

## The Atheist

Newsletter of the Atheist Community of Austin, a Nonprophet Organization

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John Koonz, Editor

XX

Contents: To Affiliate, Or Not To Affiliate, That Is The Question  
Freethought Roundup Update  
Announcements  
Freethinker Cenotaph  
And the Survey Says:  
Book Review  
A Secular Definition of Society, Rights, Good, and Evil.  
A Quote To Put On Your Refrigerator  
Pure Unadulterated Hate, . . . and a Cartoon (not in e-mail sorry)  
Your ACA board of directors:  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR THE ATHEIST COMMUNITY OF AUSTIN, INC.

### To Affiliate, Or Not To Affiliate, That Is The Question

Recently, the board of ACA was presented with the offer to affiliate our organization with the American Atheists. The board of directors has not discussed this issue or made any decision regarding this matter. However, many of you have expressed your concerns to me about affiliating with AA.

ACA is, first and foremost, a community of atheists. Therefore, it is important for your board of directors to acknowledge and respond to your concerns. At our last board meeting, October 11th it was decided that the issue of whether to affiliate with American Atheists or not would be left up to the membership. We have tentatively scheduled a meeting on November 29th at 12:00 noon at the Austin History Center for members to discuss and vote on the issue. This meeting will be for members only. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Kellen at (512) 916-9832 or [atheist@atheist-community.org](mailto:atheist@atheist-community.org)

### Writing for Atheist Community of Austin affiliation with American Atheists, Joe Zamecki:

At least five times in the past, American Atheists has attempted to create an Austin chapter of American Atheists, all unsuccessfully. There has never been enough support for an Austin chapter, or an affiliation of any kind. American Atheists has been based in Austin since around 1974. To our knowledge, there had never been an organized local Atheist group in Austin before Kellen Von Houser contacted Spike Tyson, Director of American Atheists General Headquarters for advise and help on starting a local group. Spike gave Kellen not only advise, but also personal donations, he donated a large supply of books, pamphlets, and stickers from American Atheist Press, called The Hot Jumbo Bagel and got permission for weekly meetings, and spread the word-of-mouth necessary for Austin Atheists to take notice. American Atheists resources have always been open to the ACA and members of the AA staff have taken part in several ACA activities.

Since the O'Hairs left in 1995, American Atheists has been re-started, re-formed, and re-focused. Most of you know that the new AA is much different than the old AA of Madalyn days. Some of ACA's new members however, do not. First it should be known that Madalyn wouldn't allow an AA affiliation program. She also wouldn't allow lots of the other positive things AA is doing now. Well she's gone. Been gone for about 3 years. No one could be happier about that than the new AA. After some very shaky times, AA is back, and on very stable ground. Ellen Johnson is the new AA president, Frank Zindler is the new editor, and Spike Tyson is the new director. I say new for the benefit of new ACA members, but most of you have known about the new lineup for over 2 years. The fact that AA is still in business, and is the foremost national Atheist advocacy around, proves that AA is on solid legal ground. Most of you know that the IRS has tried to shut down AA for 35 years to no avail. If you've had any experience with an IRS audit, you know that they would never let "shaky legal" activities go unpunished. Well AA has survived numerous aggressive audit investigations, and has passed with flying colors. I encourage everyone to examine AA's websites and see all the positive activism the IRS can't stop.

The new AA Affiliation Program, started by Jim Heldberg in California, is one way AA is reaching out to other groups. Yes, it's been a long time in coming, I'll be the first to say that. And I've waited for that program to mature and evolve into what would appeal to the ACA before bringing up the idea of affiliating with AA. Well some changes in the program have come and I think it's ready for us. We can get a link from the AA website to ours. Doesn't seem like much, but AA doesn't give this to just any group. I've gone over the reasons why we didn't get a link when we formed. For more info on that argument, e-mail me at [joeyjojon@aol.com](mailto:joeyjojon@aol.com)

We can also get announcements of our group activities in The American Atheist Newsletter. That goes out to about 3000 individuals, libraries, Atheist groups, and other organizations around the world. When we got Bruce Todd to sign our proclamation in 1996, the AA newsletter featured a bit on it with a photo of the city council meeting. That was a one-time freebie. Well that newsletter can also feature info about our TV Show. I'm sure it can also feature info about our upcoming convention--our Atheist Alliance convention.

1 Which brings up our affiliation with the Atheist Alliance. For you new people, the ACA is currently affiliated with the Atheist Alliance. The benefits are very similar to those offered by AA's affiliation program, except that affiliating with AA is absolutely free of charge. I was opposed to ACA

affiliating with Atheist Alliance for several reasons, but I'm over that now.

Knowing that Atheist Alliance is a very different group from American Atheists helps. First off, American Atheists is out in the forefront of Atheist Activism in America. From nationwide pickets of the Promise Keepers, the Westboro Baptist Church--(Godhatesfags.com), and the Pope, to vocalized opposition to the Religious Freedom Amendment, and meeting with White House officials about the civil rights of Atheists, American Atheists is doing the positive, national, public Atheist activism that Atheists need--and the Atheist Alliance is not.

We can be sure that no sensible person who examines this will think that affiliation means the ACA is "combining" with AA. Since the Atheist Alliance has been getting local groups like ours, to affiliate with them, people know the meaning and value of affiliating with a national group. They know we have not "combined" with the Atheist Alliance. We are still independent and that won't change. It's the same deal with American Atheists.

To date, I've found no realistic risks for ACA affiliating with either national group. Both are fair affiliation programs, and I only see benefits from both affiliations. We can make this something great if we want, or we can make it nothing. It's entirely up to us. I'd like to invite anyone to e-mail, call, or fax me with questions, comments, or gripes about American Atheists. I will try to answer everything to the best of my knowledge. I also invite all members of ACA and all ACA List lurkers to visit American Atheists GHQ in Austin. 7215 Cameron Rd, Austin, 78752 Monday-Friday, 9-5. You can call me at (512)458-1244 or fax us at:(512)467-9525 Check out AA's sites: [www.AmericanAtheist.org](http://www.AmericanAtheist.org) and AA's Texas page: <http://www.star-telegram.com/homes/atheists> And AA's Affiliation page: <http://www.atheists.org/flash.line/affilob.htm> I look forward to more discussion on this idea, and I thank the editor of The Atheist for this opportunity to speak. It suddenly occurred to me that most of the ACA and others on the ACA list may not be aware of just which local groups have affiliated with AA. Here they are:

Utah Atheists -- Summit Park, UT,  
Humanistic Atheist Students, University of Florida -- Gainesville, FL,  
Northeast Atheist Association -- Southbury, CT,  
Metroplex Atheists -- Mansfield, TX,  
Family Freethought Alliance -- High Ridge, MO,  
Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers -- Hinesville, GA,  
Michigan Atheists -- Wayne, MI

Also, I was mistaken about one thing. Metroplex Atheists, in Mansfield, TX is actually the first local group to affiliate with both the Atheist Alliance and American Atheists. I had said that if the ACA were to affiliate, we'd be the first to affiliate with both national groups. More info about all of these groups is on the AA website. Needless to say, the Atheist Community of Austin is more established than any of these groups. We would be in good company however. They are all active groups.

Realistically, ~Joe Zamecki, Board Member, Atheist Community of Austin, Co-Host, The Atheist Experience Headquarters Staff, Life Member, American Atheists

Writing for the opposition to Atheist Community of Austin affiliation with American Atheists, Keith Berka:

Here is the dictionary defined meaning of affiliation: 1 a : to bring or receive into close connection as a member or branch b : to associate as a member <affiliates herself with the local club> 2 : to trace the origin of intransitive senses : to connect or associate oneself : COMBINE

If the Atheist Community of Austin "affiliates" itself with the "American Atheists", I argue that we will be open for a lot of flack and perhaps tainted with "guilt by affiliation" accusations from critics of the American Atheists. Furthermore, I argue that beyond the "guilt by affiliation" argument and the potential for damage it may cause the Atheist Community of Austin we will also create division in our local community ranks that will cause a loss of members and potential members for the Atheists Community of Austin. I argue in opposition to "affiliations" in general and this proposed affiliation in specific. I feel however that "association" rather than "affiliation" can be very often a good idea and should be undertaken on and individual bases rather than as a group decision made by the ACA as an organization. I argue that if any individual members of the "Atheists Community of Austin" really want to support the "American Atheists" in a meaningful way, joining their organization as a single individual "associate" and sending them some money is a good idea. But be cautious! Although the verdict is still out, American Atheists past leadership has been accused of "stealing more gold then they could successfully carry off"! However, if ACA becomes an organizational "affiliate" of the American Atheists, I argue that we may as well just call ourselves the "American Atheists, Austin Chapter", because that is in fact how we will be viewed. (Particularly to the news media and callers to our TV program.) I suggest that it does not matter if its true, it matters only that it will be the way it is viewed! Furthermore to be honest about our group and what we have done, I submit that we announce our affiliation with American Atheists if it happens on our press releases and interviews, newsletters, TV outreach and to our member applicants.

But before we do it, lets take a deeper look at this "Affiliation" proposal and see if the advantages are really there. I have spoken up to this point only of the potential disadvantages of affiliation. Are the proposed benefits of affiliation actually real or imagined? Can they be achieved without "Affiliation" with the American Atheist? Are they enough to warrant the risks involved? Or, are they just trinkets. Mere Indian beads like those given out in the early days to Indians to gather their help? You be the judge! Here is how the proponents of "Affiliation" are selling it's benefits and here too is a critical comment attached to each supposed benefit as it would apply to The Atheist Community of Austin. You be the judge of the value of the claimed benefits.

ACA joining as an affiliate of the American Atheists.  
The Claimed Benefits:

Benefits: Increasing communication and cooperation among Atheist organizations will help all of us work together.

Comments: If American Atheist wants improved communications and cooperation with other atheists organizations why don't they get it by linking to all of the major atheist web sites without insisting on affiliation first.) They seem to want to increase their own communications and cooperation with other atheists groups but only if others will pay the price of giving them credibility through first affiliating with them. This may help American Atheists

with their own image because it enables them to point to their affiliates as proof of their own credibility. But it may harm the affiliate. For example, news people going into their web site learn that we are affiliated with them. It could drag ACA down while lifting AA up! No advantage here to ACA! American Atheist makes money by getting new members and the Atheist Community in Austin gets a black eye for affiliating with American Atheists and then starts losing members. That sucks! How does this fit with our primary objective of creating an "Atheist Community" in Austin for Austin Atheists? It doesn't. There is no advantage to this affiliation to the Atheists Community of Austin.

Benefits: Local Atheist organizations choosing to affiliate with American Atheists will strengthen their own local influence.

Comments: (Oh really? Prove it!) I think affiliation could harm our local influence. The only reason AA wants this is to enhance its own image not to help us. Could this be merely an imagined benefit brought on by wishful thinking on the part of the American Atheists? American Atheists tried at least 3 times to have a chapter of their own in Austin and failed miserably each time. Now that the Atheists Community of Austin has done it successfully, American Atheists are suggesting that they can help us strengthen our local influence. Wow!

Benefits: They can also use American Atheists resources of leadership and communication to gain ideas and information, to find new members and to take an active role in their communities.

Comments: (Find new members? I'll bet they won't give us local mailing lists and phone numbers so we can go to their members and ask them to join our group. We have our own resources of communication but I am intrigued. How would this work? American Atheists seems to be claiming that they have American Atheists resources in leadership and communication AND that affiliates can use these resources to: 1. gain ideas (we don't need to be an affiliate to do this. Post them to your web site AA!) 2. find new members (Will you give us your membership list AA? Don't make me laugh! You won't!) 3. and take an active role in our community ( We do this now and affiliation won't help, this is no benefit!)

Benefit: Affiliated organizations receive: Free announcement of local events in American Atheists publications

Comment: (Very little use to ACA as our web site does the same thing for us and 99.9% of AA's subscribing readers live some place other than Austin and reaching them with our announcement would have no effect.) Benefit: Free assistance in setting up and operating new local organizations and programs

Comment: (No advantage to ACA, we have already done this)

Benefit: 20% discount first-year American Atheists memberships for organization members

Comment: (So you save \$3.00 bucks. Big deal! Visit their web site and you will already be getting the full value of belonging to AA for Free. Do that for two years and you will save \$30.00 bucks. This is not a benefit it's a cost)

Benefit: 20% discount on American Atheist materials over \$50 ordered by organization

Comment: (AA has some good stuff. Pay full price. You will be helping them more.)

Benefit: Reduced conference registration fees for organization members

Comment: (You will most likely never go to an American Atheists conference unless you are an American Atheists member.) This is really no advantage to the ACA organization in that it does not ENHANCE ACA as a locally operating group. It certainly is no reason for us to become an American Atheists Affiliate.)

Benefit: A local organization may request affiliation with American Atheists if it agrees with the broad goals and purposes of American Atheists, has a significant number of members who are interested in becoming members of American Atheists, and is recommended by the State Director or other officer. Upon approval by American Atheists, the organization will be notified by prompt return of this document, and will be immediately able to exercise all benefits.

Comment: (Which you can plainly see there are very few if any benefits to The Atheist Community of Austin in becoming an affiliate of this group and in fact some real down sides to it.)

National groups like the American Atheists it should be remembered, have an entirely different function than local groups like ours. American Atheists will do what they want in Austin or any other city, despite how it may effect the local Atheists community. When they leave, we still have to have a positive influence in our hometown. It will be left up to us to outreach to our community in a positive way and to win acceptance of our community here. Lets support the national groups as we can, but lets not throw in with any of them.

And lets also not get in between any national groups by affiliating with some and not with others. And...what ever we do, lets not make our current members and future members go away because they feel that affiliation with the American Atheists comes with membership in the Atheists community of Austin. They may not like it!

If they want to be an affiliate of the American Atheists I am sure that they would rather do it on their own.

~Keith Berka ACA board member

### **Freethought Roundup Update**

Next Easter weekend, (April 2-4, 1999), all atheists and other Freethinkers are invited to Austin, Texas for the 1999 Freethought Roundup!, the national convention of the Atheist Alliance. Speakers already scheduled include Dan Barker, who will speak and perform a Freethought Concert, and Dr. Arthur

F. Ide, author of over 400 titles on wide variety of issues, many of relevance to non-believers. The Atheist Community of Austin, host for the event, is still entertaining suggestions for speakers and workshops.

A Friday dinner will be served, as well as lunch on Saturday and a banquet Saturday evening. All meals will feature the flavorful fare for which Austin is widely known. Plans are also being made for a visit to Esther's Follies for some irreverent hilarity, and of course there is always a possibility of a drive to the recent cenotaph battleground of Comfort, Texas. Expect the weather to be fair and the wildflowers to be in bloom.

The 1999 Freethought Roundup will be held at Austin's Downtown OMNI Hotel at 700 San Jacinto (512-476-3700). We are getting a special rate, so tell them you're with the Freethought Roundup (or Atheist Alliance Convention) to get the good deal.

The OMNI is built on the site once occupied by the official residence of the, President of the Republic of Texas, which burned down in 1847, and is only a block away from 6th Street's collection of restaurants, live music venues, and the hottest night life in Texas. The Capitol Building is only about a few blocks away, and most of Austin can be seen from the rooftop pool.

The 1999 Freethought Roundup! promises to be an exciting, informative, and revitalizing event for all non-believers. The friendly folks at the Atheist Community of Austin will do their best to make your convention experience a positive one.

Contact Don Rhoades at 512-892-3188, donrodz@swbell.net, or Mary Sue Osborne at terrafemme@aol.com for further information.

~ Don Rhoades

### **Announcements**

TV Committee meeting, at this point in time, is always the third Sunday, at the studio, before the show (a little after 8:00).

The next ACA Board meeting will be on November 8th. Board meetings are open to all members.

The Lecture Series topic for November 1st will be "Pseudoscience based religions" and "The latest attacks on the Anthropic Principle" by Roahn Wynar graduate physics student, UT

The quarterly Blood Drive was on the 17th of October, but don't worry, you can donate anytime! Please consider donating, especially if you have a rare blood type. Mention ACA so that our account will be credited.

Products Godless dollars will be available soon. Cost will be about \$1.50. See Sue Osborne for more information on this and other exciting atheist products.

Randalls Donations Randalls will donate a percentage of the money you spend there to the Atheist Community of Austin. To take advantage of this offer, contact the customer service department of your nearest Randalls. The ACA number is 5158.

Weekly Meetings Sunday Mornings at Hot Jumbo Bagelry, 307 West 5th Street at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings when lectures are not scheduled at Furr's Cafeteria.

For more information about any of these coming events, call (512) 371-2911 or e-mail tankgirl@swbell.net

### **Freethinker Cenotaph**

Two years ago Ed Scharf went before the Comfort Chamber of Commerce and proposed a historical marker and monument (or Cenotaph) commemorating the existence of German Freethinkers who settled in central Texas. It was approved. Ed continued working on the idea with the Kendall County Historical Society and the Texas State Historical Commission. He wrote hundreds of letters to descendants of the original settlers. Eventually, a fund for the cenotaph was set up through the Comfort Heritage Foundation. When Texas atheists and Freethinkers found out about the project about a year ago, there was a lot of enthusiasm. Donations were collected and plans made to come to the dedication.

Recently, some Comfort residents realized that some atheists had an interest in the project. A statement entitled "No Monument to Atheism" was passed around. A large ad was published in the local papers from citizens opposed to the cenotaph. Over 600 hill country residents signed a petition to stop the cenotaph. On September 24, the Comfort Chamber of Commerce voted to cancel the project, have the rock removed from the park, but to create a committee to study the creation of a memorial to the freethinker settlers. It was noted at both the Chamber meeting and a Kendall County Commissioners Court session that everyone is satisfied with the final wording of the historical marker.

**THE SOLE DRIVING FORCE IN THE MOVEMENT TO STOP THE PROJECT WAS THE INVOLVEMENT OF ATHEISTS.**

It looks to me as if Comfort would go ahead and erect a monument to the Freethinker settlers (possibly even using the big rock) IF the following conditions are met: 1. Nobody even suggests that those Freethinker settlers did not believe in gods. 2. No known atheists contribute or participate in any way. 3. Current day freethinkers and atheists do not react to being publicly maligned.

None of these conditions are acceptable.

Research reveals clearly that the settlers "worshipped no deities." There may have been some individual believers among the Freethinkers, and probably a number of Deists, but as a group it is accurate to categorize them as atheists, agnostics, unreligious or nonbelievers. Pretending they were religious dishonors them and is an attempt to rewrite history.

It is not surprising that Comfort citizens should be quite unaware of the worldwide centuries old Freethought movement. Nor can we be shocked when religious folk organize quickly to defend their community from the threat of descending hordes of atheists. In a time when hatred of atheists is the last socially acceptable form of bigotry, it was bound to happen. So what now?

Atheists and other Freethinkers should and shall continue to honor the memory of our philosophical ancestors. If the Comfort people build a memorial, then we will be represented at the dedication...unless it is a religious ceremony, in which case we will be free to wait and have our own. If Comfort decides it doesn't want any new marker, then there is still the Treue der Union Monument, the 132 year old headstone of Texas heroes, most of them Freethinkers. In either case, the citizens of the unincorporated village of Comfort are not allowed to tell atheists to stay out of town, though they have tried.

To date, six newspapers have picked up on the story. This effort has become an excellent opportunity to continue to educate people about Freethought history, atheism, and the meaning of tolerance.

Ed note: I don't know who wrote this. Don Rhoades read it on The Atheist Experience a few weeks ago. Don says he thinks at least part of it came from Julie Fisher of the Hill Country Freethinkers. If anyone knows who actually wrote this, please contact me at jknz@hotmail.com so that I can properly credit the author. I have included this as it seems to be a pretty good summary of the situation so far.  
~John Koonz, Editor

#### **And the Survey Says:**

This was in response to our ACA web site survey question; What would you like to tell middle school kids about atheism?:

Atheism isn't "just another religion," it is the only stance on the god-and-religion question that is firmly rooted in reality and reason. Never accept something on faith. Sensible people ask questions.

#### **Book Review**

I found *What is Atheism*, by Douglas E. Krueger, to be a very useful book on the subject of atheism. While other atheist authors offer long and detailed arguments, Douglas Krueger provides his readers with easy to find answers to eight frequently asked questions. The eight common questions included are; what is atheism?; how can atheists have morals?; doesn't the bible show that god exists?; don't reports of miracles prove that god exists?; aren't there philosophical proofs which demonstrate that god exists?; wouldn't someone have to know everything in order to say that there is no god?; and what's wrong with believing on faith? The answers to these questions are written in outline form allowing the reader to quickly locate snappy come-backs to standard Christian claims.

Krueger begins to answer the first question, what is atheism?, with a set of clear definitions. "The narrow, stronger definition of "atheism" is that of someone who asserts that there are no gods. On this definition, an agnostic would not be considered an atheist. Although the broad use of the term "atheism" has its advantages, since it is much easier to defend, it will not be used here. I will confine my use of the term "atheism" to the stronger thesis that there are no gods. Although it is a stronger claim, it is defensible, and, in addition, it is the view to which I adhere. I agree with the agnostic that the theist's claim that there is a god is unwarranted, but I also believe that there are good reasons to think that the claim that there are no gods is warranted." He then goes on to use a definition for atheism that may make some readers uncomfortable: "Atheism - the belief that there are no gods." In answering his question 'Wouldn't someone have to know everything in order to say that there is no god?', Krueger shows that he is able to support this strong atheism position.

Krueger ends with a short summary of his major points and a very good annotated list of suggested readings and websites. He also includes the names of useful atheistic organizations. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to debate the existence of god with true believers.

Recently, I attempted to donate this particular book to the Westview Middle School library.(Pflugerville ISD) .I was told that the book was too sophisticated, written at too high a reading level and that it promoted a biased world view. When I checked the reading level, it turned out to be 10th grade, no higher than many other books already in the collection. As to the sophistication 'problem', all I can say is that my students are required to understand logical arguments. In fact, stressing critical thinking skills is supposed to be a district -wide goal. I have not been convinced that *What is Atheism* is any more biased than the bible, the quran, or the book of prayers already available in our school library. As far as I am concerned, if a book is banned by a public school, it is worth reading.

*What is Atheism; A short Introduction* by Douglas E. Krueger was published by Prometheus Books in 1998.

~John Koonz

#### **A Secular Definition of Society, Rights, Good, and Evil.**

1. A society is a group of people who are emotionally and intellectually similar enough to trust one another's motives and competence.
2. A right is that which a society can provide all it's members, and most of it's members feel should be a right. This can come from a religious belief or an emotional basis, rather than a purely logical one.
3. Evil is the violation of a right. Good is the granting and protection of a right. They are not distinct territories, they are directions. To say they do not exist is like looking at a map and failing to reach "east" or "west".
4. You will know evil from an attitude accepting that the ends always justify the means. You will know good from an attitude of trying to grant rights to weaker beings. These are the things to which good and evil lead.

~Manda

**A Quote To Put On Your Refrigerator**

"I think that it stands for everything most hostile to the mental emancipation and stimulation of mankind. It is the completest, most highly organized system of prejudices and antagonism in existence. Everywhere in the world there are ignorance and prejudice, but the greatest complex of these, with the most extensive prestige and the most intimate entanglement with traditional institutions, is the Roman Catholic Church. It presents many faces to the world, but everywhere it is systematic in its fight against freedom."

H.G. Wells

**Pure Unadulterated Hate, . . . and a Cartoon**

Friends,

In case any of you didn't know, five days ago a 21-year-old gay man named Matthew Shepard was pistol-whipped, tied to a fence, burned with cigarettes, and left for dead in 35-degree weather by two other young men. Without a doubt, the attack was motivated by homophobia. He was comatose when found twelve hours later, and died at 12:53 am Monday without regaining consciousness. Shepard was a University of Wyoming student.

I'm gay. That could have been me tied to a fence and beaten to death. I'm a big guy, and I like to think that I could at least take the bastards with me, but you never know. Today is my birthday, and I don't think I'll forget it anytime soon.

In my opinion, there is a great deal of responsibility to be laid at the door of christianity for this atrocity. Every homophobic one of them shares in the responsibility for this and every other hate crime motivated by their religion.

~Tom K. Moore

**Your ACA board of directors:**

Co-chairs: Don Rhoades, Kellen Von Houser

Treasurer: Ray Blevins

Secretary: Ray Blevins

Board members: Keith Berka, Sue Osborne, Rodney Florence, Arlo Pignotti, Earle Beach, John Koonz, Arval Bohn, Ralph Shirley, Joe Zamecki

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR THE ATHEIST COMMUNITY OF AUSTIN, INC.**

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Companion's name (if family or couple membership)

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone : (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that I am a non-theist, that I have read the "Purpose" of the Atheist Community of Austin, Inc. as stated in the Constitution (below), and that I am in agreement with the principles stated herein. I understand that membership is open only to non-theists. Purpose The Atheist Community of Austin is organized as a nonprofit educational corporation to develop and support atheist community; to provide opportunities for socializing and friendship, to promote atheist viewpoints, to encourage positive atheist culture, to defend the First Amendment principle of state/church separation, to oppose discrimination against atheists, and to work with other organizations in pursuit of common goals. This organization shall operate in an open, democratic manner, without discrimination as to gender, race, age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, nationality, or disability. The Bylaws to this Constitution are intended to further define and explain the operating procedure of this organization. Changes may be made to the Bylaws when necessary to improve the operation of this organization. Changes to the Bylaws shall not alter the purpose of this organization as set forth in its Constitution. Check all that apply

§ I wish to become a member of the Atheist Community of Austin, Inc. Membership fees are \$24.00 per year, but our membership year does not begin until the 1st of March. My prorated membership fee, at \$2.00 per month until next March, is enclosed.

§ I wish to make a tax exempt donation to ACA .

§ I only wish to participate in the e-mail group. My e-mail address is above. No fee is required.

§ I wish to help ACA save money by receiving The Atheist by e-mail. No fee is required.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to: Atheist Community of Austin, Inc., P.O. Box 3798, Austin, Texas 78764