

ATHEISM IS A CONCLUSION NOT A BELIEF

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

APRIL

Apr. 5*	Thursday	7:00 / 8:15 P.M.	NYCA Movie Nite - First Thursday of Month
Apr. 14	Saturday	POSTPONED	Madalyn Murray Birthday Dinner
Apr. 15**	Sunday	12:00 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
Apr. 17***	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
Apr. 26**	Thursday	6:30 P.M.	NYCA Monthly Meeting (new location)

MAY

May 3****	Thursday	4:00-6:30 P.M.	NYCA Gift of Life Day
May 13**	Sunday	12:00 P.M.	NYCA Brunch, Library, Book Club
May 15***	Tuesday	7:00 P.M.	NYCA Meet-Up
May 31**	Thursday	6:30 P.M.	NYCA Monthly Meeting

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- * Film Forum - 209 West Houston St (6th Ave. / Varick)
 - ** Garden Restaurant – 145 East 60th St. (Lexington / Third)
Cost: Individual checks plus \$5 suggested donation — Reservations not required
 - *** Village Pourhouse – 64 Third Ave. (11th St.)
 - **** NY Blood Bank – 310 East 67th Street (2nd)

WEDNESDAYS

THIS WEEK IN ATHEISM CABLE SHOW
6:30 PM-CH 57 (MANHATTAN CABLE)
LIVE STREAMING: WWW.MNN.ORG

SEEKING CABLE SHOW GUESTS

CALL: KEN BRONSTEIN / 212-535-7425

THURSDAYS

NYC ATHEISTS CABLE SHOW
7:00 PM-CH 67 (MANHATTAN CABLE)
LIVE STREAMING: WWW.MNN.ORG

ATHEISTS BOOK CLUB CABLE SHOW
7:30 PM – CH 67 (MANHATTAN CABLE)
LIVE STREAMING: WWW.MNN.ORG

2007

NEW YORK CITY ATHEISTS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
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.

GUEST “SERMON”

Is Anything Out of Bounds for Atheists?

By Jane Everhart



Atheists, as freethinkers, question everything. There is nothing on earth safe from our inspection, study, skepticism or research: Turn over any rock in a meadow and we will examine the soil, the moisture in it, the minerals, the flora, the creatures that scamper out from under it. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is out of bounds for our scientific contemplation.

So it was with some puzzlement that I considered the criticisms I received after I wrote, under the *nom de plume* “Cassandra,” a reply to Ted Haggard’s contention in *The New York Times* that Evangelicals have better sex lives than any other group. My response to Haggard, published in our February newsletter, was predominantly scientific: I tried to show how impossible it would be for the ex-Rev. Haggard (now on leave from his church after some sexual peccadilloes of his own) to prove his assertion about the sexual athleticism of his sect. I concluded that a methodical, scientific, double-blind study could not be done because the difficulty of conducting such a study in places where sex takes place would be prohibitive and because there is no established criteria of what constitutes a good sex experience anyway.

I speculated in the article that the Rev. Haggard’s pride in his Evangelicals’ sexual life was just another ploy to attract younger people to fundamentalist churches—a loosening-up of the church’s sexual restrictions to meet the demands of modern times. For centuries, religion has controlled sexual activity with rules and regulations and has insinuated into our consciousness the belief that sex is forbidden, sinful and dirty. As Madalyn Murray O’Hair put it:

“The churches have always pretended that sex is a sin and to keep it sinful, it is necessary to keep it mysterious. Most of the morality of the church is deeply bound up with the desire of the church to control everyone’s sex life.”

--Madalyn Murray O’Hair, 1986

So I was perplexed that my article had elicited several reader comments that my challenge to the Rev. Haggard was beneath the dignity of this publication. One reader found my response “offensive” (though apparently they did not find the Reverend’s original contention as offensive as my response). It has always been my deeply held belief as a lifelong atheist that nothing human is out of bounds for scientific consideration or discussion. I feel it is no less appropriate to discuss human sexuality than it is to discuss the human digestive system or elimination process.

I found this labeling of any discussion about human sexual activity as “offensive” quite medieval. These days, sex is discussed, in its every manifestation, everywhere in our society, including such sacrosanct institutions as *The New York Times*, *The Wall St. Journal*, Channel 13 and high school classrooms.

But then I remembered something that Jesuits often say: “*Give us a child before he is seven and he is ours forever,*” and I realized that the belief that sex is “bad,” sinful and unmentionable-in-polite-society is ingrained by religion and often persists after the individual leaves the church and becomes an Atheist. Thus, any mention of sexuality in these pages, no matter how defensible, might be seen as offensive, lewd, distasteful, dirty, sinful, nasty, impure, unrefined or loutish by those brainwashed in childhood by the church.

So, is it valid for us as Atheists to discuss human sexuality in this publication? When the church tries to control our sexuality through its restrictions on abortion, marriage, contraception, legitimacy, divorce, homosexuality or medication for sexual diseases, then human sexuality is a suitable—indeed, compelling—issue for us to confront, and an incentive to fight for our sexual rights under the aegis of separation of church and state. We not only want the church out of our schools, we also want it out of our bedrooms. □

April 5 Thursday 7:00 / 8:15 PM
NYCA First Thursday of Month Movie Nite

Movie: Into Great Silence
Location: Film Forum
209 West Houston St.
(6th Ave. / Varick)

Directions: 1 train to Houston,
A,C,D,E,F,V, train to West 4th

7:00 P.M. - Meet in front of theatre for dinner
8:15 P.M. - Meet in front of theatre for movie

This is a German documentary about Catholic monks who barely utter a word. *INTO GREAT SILENCE* runs 162 engrossing, entrancing, enlivening minutes... Philip Gröning brings us inside a world as mysterious and often as silent as the dark side of the moon, a charterhouse of Carthusian monks in the French Alps. Founded in the 12th century, the Carthusians are among the most rigorous of all Catholic orders... In an overwhelmingly noisy world, the Carthusians seek God in solitude; all things considered, including the inevitable tranquility and focus of their lives, you soon understand why... Through unrushed rhythms and a harmonious mise-en-scene, Mr. Gröning finds beauty in a mote of dust, a patch of newly tilled earth and the long white eyebrows that hang over an aged blind monk's eyes like a curtain. Grace, it seems, makes little noise." -- Manohla Dargis, *The New York Times*

• In French & Latin with English Subtitles

April 14 Saturday
NYCA Madalyn Murray O’Hair Birthday Party

Postponed till further notice

April 15 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

Guest: Warren Allen Smith



Subject: Databases of the names of Atheists (books and on line).

Mr. Warren Smith is the author of *Who's Who in Hell*, a handbook and international directory for humanists, freethinkers, naturalists, rationalists and non-theists, and *Celebrities in Hell*, a listing of contemporary non-revelationists from Woody Allen and Marlon Brando to Marlene Dietrich, Katharine Hepburn, Christopher Reeve and Frank Zappa.

Starting with the data from the above two books, Smith has developed *PHILOSOPEDIA* (Wikipedia format) a free online reference source for freethinkers and the philosophy-minded.



The NYCA library includes more than 600 books as well as numerous CDs, DVDs, cassettes, videotapes, newsletters and magazines.
Contact: Pat Berger – NYCA Librarian
PGBNYC@AOL.COM / 212-489-5644

April 17 Tuesday 7:00 P.M.
NYCA Meet-Up

Location: Village Pourhouse
64 Third Ave. (11th Street)
Casual conversation and drinks with your fellow freethinkers.
Cost: Free (cash food and bar)
Register at <http://atheists.meetup.com>

This newsletter is published by
New York City Atheists Inc.

Publisher - Kenneth Bronstein
Editor- Jane Everhart

April 26 Thursday 6:30 P.M.

NYCA Monthly Meeting

Location: Garden Restaurant

145 East 60th St. (Lexington and Third)

Reservations: Not required

Cost: Individual checks plus \$5 donation

Speaker: Henry Miller

Subject: *Clarence Darrow*



Mr. Miller is a Senior Member of Clark, Gagliardi & Miller, P.C., a law firm located in White Plains, New York.

He has written and appeared in Off-Broadway (usually way-off) productions. His latest production, *Clarence Darrow: All Too Human*, is a one-man play about Clarence Darrow.

At our meeting, Mr. Miller will portray Clarence Darrow during the Scopes (monkey) Trial followed by a Q&A.

The "Scopes Trial" pitted lawyers William Jennings Bryan against Clarence Darrow (the latter representing teacher John Thomas Scopes), testing a law passed on March 13, 1925, which forbade the teaching, in any state-funded educational establishment in Tennessee, of "any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals." This is often interpreted as meaning that the law forbade the teaching of any aspect of the theory of evolution. John Scopes, a high school teacher, was arrested for teaching evolution from a chapter in a textbook that showed ideas developed from those set out in Charles Darwin's book, *The Origin of Species*. The famous trial was made infamous by the fictionalized accounts given in the 1955 play *Inherit the Wind* and the 1960 Hollywood motion picture of the same name.

Proud to be an atheist!

**ATHEISTS
BORN IN THE MONTH OF APRIL**



MARLON BRANDO
APRIL 3, 1924 – JULY 1, 2004



CHARLIE CHAPLIN
APRIL 16, 1889 – DECEMBER 25, 1977



MADALYN MURRAY O'HAIR
APRIL 13, 1919 – SEPTEMBER 25, 1995

ATHEISM by Madalyn Murray O'Hair

The following is the text of an address given by the founder of American Atheists at the Eighth Annual Convention of the American Rationalist Federation, on 25 August 1962, before the US Supreme Court had agreed to hear the case now known as *Murray v Curlett*. The speech was originally printed in *The American Rationalist*, Volume 17, Number 3, September/October 1962.



The indestructible foundation of the whole edifice of Atheism is its philosophy, materialism --or naturalism, as it is also known. That philosophy regards the world as it actually is, and views it in the light of the data provided by progressive science and social experience.

Atheistic materialism is the logical outcome of scientific knowledge gained over the centuries.

We make a fundamental error, I think, as we tilt at the windmills of imagined gods. We need to review where we have come from, under what conditions, and to see the threshold upon which we stand now.

Scientists Persecuted

Our history has been marked by a ceaseless struggle against ignorance and superstition. In ancient Greece the works of the materialist philosopher Democritus, who first taught the atomic theory of matter, were destroyed. Anaxagoras was banished from Athens for being an Atheist. The materialist philosopher Epicurus, revered by the ancients for having liberated man from fear of gods and for asserting the validity of science, was for 2000 years anathematized and falsely depicted as an enemy of morality and a disseminator of vice. The Alexandria library, housing 700,000 scientific and literary works, was burned by Christian monks in 391 AD. Pope Gregory I (590-604) destroyed many valuable works by ancient authors. In every society there have been forces that have stood to lose by the dissemination of progressive scientific views. In the past, these forces either directly persecuted progressive scientists and philosophers or sought to distort scientific discoveries so as to deprive them of their progressive, materialistic implications.

The Inquisition, a papal invention for suppressing all opposition to the Catholic Church, savagely persecuted all progressive thinkers; Giordano Bruno, Ludilio Vanini, and Galileo come readily to mind.

Voltaire was imprisoned in the Bastille, and Diderot was sent to prison. In our own country we are familiar with the story of Thomas Paine, the Salem witch trials, Ingersoll and Einstein. The struggle is unceasing, as important today as during any other period of history.

We need, therefore, to see what we fight and why. We need not direct our main assault against the Bible or the Koran. We need not argue endlessly about the historicity of Jesus. We

should look past trinities and angels and other theological blind alleys. We must look to materialistic philosophy which alone enables men to understand reality and to know how to deal with it.

It is true that today our kind are no longer burned at the stake, but there are many other ways of exerting pressure. Our scientists and progressive philosophers are dismissed from universities and other employment. Outspoken scientific and philosophical works are much less likely to be published than rather senseless junk. Character assassination is common. Reactionary religious propaganda is unceasingly drummed into unthinking minds through the captive media of mass communication.

Theology Wastes Time

As always, our opponents today are formidable. But our strength lies in the positive approach of uncovering and publicizing the laws of nature and human behavior, and in applying these laws in the interest of human welfare. We need not waste our time with endless arguments about tortuous paths of the endless labyrinths of theology.

We need to know upon what we base ourselves. Atheism is based upon a materialist philosophy, which holds that nothing exists but natural phenomena. There are no supernatural forces or entities, nor can there be any. Nature simply exists. But there are those who deny this, who assert that only mind or idea or spirit is primary. This question of the relation of the human mind to material being is one of the fundamental questions dealt with by all philosophers, however satisfactorily. The Atheist must slice through all obfuscation to bedrock, to the basic idea that those who regard nature as primary and thought as a property (or function) of matter belong to the camp of materialism, and that those who maintain that spirit or idea or mind existed before nature, or created nature or uphold nature, belong to the camp of idealism.

All conventional religions are based on idealism. Many varieties of idealism exist, but the apologist for idealism and opponents of materialism go under many names; we have, for instance, dualists, objective idealists, subjective idealists, solipsists, positivists, Machians,

irrationalists, existentialists, neo-positivists, logical positivists, fideists, revived medieval scholastics, Thomists. And opposed to these stand alone the Atheistic materialists (or perhaps naturalists, Rationalists, freethinkers, etc.) who have no need for intellectual machinations, deceptions, or masquerades.

Whether or not the Bible is pornographic literature is only a side issue. Let us see what the Idealist camp features. The church teaches a contempt for earthly life and that to reach some imagined "heaven" is the main goal of life. And, significantly, the church teaches that this goal can be achieved only as the reward for obedience and meekness. The church threatens the wrath of god and the torment of hell for those who dare to oppose its teaching.

Atheists Prize Life

But Materialism liberates us, teaches us not to hope for happiness beyond the grave but to prize life on earth and strive always to improve it. Materialism restores to man his dignity and his intellectual integrity. Man is not a worm condemned to crawl in the dust, but a human being capable of mastering the forces of nature and making them serve him. Materialism compels faith in the human intellect, in the power of knowledge in man's ability to fathom all the secrets of nature and to create a social system based upon reason and justice. Materialism's faith is in man and his ability to transform the world by his own efforts. It is a philosophy in every essence optimistic, life-asserting, and radiant. It considers the struggle for progress as a moral obligation, and impossible without noble ideals that inspire men to struggle, to perform bold, creative work.

Modern materialism--or naturalism--is linked with the everyday experience of people. It believes in experiment as the basis of knowledge, and neglects no sphere of reality. It advances itself as an ideological weapon for use in progress. It is in social life that man develops his mind and emotions, will and conscience, and puts meaning and purpose into life. He does not closet himself in solitary prayer and dream of death as a door opening unto eternal bliss. A materialist lives a full social life and is inspired by progressive ideals; he is concerned with the

problems and joys of life, not death. He is deeply involved with shaping his life as a useful member of society and contributing what he can to its progress.

The Idealist sees science and man as subordinate to religion, to "idea," and sees knowledge as subordinate to faith. The ultimate object of the idealist is to furnish evidence of the existence of "god." He lays great stress on moral questions, but the morality he preaches is one of meek submission, of passive acceptance, and thus, of justification of existing social evils. This morality substitutes prayer and appeals for divine assistance for struggle and protest against social injustice. The entire Idealist philosophy is contrived, with deliberateness, to bolster the status quo.

Ours is a time when successful struggle against this reactionary philosophy requires more than a petulant argument over the authorship of the Gospels, more than a negative attack on the totalitarian and monolithic authoritarianism of conventional religion, but rather an aggressive action program to spread the positive philosophy of materialism. □

<p style="text-align: center;">We are searching for: Monthly Meeting Room Thursday Nites: 6:00 – 9:00 P.M. Seating 35-50 Cost: FREE OR INEXPENSIVE Call: Ken Bronstein – 212-535-7425</p>

Editor's Q and A

Dear Editor,

Your president and publisher, Kenneth Bronstein, says in his March "Sermon" that being an Atheist has enabled him to do right in our society. I contend that you can do what's right *without being an Atheist*. That is, being an Atheist is not a requirement to do good works.

Precise Critic
New York, N.Y

Dear Precise,

I don't think our president meant that being an Atheist is a *requirement* in order to do good works. He meant that being an Atheist makes it

easier and more logical to do the right thing. Read the first paragraph of his March 2007 "Sermon," which begins, "Religion teaches obedience to authority...Religion teaches you to wait for justice in heaven instead of working for a better society here on earth..."

Thus, a Catholic who is expected to be obedient to authority probably would not have had the temerity to buck the military brass, as Bronstein did, and be an advocate for the hapless youths who had the bad judgment to go AWOL.

And I doubt that a practicing Fundamentalist Baptist would have been pragmatic and down-to-earth with these underprivileged boys. Chances are, a raving Fundamentalist would have prayed for the boys' souls and told them they were headed for hell.

An Atheist doesn't make those kinds of judgments. If you don't believe in hell, you don't waste time predicting that the accused soldier will go there. If you don't believe in a soul, you will spend more time dealing with the practical problems of the accused here on earth.

Moreover, Atheists believe in doing the right thing without a concomitant coercion to any belief system. For example, there was a recent news report out of Barbourville, KY, about a healthcare clinic that encourages patients to pay for their treatment by agreeing to read the Gospel of John, attending a church service or helping a neighbor with yard work. This medical clinic is a faith-based organization that uses free health care to the uninsured as a means of spreading the gospel.

Well, friends, Atheists don't do stuff like that. We won't fix your teeth with the stipulation that you read Richard Dawkins from cover to cover. We won't bail you out of jail on the condition that you embrace Evolution. We don't have any belief system to sell. We want fairness and equality for all; we embrace the hope that all are deserving of adequate health care and legal advice.

When you don't have any religious axe to grind, you can make judgments on the basis of practicality and logic and what's good for society as a whole. □

NYC Atheists End-of-Summer Cruise

**5-Day Canada Cruise
Aboard The Carnival *Victory*
August 25-30, 2007**

Escape the everyday world for a while; ply the waters of the northern Atlantic drinking in the vistas that our Viking ancestors first saw.

Enjoy the smell of salt air, the vivid sunsets over the ocean, the gourmet buffets, the fresh air in your lungs, the romantic moonlight dances, the deck chair tête-à-têtes, making new friends, docking at charming little fishing villages peopled by hospitable locals.

Itinerary

Sat.: Depart NYC: 5:00 PM
Sun.: "Fun Day at Sea"
Mon.: St. John/Bay of Fundy
Tue.: Halifax, Nova Scotia
Wed.: "Fun Day at Sea"
Thur.: Arrive NYC: 8:00 AM

Cost: \$575 - \$775 (includes port charges & taxes) (Double Occupancy)

Deposit: \$200 by 4/20-Refundable 'til 6/20

Contact: Gloria Kingsley
Gloria@SolarTravelinc.com
718-274-4017

Call for flyer and further details

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

**Stem Cell Research
Is
Pro-Life**

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



Circa: 1993
Top: Jon and Robin O'Hair
Bottom: Madalyn Murray O'Hair

Thank to Paul Lozowsky for photo

RENEW / JOIN NYC ATHEISTS

Through our programs and activities, we work to bring awareness of our principles, our vision and, above all, of our existence as atheists. We do it through our website, our meetings and events, our cable shows, our library and book club, our street tabling and our newsletters

--all of which are funded by your membership.

With the continued growth of our membership, we gather strength in numbers and will more effectively counteract the threat of a looming theocracy.



NYC ATHEISTS — 2007 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

First Name: _____ Last Name _____

Street Address: _____ Apt No.: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____@_____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____

NYC Atheists Inc. is a non-profit (501-C3), 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 Friend __ \$ 100 Sustainer __ \$ 250 Patron __ \$ 500 Benefactor __ \$ 1000

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**