

New York City Atheists Inc.

NOVEMBER 2006

Serving the Tri-State area • An affiliate of American Atheists & Center For Atheism Vol. III Issue No. 11

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

ATHEISM IS A CONCLUSION NOT A BELIEF

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

NOVEMBER

Nov. 2*****	Thursday	6:15 / 7:45 P.M.	NYCA Movie Nite - First Thursday of Month
Nov. 7***	Tuesday	5:00 – 6:30 P.M.	NYCA Election - Blood Donation Day
No v. 12*	Sunday	12:00 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
Nov. 21**	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
Nov. 30*****	Thursday	6:30 P.M.	NYCA Monthly Meeting

DECEMBER

Dec. 7	Thursday	TBA	NYCA Movie Nite - First Thursday of Month
Dec. 10*	Sunday	12:00 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
Dec. 19**	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
Dec. 21	Thursday	6:30 P.M.	NYCA Solstice Party (Location-TBA)

- =====
- * Garden Restaurant – 145 East 60th St. (Lexington / Third)
Cost: Individual checks plus \$5 suggested donation — Reservations not required
 - ** Stone Creek Lounge – 140 East 27th St. (3rd / Lexington) – Cash bar and food
 - *** NYC Blood Center – 310 East 67th St. (1st / 2nd)
 - **** Editorial Freelancers Association – Room 1910 - 71 West 23rd Street - (6th Ave.)
 - ***** Location: Quad Cinema – 34 West 13th St. (University)

WEDNESDAYS

CENTER FOR ATHEISM CABLE SHOW
6:30PM-CH 57 (MANHATTAN CABLE)
LIVE STREAMING: WWW.MNN.ORG

THURSDAYS

NYC ATHEISTS CABLE SHOW
8:00PM-CH 67 (MANHATTAN CABLE)
LIVE STREAMING: WWW.MNN.ORG

JOIN
NEW YORK CITY ATHEISTS
SEE PAGE 8

NYC Atheists Inc. is a 501-C3, 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.



PRESIDENT'S "SERMON"
THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING AN ATHEIST

Page 2

When I became an Atheist on my thirteen birthday, I sought truth, not falsehood. I concluded, even as an adolescent, that there is no deity, no heaven and no hell. Religion was defective merchandise. I decided that I had to face reality. I chose a life of rationality, reality, reason, science and skepticism. Now, years later, I count the advantages of having lived life as an Atheist:

KENNETH BRONSTEIN

Though theists may claim that they are "special" in the eyes of god as the Chosen People, Children of god, etc., based on delusionary mythology, I, an Atheist, have the advantage of knowing that I, with a documented two-million-year-old homo genus heritage, am really the "special" human being.

As an Atheist, I have the advantage of knowing that I am on a perpetual proof-pilgrimage, testing the facts. If the facts change, I will change. Faith-based individuals are not so inclined. They never change their beliefs even in the face of incontrovertible scientific evidence.

As an Atheist, I have the advantage of knowing that because of natural selection and adaptation, humans possess a highly developed brain capable of abstract reasoning, language and introspection. This enables me to seek the truth and not to rely upon mystical and supernatural sources. I have become my own authority figure: a mature adult, emotionally balanced and capable of making my own decisions.

Therefore, I am capable of being a problem solver. No astrology, Ouiji boards, taro cards, prayer (which we Atheists feel is just talking to oneself). No artificial coping mechanisms for temporary "feel-good" purposes. As an Atheist, I have the advantage of exercising real problem resolution and not temporary fixes. For example, take a problem that sooner or later enters all our lives: illness. My way of dealing with it is to do extensive personal research on the malady, seek out the best doctor and hospitals that specialize in that particular field and get additional medical opinions.

Two famous Atheists followed this plan of action with their illnesses. Stephen Jay Gould was informed by physicians that he had a 90 percent probability of a less than five-year life expectancy after he was diagnosed with an abdominal mesothelioma cancer. He lived 20 years. Lance Armstrong, diagnosed with brain and testicular cancer, was informed by doctors that his life expectancy was just a few years. We all know that not only has his cancer been in remission but he won the Tour de France seven times. Prayer had nothing to do with the survival of these men. Science and good medical practice extended their lives.

As an Atheist, I have the advantage of living life without the fear that some mystical source will decide whether I will live or die or enter heaven or hell. I do not harbor the delusion that there will be, as Woody Guthrie put it, "pie in the sky when you die." When you die, it's over, folks. Curtains. So whatever you want to do, do it now.

HOPE DOES NOT MAKE IT HAPPEN

WE CAN ONLY DO IT WITH YOUR PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL INVOLVEMENT

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

UPCOMING NOVEMBER EVENTS

Page 3

Nov. 30 Thursday 6:30 P.M.
NYCA Monthly Meeting

Location: Editorial Freelancers Association
71 West 23rd St. (6th Ave) – Room 1910

Reservations: Not required

Speaker: Ana Lita

Dr. Lita holds a Ph.D. in Applied Ethics and Social Philosophy from Bowling Green State University and an M.A. in Sociology through Lancaster University, UK. The author of numerous conference presentations, scholarly and popular publications in the fields of education and ethics, she was appointed director of the International Humanist and Ethical Union-Appignani Center for Bioethics in September 2004.

Subject: *Biotechnology Humanism*

The diverse and rapid growth of biotechnological applications is creating new opportunities for reshaping our lives, in particular our procreative practices. In this vein, yesterday's questions of "Could we?" are being displaced by today's worries of "Should we?" Given the recent and ongoing developments in reproductive sciences, women are particularly impacted by the consequences of humanist thinking. Some notable and controversial developments in biotechnology affecting women's reproductive rights include the emergence of cervical cancer vaccines and "egg markets," which have the potential to help or harm women and their current socio-economic status in modern society. Dr. Lita will review the controversies related to cervical cancer vaccines and egg donation.

Nov. 2 Thursday 6:15 / 7:45 P.M.
NYCA First Thursday of Month Movie Nite

Movie: *Jonestown – The Life and Death of Peoples Temple*

Story of the Jim Jones Peoples' Temple and the mass suicide of 900 of its members on command of their leader.

Location: Quad Cinema

34 W13th St. (University)

Time: 6:15 P.M. (meet in front of theatre for pre-movie dinner at local restaurant)

Time: 7:45 P.M. (meet in front of theatre for movie)

Nov. 7 Tuesday 5:00 – 6:30 P.M.

NYC Atheist Blood Donation Day

NYC Blood Center – 310 East 67th St. (3rd)

Reservations: Not Required

Nov. 12 Sunday 12:00 P.M.

NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club

Location: Garden Restaurant

145 East 60th St. (Lexington and Third)

Reservations: Not required

Cost: Individual checks plus \$5 donation

Speaker: Dave Silverman – American Atheists Media Director

Subject: *How to Win an Unwinnable Argument*

Dave will respond to the 10 most common myths about Atheism.

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

Nov. 21 Tuesday 7:00 P.M.

NYCA Meet-Up

Location: Stone Creek Lounge

140 East 27th St. (3rd/Lexington)

Casual conversation and drinks with your fellow freethinkers.

Cost: Free (cash food and bar)

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

QUESTION FAITH

NO MORE FREE PASS !

MAKE THEM PROVE IT



Voltaire

François Marie Arouet (1694-1778)

"I may not agree with what you say, but to your death I will defend your right to say it."

And Skeletons Won't Dance American Chronicle by Stan Grimes

Since the beginning of the human species and the development of even the most rudimentary brain, blame for humankind's failures or weaknesses had to be blamed on something or someone external of the self--hence, god. Mankind's first gods were rather basic creations, the wind, the sun and the rain. Crop failures were blamed on the sun god, rain god or some other kind of god. A woman's infertility was blamed on a fertility god. After all, there was nothing wrong with a man's or a woman's reproduction organs. It had to be the fertility god's doing or undoing. Man was not weak; it was god's fault.

Enter Jesus

After man became more sophisticated, his gods became more sophisticated. Most of them looked human, but had super powers, i.e., Thor, Mercury, Venus, Aphrodite, etc. These gods worked well for hundreds of years, but once again humans stepped up the ladder of sophistication. Humans wanted a god they could relate to on a more personal level. Hence, came the god of the Christians. A god that even the most poor of the poor could pray to and ask for help. To punctuate this idea, along came a fellow named Jesus who placed god on an even more personal level by telling everyone he (and only he) was the son of this Christian god. What a better way to bring god into your living room. Having Jesus walking the streets was like having Jerry Falwell living next door.

Then, since humans can rarely agree on anything, humankind couldn't agree on Jesus's place in the whole scheme of things. Hence, came all the splinter religious groups: some believed in the Nicene Creed, others ignored the creed, and still others created their own creeds. Today we have a whole passel of radical, conservative and fundamentalist religionists walking around healing each other in the name of some form of this Christian god.

Search for Proof of god

If you ask most religionists for some kind of proof that their god exists, they will read to you from a jigsaw puzzle book entitled the Bible, as if the hand of their god wrote the Bible. When, in fact, this book was written and translated by weak and prejudiced men. When a nonbeliever points this out to a Christian, a standard reply is given: faith. The myths must be believed through faith. Of course, this is what they say in public, but behind closed doors, Christians are just dying to get their hands on some real physical evidence that the man Jesus was god's son. They examine ancient burial shrouds, they see the Virgin Mary in a cheese sandwich, and they see tears flowing from a piece of concrete that resembles Mary.

Atheism Is Wakeup Call

Humans are an insecure lot, you see, and believe they should not die. Humans, down deep in their egos, can't imagine that such sophisticated and bright creatures should die and decompose. How can that be? How could such marvelous creatures be no different then a dead squirrel? Religion was born out of insecurity and ignorance of the world around us. Humans must have hope for a hereafter; it's an innate wish, yet illogical. Most people require a god to explain their existence.

Christians are afraid atheism is the real truth. They hate the non-believers (a form of fear) for this reason. Atheism is the wake-up call they don't want. Atheism places humankind on the same level as all creatures. When they die, they decompose, there is no rainbow at the bottom of their grave, and skeletons won't dance their way to the Pearly Gates.

**Man invented god;
god did not invent man**



Leonid Hambro
1920 - 2006

Leonid was a member of NYC Atheists.

NYC Atheists – Jan. 2004 newsletter

At our first annual NYC Atheist Solstice Dinner on December 22, 2003, we were entertained by Leonid Hambro, an artist who was born, bred, and continued to be an Atheist into his ninth decade.

Adapted from New York Times -10/26/2006:

As a pianist, Leonid had a huge repertory of pieces, most committed to memory. He used his storehouse in impressive displays called “Command Performances,” in which he gave a list of a hundred works to audience members and had them pick the program.

He had a distinguished conventional career, making more than 100 recordings and touring worldwide. He played as a soloist with the orchestras of Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and London, among many others. He was known especially as a sensitive and skilled chamber musician, collaborating with soloists like Fritz Kreisler, Jascha Heifetz, Isaac Stern, Leonard Rose and Pierre Fournier.

For 17 years, he was a pianist for WQXR, the radio station owned by The New York Times Company, playing live recitals and chamber music on the air. He and another WQXR pianist, Jascha Zayde, formed a duo that played throughout the 1960’s.

But his partnership with Victor Borge was best known. The men began a 10-year collaboration in which Leonid played the straight man

**YOU ARE FREE TO HOLD
TO YOUR
IRRATIONAL AND DELUSIONARY
BELIEFS**

**BUT
YOU CAN NOT MAKE THEM
INTO
FEDERAL – STATE - LOCAL
LEGISLATION**

to Borge’s antics. Many of their routines were improvised. They were often based on the premise that Leonid was a silent second banana, but Borge would periodically give him a solo, saying it was his contractual obligation to do so, and then do everything he could to undermine the performance: whistling, walking around and playing with the microphone.

In 1970 Leonid ended his collaboration with Borge to lead the piano faculty at the California Institute of the Arts, where he stayed until 1987.

In the early 1980’s Leonid formed a piano ensemble with three top students. They toured as a quartet of pianos for 15 years. More recently he gave master classes and taught.

I visited Leonid during his hospitalization. He was an Atheist to the end.

Leonid Hambro - NYC Atheists and I will miss you. – Ken Bronstein

**NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLERS
NOW AT NYC ATHEISTS LIBRARY**
Sam Harris

End of Faith
Letter to a Christian Nation

Richard Dawkins
The god Delusion

Daniel Dennett
Breaking The Spell

Contact: Pat Berger – NYCA Librarian
PGBNYC@AOL.COM

opposition. If anything, the Bush plan was even less popular in deep-red states like Montana than in states that voted for Mr. Kerry.

Religious "Shock Troops"

And the religious and cultural right, which boasted of having supplied the Bush campaign with its "shock troops" and expected a right-wing cultural agenda in return-starting with a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage - was dismayed when the administration put its energy into attacking the welfare state instead. James Dobson, the founder and chairman of Focus on the Family, accused Republicans of "just ignoring those that put them in office."

It will be interesting, by the way, to see how Dr. Dobson, who declared of Bill Clinton that "no man has ever done more to debase the presidency," responds to the Foley scandal. Does the failure of Republican leaders to do anything about a sexual predator in their midst outrage him as much as a Democratic president's consensual affair?

In any case, just as the religious right was feeling betrayed by Mr. Bush's focus on the goals of the economic right, the economic right suddenly seemed to become aware of the nature of its political allies. "Where in the hell did this Terri Schiavo thing come from?" asked Dick Armey, the former House majority leader, in an interview with Ryan Sager, the author of *"The Elephant in the Room: Evangelicals, Libertarians and the Battle to Control the Republican Party."* The answer, he said, was "blatant pandering to James Dobson." He went on, "Dobson and his gang of thugs are real nasty bullies."

Darwin Wins

Some Republicans are switching parties. James Webb, who may pull off a macaca-fueled upset against Senator George Allen of Virginia, was secretary of the Navy under Ronald Reagan. Charles Barkley, a former N.B.A. star who used to be mentioned as a possible future Republican candidate, recently declared, "I was a Republican until they lost their minds."

So the right-wing coalition is showing signs of coming apart. It seems that we're not in Kansas anymore. In fact, Kansas itself doesn't seem to be in Kansas anymore. Kathleen Sebelius, the

Right after the 2004 election, it seemed as if Thomas Frank had been completely vindicated. In his book, *"What's the Matter With Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America,"* Mr. Frank argued that America's right wing had developed a permanent winning strategy based on the use of "values" issues to mobilize white working-class voters against a largely mythical cultural elite, while actually pursuing policies designed to benefit a small economic elite.

It was and is a brilliant analysis. But the political strategy Mr. Frank described may have less staying power than he feared. In fact, the right-wing coalition that has spent 40 years climbing to its current position of political dominance may be cracking up.

Preachers & Plutocrats Allied

At its core, the political axis that currently controls Congress and the White House is an alliance between the preachers and the plutocrats - between the religious right, which hates gays, abortion and the theory of evolution, and the economic right, which hates Social Security, Medicare and taxes on rich people. Surrounding this core is a large periphery of politicians and lobbyists who joined the movement not out of conviction, but to share in the spoils.

Together, these groups formed a seemingly invincible political coalition, in which the religious right supplied the passion and the economic right supplied the money.

The coalition has, however, always been more vulnerable than it seemed, because it was an alliance based not on shared goals, but on each group's belief that it could use the other to get what it wants. Bring that belief into question, and the whole thing falls apart.

Future historians may date the beginning of the right-wing crackup to the days immediately following the 2004 election, when President Bush tried to convert a victory won by portraying John Kerry as weak on defense into a mandate for Social Security privatization. The attempted bait-and-switch failed in the face of public

state's Democratic governor, has achieved a sky-high favorability rating by focusing on good governance rather than culture wars, and her party believes it will win big this year.

And nine former Kansas Republicans, including Mark Parkinson, the former state G.O.P. chairman, are now running for state office as Democrats. Why did Mr. Parkinson change parties? Because he "got tired of the theological debate over whether Charles Darwin was right."

NYC Atheists Letter to Editor
Submitted to NY Times – not published

To the editor:

The temporary resting place of the so-called World Trade Center Miracle Cross at St. Peter's Church on Barclay Street should become its permanent home.

The so-called "miracle cross" that once dominated Ground Zero discriminates against all the Jews, Muslims, Atheists, Agnostics and others who died in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centers.

Moreover, the cross isn't a "miracle," it is just a couple of rusty girders, one of hundreds just like it that were found after the Twin Towers fell. After all, the Twin Towers were built with thousands of such T-shaped girders. That a worker resurrected one of these girders and dubbed it a Christian cross is an affront to all of us who believe in our Constitutionally based right to have public places free of religious propaganda and religious coercion.

Enough time has now passed so that those of us who once could not bear to think of anything but our losses on 9/11 may now consider our rededication to the freedoms our country stands for. And one of those freedoms provided by our Constitution is freedom *from* religion. A cross on public property is a violation of our Constitution's clear insistence on the separation of church and state.

Now there is a move to incorporate this so-called "cross" into a permanent memorial for the victims of 9/11—a totally inappropriate move in the eyes of those of us who honor our Constitution. It constitutes the "hijacking" of our Constitutional rights by those insensitive to the diversity of beliefs and non-beliefs in our country. To have a Christian cross as a symbol of the courage and indomitable will of our citizens who rallied after the terrorist attacks pins a label on this courage that excludes the millions of Jews, Atheists, Muslims, Agnostics and others who support, and pay taxes in, this country. Will the Ground Zero Memorial

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

**LOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS
FOR A NEW CABLE SHOW
ATHEISTS BOOK CLUB**

We are in preparation for starting our third cable show.

- (1) NYC Atheists Live on Tape
Wednesday – 6:30 P.M.
Manhattan Cable #57
- (2) This Week in Atheism
Thursday - 8:00 P.M.
Manhattan Cable #67
- (3) The Atheist Book Club will review books on Atheism.

We need individuals who enjoy reading and discussing books.

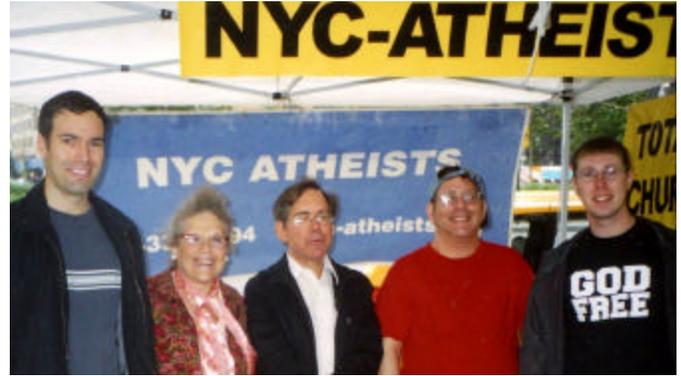
Contact: Ken Bronstein – 212-535-7425

**SCIENCE will replace RELIGION
KNOWLEDGE will replace FAITH
UNDERSTANDING will replace FEAR**

include a Jewish star or an Atheist 'A' made of rusty girders? Yet hundreds of Jews and Atheists died in the attack.

Moreover, the World Trade Center Memorial Foundation opens itself up to legal battles over this violation of the rights of American citizens to be free of what we feel is religious labeling and subtle religious coercion on public property.

Kenneth Bronstein
President -New York City Atheists, Inc.



NYCA OCT. 2006 STREET TABLING
L-R: Benson, Amster, Gumbiner, Charcofsky, Treiber.

PROUD TO BE AN ATHEIST!

**SEPARATION
OF
CHURCH AND STATE**

**WE LIVE IN A COSMOS
WITHOUT A DEITY

DEAL WITH IT**



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**