Howdy! Well for your newsletter staff, October was a very short month! You may recall that our September issue came out several days late. Sorry about that! So for this, the November issue, we made sure to get done with editing a bit earlier, to give plenty of time to the printer. They do great work, and we’re still working with them on making improvements.

One change to the newsletter that you may have already noticed is, it’s a bit lighter. We reduced the page count by four pages, one fourth of its size for the last year. We pledge that the quality will not significantly drop with that reduction, but as we all know, you can get a lot more quality in if you have a lot more space for it. For a year we had the largest newsletter we could find among local Atheist groups. Yess! Our group rocks! :)

Now we’ve spent a lot of time studying other local Atheist groups in America, and we’ve learned a lot. I helped to start a couple of them, but these days, more local Atheist groups are popping up, and in some unique and interesting places. For example, Rossmoor Atheists in Walnut Creek, California is a new group that’s meeting with success. Rossmoor is basically a gated community, and it’s large enough to have it’s own local Atheist group. There are other groups near there, but this one had enough interested Atheists to be a group in just that one community. Usually a local Atheist group’s membership is spread out more thinly over a much larger area.

Now we don’t really think of comparing local Atheist groups as a competition between us, but on the other hand, as a part of trying to be the best group we can be, we must also look to other such groups, and discover better ways of doing things, if they currently exist. On that note, we also found that a few local Atheist groups are beating us in a few areas.

The Atheists For Human Rights, in Minneapolis, Minnesota is a relatively new group, having just been started in February of 2002, and already they have almost three times the number of members we have. They have around 300 members who have all paid $25 for a year of membership. I’m going to inquire into their secret…and hope it’s not really a secret…:)

On the other side of the big membership spectrum is Freethinkers of West Michigan. You know that little piece of Michigan that’s separated from the larger portion of Michigan on the Northwest side? That little bit of America that’s stuck way up there next to Canada? Well apparently there are a lot of Atheists on that thing! The Freethinkers of West Michigan was founded in 1997, and they currently have around 350 members. That’s more than any local Atheist group we discovered. What’s their secret? I’m going to theorize that it’s the fact that they don’t charge a penny for membership. If they included life membership in that, that’s more members whose memberships won’t disappear just by expiring and not being renewed.

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In this issue, we present the results of a lot of work in researching local Atheist groups. It’s a chart of local Atheist groups in America which are currently active, or at least active enough to respond to our questions about them. Of course it’s not a complete list, but it shows the top most active local Atheist groups in America, and you can compare the details of how they run their groups, and theorize on their success, as we have.

We feel it’s important to know and communicate with other local Atheist groups, so we hope you’ll take time to read about them, and then maybe contact them to learn more. We also hope that if you’re not in Austin and you’re reading this, that you’ll find a local group near you this way. Many Atheists are still alone in their rationality where they reside, and this is one way we can help them find others of like mind. Some of us Atheists take for granted the value of having just one agreeable person to talk to about it. Living in Austin, we are accustomed to being able to voice our freethinking opinions out loud. It’s also important to remember our fellow Atheists who are isolated and surrounded by hostile religious groups, and are afraid.

Now when the ACA meets, it’s your opportunity to meet our Board of Directors. Here’s a photo of them just after the first board meeting with this current board lineup. (plus two non-board members.:)

In this issue we also take a look at Ventana Del Soul, where we’ll be meeting on Nov. 5. This may become permanent, or it may not. Come on down and hang out with us. We reserved our own room, and we hear that the food is great. Also the word on spending money is, don’t worry about it. Have lunch, brunch, or just a cup of coffee, or nothing at all. The room is taken care of. (Spending money at meetings has been a big issue lately.) So come meet us friendly Atheists. We’re happy Austinites. JRZ

In This Issue...

---A Look Back at the GAMOW , 11-2-02
---Local Atheist Group Breakdown and Ranking...finally!
---Newsbits!
---Editorial: The Price of Establishment and Growth
---Plus a Whole Lot More!

Published using Art Explosion Publisher Pro with assistance from Joe Rhodes. This newsletter is an official publication of the Atheist Community of Austin, however some articles are reprinted from other sources and editorials are the opinions of their respective authors. Official ACA statements are clearly indicated.
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 artist is Tracie Harris, a member of the ACA.

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

Your Newsletter Staff: Editor - Joe Zamecki, joezamecki@hotmail.com, Co-Editor - Marla Repka, marlarepka@hotmail.com. Your ACA Board of Directors: President: Matt Dillahunty, Vice-President: Don Baker, Treasurer: Joe Rhodes, Secretary: Steve Elliott, Directors: Don Baker, Keith Berka, Charles Clark, Matt Dillahunty, Steve Elliott, Mark Loewe, Don Rhoades, Joe Rhodes & Joe Zamecki

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.” Admission is always free. November’s lecture will be given by Robin Matthews, a retired Austin high school teacher.

Atheist Community News is mailed free to paid members of the Atheist Community of Austin as an official publication of the ACA. But of course there is a cost to send it in the mail, so if you’d like to save us that postage, we’ll be glad to take you off of our mailing list, and then you can just pick up your copy at the regular meetings. We’ll try to make sure that there are plenty of copies available at each regular meeting. Just e-mail your editor at joezamecki@hotmail.com or call at (512)382-9283, and we’ll make it so. We’re also looking for volunteers to help us distribute this newsletter to public places. It’s easy and free, and helps us get our friendly faces out there under the banner of our proud Atheism. To help in that, e-mail your editor. :o)
Editorial...

Godless Americans! “Free, proud and on the move!”

Ellen Johnson said those wonderful words at the Godless Americans March on Washington, on a Saturday in 2002. Over 1,200 Godless Americans marched to the Capitol Building and had a four hour long rally. In this issue, we present some photos and quotes from the speakers on page ...

I worked the information tent at the GAMOW, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. After months of heavy organizational work, we finally had the National Mall to ourselves. I remember being so relieved that I spent so much time and gaffing tape (expensive stuff, that gaffing tape!) securing the American flag on its stand, on the left side of the stage. I was relieved that I was downright obsessive about making sure that flag wouldn’t be knocked over by wind, rain, accidental stage impact, or even a UFO invasion! It ended up looking like the stage was trying to swallow up the flagpole. Well I was so relieved because when I got off that stage, and the march had lead up to the rally, it got windy. Really windy. Maybe we should write a bar-room singalong about how “our flag was still there…”

The biggest thrill for me at the GAMOW was seeing over a thousand out of the closet Godless Americans gathered together in one place. It was the first time in American history that a march on Washington D.C. had been held for this purpose. That purpose, in my opinion, was to let ourselves and the rest of the world know that our movement has come of age, and is now a viable contender in politics and the rest of society, in America. It’s about time too! Ours is the most beautiful nation in history, but we still have more violence than any other developed nation in the free world, along with being among the most religious nations.

The GAMOW meant that our work in establishing our rights in America wasn’t just beginning, but was now within the realm of our everyday means to our ends. What changed was us, in relation to the world. We became visual and vocal to the nation, entering a group of minorities of many kinds, who have won the ability to march there, for their cause.

The Atheist movement in America has had three other national sized marches, the three American Atheists Pride Marches. We’ve come a long way, baby!

John F. Kennedy once said, “There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long range risks and costs of comfortable inaction.” In that spirit, I’d like to re-state our long range goals for this newsletter. It’s not free to the ACA, so we try to make sure that we have clear goals, and that we reach them with this medium of communication:

1. To serve as an outreach to the general public, to help us find other Atheists, by helping them to find us. We already know that there are thousands of godless Americans living in Austin, and that most of them probably don’t yet know about our group. The ACA newsletter is available to everyone, regardless of whether they’re online, or have cable tv. It’s sent to ACA members, some media outlets, a few government offices and even some churches. It’s also placed free in convenience stores, restaurants, gas stations, coffee shops, bars, on public buses and at other public places. That’s so the general public can see it, read it, and take it home, all free and easy. That’s why we have the title of the newsletter in big bold letters, with the word “Atheist” right up front.

In a year of publishing this newsletter, we estimate that print copies have been read by hundreds of Austinites not then affiliated with our group. It’s something tangible that can last in someone’s living room for years. That’s how lots of active Atheists got started, by simply coming across a newsletter and letting it sink in for a while. That was the way for your humble editor.

2. To keep our ACA members up to date on group events, news, announcements, ideas, and other relevant group communication. We’ve tried hard to get the most accurate and up to date information about our social calendar to the members as fast as a monthly publication can.

3. To keep lines of active communication open between our local Atheist group, and others throughout America. As we will show in this issue, there are LOTS of local Atheist groups in America. But many of the local Atheist groups are disjointed by a communication vacuum that sometimes exists. We receive a few local newsletters from local groups, but only a handful. We know there are many more. I’ve worked in the past on archiving dozens of different local Atheist group publications, which enabled me to read and study and compare them all. That’s how I came up with the overall design, layout and approach of Atheist Community News. I wanted us to have the very best newsletter a local group can have. That included the task of getting copies to as many other local Atheist groups as possible, and we’ve done a lot of that so far.

4. To put our opinions out there, so the public is made more aware. We can’t buy a lot of advertising, so this serves as a form of advertising for our group. Any other means of communication that the ACA has going currently has to be initiated by the individual in the public. This means of communication is sitting among other local publications, right now, in convenience stores, restaurants, gas stations, coffee shops...the list goes on. It’s advertising that’s out there, waiting to be seen by people just walking by. Curious enough to pick it up? Good, there’s a whole boatload of more advertising for the ACA inside each issue. I’ve personally watched people pick it up, read it intently, stuff it in their bag, and go. I know it’s unique and challenging reading for the average American, and people like that.

5. To create another pillar of establishment for the ACA. Having a print newsletter is a fundamental way that local Atheist groups establish themselves. From my research into active local Atheist groups, I find that the ACA is easily one of the top three most active in the nation. That’s because we have the basics of every established active local group has. A public access tv show, a website, 501( C )3 status, a board of directors, a bank account, an online radio show, regular social events, and a newsletter. These are the big basics of local Atheist groups which are active. We have a positive effect on the movement in many ways, and the newsletter, among other efforts, is helping us to lead by example.

There are a few other, less important reasons, but those are the big ones. Now to publish and mail out Atheist Community News costs the ACA around $250 per month. Of course, we here at ACN feel that the cost is justified by fulfilling the above five reasons to have a newsletter, and then some.

But besides that, have you noticed that the ACA doesn’t pressure folks for donations? We don’t do that in this newsletter, or on our website, or on our tv show, or our online radio show. That’s another glaring quality about our group. Most non-profit groups have to make regular appeals to their members for donations. The ACA is doing very well financially, so appealing for donations? We don’t do that in this newsletter, or on our website, or on our tv show, or our online radio show. That’s another glaring quality about our group. Most non-profit groups have to make regular appeals to their members for donations. The ACA is doing very well financially, so appealing for donations isn’t a priority. We don’t have to spend any talk time asking for money. We can spend that time talking about our issues and opinions.

With that being said, if you’d like to help the ACA fund the publication of our print newsletter, please do so. We’d like to keep it free, for the very simple and obvious reason that more people will read it that way. Now’s a good time to let your favorite board member(s) know your feelings about our newsletter. The ACA Board is wrestling through these issues now.

One way that your newsletter staff has helped in that recently, again, is to reduce the size of the newsletter by four pages. That’s a 25% reduction in the overall cost of the printing. I will try to cram the same amount of material into a smaller publication. We welcome your comments on the changes we’ve made over the last year, our first year of publishing this particular version of the ACA newsletter. We feel that this is part of the ACA history, not just an accurate way of recording our history, which it also is. We encourage you to pick up a past issue and be reminded of our proud history. JRZ
Atheist Community of Austin Social Calendar for November

Thursday Nov 2    7:30 p.m.    Happy Hour at Ninfas in North Austin, Research/183 just west of I-35 on the Northbound side of 183, Four Year Anniversary of the Godless Americans March on Washington, 11-2-02

Sunday Nov 5    12:15 - 1:45 p.m.    Lecture: Robin Matthews - Teaching evolution in Austin

4:30 - 6:00 p.m.    Atheist Experience TV show, Time-Warner Cable channel 10 , Host: Matt Dillahunty, Co-host: Don Baker

Thursday Nov 9    7:30 p.m.    Happy Hour at Ninfas in North Austin

Sunday Nov 12    11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.    Special regular meeting - Our regular morning meeting will be at Ventana del Soul instead of the usual Romeos. Ventana’s phone number is (512)707-7447 and their address is 1834 East Oltorf, Austin. In this issue, we feature a photo of the place. Board Meeting Immediately follows the regular meeting.

4:30 - 6:00 p.m.    Atheist Experience tv show, Host: Matt Dillahunty, Co-host: Russell Glasser

Thursday Nov 16    7:30 p.m.    Happy Hour at Ninfas in North Austin

Sunday Nov 19    11:30 a.m.    Regular meeting at Romeo’s

4:30 - 6:00 p.m.    Atheist Experience TV show, Host: Matt Dillahunty, Co-host: Jeff Dee

Thursday Nov 23    7:30 p.m.    Happy Hour at Ninfas in North Austin

Saturday Nov 25    10:00 - 11:00 a.m.    ACA Blood Drive Roll up your sleeves for community service.

Sunday Nov 26    4:30 - 6:00 p.m.    Atheist Experience TV show, Host: Matt Dillahunty, Co-host: Tracie Harris

Thursday Nov 30    7:30 p.m.    Happy Hour at Ninfas in North Austin

ACA Event Details

---Lecture Series--- We hold our monthly lectures at the Austin History Center, at the corner of 9th St. and Guadalupe St. They start at 12:30pm in the “Reception Room.” Admission is always free, and it’s open to the public. This month’s lecture will be given by Robin Matthews, a retired Austin high school teacher. He’ll be talking about how evolution is taught in Austin high schools and whether the message is getting across. This lecture will be the last lecture of the year and will occur on the 1st Sunday of the month this time. We’ll also be starting a little earlier than usual as we have a shorter reservation time.

---Board Meetings--- November 12th ACA Meeting at Ventana del Soul. The ACA’s Sunday morning meeting for November 12th will be at the community center Ventana del Soul at the slightly earlier time of 11am. The location is 1834 East Oltorf St., just Southeast of downtown off I-35. The ACA board meeting for November will immediately follow, so think about sticking around and participating. Our reservation for the space ends at 1:00 pm. It will be possible to linger in the cafe or outside after the meeting. Thanks to David Kennedy for finding the space and Don Rhoades and Joe Rhodes for helping to check it out.

---Happy Hour!--- We meet for Happy Hour at Ninfas on 183/Anderson which is just west of I-35 by about a block. It’s on the northbound side of 183. If you’re coming north on I-35, be sure to take the 183/St. Johns exit, go through St. Johns, and then left onto 183 northbound, under the overpass. Ninfas is famous for their Tex Mex and Margaritas, aka Ninfaritas.

---Regular Weekly Meetings--- Sundays at 11:30am at Romeo’s Italian Restaurant on Barton Springs Rd. just West of South Lamar.

---TV Show--- The Atheist Experience is our TV show. It airs on Time-Warner Cable, public access channel 10, from 4:30pm - 6:00pm every Sunday.

---Online Radio Show--- The Non-Propheats, our online radio show no longer broadcasts through Freethought Radio. We will be a podcast only show for upcoming episodes, and we will continue to discuss whether we wish to relocate to another station soon. In the meantime, please feel free to tune in live at http://nonprophets.gotdns.org and visit our archive to hear recent episodes.

---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.

---Outings--- We like to go places as a group, and see some wonderful things, like a field trip. Last month, we took a cruise on Town Lake together. We tried to find a “Hell House” to visit this month, but we couldn’t locate one in the Austin area. If you have an idea for an outing, please let us know.

The Atheist Community of Austin

PO Box 3798    Austin TX 78764    Voicemail: (512)371-2911    Website: www.atheist-community.org
The 2006 national convention for the Atheist Alliance was held in Kansas City, Missouri. No word yet on where their 2007 convention will be held, but we expect to hear about that by the very end of September. www.atheistalliance.org or:

1-866-HERETIC

_______________________________________

From the American Atheists website:  www.atheists.org/convention:

AACON XXXIII – The 33rd Annual National Convention of AMERICAN ATHEISTS

April 6-8, 2007, Seattle, Washington

For more info: (908)276-7300

Speakers include: Phillip Paulson, Atheist Activist, Luigi Cascioli, former candidate for the Catholic priesthood, and Fleming Rose, cultural editor of the Danish publication Jyllands-Posten, which published the cartoons of Mohammed that caused such a fuss.

_______________________________________

The American Humanist Association’s next national conference will be June 7-10, 2007 in Portland, Oregon. We’ll get you more info about that when we get it. The American Humanist Association’s Washington DC office: (800) 837-3792 or: www.americanhumanist.org

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Council for Secular Humanism
www.secularhumanism.org

Science + Art Festival 2006, Nov. 9-12, 2006

New York City, New York

Featuring The Theatre of Science, The Robot Talent Show, A Scientist at the Movies, Ann Druyan, and more. www.scienceartfestival.com/

The Center For Inquiry also has a new online radio show and podcast. Check it out at:

www.pointofinquiry.org
So the volunteer walked up and pointed a finger at the injured man and loudly said, “B...29. I...19. N...7...Who's ready for another cold beer?”

That's good enough, come on.” So the cop took the volunteer over to the injured man still lying on the ground, bleeding and said, “Ok, do your best.”

I could hear every word. Maybe I could say a few words in the Catholic language that would make this man feel better. So the cop said, “Ok I guess not a priest, but I lived next door to a Catholic church for several years, and on Summer nights, they'd open their front doors during their services, and I could hear every word. Maybe I could say a few words in the Catholic language that would make this man feel better. So the cop said, “Ok I guess that’s good enough, come on.” So the cop took the volunteer over to the injured man still lying on the ground, bleeding and said, “Ok, do your best.”

The steel cross memorial at the World Trade Center in New York City is being moved. The only part of the WTC that Jesus felt inclined to save, a portion of a steel girder in the framework of one of the towers, has become a sacred and beloved icon to many many Jesus fans. The Associated Press reported on October 5, 2006 that workers removed the cross to move it to a temporary home at St. Peter’s Church nearby the World Trade Center. The plan they have is to make it a part of the memorial or inside the museum they’re planning for that site. A 9/11 museum, with a big cross in it.

As we’re sure you’re all well aware, an Amish man walked into an Amish school and murdered several Amish girls. This comes as a disturbing shock, but the Amish have been having legal problems involving violence and murder for some time now. A group of Amish in Ohio has been exposed as having some terrible problems with violence, murder, sex abuse and more, and while the media reported on it well a few years ago, we feel it’s important to remind folks of it today. In light of the recent Pennsylvania murders of Amish students, we ask that you examine www.amishabuse.com.

Here’s a quote from that site: “The world looks upon the Amish as a good moral Christian community (which many of them are), but as you read this, you will learn the truth about the Swartzentruber Amish Community.” It’s a personal testimonial from a former member of that community.

Fred Phelps’ Westboro Baptist Church has agreed to not picket the Amish schoolgirls’ funeral, in exchange for getting some free air time on a radio show. Phelps’ church, mostly his own family members, has been picketing the funerals of American servicepersons killed in Iraq and Afghanistan because apparently there are a lot of gays and lesbians serving proudly in our military, and our military hasn’t rounded them all up and deported them yet. We can only theorize, because air time regarding Phelps and his gang is hard to come by, that they wanted to picket the Amish funeral because the Amish don’t persecute their homosexual members. But it’s a closed community, and very secretive, so who knows?

The United States House of Representatives passed a bill that would prevent judges from awarding legal fees to groups that sue municipalities for violating the Constitutional ban on establishment of religion. There can be only one reason for this action, they simply want to use the government to establish an official national religion. There already weren’t penalties built into the Constitution for those who violate the establishment clause, and this one simple way of enabling non-wealthy Americans to get justice is about to be eliminated. This makes the law’s remedies available ONLY to those who can afford them, in a big way. It’s one of the many small steps towards theocracy. We’ll let you know how it goes, in our own words, of course.

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Newsbits is our interpretation of the news, as discovered at many different news sources.

Secular Yoga in the Park

Gundega and Arlo Pignotti enjoy Yoga, but often yoga classes involve new age mysticism, talk of chakras, enlightenment, etc. As Atheists, this is quite uncomfortable sometimes, and it’s hard to hold balance if you’re rolling your eyes at some spiritual mumbo jumbo. Gundega Pignotti is a certified Yoga instructor and teaches Yoga all over Austin that is completely secular, focusing on building strength, balance, flexibility and relaxation. Gundega now hosts Yoga in the Park for donations! Please join us in Shipe Park in the Hyde Park area on 45th Street and Avenue F at 7pm on Wednesdays. For photos and more information, visit www.yogainthepark.net.

512-294-5524 bhealthy4ever@hotmail.com www.YogainthePark.net

A Joke

There was a big car wreck! SMASH! Some poor guy was lying half in and out of his car, bleeding to death. A crowd ensued and a cop walked up. The cop said to the guy on the ground, “Ok buddy, don’t worry. I’ve just called for an ambulance, and they’ll be here in a few minutes, and they’ll fix you right up. It’s gonna be ok.” The injured man said, “No, forget the ambulance. I’m a gonier!” So the cop said “Oh don’t talk like that! The ambulance will take you to the hospital, and they’ll take care of you there and you’ll be just fine.” The man said “No! I’m done for! Just get me a priest!” The cop said, “Well the ambulance is on its way...I guess it wouldn’t hurt to let you talk to a priest.” So the cop turned to the crowd and asked “Is there a priest here? Anyone a priest here?” No one responded. Finally a lone man in the back raised his hand and came forward and said, “Well I’m not a priest, but I lived next door to a Catholic church for several years, and on Summer nights, they’d open their front doors during their services, and I could hear every word. Maybe I could say a few words in the Catholic language that would make this man feel better. So the cop said, “Ok I guess that’s good enough, come on.” So the cop took the volunteer over to the injured man still lying on the ground, bleeding and said, “Ok, do your best.” SO the volunteer walked up and pointed a finger at the injured man and loudly said, “B...29. I...19. N...7...Who’s ready for another cold beer?”
Ventana Del Soul
1834 East Oltorf, Austin, Texas

PH: (512) 707-7447, FX: (512) 707-7338 www.ventanadelsoul.org

Rooms with a View & Visions of Community. Enriching our neighborhoods with a spirit of community by offering cultural and community activities that bring people together and stimulate minds, of all ages, in ways that make a positive and lasting difference.

Ventana del Soul (Window of the Soul) focuses energy, creativity, and resources on providing cultural, community and vocational programs that improve the developmental foundation of the community. From this foundation, the community will be able to nurture the qualities that guide choices and have a sense of centeredness, purpose and focus.

We’ll be meeting at Ventana Del Soul Sunday Nov 12, 11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

An Announcement from Michigan Atheists

MICHIGAN ATHEISTS STATE CONVENTION November 17, 18, and 19, 2006

The Venue: The convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Livonia West, 17123 Laurel Park Drive, Livonia, Michigan, conveniently located at the I-275 and Six Mile Road Exit. If you plan to overnight the special convention room rate is $89 plus tax per day. You must make your reservation directly with the Holiday Inn, prior to the cut off date of October 18.

This is a lovely, full service hotel including outstanding dinning, an inviting garden swimming pool and located in the prestigious Laurel Park Shopping Mall. It is a perfect weekend getaway. CONVENTION TIME: 9:00AM TO 5:00PM, Saturday, November 18. *Registration begins at 8:15am.

PROGRAM:

Arlene-Marie, Michigan Atheists State Director, American Atheists

Dr. Michael Newdow, Atheist activist, medical doctor, lawyer and entertainer.

Rick Wingrove, American Atheists Capitol Hill Representative.

Dr. Gregory Forbes, Professor of Biological Sciences.

Ellen Birch, Documented relative of Thomas Jefferson and Atheist activist.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

*On convention day, Saturday, November 18th, we will break for lunch in our private dinning room with a served luncheon and enjoy special entertainment. Beyond speaking at our convention, Michael Newdow will entertain us with his political and separation of state and church messages set to music and song.

*Friday, November 17th at 7:00pm we will welcome our speakers at a dinner reception at Shanahan's (located in our hotel.) You may order from the menu and self pay.

*Sunday, November 19th we will travel by individual cars to Henry Ford Museum to view their outstanding "Liberty and Justice for All" display.

NEED MORE INFORMATION? Call Arlene-Marie at 313-388-9594 or amarie@atheists.org

We all have the right to reject religion. If you’re from a state that has religious exemptions, go back and tell your legislator to repeal them. Make teachers and others in your community who deal with children aware that they must report ill children to child protective authorities while there’s still time to help them.

I didn’t see flying airplanes into buildings.

Cooperation starts with communication.

Thou shall not lie by saying there are no Atheists in foxholes! No more lies!

I discovered that I was an Atheist when I was about sixteen years old, and I asked why our neighborhood church carried a secular insurance policy to protect the physical building against acts of God. They said, ‘That’s just one of life’s little mysteries that you’ll have to accept because it’s beyond your capacity to understand.’

Actually this is a march for ALL Americans. ALL Americans are Godless Americans - because there is no god!

We are your patriots, we are serving our country, we always have, we always will, and we thank the United States, we thank America for your support to all our troops. Let’s support those troops, thank you.

I revere life, I’m devoted to understanding what’s going on in our world, I have faith in people, and in humanity, and I worship reason and skepticism, so I believe in religion. It’s kind of like Thomas Paine who said that ‘The world is my country, and my religion is doing what’s good.’

I saw a sign that said ‘Democracy not Theocracy,’ well let me tell you about Utah...

We must dedicate ourselves to the task of cooperating with one other, as we are doing today.

An alternative theory would require evidence. Without evidence, there is no alternative theory to evolution.

A rejection of the supernatural does not automatically bind the person to necessarily adopt any particular political ideology. We non-believers can be liberals, we can be conservatives, we can be middle of the road, we can be capitalists, we can be socialists. We Atheists are your friends, your neighbors, and your co-workers. We want what every other American wants, and that is health, prosperity and love.

Given the grave environmental dangers confronting a species that has soiled its net, a species that has multiplied beyond the carrying capacity of the spaceship it calls Earth, facts, facts, and more facts must be collected relating to the problem and they must be evaluated and used to find solutions that will allow the survival of homosapiens.
Chris Harper, aka Pastor Deacon Fred, from the Landover Baptist Church. You can read all about his “church” by going to www.landoverbaptist.com and don’t forget to bring your sense of humor. Some Christians get angry when they see that website, not knowing that it’s not real. That leads to a lot misguided hate e-mails, which you can also read.

Ellen Johnson is president of American Atheists and she chaired the GAMOW task force. She is most responsible for the success of the GAMOW.

Margaret Downey spoke, and she’s now the president of the Atheist Alliance. www.atheisitalliance.org

We marched well and proudly, through the gauntlet of friendly supporters, amused tourists, and angry ridicule from Christian protesters.

We need a satellite photo, to really see the size of our group in fairness. Suffice to say, it was the largest gathering of Godless Americans for this purpose in American history and the first at the National Mall.

Here’s American Atheists National Spokesman Ron Barrier on the right, with a couple of Godless Americans, standing in front of some of the Christians who came with big banners, to picket our march. It was fun to see some of the top most interested Christians, out there to sell us the love of their god being whipped and tortured...one banner showed that in color...

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## Local Atheist Group Breakdown

We sent out a questionnaire to all of the local Atheist groups in America that we could find contact information for, and these are all the groups that got back to us. If your group isn’t listed here, please let us know, and feel free to answer the questions as well:

1. When was your group founded?
2. Is your group incorporated?
3. Does your group have a board of directors?
4. Does your group have a TV show?
5. Does your group have an internet show of some kind?
6. Does your group engage in picketing?
7. Does your group have a bank account of some kind?
8. Does your group have a credit card?
9. Does your group engage in Solstice/Equinox events?
10. What is the approximate number of members that your group has?
11. What is the cost of a regular membership in your group?
12. Has your group encountered any discrimination, harassment or vandalism?
13. Does your group sell products?
14. Does your group have a building?
15. Does your group have an office?
16. Does your group have a print newsletter?

There’s a lot more we’d like to know about local Atheist groups, but we feel that these are the basic questions that reveal the most active groups.

### Notes on the research, methodology and results

As a testament to the need for local groups to communicate with one another more, you’ll notice that this list isn’t very long, and that there are even a few blank spots where information should be. We encountered a cornucopia of challenges and problems along the way in researching these groups. The biggest problem is that a lot of group websites are old and out of date, with bad contact information. This is so widespread among local Atheist groups because it results from one of many different problems within a groups. Some groups become inactive, and lack the volunteer needed to update their website. Some groups have webmasters who move on, leaving a gap in that area. Some representatives of groups fail to get with their webmaster when their contact information changes. Finally, we also discovered that some groups are now gone, despite their fine looking websites still online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Date Founded</th>
<th>Inc</th>
<th>Board</th>
<th>TV Show</th>
<th>Internet Show</th>
<th>Pickets</th>
<th>Bank Acct</th>
<th>C/C</th>
<th>D, H, or V</th>
<th>Sell Prod</th>
<th>Have a bldg</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>P.N.</th>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>1988</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Atheists and Other Freethinkers of Sacramento, CA</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Atheists for Human Rights, Minneapolis, MN</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Boulder Atheists, CO</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>1996</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>2002</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Norwich Atheists, CT</td>
<td>2005, July</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>2005, May</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>2004, June</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>United States Atheists, Portland, OR</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There are many more local Atheist groups that we would like to hear from. Please let us know if your group isn’t listed here, and we’ll be happy to add your group to our list.
Specific issues in regards to the findings.

1. According to the info section of the website for the Houston Atheist Society: “The Houston Atheist Society has disbanded. There will not be any more meetings for this group.” We are working on establishing contact with former board members of that group, to find out what happened.

2. The Atheist Law Center in Alabama has been disbanded and their site has been discontinued, in case you didn’t already know about them.

3. We deliberately excluded a few kinds of groups from this chart. Campus groups, because they’re a very different kind of group from regular local groups not centered on a campus. Also most groups we found that didn’t have the word “Atheist” in the title of the group. In our experience, most groups without that word in their name are different from groups that have it. The main difference is usually strength of Atheism in the average member. We also excluded groups that were just online discussion groups. Having a discussion group is great, but it’s only one part of having a local Atheist group.

4. For some reason, the last question wasn’t added to the list of questions the first time around, so we haven’t gotten answers to that question from a few groups. That should appear in the next issue of Atheist Community News. Of course, as with other areas of effort in local Atheist groups, the cream rises to the top, and gets noticed.

5. United States Atheists in Portland, Oregon is a local group with a clever name. They wanted the acronym “USA.” They’re currently undergoing major group changes, such as re-working their membership policies, and invigorating their print newsletter. They still own the Atheist Community Center though, and actually pay taxes on it as well. In the next few issues, we hope to include an in-depth article about local Atheist group television shows, and another article about local Atheist groups’ buildings and offices. For now, the news is good: We are on the grow!

4. Atheists of Florida is basically a statewide umbrella group with several local chapters in Florida. We found it difficult to communicate with any of them. They and several other local groups didn’t get much mention for this reason. We regret leaving out any active groups, and we’d like to continue this list in a future issue of ACN. For now though, here is how the cream of the crop stacks up, as far as we can measure:

**Rankings:**
1. The Atheist Community of Austin, 2 New York City Atheists, 3 Atheists for Human Rights, 4 Pennsylvania Non-Believers, 5 Freethinkers of West Michigan, 6 Idaho Atheists, 7 Metroplex Atheists, 8 Atheist Coalition of San Diego, 9 San Francisco Atheists, and 10 Salt Lake Valley Atheists

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<td>75</td>
<td>$20./year</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>53</td>
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<td>120</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>10 paid, 150 unpaid</td>
<td>$25./year, or less</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$25./year</td>
<td>V</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>V</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>H,V</td>
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philosophical diversity that exists in our beautiful city, Austin, Texas.

Think of things. You can thank the very valuable cultural and religious Americans make up about 14% of the population, and liberty to include a real existence of freedom from religion. Non-believers advocate a rational and necessary separation between government and religion, and a free and open level of religious beliefs. We advocate a rational and necessary separation between religion and government, and to help the public understand us better. We advocate rational and necessary separation between religion and government, and to help the public understand us better. We advocate rational and necessary separation between government and religion, and to help the public understand us better. We advocate a rational and necessary separation between government and religion, and to help the public understand us better.

The Atheist Community of Austin is a non-profit educational and social organization, founded in 1996 to help atheists meet other atheists in the Austin area, and to help the public understand us better. We advocate a rational and necessary separation between government and religion, and to help the public understand us better. We advocate a rational and necessary separation between government and religion, and to help the public understand us better. We advocate a rational and necessary separation between government and religion, and to help the public understand us better.

"Hands that help are better than lips that pray."

Colonel Robert Green Ingersoll, Orator, Attorney, Civil War Veteran