE 8

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.

DECEMBER

Dec.	1*	Thursday	6:00 / 7:30 P.M.	NYCA Dinner & Movie Nite
Dec.	1**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Dec.	8**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Dec.	11***	Sunday	12:00 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
Dec.	15**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Dec.	17	Saturday	1:00 P.M.	American Atheists Winter Solstice Meet'n Greet (See Page 3)
Dec.	20****	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
Dec.	21*****	Wednesday	6:00 P.M.	NYCA Solstice Dinner (SEE Page 4)
Dec.	22**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Dec.	29**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show

JANUARY

Jan.	5*	Thursday	6:00 / 7:30 P.M.	NYCA Dinner & Movie Nite
Jan.	5**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Jan.	8***	Sunday	12:00 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
Jan.	12**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Jan.	17****	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
Jan.	19**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Jan.	26**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Jan.	29***	Sunday	12:00 P.M.	NYCA Annual Meeting

- * **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 109**
- *** **Garden Restaurant – 145 East 60th St. (Lexington / Third)**
Brunch Cost: Order from Menu — Reservations not required.
- **** **Manhattan Lounge - 1720 2nd Ave. (89 / 90th St.)**
- ***** **Minado Restaurant – 6 East 32nd St. (5TH / Madison)**



PRESIDENT’S SERMON
SOLSTICE RESOLUTIONS 2006

We resolve that the Atheist community establish a presence in Washington D.C.:

- (1) An Atheists Club / Organization / Affiliate
- (2) An Atheists Press Office
- (3) An Atheists Lobbyist

I have just returned from Washington D.C. and the *Atheists In Foxholes March and Rally*. Walking around the Washington, I noticed that every imaginable interest group had either an office or a building. To be effective in national government, you need “feet on the ground” inside the Beltway. You need your representatives there in Washington for ongoing, direct contact with the legislature and the national press. Washington is the political and legislative epicenter of the country. That’s where representatives from the rest of the country come to debate, to have hearings, to legislate, to listen and to act. We need to be there to present the Atheist view when the opportunities present themselves.

At the *Atheists In Foxholes March and Rally*, I found some local Washington-area residents who are interested in starting an American Atheists Affiliate inside the Beltway. In the belief that this is crucial to the best interests of the whole Atheist community, I offered them start-up support from NYC Atheists.

I will be working with American Atheists in the development and establishment of an Atheist Press Office and Lobbying group in our nation’s number-one legislative center.

I would greatly appreciate your comments.

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

PAST NOVEMBER EVENTS

Nov. 3 Thursday
NYCA Dinner & Movie Nite
Feature: Penn & Teller

Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24 Thursday
NYCA Cable Show

Nov. 8 Tuesday
NYCA B.L.O.O.D. Program



L-R: Josh Karpf (Founder - NYC Atheists) and Ken Bronstein (President – NYC Atheists) are the first two NYCA B.L.O.O.D. donors

NEXT NYCA B.L.O.O.D DONATION DATE
MAY 4, 2006

Nov. 10 Thursday

Atheists In Foxholes Press Conference
National Press Club -Washington D.C.



L-R: Hans Kasten (Honoree), Ken Bronstein (President – NYC Atheists and Veteran), Richard Wingrove (Virginia State Director – American Atheists and Veteran)

KEN BRONSTEIN’S SPEECH

(everyone was allowed three minutes)

WHO AM I ?

I am Ken Bronstein, President, NYC Atheists. I am an Atheists ex-military officer who served from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, which included the Berlin Crisis - Cuban Missile Crisis – Viet Nam – Cold War.

These activities have numerous times placed me in harm’s way.

At no time did I pray or need prayer.

The first reason why I am here

Is to acknowledge Hans Kasten, our Honoree and the millions of patriotic men and women who have worn the uniform of the U.S. military both past and present.

The second reason why I am here

Atheists' rights must be acknowledged and honored in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Specifics:

- * Full non-discrimination rights for Atheists**
- * Availability of Atheist / Secular counseling**
- * Halt religious proselytizing**
- * Stop intimidations to attend religious services**

I want to remind everyone of two recent disturbing events.

*** General Boykin, ex-special forces commander, with his American Christian Crusade of god's gladiators.**

*** The institutionalized fundamentalist proselytizing at the Air Force Academy.**

The third reason why I am here

To affirm that there are Atheists in foxholes. I am an example of an Atheist in a foxhole.

I would also like to propose that:

- * War can make anyone an Atheist, Witnessing other human beings getting killed.**
 - Questioning why were their prayers did not save their comrades**
 - Asking god; why are there wars ?**

YES, THERE ARE ATHEISTS IN FOXHOLE

Ernie Pyle, a World War II combat reporter in the Pacific is credited with the statement *THERE ARE NO ATHEISTS IN FOXHOLES.*

Unfortunately, Ernie Pyle did not survive the war. Therefore, I have to conclude that his prayers did not help him. Maybe no one is there to hear those prayers. Maybe praying is just talking to yourself.

**FINALLY
TO HELP SURVIVE IN COMBAT,
STOP PRAYING AND DIG A DEEPER
FOXHOLE.**

**Nov. 11 Washington D.C.
Atheists in Foxholes March / Rally**



Ellen Johnson (President of American Atheists) addresses the rally crowd.

Standing - Atheist Foxhole Veterans. NYCA member attendees; Pat Berger, Harvey Osgood, Dennis Horvitz and Ken Bronstein

**Nov. 13 Sunday
NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club**

**Nov. 15 Tuesday
NYCA Meet-Up**

**Nov. 20 Sunday
NYCA Monthly Meeting
Subject: Framing the Debate
We discussed how the Fundamentalist Christians and Conservatives framed the debate for the 2004 elections and how we can take it back.**

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**FAITH BASED INITIATIVES
ARE
RELIGIOUS SUBSIDIES
AND
WILL BECOME
RELIGIOUS ENTITLEMENTS**

=====

MARK TWAIN QUOTE:

**CHECK THE WEATHER REPORT
BEFORE
PRAYING FOR RAIN**

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UPCOMING DECEMBER EVENTS

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 NYCA Cable Show
8:00 PM THURSDAY
Manhattan Cable # 67

Dec. 1 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 at the tables that have a harbor view of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Movie Info

Movie: Penn & Teller Cable Show

Subject: *Exercise vs. Genetics*. Penn & Teller blow the lid off exercise.

Time: 7:30 P.M.

Where: Southbridge Tower - 66 Frankfort Building

The complex is located between Water/Pearl and Fulton Street near the South Street Seaport.

Directions: Southbridge is easily reached by 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, straight through two courtyards, to 66 Frankfort. The Community Room is located on the first floor. --

Dec. 11 Sunday 12:00 P.M.
NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club

Location: Garden Restaurant @ 145 East 60th Street. (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.

December – Book Club Readings

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



We will be reading and discussing Pages 65 — 95, *The Idea of a Worldview*.

Dec. 17 Saturday 1:00 PM
American Atheist Winter Solstice Meet'n Greet

Location: Crowne Plaza Hotel
36 Valley Road
Clark, N.J.

Cost: \$ 25.00 (includes buffet luncheon)

Register on-line:

www.atheists.org/wintersolstice.html

Call Ken Bronstein 212-535-7425 if you have any questions (directions, transportation, etc.) or plan to attend.

Dec. 20 Tuesday 7:00 P.M.
NYCA Meet-Up

Casual conversation and drinks with your fellow freethinkers. Register at

<http://atheists.meetup.com>.

Location: Manhattan Lounge, 1720 Second Avenue (89 / 90th Street) ---

Dec. 21 Wednesday 6:00 P.M.
Solstice Dinner

Location: Minado Restaurant

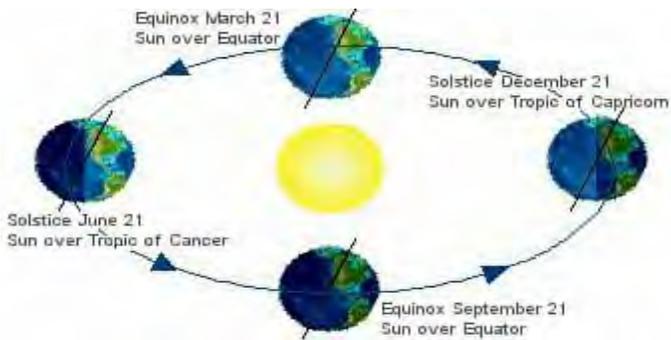
6 East 32nd St. (near 5th Avenue)

Cost: \$ 35 (includes one soft drink)

Reservations: Not required

We return to the Minado Restaurant to enjoy its 100 foot long fabulous buffet.

SOLSTICE "The Sun stands still"



The winter solstice is when the earth is in that point of its orbit it is most tilted away from the sun.

The date of the winter solstice is the date with the shortest day and the longest night of the year.

In the Northern Hemisphere, this date usually falls on December 21 or December 22.

The dates of the Winter Solstice and Summer Solstice are reversed for the Northern and Southern Hemisphere.

In the Southern hemisphere this date usually falls on June 21 or June 22.

What is the Solstice?

Solstice derives from an ancient Latin word meaning "stop" or "to stand still." According to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, it refers to one of two points when the sun is furthest from the celestial equator.

Winter Solstice, or Yule, is held on or around December 21st. It marks the shortest day of the year (in the Northern Hemisphere) and is an important holiday to those who follow the old ways.

To the ancients, it appeared as if the sun and moon stopped in their flight across the sky. This is the longest night of the year and was a time of both anticipation and rejoicing at the Sun's rebirth.

The Sun's representation as the male divinity, or celestial ruler, predates Christianity. As with other rituals and celebrations, the Church felt that by assimilating this holiday into the Christian beliefs, it would help convert those who still followed the Olde Way.

Relationship to Christmas

The selection of December 25th as a Christian holiday was first recorded in scholarly texts dating to 325 A.D., although the actual practice was first decreed in 274 A.D. by the emperor Aurelian. Since the non-Christians viewed this time as the rebirth of the sun, it made sense for the church to also mark this period as the celebration of the nativity of Christ. Curiously, the selection of the day appears arbitrary although mankind had long known how to calculate the Solstices. One can only guess that rather than shift the celebration each year, a regularly scheduled event was preferable. Apparently the old Roman desire for order never quite left the new faith.

Symbols of the Solstice

The Yule Log, candles and mistletoe . . . what are the origins of these symbols of the Solstice? The Winter Solstice marks a crucial part of the natural cycle. In a real sense, the sun begins anew its journey toward longer days, times of new growth and renewal of the world once again. In a spiritual sense, it is a reminder that in order for a new season to begin, the old one must end and that spring will come again.

Winter Solstice Symbols

The Yule Log, candles, mistletoe and other icons of the Christmas season are borrowed from the Solstice celebration. While mostly viewed as decorative in nature today, these items had deep symbolic significance to the older faith.

The Yule Log

By lighting a fire, the ancients were acknowledging the return of the sun, warmth and light, marked by the lengthening of days and the promise of the coming spring. In pagan belief, for good luck, the Log should be lit on the first try and must burn for twelve hours.

Mistletoe

The "kissing bush" actually was one of a group of evergreens such as holly, rosemary, pine and yew. Since these and other coniferous plants flourished during the winter months, they became symbols that life continued its cycle even

in the coldest and shortest of days. The custom of kissing under the mistletoe actually seems to have its origins in the late 18th century; interestingly, the actual bough could have been holly or some other evergreen as well as mistletoe. Ultimately, it was the bright berries and rich green color which could withstand the harshness of winter, that made mistletoe the favorite.

Candles

As with most belief systems, the use of candles by the ancients symbolized light, focused the spirit and marked the belief that light, warmth and new life, would again turn the Great Wheel of time and the spring would come again.

The Feast

Food has been associated with winter celebrations—Saturnalia of the Romans, the Solstice, or Christmas dinner—since time immemorial, in those distant times, the winter would have meant lean months during which subsistence meant surviving on the last of the crops and meat harvested during the fall. To partake from this larder in honor of the run of the sun was to reaffirm the faith in the return of light and warmth to the world.



Isaac Asimov (1920-1992)

“Properly read, the Bible is the most potent force for atheism ever conceived.”

“To surrender to ignorance and call it god has always been premature, and it remains premature today.”

“Creationists make it sound as though a "theory" is something you dreamt up after being drunk all night.”

“Imagine the people who believe such things (religion) and who are not ashamed to ignore, totally, all the patient findings of thinking minds

through all the centuries since the bible was written. And it is these ignorant people, the most uneducated, the most unimaginative, the most unthinking among us, who would make themselves the guides and leaders of us all; who would force their feeble and childish beliefs on us; who would invade our schools and libraries and homes. I personally resent it bitterly.”

“If I were not an atheist, I would believe in a god who would choose to save people on the basis of the totality of their lives and not the pattern of their words. I think he would prefer an honest and righteous atheist to a TV preacher whose every word is god, and whose every deed is foul.”

“To rebel against a powerful political, economic, religious, or social establishment is very dangerous and very few people do it, except, perhaps, as part of a mob. To rebel against the "scientific" establishment, however, is the easiest thing in the world, and anyone can do it and feel enormously brave, without risking as much as a hangnail. Thus, the vast majority, who believe in astrology and think that the planets have nothing better to do than form a code that will tell them whether tomorrow is a good day to close a business deal or not, become all the more excited and enthusiastic about the bilge when a group of astronomers denounces it.”

“I am an atheist, out and out. It took me a long time to say it. I've been an atheist for years and years, but somehow I felt it was intellectually unrespectable to say one was an atheist, because it assumed knowledge that one didn't have. Somehow it was better to say one was a humanist or an agnostic. I finally decided that I'm a creature of emotion as well as of reason. Emotionally I am an atheist. I don't have the evidence to prove that god doesn't exist, but I so strongly suspect he doesn't that I don't want to waste my time.”

“Although the time of death is approaching me, I am not afraid of dying and going to Hell or going to the popularized version of Heaven. I expect death to be nothingness and, for removing me from all possible fears of death, I am thankful to atheism. When I die I won't go to heaven or hell, there will just be nothingness.”



Pearl Buck (1862 – 1973)

Pearl Buck lived most of her first forty years in China. Upon returning to the United States, she was active in American civil rights and women's rights activities. Pearl also established Welcome House, the first international, inter-racial adoption agency.

As a writer, she wrote over seventy books and in 1938 was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

“I feel no need for any other faith than my faith in human beings. Like Confucius of old, I am so absorbed in the wonder of earth and the life upon it that I cannot think of heaven and the angels.”

“It may be that religion is dead, and if it is, we had better know it and set ourselves to try to discover other sources of moral strength before it is too late.”

**ATHEISM
IS A CONCLUSION
NOT A BELIEF**

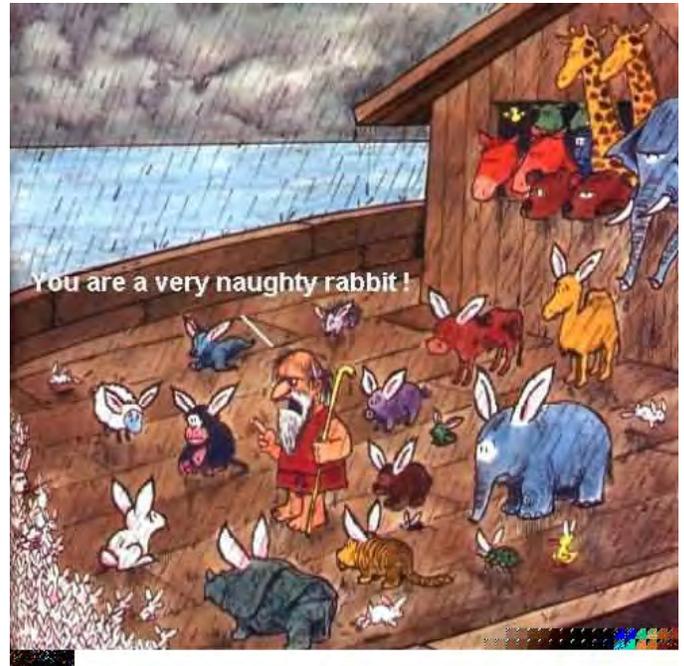


INTELLIGENT DESIGN ??????

**When A Fundamentalist Wants To Pray
For You
Tell Them
That Is Arrogant And Insulting**

**MAKE THEM PROVE
THE THEORY OF GOD
WITH SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE**

**WHO / WHAT
CREATED THE CREATOR?**



**THE BIBLE
IS
LITERATURE
NOT
HISTORY**



**NYCA MONTHLY MEETING
OCT. 30, 2005
L-R: Daniel Berger (guest) and Dennis Horvitz (host) discuss evolution in schools.**

**NYCA BLOOD DONATION PROGRAM
NOV. 8, 2005
L-R: Giddian Beer, Suzy Lanza, Dennis Horvitz, at NYC Blood Bank.**



**NYCA HALLOWEEN PARTY
OCT. 31., 2005
Who has more fun than Atheists ?**



**NYCA HALLOWEEN PARADE
OCT. 31, 2005
Atheists make a statement**

NYC ATHEISTS — 2006 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 2006 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

SPECIAL - \$ 10

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