

New York City Atheists Inc.

Serving the Tri-State area • An affiliate of American Atheists & Center For Atheism

WEB: NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG

COOPER STATION - Box 93, NY, NY 10276-0093

July 2006

Vol. III Issue No. 7

212-330-6794

July 4th Barbecue / Fireworks

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

AUGUST

Aug.	3*	Thursday	6:00 / 7:30 P.M.	NYCA Dinner / Movie Nite
Aug.	3**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Aug.	10**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Aug.	13***	Sunday	12:00 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
Aug.	15*****	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
Aug.	17**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Aug.	24**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Aug.	31**	Thursday	8:00 P.M.	NYCA Cable Show
Aug.	31***	Thursday	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
*** Garden Restaurant – 145 East 60th St. (Lexington / Third)
Brunch Cost: Order from Menu — Reservations not required.
**** Manhattan Lounge – 1720 2nd Ave. (89/90)
***** Barbecue / Fireworks – see page 3.

JOIN
NEW YORK CITY ATHEISTS
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - PAGE 8



KEN BRONSTEIN

Religious Fundamentalists and the Evil They Perpetrate

The dictionary defines "evil" as, among other things, something that is "morally reprehensible," "causing harm" or "something that brings sorrow, distress or calamity."

Under this definition, though Religious Fundamentalists claim they are the Culture of Life, the Religious Right actually encompasses, and perpetuates, a Culture of Evil that may be the greatest organized negative force fighting modern scientific progress.

Religion's opposition to science harks back as far as the Galileo heresy inquisition. Galileo contradicted the idea that the sun revolved around the earth and, for all practical purposes, proved the Copernican theory that the earth and other planets circle the sun. Today, we accept that the earth revolves around the sun. But we haven't yet come to terms with organized religion's opposition to other recent scientific advances:

- Organized religion's opposition to abortion represents what I call a Culture of Birth. But once the unwanted fetus is born, the church no longer seems to care what happens to it. The Religious Right drops its concern about the unwanted child's need for health care, education and housing-- as evidenced in legislation that denies these essentials to the child.
- The Religious Right's opposition to the Morning-After Pill constitutes a chastity-belt action which presumes that providing this type of birth control will cause their daughters to become more promiscuous.
- Not allowing condom distribution in Africa because the Religious Right believes in abstinence represents the same kind of blinders. As a result, millions of Africans have died of AIDS. Withholding scientific aid in order to enforce morality is not only unconscionable, but simply does not work.
- The Religious Right does not trouble itself about environmental protection. They believe that when The Rapture comes, they will be taken to a better place, so they don't need to care about our depleted forests or global warming.
- Their efforts to introduce Creationism into school curriculums can be interpreted as a sneaky way of injecting religious beliefs into the educational system of the US and brainwashing our children.

Evildoers? If you can call someone "evil" who throws an unwanted child, born into poverty, onto the whims of charity with no assurance of access to good housing, healthcare or educational opportunity, then the world is full of evildoers.

If you can call "evildoers" those who let whole populations die from AIDS when an inexpensive little device could save their lives, then we are talking about a Culture of Death, not of life. J'accuse! ...

J'accuse the whole Religious Right of undermining our society's efforts in scientific progress. Or as Madalyn Murray O'Hair once famously said, Religion delayed man's landing on the moon for more than 500 years.

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

PAST JUNE EVENTS

June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 Thursday
NYCA Cable Show - 8:00 P.M.

June 1 Thursday
NYCA Dinner / Movie Nite
Saw the movie: The Dead Poets Society

June 7, 14, 21, 28 Wednesday
CFA Cable Show – 6:30 P.M.

June 11 Sunday
NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club

June 20 Tuesday
NYCA Meet-Up

June 29 Thursday
NYCA Monthly Meeting
Guest: Dr. John K. Chapin, Professor
Department of Physiology and Pharmacology
Downstate School of Medicine

Subject: *The Mind/Brain Controversy*. The Dualists, 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 Dr. Chapin’s research.

UPCOMING JULY EVENTS

July 4 Tuesday 12:00 / 8:45 P.M.
NYCA July 4th Barbecue / Fireworks
Cost: \$10 member / \$20 non-member
Reservations: N/A

BARBECUE

Time: (by train) Meet at 10:30 AM at Grand Central Station, at the great hall round info kiosk. Purchase round trip ticket to Chappaqua. Train ticket cost: \$14.50 (senior \$9.50)
Time: 12:00 PM
Location: Eric and Elaine Stone's home, 76 Devoe Rd. Chappaqua, NY (Westchester County) 914-238-4803
Driving Instructions: Saw Mill Parkway, take exit RT-120. Stay on RT-120S - Hunt -> Quaker -> Greeley -> King -> Bedford. Turn left onto Devoe Rd.

FIREWORKS

Time: 8:45 PM
Beatrice Kachuck's Apartment
60 East 8th St. (18B) / Broadway
Location: (watch from the roof of her 33-story building)
212-260-4107

Cost: Free
Reservations: N/A

July 5, 12, 19, 26 Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
CFA Cable Show

July 6 Thursday 6:00 / 7:30 P.M.
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

MOVIE: *The Taking Of Pelham One Two Three*
An all-star cast, including Academy Award winners Walter Mathau and Martin Balsam. Also in the cast is Robert Shaw of *Jaws* fame.

Four armed men hijack a New York City subway train and demand one million dollars -- which must be delivered in one hour -- for the train and the lives of the passengers held hostage. Lt. Zachary Garber (Walter Mathau) of the New York City Transit Police must contend with City Hall red tape, the unrelenting demands of the hijackers and the ever-ticking clock in his efforts to save the passengers and bring the hijackers to justice.

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

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.

July 6, 13, 20, 27 Thursday 8:00 P.M.
 NYCA Cable Show

July 9 Sunday 12:00 P.M.
 NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
 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.

July 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?*

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

July 13 Thursday 8:00 P.M.
 NYCA Cable Show

July 18 Tuesday 7:00 P.M.
 NYCA Meet-Up
 Location: Manhattan Lounge
 1720 2nd Ave. (89/90)
 Casual conversation and drinks with your fellow freethinkers. Register at
<http://atheists.meetup.com>

July 20 Thursday 8:00 P.M.
 NYCA Cable Show

July 30 Sunday 12:00 P.M.
 NYCA Monthly Meeting
 Location: Garden Restaurant
 145 East 60th St (Between Lexington and Third)
 Reservations: Not required
 Cost: Individual checks

Guest Speaker: TBA

Subject: I am mad as H..... and I am not going to take it anymore.

See the NYC Atheists June newsletter president's sermon: *I am mad as H..... and I am not going to take it anymore.*

We will discuss how Atheists can/should respond to theists remarks such as "god bless you," "without god you are immoral," etc.

**YOU ARE A
 FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN IF...**
 From: evilbible.com

10 - You vigorously deny the existence of thousands of gods claimed by other religions, but feel outraged when someone denies the existence of yours.

9 - You feel insulted and "dehumanized" when scientists say that people evolved from other life forms, but you have no problem with the Biblical claim that we were created from dirt.

8 - You laugh at polytheists, but you have no problem believing in a Triune god (trinity).

7 - Your face turns purple when you hear of the "atrocities" attributed to Allah, but you don't even flinch when hearing about how god/Jehovah slaughtered all the babies of Egypt in "Exodus" and ordered the elimination of entire ethnic groups in "Joshua" including women, children and trees!

6 - You laugh at Hindu beliefs that deify humans, and Greek claims about gods sleeping with women, but you have no problem believing that the holy spirit impregnated Mary, who then gave birth to a man-god who got killed, came back to life and then ascended into the sky.

5 - You are willing to spend your life looking for little loopholes in the scientifically established age of Earth (a few billion years), but you find nothing wrong with believing dates recorded by Bronze Age tribesmen sitting in their tents and guessing that Earth is a few generations old.

4 - You believe that the entire population of this planet, with the exception of those who share your beliefs -- though excluding those in all rival sects -- will spend Eternity in an infinite Hell of Suffering. And yet you consider your religion the most "tolerant" and "loving."

3 - While modern science, history, geology, biology and physics have failed to convince you otherwise, some idiot rolling around on the floor speaking in "tongues" may be all the evidence you need to "prove" Christianity.

2 - You define 0.01% as a "high success rate" when it comes to answered prayers. You consider that to be evidence that prayer works. And you think that the remaining 99.99% FAILURE was simply the will of god.

1 - You actually know a lot less than many atheists and agnostics do about the Bible, Christianity and church history - but still call yourself a Christian.

Letter to Editor

Dear Ken,

In response to your June "sermon," I too get frustrated. And when spoken to by a believer with the condescending attitude you refer to, it gets me excited to tell them off. But I usually refrain, take a step back and realize how sad and pitiful it is to see people so brainwashed go through life in the DARK.

In an environment like the tabletop display at Columbus Circle where NYCA is trying to get the message heard, I think the most effective method would be sharing short messages of resounding truth that ring the loudest, e.g.-- "Why don't you believe in Santa Claus anymore?" "You are entitled to your own beliefs, but not your own facts" (from the newsletter). Your newsletter has offered dozens of "keepers" like these over the years that can hit the mark quickly.

I think that is the key to persuading someone to consider non-belief, ie.-give them a short and simple message/idea to think on. Something that gets them thinking because of its resonance, and then gets them to begin the questioning.

I agree with you that if each atheist informed everyone they knew (in their own way, whether subtle or not) of their atheism, we would begin a revolution. It's human nature; it's easier to accept something new and different when you have positive or familiar references, i.e.-friends and family acknowledging their atheism. Let's keep the ball rolling in the right direction. I've always suggested a more aggressive stance towards getting the truth out in order to get more acceptance in the marketplace of ideas. As a member of American Atheists I suggested a billboard with a simple message, changing over time. Imagine the publicity it would achieve and also be a rallying cry to atheists to: 1) not feel alone, 2) increase our numbers 3) raise money to achieve more outreach.

Keep up the excellent work you do.

Sincerely,
David Withington
New York, N.Y.

People Are Attracted To Religion

For 16 Reasons

Ohio State University - June 13 2006

Religion and Spirituality

People are not drawn to religion because of a fear of death or any other single reason, according to a new comprehensive psychological theory of religion.

There are actually 16 basic human psychological needs that motivate people to seek meaning through religion, says Steven Reiss, author of the new theory and professor of psychology and psychiatry at Ohio State University.

These basic human needs – which include honor, idealism, curiosity and acceptance – can explain why certain people are attracted to religion, why god-images express psychologically opposite qualities and the relationship between personality and religious experiences.

Previous psychologists tried to explain religion in terms of just one or two overarching psychological needs. The most common reason they cite is that people embrace religion because of a fear of death, as expressed in the saying 'there are no atheists in foxholes,' Reiss says.

"But religion is multi-faceted – it can't be reduced to just one or two desires."

Reiss described his new theory – which he says may be the most comprehensive psychological theory of religion since Freud's work more than a century ago -- in the June issue of *Zygon*, a journal devoted to issues of science and religion. "I don't think there has been a comprehensive theory of religion that was scientifically testable," he says.

The theory is based on his overall theory of human motivation, which he calls sensitivity theory. Sensitivity theory is explained in his 2000 book *Who Am I? The 16 Basic Desires that Motivate Our Action and Define Our Personalities* (Tarcher Putnam).

Appeal Of Religion

Reiss says that each of the 16 basic desires outlined in the book influence the psychological appeal of religious behavior. The desires are power, independence, curiosity, acceptance, order, saving, honor, idealism, social contact, family, status, vengeance, romance, eating, physical exercise, and tranquility.

Reiss has already done some initial research that suggests the desire for independence is a key psychological desire that separates religious and non-religious people. In a study published in 2000, Reiss found that religious people (the study included mostly Christians) expressed a strong desire for interdependence with others. Those who were not religious, however, showed a stronger need to be self-reliant and independent.

The study also showed that religious people valued honor more than non-religious people, which Reiss says suggests many people embrace religion to show loyalty to parents and ancestors. In the *Zygon* paper, Reiss explains that every religious person balance their 16 basic human needs to fit their own personality.

"They embrace those aspects of religious imagery that express their strongest psychological needs and deepest personal values."

One example is the desire for curiosity, Reiss says. Religious intellectuals, who are high in curiosity, value a god who is knowable through reason, while doers, who have weak curiosity, may value a god that is knowable only through revelation. "People who have a strong need for order should enjoy ritualized religious

experiences, whereas those with a weak need for order may prefer more spontaneous expression of faith," he said.

"The prophecy that the weak will inherit the earth should appeal especially to people with a weak need for status, whereas the teaching that everybody is equal before god should appeal especially to people with a strong need for idealism."

If religion and personality are linked, religion must provide a range of images and symbols sufficiently diverse to appeal to all the different kinds of personalities in the human population, Reiss says. Religious imagery potentially accommodates everybody because in many instances the images and symbols are psychological opposites.

Different gods

"How we value and balance the 16 psychological needs is what makes us an individual, and for every individual there are appealing religious images," he said. "The values that guide a personality with a strong need for vindication are expressed by a god of wrath, or a war god, while the values that guide a personality with a weak need for vindication are expressed by a god of forgiveness."

"The values that guide a personality with a strong need to socialize are expressed by religious fellowship and festivals, while the values that guide a personality with a weak need to socialize are expressed by religious asceticism."

The need for acceptance makes meaningful the images of god as a savior, while its opposite inspires the concept of original sin, according to Reiss. The need to eat motivates some people to value abstinence and others to value sustenance. "Because this theory can be tested scientifically, we can learn its strengths and weaknesses, and gradually improve it," Reiss said. "Eventually, we may better understand the psychological basis of religion."

Reiss emphasized that this theory addresses the psychology of religious experiences and has no implications for the validity or invalidity of religious beliefs.

**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**
 =====

Liberals Escaping To Canada

Manitoba Herald, Canada

The flood of American liberals sneaking across the border into Canada has intensified in the past week, sparking calls for increased patrols to stop the illegal immigration. The actions of President Bush are prompting the exodus among left-leaning citizens who fear they'll soon be required to hunt, pray, and agree with Bill O'Reilly.

Canadian border farmers say it's not uncommon to see dozens of sociology professors, animal-rights activists and Unitarians crossing their fields at night. "I went out to milk the cows the other day, and there was a Hollywood producer huddled in the barn," said Manitoba farmer Red Greenfield, whose acreage borders North Dakota. The producer was cold, exhausted and hungry.

"He asked me if I could spare a latte and some free-range chicken. When I said I didn't have any, he left. Didn't even get a chance to show him my screenplay, eh?"

In an effort to stop the illegal aliens, Greenfield erected higher fences, but the liberals scaled them. So he tried installing speakers that blare Rush Limbaugh across the fields. "Not real effective," he said. "The liberals still got through, and Rush annoyed the cows so much they wouldn't give milk."

Officials are particularly concerned about smugglers who meet liberals near the Canadian border, pack them into Volvo station wagons, drive them across the border and leave them to fend for themselves.

"A lot of these people are not prepared for rugged conditions," an Ontario border patrolman said. "I found one carload without a drop of drinking water. "They did have a nice little Napa Valley cabernet, though."

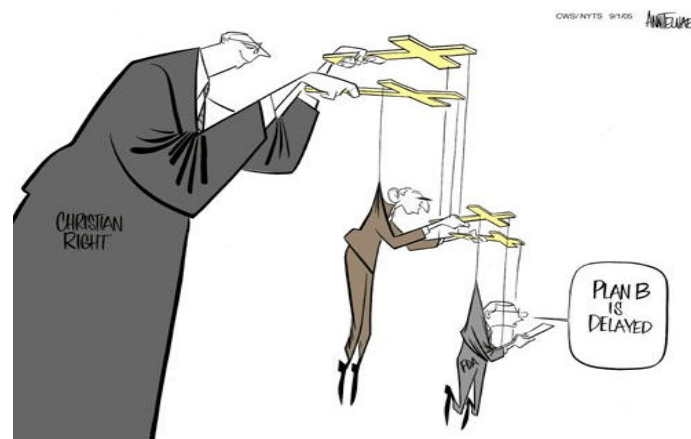
When liberals are caught, they're sent back across the border, often wailing loudly that they fear retribution from conservatives. Rumors have been circulating about the Bush administration establishing re-education camps in which liberals will be forced to drink domestic beer and watch NASCAR races.

In recent days, liberals have turned to sometimes-ingenious ways of crossing the border. Some have taken to posing as senior citizens on bus trips to buy cheap Canadian prescription drugs. After catching a half-dozen young vegans disguised in powdered wigs, Canadian immigration authorities began stopping buses and quizzing the supposed senior-citizen passengers on Perry Como and Rosemary Clooney hits to prove they were alive in the '50s.

"If they can't identify the accordion player on The Lawrence Welk Show, we get suspicious about their age," an official said.

Canadian citizens have complained that the illegal immigrants are creating an organic-broccoli shortage and renting all the good Susan Sarandon movies. "I feel sorry for American liberals, but the Canadian economy just can't support them," an Ottawa resident said. "How many art-history majors does one country need?"

In an effort to ease tensions between the United States and Canada, Vice President Dick Cheney met with the Canadian ambassador and pledged that the administration would take steps to reassure liberals, a source close to Cheney said. "We're going to have some Peter, Paul & Mary concerts. And we might put some endangered species on postage stamps. The President is determined to reach out," he said.





NYC Atheists necklace designed and worn By NYCA Member Pat Berger



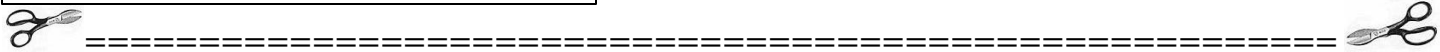
MAY 25, 2006
Guest Speaker: Dr. Lee Silver of Princeton



June 6, 2006
Board member Jay Gumbiner's Birthday



666 PARTY
L-R: Howard Charcofsky. Harry Graber



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