

New York City Atheists Inc.

June 2006

Serving the Tri-State area • An affiliate of American Atheists & Center For Atheism Vol. III Issue No. 6

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

JULY 4TH NYCA BARBEQUE AND FIREWORKS

JUNE

June	1*	Thursday	6:00 / 7:30 P.M.	NYCA Dinner / Movie Nite
June	1**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
June	8**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
June	11****	Sunday	12:00 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
June	15**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
June	20****	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
June	22**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
June	29**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
June	29***	Thursday	6:30 P.M.	NYCA Monthly Meeting

JULY

July	4*****	Tuesday	12:00 / 8:30 P.M.	NYCA July 4 th Picnic / Fireworks
July	6*	Thursday	6:00 / 7:30 P.M.	NYCA Dinner / Movie Nite
July	6**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
July	9***	Sunday	12:00 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
July	13**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
July	18****	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
July	20**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
July	30***	Sunday	6:30 P.M.	NYCA Monthly Meeting

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- * Dinner: South Street Seaport – Pier 17 – 3rd Floor Food Court
* Movie: Southbridge Towers – 66 Frankfort St. - Community Room
** Manhattan Cable Channel 67 / RNN Cable Channel 110
*** Garden Restaurant – 145 East 60th St. (Lexington / Third)
Brunch Cost: Order from Menu — Reservations not required.
**** Corner Billiards – 110 East 11th St. (4th/3rd) – across the street from Webster Hall
***** Barbeque: Chappaqua, N.Y. / Fireworks: 3rd Ave. – 34th St.
Barbeque Cost: \$20 – Fireworks: Free

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[NEW YORK CITY ATHEISTS](#)
[MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - PAGE 8](#)



KEN BRONSTEIN

**I AM MAD AS H...
AND I AM NOT GOING TO TAKE IT ANYMORE**

In the 1976 movie *Network*, Max Schumacher (Peter Finch) goes to his apartment window and yells, "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore."

I, too, am mad--and offended--at being prayed for, "god blessed" and told that I am going to hell if I do not accept Jesus, by people who stop at our table on Saturdays at Columbus Circle. I have decided that I am not going to take it anymore and from now on, I will respond. My reaction will be friendly and non-hostile and will depend on the situation.

What these religious well-wishers do not realize is that we Atheists find their blessings arrogant, smug and supercilious. In the best of all worlds, I would like to tell them, "You are enfolding me into your own world of faith without my permission. You are implying that you are sorry for me because I obviously have not seen the 'religious light' that you think enhances your life and therefore, you feel superior to me in morality and right-thinking."

But usually we do not have time to say this, nor will they stand still long enough to hear our response, they just want to throw their smug little message in your face fast. I've concluded that these religious spokespeople are divided into two categories:

- 1) **Christian crusaders:** These are the arrogant, smug and supercilious people who believe that everyone should accept Christ. These you ignore or dismiss quickly because it is unproductive to argue with them.
- 2) **Well-wishers:** These people are not sensitive to the beliefs of the 20- to 30-million Americans who are nonbelievers; their blessing is just a rote salutation. This category offers the greatest opportunity for us to interact with.

I try to direct my responses mainly to the second group. I sometimes inform them that there are upwards of 30 million nonbelievers in the U.S. and, therefore, "Do not god-bless someone unless you know they are a believer."

I would appreciate your comments. Ken Bronstein at NYCATHEISTS@AOL.COM or 212-535-7425.

PAST MAY EVENTS

May 4, 11, 18, 25 Thursday
NYCA Cable Show

May 4 Thursday
NYCA Blood Donation Program

Each year, the president of the United States proclaims that the first Thursday in May be designated the National Day of Prayer.

NYCA's positive response to this outrageous governmental support of theism is the NYCA blood donation event.

They may pray; we, on the other hand, use science and rational reasoning to solve and resolve problems.

Fifteen NYCA members participated in our blood donation event. It was good start; next year we hope to double the participation.

May 14 Sunday
NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
Great meeting and discussion.

May 16

Tuesday

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NYCA Meet-Up

Twenty-three bright, friendly people attended our meetup at our new location.

May 25

Thursday

NYCA Monthly Meeting

Guest: Lee M. Silver

Subject: Challenging Nature: The Clash of Science and Spirituality at The New Frontiers of Life.

Princeton biophysics professor Lee Silver discussed why religious fundamentalists (right-wing) and New Age devotees (left) alike react so strongly against genetic engineering and modern scientific advances in biotechnology.

Professor Silver also discussed how Judeo-Christian beliefs limit human knowledge and stand in the way of progress.

UPCOMING JUNE EVENTS

June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 Thursday 8:00 PM
NYCA Cable Show -Manhattan Cable # 67

June 1 Thursday 8:00 PM
NYCA Dinner & Movie Nite
Dinner

Time: 6:00 PM

**Location: South Street Seaport
Pier 17 – 3rd Floor Food Court
Tables facing towards Brooklyn
Bridge**

Cost: Individual Checks

Reservations: None required

Movie: *Dead Poets Society*

Plot Outline: English professor John Keating (Robin Williams) inspires his students to appreciate poetry and seize the day.

Time: 7:30 PM

**Location: Southbridge Towers – 66 Frankfort
Between
Water/Pearl and Fulton Street near the South
Street Seaport.**

Directions:

**Subway: Fulton St. Station – A,C, J, M, Z,3, 4, 5;
City Hall Sta. 6. Buses: B51, M1, M15, M22,
M103**

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Walk east along Fulton Street (towards the South Street Seaport), then through the walkway on Fulton Street by the side of the Foot Locker store, straight through two courtyards, to 66 Frankfort. The Community Room is located on the first floor.

June 11 Sunday 12:00 P.M.

NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club

**Location: Garden Restaurant @ 145 Eat 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.

June Book Club Readings

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

We will be reading and discussing Pages 161-176, *The Meaning of Life; How Did We Get Here?*



**PAT BERGER – NYCA LIBRARIAN
NYCA'S GERTUDE STEIN**

The NYCA library includes approximately 500 books as well as numerous CDs, DVDs, cassettes, video tapes, newsletters, newspapers and magazines.

We thank NYCA members who have contributed to our library: Edith Amster, Ms. Anonymous, Giddean Beer, Ken Bronstein, Howard Charcofosky, Mario DeOliveira, Paul Herzog, Dennis Horvitz, Mason Hu,

Nina Galen, Jay Gumbiner, Josh Karpf,
Suzy Lanza, Harvey Osgood.

June 20 Tuesday 7:00 P.M.

NYCA Meet-Up

Casual conversation and drinks with your fellow
freethinkers. Register at

<http://atheists.meetup.com>

Location: Corner Billiards – 110 East 11th St.
(4th/3rd) – across the street from Webster Hall –
three blocks south of Union Square.

June 29 Thursday 6:30 P.M.

Monthly Meeting

Location: Garden Restaurant
145 East 60th St (Between Lexington and Third)
Reservations: Not required
Cost: Individual checks

Guest Speaker: John K. Chapin, Ph.D.
Department of Physiology and Pharmacology
SUNY Downstate School of Medicine

Subject: *The Mind/Brain Controversy.*
The Duelists, who think there is a soul
superimposed on the brain, would not like to
hear that the actual physical neurons themselves
are able to do all the work in our configuration.

STOP
FAITH-BASED SUBSIDIES
THAT WILL BECOME
FAITH-BASED ENTITLEMENTS

Question religion!

No free pass for faith

**YOU ARE ENTITLED
TO YOUR OWN BELIEFS,
BUT YOU ARE NOT ENTITLED
TO YOUR OWN FACTS**

**Science will replace religion.
Knowledge will replace faith.
Understanding will eliminate fear**



Charles Bradlaugh: 1833-1891

Political activist and one of the most famous
English atheists of the 19th century.

From his *The Freethinker's Text Book*
published in 1876.

"The atheist does not say that there is no
god, but he says 'I know not what you mean
by god. I am without the idea of god. The
word god to me is a sound conveying no clear
or distinct affirmation. I do not deny god,
because I cannot deny that of which I have
no conception, and the conception of which
by its affirmer is so imperfect that he is
unable to define it for me.'"

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

Amendments 1-10 of the Constitution
September 25, 1789

The Conventions of a number of the States
having, at the time of adopting the Constitution,
expressed a desire, in order to prevent
misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that
further declaratory and restrictive clauses
should be added, and as extending the ground of
public confidence in the Government will best
insure the beneficent ends of its institution;

Resolved, by the Senate and House of
Representatives of the United States of America,
in Congress assembled, two-thirds of both
Houses concurring, that the following articles be
proposed to the Legislatures of the several
States, as amendments to the Constitution of the
United States; all or any of which articles, when
ratified by three-fourths of the said Legislatures,
to be valid to all intents and purposes as part of
the said Constitution, namely:

Amendment I

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.

Amendment II

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by

law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right

of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people. xxx



Born-Again Christians

DOES RELIGION INCREASE CRIME?

The U.S. Justice department has just released data that as of June 30, 2005, the U.S. prison population has increased to 2.2 million inmates or about one in every 136 U.S. residents.

The population of prisons and jails is increasing about 1000 inmates per week.

The three states that have the greatest incarceration rates are Louisiana, Georgia and Texas. They are all highly religious red states, with the death penalty, highest abortion rates and highest divorce rates.

The states with the lowest incarceration rates are Maine, Minnesota and Rhode Island. They are all blue states, non-death penalty, lowest abortion rates, lowest divorce rates and much less religious.

Conclusion: Religiosity and conservatism are negative influences for crime, abortion and marriage. The religious and conservative states have the longest rap sheets. About half of one percent of prisoners are atheists (15,000). The number of U.S. atheists is estimated between 3-9% of the population (9 to 27 million).

MORALITY BASED UPON A DEITY OR THE FEAR OF A DEITY DOES NOT WORK

RELIGION IS NOT A DETERRENT TO CRIME

THE TEN

COMMANDMENTS SUGGESTIONS

http://www.ethicalatheist.com/docs/ten_commandments.html

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|--|
| 1. <u>Thou SHALT NOT believe all thou art told.</u> |
| 2. <u>Thou SHALT seek knowledge and truth constantly.</u> |
| 3. <u>Thou SHALT educate thy fellow man in the Laws of Science.</u> |
| 4. <u>Thou SHALT NOT forget the atrocities committed in the name of god.</u> |
| 5. <u>Thou SHALT leave valuable contributions for future generations.</u> |
| 6. <u>Thou SHALT live in peace with thy fellow man.</u> |
| 7. <u>Thou SHALT live this one life thou hast to its fullest.</u> |
| 8. <u>Thou SHALT follow a Personal Code of Ethics.</u> |
| 9. <u>Thou SHALT maintain a strict separation between Church and State.</u> |
| 10. <u>Thou SHALT support those who follow these commandments.</u> |

TREASURE HUNT

NYCA has established a monthly treasure hunt. Our first treasure hunt is for someone to: scientifically prove and demonstrate a soul and to scientifically prove and demonstrate that there is a soul in the embryo upon conception.

Three prizes will be offered:

First Prize: One week in purgatory

Second Prize: Two weeks in purgatory

Third Prize: Three weeks in purgatory

From Wikipedia

The word "soul" did not exist in the times of Jesus, Socrates or Aristotle, and so the quotations, interpretations and translations into the word "soul" from these sources means that the word should be handled very carefully. One might go as far as saying that since the word "soul," in the sense we use it today, did not exist in Hebrew or Arameic, and only partly in Greek, Ancient Greeks sometimes referred to the soul as psyche (as in modern English psychology). Aristotle's works in Latin translation used the word anima (as in animated), which also means "breath." In the New Testament, the original word may sometimes better translate as "life," as in :

"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26)

If you exchange the word "life" for "soul" in the sentence above, the statement may seem less profound.

The Latin root of the related word spirit, like anima, also expresses the idea of "breath." Likewise, the Biblical Hebrew word for 'soul' is nefesh, meaning life, or vital breath.

The various origins and usages demonstrate not only that what people call "soul" today has varied in meaning during history, but that the word and concept themselves have changed in their implications

Attempted Demonstrations of the Soul As Distinct from The Mind

During the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century, researchers attempted to weigh people who were known to be dying, and record their weight accurately at the time of death. As an example, Dr. Duncan MacDougall, in the early 1900s, sought to measure the weight purportedly lost by a human body when the soul departed the body upon death. MacDougall weighed dying patients in an attempt to prove that the soul was material and measurable. These experiments are widely considered to have had little if any scientific merit, and although MacDougall's results varied considerably from 21 grams, for some people this figure has become synonymous with the measure of a soul's weight. Experiments such as MacDougall's have not been repeated with current precision equipment and research tools, and snopes.com concludes of one researcher that:

"MacDougall's results were flawed because the methodology used to harvest them was suspect, the sample size far too small, and the ability to measure changes in weight imprecise. For this reason, credence should not be given to the idea his experiments proved something, let alone that they measured the weight of the soul as 21 grams. His postulations on this topic are a curiosity, but nothing more." xxx

Evil Tines

The fork, devilish and maligne, was the last of the utensils to arrive at the table

Smithsonian – May 2006

By Jennifer Drapkin

In the 11th century, a Byzantine princess ate her sweetmeats with a forbidden object: a two-tined gold fork. At the time, the Church so opposed forks that after she succumbed to the plague, a Franciscan theologian called her untimely death “a just punishment from god.”

The knife and the spoon have a venerable history, but the fork, associated with Satanism and hedonism, became widely used only in the past 200 years. Or so one gathers during a visit

with the curators of “Feeding Desire,” a new exhibition about the evolution of dining utensils which opens this month at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York City. “The idea is that if you were a good Christian—eating gruel and meat—you wouldn’t indulge in anything that called for a fork,” says curator Sarah Coffin, leader of the most comprehensive museum survey of American and European flatware. “It’s impossible now to think about the controversy that a piece of flatware could stir up, but the Church really saw the fork as an evil implement.”

Although the reason for the fork’s obloquy remains unknown, it eventually gained acceptance in Italy with pasta’s rise during the Renaissance. But Northern Europeans, Coffin says, continued to resist the fork for centuries, preferring to skewer meat and potatoes on the tip of a knife. When the Victorians began to regard the dinner knife as a brutal instrument and rounded off its point, meat still needed to be skewered. The fork rose to prominence.

Americans considered forks to be a European affectation until the Rockefellers, Carnegies and Morgans popularized them in the 1800s, says guest curator Darra Goldstein, founding editor of *Gastronomica* magazine. Soon, owning flatware of all kinds was the thing to do: there were utensils for raw oysters, fried oysters, fried chicken, lemon slices, poached eggs, bonbons, nuts, buckwheat griddle cakes, pickles, berries and chipped beef. A single dinner party could have as many as 146 different pieces. In 1925, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, responding to a silver shortage, ordered the Bureau of Standards to limit the number of pieces in a flatware pattern to 55. Arbiter of manners *Emily Post* approved of the restriction, declaring, “No rule of etiquette is of less importance than which fork we use.” Elaborate silverware has been on the decline ever since. And with the rise of the fast-food burrito and chicken nugget, it seems the fork’s days at the table may be numbered. xxx



April 29, 2006
Julia Sweeney's *Letting Go of god*
NYCA Members who attended the play



May 4, 2006
NYCA Blood Donation Program
L-R: Suzy Lanza, Jay Gumbiner,
Ken Bronstein, Judy Sager



April 30, 2006
NYCA Monthly Meeting
Guest Speaker: Beth Lamont



May 13, 2006
NYCA Street Tabling
Columbus Circle - Manhattan



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, educational association with these 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 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

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