Howdy! I’m Joe Zamecki, the new editor for this newsletter. We have an all-new staff, a new look, and a new name. It used to be “The Atheist,” and it was edited by Jill Ford. We’re going to try to live up to the same high standards that Jill employed to bring you the best darned Atheist group newsletter around.

The last issue of “The Atheist” was the March - April 2004 issue, Volume 8.3-4. It’s been over a year since that last issue, so this new start-up issue will feature information on the basics of the ACA. For those of you who are new to this group, this issue will be a valuable resource for information about ACA events, scheduling and other basic information that may not appear in other issues.

Inside you’ll find out about our weekly regular meetings, our monthly lecture series, our weekly cable access tv show, our weekly online radio show, our weekly happy hour get-togethers, and so much more! This newsletter will also introduce you to individual members of the ACA through the Atheist Testimonials Page. We’re also looking for submissions. Letters, to the editor, articles, jokes, cartoons, and various other submissions can be sent to us at: joezamecki@hotmail.com

Thanks and enjoy! :o)

In This Issue...

---ACA Social Calendar
---An Atheist Testimonial
---Atheist Eve!
Atheist Eve is a Freethinker's favorite cartoon. You can see all the other Atheist Eve cartoons by going to the ACA website and clicking on “Atheist Eve.”

The Atheist Community of Austin is a local non-profit educational 501(c)3 organization founded in 1996, and is affiliated with American Atheists Inc., The American Humanist Association, And the Council for Secular Humanism, and is a member group of the Atheist Alliance Intl.

The ACA is a democratically run organization. Board Meetings are held every second Sunday of the month, and all members are welcome to attend, but only board members may vote. Board elections are held every year in May.

Regular membership in the ACA costs just $24. per year, and the membership year begins in March. You can join anytime though. We also offer student, family, senior and life memberships.

The ACA hosts a monthly lecture at the Austin History Center at the corner of 9th St. And Guadalupe St. This is a community service, and a means of disseminating information and ideas of interest to Atheists and the greater Austin community. Lecture topics usually focus on core areas of Atheist interest such as science, skepticism, the impact of religion, philosophy, church/state separation, and community activism. Lectures are scheduled on the 3rd Sunday of every month starting at 12:30 pm in the “Reception Room.” Free admission.

Our October lecture will be held on October 16, 2005, and the speaker will be DJ Grothe, from the Center for Inquiry. The Topic: Arguing for America: Secularism and the Culture Wars

About the speaker: DJ Grothe is the director of the Center for Inquiry On Campus (http://www.centerforinquiry.net) and has lectured and written widely on freethought issues. He is currently finishing a book on the need for public argument in a secular democracy. Mr. Grothe has lectured widely on secular ethics, religious-political extremism, church-state separation, the role of religion in education, science advocacy and skepticism and the paranormal. Before completing graduate studies in philosophy and intellectual history at Washington University, DJ worked as a corporate magical entertainer.
Editorial…

Your Editor on the
Good old Days, and our
New Direction

For several years now, I have wanted to re-join the Atheist Community of Austin, and recently I have been able to do that. Yess! I was once a board member, co-host of the Atheist Experience tv show, and one of the first members to work up homemade advertising for the group. After having lived in New Jersey for about six years, while working for American Atheists, I have returned to my favorite city in the world, Austin. It’s been a while, but I’m back, and boy have certain things changed in the ACA!

Furr’s Cafeteria in Northcross Mall was where we used to have our monthly lectures, and that Furr’s is now gone! I believe we had the best food there, among all the places we’ve had meetings at. I enjoyed going to Northcross Mall, not only for those meetings and the great food that came with it, but also because that’s where I used to vote, and go see Rocky Horror Picture Show during their midnight screenings, at the movie theater there. It used to be a very lively mall.

Now we have lectures at the Austin History Center, which is nice, but the food there isn’t as good. Lol Actually there’s no food available at that new location. Kind of a drag. But we hear the speaker better there, and there’s never a crowd of non-members to snake through in order to get to our meeting room. We trade some things for other things, and that’s live.

The old meeting place for our regular weekly meetings was pretty nice too. The Hot Jumbo Bagel, it was called, and that’s the very first place I ever had a real bagel. They were big, hot and soft on the inside. Plus that place had some great soft tacos and a good variety of tasty beverages.

I remember how our group meetings at the bagel shop numbered up to 40 people on any given Sunday for several months there. We used to put most of the tables in the place together for our meetings, usually in a box formation so all could hear as best as possible. We even brought our kids to the meetings, since the was also a kids’ section off to the side, with kid-sized tables and chairs, and lots of kids books to read.

Now we have our weekly regular meetings at Crescent City Beignets on West Sixth Street, and things are quite a bit different there. The food is of a totally different kind, French and Cajun, for the most part, and it’s pretty good. I had the crawfish etouffee and had to have another. And another! They also have a really good selection of drinks.

But some talk has been heard among the group that we should meet elsewhere. This is not uncommon at all. It’s been said that the management there isn’t too happy with the nature of our meetings, despite our repeated business in small but consistent sized groups.

The issue is religion. If you’ve ever been to a meeting there, and I certainly hope you have, you’ve surely noticed the crucifix on the wall, over the bathrooms. I would’ve put the crucifix IN the bathroom, but not all things appear in appropriate places.

We in the ACA have shown great tolerance for this, and other crosses and crucifix there by not even mentioning them out loud. Of course we Atheists have to be very tolerant in this very religion-soaked society we live in. So this isn’t exactly a sacrifice for us. It reminds me of when Moe on the Simpsons re-designed his bar into a family theme restaurant and took out a tv ad saying, “If you like a nice family restaurant, with a whole lot of crap on the walls, come on down to Moe’s Family Feedbag!” We could think of that crucifix as just more disposable crap on the wall!

But of course it isn’t so fitting to meet under a crucifix, when we realize that there are lots of secular places to meet out there. Besides, one of the employees there wears a gold cross rather blatantly around his neck when we’re there, and some say that cross has grown in size over the months….lol

I’d like to find a restaurant to meet at that is owned by an Atheist or Atheists. It can be done. They are out there. In the meantime however, Crescent City is nice. I’m always up for showing devout Christians that we exist in significant numbers, and that they should be happy we’re there, as we always bring in business complete with tips.

I believe it’s important for us to outwardly take our rightful place in society as a productive and positive-minded portion of the populace. I try to surround my outward Atheism with obvious confidence and a healthy smile. I also feel that it’s very important for us to find other Atheists in Austin. Whether or not they ever attend a meeting, since many if not most of our members don’t attend regular meetings anyway, we need to find them. I think we need to do some paid advertising, and make the ACA a household name. Now that we’re affiliated with the top national Freethought groups in America, it’s the perfect framework for us to get more visible in Austin. JZ
Atheist Community of Austin Social Calendar for October, 2005

Sunday Oct 2
11:30 a.m. Crescent City Beignets - A weekly social gathering
4:30 - 6:00 p.m. Atheist Experience - TV show, Ch. 10, Time Warner Cable
Host: Russell Glasser, Co-host: Matt Dillahunty. Topic: Arguing for God

Monday Oct 3
7:00 p.m. Godless Gamers

Thursday Oct 6
7:30 p.m. Happy Hour at Antonio’s Tex Mex, I-35 @ St. Johns

Sunday Oct 9
10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Board Meeting - at Schlotsky’s, South Lamar @ Toomey.
11:30 a.m. Crescent City Beignets - A weekly social gathering
4:30 - 6:00 p.m. Atheist Experience TV show, Ch. 10, Time Warner Cable
Host: Matt Dillahunty, Co-host: Don Baker, Topic: The god of the gaps argument and religion's promotion of ignorance

Monday Oct 10
7:00 p.m. Godless Gamers

Thursday Oct 13
7:30 p.m. Happy Hour at Antonio’s Tex Mex

Sunday Oct 16
12:30 - 2:00 p.m. Lecture: DJ Grothe, Center for Inquiry - Arguing for America: Secularism and the Culture Wars
4:30 - 6:00 p.m. Atheist Experience TV, Host: Russell Glasser, Co-host: Matt Dillahunty

Monday Oct 17
7:00 p.m. Godless Gamers

Thursday Oct 20
7:30 p.m. Happy Hour at Antonio’s Tex Mex

Sunday Oct 23
11:30 a.m. Crescent City Beignets - A weekly social gathering
4:30 - 6:00 p.m. Atheist Experience TV, Host: Russell Glasser, Co-host: Jeff Dee

Monday Oct 24
7:00 p.m. Godless Gamers

Thursday Oct 27
7:30 p.m. Happy Hour at Antonio’s Tex Mex

Sunday Oct 30
11:30 a.m. Crescent City Beignets - A weekly social gathering
4:30 - 6:00 p.m. Atheist Experience TV, Host: Russell Glasser, Co-host: Keryn Glasser

Monday Oct 31
7:00 p.m. Godless Gamers

“I can’t pretend a stranger is a long-awaited friend.” Rush

3.
ACA Event Details

----Lecture Series We hold our monthly lectures at the Austin History Center, at the corner of 9th St. And Guadalupe St. We hold them on the third Sunday of each month and they start at 12:30pm in the “Reception Room.” Admission is always free.

----Board Meetings We hold our board meetings on the second Sunday of the month, and lately we’ve held them at the very large Schlotzky’s at the corner of South Lamar and Toomey St., just South of Town Lake. That starts at 10am and usually lasts till 11:30am. All members are welcome, but only board members may vote at those board meetings.

----Happy Hour! We meet for Happy Hour at Antonio’s Tex Mex on Thursdays, at 7:30pm. That’s on I-35 Southbound side, just South of Research/183 and just north of St. Johns.

----Regular Weekly Meetings We meet regularly every Sunday at 11:30am at Crescent City Beignets, at 1211 West Sixth St. (A beignet is like a square donut with no hole, and they serve a lot more than that.) All Atheists and Atheist-friendly folks are welcome!

----TV Show The Atheist Experience is our tv show. It airs on Time-warner Cable, public access channel 10, from 4:30 - 6:00pm every Sunday. It’s a live call-in talkshow, so feel free to call in with comments and questions for the show and their audience. Members of the ACA are also invited to visit the tv studio during the show, as live studio audience members. Also if you’d like to see the show but don’t have time, or cable, you can borrow my copies of some of the most recent shows that I have, on VHS. I, being Joe Zamecki. This show is also repeated, taped, on Tuesdays at 4:30pm on Channel 10. We also need volunteer help on the show from time to time, so if you’re interested in helping out, or if you think you’d like to be a guest on the show, please e-mail: tv@atheist-community.org

----Online Radio Show “The Non-Prophets” is our online radio show hosted by Jeff Dee, Denis Loubet, and produced by Russell Glasser.

----Public Demonstrations Once in a while, we grab picket signs and cameras and hit the pavement in public on issues of importance to us. Usually these can’t be scheduled far in advance, so announcements about demonstrations will likely only be heard at regular membership meetings. The last demonstration we held was at the Texas State Capitol Building on 11th at Congress Ave. We picketed the National Day of Prayer ritual/rally/bad concert held on the steps of the Capitol Building. Around 20 Atheists picketed. A photo of that is on our back page. It was fun!

“So eat that pork! Eat that ham! Laugh till you choke on Billy Graham! Moses, Aaron and Abraham! They’re all a waste of time! And it’s your ass that’s on the line!”

Frank Zappa
Some national Freethought groups’ upcoming events

Atheist Alliance 1-866-HERETIC

According to Ellen Johnson in the American Atheists Newsletter, the 2006 American Atheists national convention will be held in San Antonio, Texas! More details should come soon. For more info on American Atheists: (908)276-7300.

Atheists in Foxholes Day! Join us on Veterans Day, Friday Nov. 11, 2005 on the Mall in Washington, DC as we salute and celebrate ATHEISTS IN FOXHOLES!

Parade down the National Mall! Program/Rally of Speakers, entertainment, more! Welcome Banquet (Thursday night, Nov. 10) President, Congressional, and Military leaders are invited to attend and send greetings to this historic gathering! For more info: (908)276-7300

Strategically located in Washington, DC, the AHA actively educates the public about Humanism, brings Humanists together for mutual support and action, defends the civil liberties and constitutional freedoms of Humanists - indeed of all peoples - and leads both local and national Humanist organizations toward progressive societal change. [No national events were listed as upcoming on the AHA site.] For more info: Toll free: (800) 837-3792

The Council for Secular Humanism celebrates its 25th anniversary with a World Congress, bringing together a stellar cast of speakers from around the globe. Along with the Council For Secular Humanism, the International Academy of Humanism and the Center for Inquiry Transnational will participate in a three-day event, October 27th - 30th, 2005 at the State University of New York at Buffalo, the Center for Inquiry, and the Marriott Hotel in Amherst, New York. For more info: 1-800-834-1610
ACA People & Products

On the right, we have our fabulous official ACA Mug, available in the Products section of our website: atheist-community.org

Note the very handsome ACA logo. Coffee tastes better in a thoroughly Atheistic coffee mug. :o)

We’ve also been active in picketing the National Day of Prayer for example, earlier this year. Yes, it was a blast! And we only had one pointy Christian passerby who gave us trouble with her magic finger. We were not discouraged at all, in fact it was quite entertaining. Most passersby gave us visible and audible signs of approval for our picket. Some even cursed the awful Christian music coming from the NDOP rally.

We also sell fish-plaques!

In our next issue...

---Another Atheist Testimonial!

---Spotlight on Atheist Volunteerism!