

## The names change but the game never ends

**L**—*Florence Morgenroth*  
LEE V. WEISMAN, THE latest Supreme Court case involving prayers in the school, is simply a replay of *Murray v. Baltimore* and the School District of Abington Township, Penn. v. Schempp. Cases the Supreme Court decided 29 years ago in 1963.

Then, in an 8-1 decision, the Court said that daily readings from the bible and the recitation of the Lord's prayer in the public schools constituted a religious ceremony, was so intended by the state, and violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

Following that decision, the states tried to come up with a non-denominational prayer that would satisfy the Court, parents and various churches. Not one was ever successful. Still, the churches and the states keep trying and this latest case, *Lee v. Weisman*, is just the latest effort to sneak prayers back into the public schools. The 5-4 decision came mighty close to reversing *Murray* and *Schempp*.

In 1963 I lived in Miami and at that time I was totally involved with friends who had brought a suit against the Dade County School Board in 1960. We had lost the case on the local level and in 1963 our case was pending before the Supreme Court along with *Schempp* and *Murray*.

In our case, the Chamberlin case, the original complainant was an atheist, Harlow Chamberlin, who had two daughters in school. The ACLU took his case and then three other complainants stepped forth -- Jewish, Unitarian and Quaker. They were represented by the American Jewish Congress in a joint action with the ACLU.

The Chamberlin case went much further than the recitation of daily prayers in the schools. Chamberlin wanted the Court to find unconstitutional the display

The hearings took about two weeks. The daily crowds lessened. The witnesses, mostly children, told the judge how humiliating it was to have to walk out of the classroom each day if they did not wish to participate in a prayer to a God they did not believe in. They told the judge how ugly and upsetting and embarrassing it was to witness an Easter pageant in the school in which a fellow student made up as Jesus Christ, with a crown of thorns on his head, carrying a cross on his back, simulated the death of Christ on the cross. To make the presentation even more realistic, the judge was told, the student had been smeared with ketchup to represent the blood of Christ.

The religious spectators in the audience began to understand for the first time how confusing the demeaning these symbols and representations could be to one not of their faith. It was a great lesson which, unfortunately, was only learned by those at the hearing.

The Supreme Court never heard the Chamberlin case. Because it had just ruled on the other two religion-in-the-school cases, it refused to hear another one. It was a terribly emotional period for the county and for the families who brought the suit. Harlow Chamberlin, who had a heart condition, died shortly afterward. He was a martyr to those who agreed with him, a devil to those who opposed him.

And so the beat goes on. The basic problem still exists. The Court can rule but there is no one to enforce the rule. And so, each school can become an island onto itself, insinuating sectarian prayers onto a captive student body even though any student can pray, on an individual basis, anywhere and any time.

The religious right wants more *Lee v. Weisman* cases. They await just one more judge to switch and they will have abolished the separation between church and state in the public schools.



# ATHEISTS of FLORIDA

"Dedicated to the absolute separation of State and Church"

Newsletter of Atheists of Florida, Inc.  
Volume I Number 06

Chapters in Miami and Tampa Bay  
July, 1992

The learned fool writes his nonsense in better language than the unlearned, but it's still nonsense.

— Ben Franklin

## Continuing story of Atheists of Florida's fight to block state spending for restoration

MIAMI — Legal counsel for Atheists of Florida, Inc., Mr. Mark Trop, has written the following letter to the State of Florida in pursuit of the unconstitutional expense of state funds for preservation of the St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Key West:

Law Office at Golden Glade  
290 N.W. 165 Street, Mezzanine 600  
North Miami Beach, Florida 33169  
(305) 944-5239  
fax: (305) 948-5389

State of Florida  
Bureau of Historic Preservation  
R A Gray Building, 4th Floor  
500 S. Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Sir:

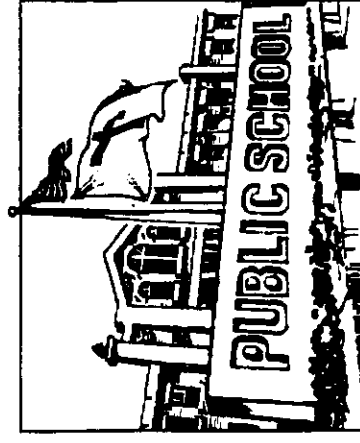
I write to discover by what method your department is funded, chooses sites that become designated as worthy of preservation and makes disbursements or causes them to be made.

Atheists of Florida, Inc.  
P. O. Box 530102  
Miami, FL 33153-0102

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

(See State, next page)

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



bulging with the faithful. The men all wore black pants, black ties and white shirts. All carried bibles. Tension and hate filled the halls and burned through the hymns they sang. It was a modern-day lynch mob.

# Atheists of Florida CHAPTER MEETINGS:

## MIAMI

The Miami chapter usually meets the second Sunday of each month at the Main Library of Ft. Lauderdale, 100 S. Andrews Avenue. This month's meeting is scheduled for Sunday, August 16 beginning at 2:00 in the boardroom. There will be a 30-minute registration and social time, followed by a topic at 2:30.

The Board of Directors will meet Sunday, August 9th, 1992 at the office of our legal adviser, Mr. Mark A. Trop, at 11:00 am.

## TAMPA

The group in Tampa Bay will become a chapter following the Board of Director's meeting in August. In the meantime, we are meeting the last Thursday of the month (this month it is July 30) at Chi-Chi's restaurant, 4020 Park Boulevard in Pinellas Park at 7:00 pm. We are in a private room and most people have dinner followed by any discussion.

For more information, call any of the following: Ed Golly 839-7567; Brent Yaciw 393-6321; or George Starks 578-1326.

## State from page 1

To reiterate from our previous newsletter, the State of Florida intends to spend about \$250,000 to assist in the restoration of St. Paul's, Key West. Christos Tzanetakos, acting director of Atheists of Florida, Inc., had written the State of Florida voicing our objections on the grounds that it violates the state/church separation aspect of the First Amendment. A response from the

State Attorney's office indicated that they found no conflict of interest in the matter and would proceed with the expenditure.

That response has escalated to a follow-up by our attorney with the above styled letter. We await another response from the state and have every intention of pursuing legal action to bar the state from this expense should they refuse to comply with the Constitution.

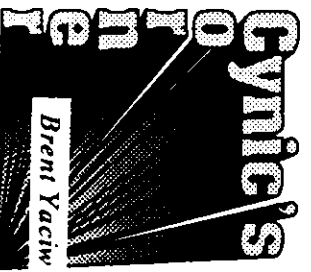
Naturally, we'll continue to keep you posted.

**Mark Andrew Trop is the attorney for Atheists of Florida and is in fact himself an atheist. Besides our cases he is proficient in preparation of wills and estate planning. If you require the services of an attorney in the Miami area, please give your consideration to Mr. Trop. His address and phone numbers appear at the beginning of this article.**

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F. Morgenroth Charles A. Ross  
Daniel Streit C. Tzanetakos  
A. Lyngezelstson Brent Yaciw



**Brent Yaciw**  
are merely incompetent scientists attempting to go beyond their

**I** sometimes think there is really no difference between science and religion, and religionists are merely incompetent scientists attempting to go beyond their mental capabilities. They begin with a "search for truth," and when the answers they find aren't quite satisfying, they fill in the blanks by imagining some intelligent force that "controls" the universe. A recent article in the *St. Petersburg Times* lent some support to my little theory; the article was called "Men, women may learn directions differently."

(continued next page)

June 1992

*Atheists of Florida*

Supreme Court as is dissenting Justice Scalia. The Court was not empowered to determine what has been or is traditional in our nation; its purpose is to determine what is constitutional. If tradition guided the decisions of the Court, women would lose the right to vote, because in the first three quarters of our nation's history women traditionally did not have that right. We "traditionally" engaged in a holocaust to solve the Indian problem, and utilized slavery to procure our manual labor. Uncontrolled pollution has been a tradition until the last 20 years. Ask yourself: how did these conditions ever get changed. Was it by having wise men stick with tradition or righting incorrect and unconstitutional laws?

Simply put, religion has no place in any government-sponsored function, period. This does not deny anyone the right to pray in as much as one may pray any time or place. It is, rather, the efforts of governments and school boards to establish the Christian religion as the proper and fitting form of belief for all Americans. Which is exactly what the framers were determining to avoid.

Ed Golly

*St. Petersburg Times, 7/18/92*

*Re: MIA disclosures could bring trouble to the White House, by Sydney H. Schanberg, July 8.*

It should bring every family of every MIA and every member of every veterans' organization to Washington to demand from the current resident there an explanation or a resignation. If he can't explain why he let hundreds of American MIAs remain in captivity or be slaughtered, then this kinder, gentler president should be run out of town on a pole. If, in fact, Bush did know of these prisoners and kept knowledge of them from their families and the American public, this information should immediately be made known.

Why is the White House refusing to release all secret documents relating to the MIAs to the Kerrey committee? Are they attempting to protect the image of this person in an attempt to guarantee him his most treasured wish of another term in office? Who does this pontificating, Bible-thumping, televangelist-excuse for a president think he is?  
Edward J. McDougall Sr., Sarasota

The University of South Florida *Oracle*, 6/4/92

Mr. Branson's letter to the editor criticizing Mr. Yaciw's stance on theology is a bit flawed, or at least misleading.

For Mr. Yaciw to assert that theology and reality are incompatible is not a neutral one, but in his role as a student and writer he is not restricted by the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment (separation of church and state), but rather is permitted his speech on grounds of the Free Exercise Clause (freedom of religion, or lack thereof). If, as a graduate teaching assistant, he were to use his influence in a classroom situation, that would be an entirely different story, as public universities are mandated to remain neutral.

Furthermore, I agree with Mr. Yaciw's claim that theology is unscientific. It is generally stated in scientific circles that the simplest explanation for a set of phenomena that works 100 percent of the time is the best, although people often misconstrue this and other physical principles (such as entropy) by trying to literally analyze what is more accurately represented by equations. Scientific "laws" stated in words are generally oversimplifications used as

mnemonic devices for scientists.

But even so, adding theology on top of physics is not a simplification, especially with the catch-all retort for questions of rationale of saying "because God says so." If miracles happened on a daily basis, we might be able to argue that the universe does not have hard and fast rules, but the fact of the matter is that no claim of divine intervention by any religion has gone unchallenged for any sufficient length of time.

The typical response to that argument is that some aspect of daily life is a miracle, such as birth, nature, love or whatever. The problem with that response, however, is that being aesthetically pleasing to language-using bipeds hardly qualifies as a miracle. Perhaps Mr. Yaciw should expand his contrast to reality and spirituality in general.  
T. Clark

Congratulations for the new format of the Newsletter. It looks formidable. Thank you for printing my note, on page 3. The item "LA Riots Produce Flood of Prayers", on page 6, is very good and the absolute truth. Wishing you good luck,  
Mike Pedomo

I just wanted to offer my congratulations on the new newsletter format AND production. Awfully, nice! Professional!

We're enjoying the much needed rain up here. Hope this finds you and yours having a happy and successful Summer Solstice.

Best wishes,

John Max Weatherly

Congratulations on the June 1992 issue of the Atheists of Florida Inc. [newsletter] It was a splendidly laid out and composed issue. In fact, this issue and I believe all the future issues will be too good to discard after one reading. May I suggest a little tear-out box somewhere in the issue where an interested reader can write for information. The way to get it to another person is to recycle it to "a mind," not a newspaper collection department. This can be done by leaving it at a library table, giving it with the tip to a waitress, or any way you can think of.

Yours truly,

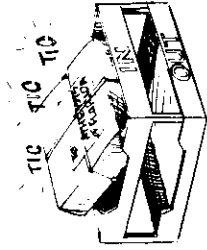
Louis Miller

A thank you to everyone who contributed to this section, a "You're welcome" for the kudos, and our promise to keep working to make things better and better! We have plans to design tract handouts and other materials for "spreading the words," but one sure way to gain exposure is getting "Atheists of Florida" into your letters whenever practical.

We also have some other plans for the newsletter. We're looking for columnists with access to IBM-compatible computers, to submit regular features. You'll get a headline like my "Gynic's Corner," and Ed Golly intends to use a photo to draw a line-art sketch for an illustration. If interested, get in touch with Ed at (813) 839-7567. In the meantime, you're living in "America's Vacation Paradise" - enjoy it!

The editors

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# LETTERS

Hi! Welcome to our letters section. Each month, we intend to have at least one page, and preferably two, devoted to letters from the general membership. Every effort will be made to print as many letters as possible; since we want to encourage our members to write letters that will gain exposure to the general public (after all, there's less accomplishment in "preaching to the saved"), we will allocate space in the following order:

1. Letters published in national-circulation newspapers or magazines NOT specifically devoted to atheism or humanism.
  2. Letters that have been published in the main section of a general-circulation paid newspaper (i.e., the St. Petersburg Times, the Miami Herald).
  3. Letters that have been published in a regional section of a general-circulation paid newspaper (i.e., the City Times section of the St. Petersburg Times).
  4. Letters published in a general circulation free newspaper (i.e., Creative Loafing).
  5. Letters published in a regional free newspaper (i.e., the Temple Terrace Beacon, the Pennysaver).
  6. Letters published in a college or school newspaper.
  7. Letters published in newspapers, newsletters, or magazines aimed at atheists, freethinker, or humanists.
  8. Unpublished letters from members.
  9. Unpublished letters from non-members.
  10. Unpublished letters from officers of the organization.
- Since all board members and other officers will be allotted column space to express themselves, we consider it only fair that the general membership should take priority in this area.

In each category, letters will be given preference if they include the name "Atheists of Florida," or make specific references to atheism as a legitimate viewpoint. These priorities may be overridden at the discretion of the editors, but we intend to adhere to them whenever possible. Format: All letters submitted should be in typed, double-spaced format, on white paper with a dark ribbon. Letters are scanned in; we don't usually have time to type (and/or decipher) handwritten ones. Unless specifically requested otherwise, letters may be edited for spelling, punctuation, or other grammatical errors; however if the writer's intent is unclear we will ask for verifications. Please include complete address and phone information. Disk submissions are appreciated; in ASCII or WordPerfect 5.1 formats for IBM compatibles, any size disk. If published, please include a photocopy of the published version with bibliographic information. (If the letter is written in response to a particular article or letter, please try to enclose a copy of it as well.) We are considering awards for most prolific publishers, and others are possible. Timing: Letters will be accepted at any time, and we will try to run them as close to publication date as possible. Any letters not included in a specific issue may be held over for a maximum of one more issue. Obviously, not all letters can be printed, and only one letter per person will be printed in each issue. We will choose our favorite and add a credit line for others.

Tips: Write often, but DON'T call the (newspaper) editor. Editors are usually overworked and underpaid, and calling

them often puts your letter in their circular file! Pick a specific point and focus on it whenever possible. Short letters have the best chance, but any well-written letter may be published. If you have a FAX, use it to send letters in if possible: the letter is more timely, and if you are faxing direct from your computer, you don't even have to print it out. Use humor; all too many in the general public see atheists as humorless negativists. Use the absurdity of religion to prove them wrong!

Example: The following article appeared in Creative Loafing. They printed my response on July 8, 1992. In England, the House of Lords rejected an appeal last year by a Canadian oil company, which had been ordered to return "The Nataraja," a 12th-century Hindu statue of which it had come into possession after it had been stolen. As a matter of legal tactics, the plaintiffs had included as a party to the lawsuit a phallic symbol representing the Hindu god Shiva, marking the first time a god had been given standing to sue in England.

"Socrates Lives"  
So the House of Lords has given standing to sue to the Hindu god Shiva. That's great! Maybe they'll finally hear my plea.  
Last Christmas, when Santa Claus was in my house, he stole all my Easter eggs! I had to work my tail off - literally - to get enough ready in time!

Four sentences was all it took to convey the utter absurdity of giving legal standing to deities in court. Five minutes of typing, but the message reached thousands. In the first six months of this year, between the local and college papers, sixteen of my letters were printed. If I can do it, so can you!

"Letters" editor & general gofer, Brent Yaciv

### Tampa Tribune, 7/92

I am stunned at the degree by which your editorial has completely missed the point of the Supreme Court ruling on prayer ceremonies at graduation exercises in our public schools.

Rabbi Guterman's "generic" prayer is a definite establishment of religion. To begin with, can there be any doubt whatsoever to which god the Rabbi was praying? Could it have been Allah, Ra, Poseidon, Venus, or the Great Spirit in the Sky? Clearly not any of the above. Only the Christingod is delineated here. The same god inappropriately referred to on our currency, in our Pledge of Allegiance, and on our Florida State and National mottoes, "In God We Trust". This conclusion may be drawn by the very nature of the prayer, wherein each paragraph solicits the prayer giver to grovel with thanks to the god for everything (s)he has accomplished in the pursuit of a diploma. The god endowed them with the capacity to learn; the teachers are blessed for their efforts; the god issues requirements for the graduates' future; and finally, the god is credited with even keeping the students alive and allowing them to reach their graduation.

This is the very foundation of the Christian religion. All credit for achievement goes to a god. Any skills, talents, abilities or successes of any kind are attributed to a god. And you conclude that when this superstitious concept is put before an entire student body on the outset of their graduation exercise that it is not an establishment of religion? Inconceivable.

I submit you are as confused over the function of the

## Cynic continued

According to the researchers, females depend more on landmarks to navigate, while men depend more on a system of vectors, calculating how far and in which direction they travel. These differences were identical in male and female rats, suggesting a genetic or hormonal cause rather than cultural influence. They may even have located a part of the brain that is different in the sexes and related to this.

Up to this point, all was factual evidence, and had things been left at that, the researchers would still hold my respect. However, the researchers apparently wanted to get something more out of their work, and unfortunately they extended beyond fact into irrational statements to accomplish this; just like religionists do. According to Thomas Bever, the male system is actually much more primitive. "Having a landmark representation is a much smarter way to get around...Evolution doesn't need us to walk around with blindfolds."

Oh really? Landmarks change, Mr. Bever — vectors don't. One thing noted in the article that he also ignores is that males consistently did better at finding their way back; perhaps he considers this a useless advantage? Seriously, one could say that both systems have advantages depending on the situation. From an evolutionary standpoint, males were generally the hunter-gatherers, and returning to father more children (hence passing on genetic material) required a system of navigation that worked regardless of familiarity with landmarks that might be covered with snow (or sand, or washed away/flooded over) on the return trip. Women remained in the same area longer, learning a pattern of recognized landmarks seen daily, where any changes would be instantly noted. Landmarks are more efficient if there are a limited number with significant differences; too many

## Atheists of Florida

similar landmarks introduce confusion, like trying to find your house the first few times in a neighborhood of nearly-identical tract homes.

Of course, my theories are just that; and they're based only on someone else's research. I'm not sure why Mr. Bever felt required to reach for his unsubstantiated conclusions, but to make a blanket, unqualified statement that one system is better than the other with only limited research panders to the simpleminded and uneducated person's requirement of definitive answers to everything—one of the strongest appeals of religion. Religion promises easy answers that you can be sure of; all you have to do is quit thinking and believe. Ignore any questions or doubts, it's just the devil trying to sway you. Note that religions need the concept of evil as well as good; if they have no scapegoat to blame the bad stuff on, they'll eventually fade away. This is why Emerson and Thoreau's feel-good transcendentalism was rejected by Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville; why deism has lost its following; why Christianity thrives. Every-thing bad can be blamed on the devil, so god must be good.

Of course, as atheists we ask the questions they are afraid to: Didn't the same god you call good create the devil? If he's so omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, why doesn't he stop all hornhead from doing all this nasty stuff? They don't ask because deep down, in that grain of rationality I think (at least, I'd like to think) every human possesses (obviously, to a limited extent in some cases), they know the answer and it scares them. It's easier to say Atheists are tools of the devil. That dismisses us without any requirement for scary questions like: "Why doesn't god make those atheists believe in him and stop asking questions?"

Speaking of grains of rationality, they appear to be shrinking, and I have another little theory about this. According to *Scientific*

*American*, on an overall basis, the more children in a family, the lower the average grade point average in school. Reading this made me think about how many Atheists I know that have two or fewer children; many, like myself, have none. Perhaps it's not an effect of having more children that lowers the GPA (as contended by some), perhaps it's just that intelligent, rational people seldom consider breeding litters a priority in their lives. One reason might be the increasingly negative climate for children: What intelligent person would want their child attending schools where guns and violent occurrences are commonplace?

Unfortunately, this means that the I.Q. and rationality, as much as is genetically transferred, is waning in the general population. One wag said, "The sum of the intelligence on the planet remains a constant; the population, however, continues to grow." If our society is to avoid de-evolution, we need more incentives for intelligent people to reproduce, and fewer for people like Kimberly Sanks. She's the 19-year-old mother of seven (by at least two fathers), unemployed, living on welfare, with a criminal record and a middle-school education, whose 20-month-old son died when she left him alone with his three brothers—one two years old, the others three-year-old twins. This is America's future. Who wants to bet there's a Bible in her apartment, and she doesn't believe in abortion? We already know she doesn't believe in birth control.

July 25, 1925  
John Scopes was found guilty of teaching evolution in the State of Tennessee.

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July 30, 1956  
Congress passed a law proclaiming the phrase "IN GOD WE TRUST" the national motto.

# NEWS FILTERS

## Court has more decisions to follow graduation prayer ban

**AS THE SUPREME COURT** concluded its 1991-92 term the last week of June, it postponed making a decision which will prove vital to all of us.

In thirteen states including Florida, Good Friday is given as a paid holiday to state workers. In Hawaii, another state which allows this practice, residents realized

that their tax dollars are being used to support a government endorsement of religion. The infraction costs the state over \$4.2-million to pay all the workers for the day off.

Responding in court, the State maintained it was not endorsing Christianity but rather, the holiday had a completely secular purpose — to provide "an extra day of rest for a weary public labor force". This unbelievably insulting government gobbledegook was actually accepted in a 2-1 ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last April.

Presumably the Supreme Court will eventually get around to handing down a decision regarding this holiday in its next term. And since the holiday has been given since 1941, Justice Scalia will no doubt find it acceptable due to its "traditional" nature, superseding any Constitutional First Amendment violations.

## ATHEISTS OF FLORIDA, INC.

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Previous statement: First Quarter, 1992  
General Fund Account: \$ 1,201.73  
Scholarship Account: 0.00

| REVENUES                           |               | EXPENSES                |                    |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Membership fees                    | \$ 530.00     | Telephone               | \$ 150.04          |
| Contributions                      | 119.39        | Postage                 |                    |
| Scholarship Fund                   |               | Bank charges            | 36.11              |
| Fund raisings                      |               | Office supplies         | 27.69              |
| Interest from Bank                 | 6.05          | Printing                | 21.85              |
|                                    |               | Southern Bell (deposit) | 250.00             |
|                                    |               | Check book              | 97.92              |
|                                    |               | Answering machine       | 149.09             |
|                                    |               | IRS (1023) fee          | 150.00             |
| Total revenue                      | \$ 655.44     | Total Expenses          | \$ 882.70          |
| Net Income (Loss)                  | ( \$ 227.26 ) |                         |                    |
| <b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>              |               |                         |                    |
| Cash unappropriated:               |               |                         | \$ 974.47          |
| Cash Scholarship Fund              |               |                         | 1,058.94           |
| Computer (book value)              |               |                         | 750.00             |
| Donated articles (estimated value) |               |                         | \$ 3,783.41        |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS:</b>               |               |                         | <b>\$ 6,566.82</b> |

Justice Blackmun is now age 80 and in all probability faces retirement within the next four years. In view of the single vote margin in the graduation prayer decision, it is now quite clear that this November's election will decide the fate of state/church separation issues for probably the next thirty years or so.

### From Atheist Network Journal of Houston

In the June and July, 1992 issues of Atheist Network Journal, we spotted a story which somewhat parallels our plight with the State of Florida regarding its planned expense of \$250,000 for the restoration of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Key West. Here is a synopsis of that story.

**SAN DIEGO**—Mt. Soledad Park in San Diego encompasses a rather prominent mountain capped by a Christian cross. Since this is a city park, the cross is an obvious violation of the state/church separation aspect of the First Amendment. Atheist Howard Kreisner brought suit to have the cross removed and the court found that the presence of the cross on public land was indeed unconstitutional.

In view of that finding, the City of San Diego introduced a measure to authorize the sale of 200 square feet of park land beneath the cross to a memorial society that would use this land to keep the cross in its present location. This measure was to be (continued next page)

As may be seen by the above financial report, Atheists of Florida has incurred a few extra start-up expenses which will run beyond the ordinary monthly operating requirements. If you are able to help out with an extra contribution during this initial beginning period, it would be a great help toward keeping Atheists of Florida financially sound. Thanks!

Atheists of Florida

July 1992

## News continued from page 4

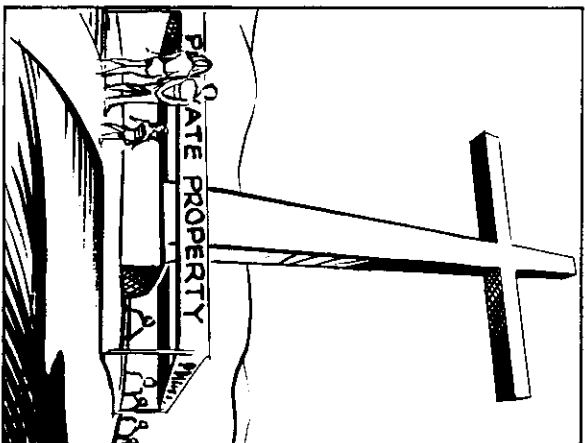
voted on by the public in the next election and was titled "Proposition F".

Requiring a two-thirds voter approval to be passed, we watched for the July issue of Atheist Network Journal to see the results. The following article spelled it out for us:

## San Diego Votes to Keep Cross In Park

Last month we reported that the City of San Diego was attempting to sell off a small parcel (200 square feet) of Mt. Soledad park to private investors in an effort to keep a 40-foot cross, whose presence was ruled unconstitutional, in the place where it presently stands. This measure, known as Proposition F, was to be decided by an election on June 2nd. The election was held and the measure passed by a margin of 14%.

Many people are responsible for allowing this to happen — and I don't mean just the brain-dead religious. Despite the efforts of Howard Kreisner to have this cross removed, it appears that many local Atheists felt it was too much trouble to take a stand on the



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## which should be followed by all municipalities

The San Francisco Chronicle has reported that Berkeley has actually begun to levy a tax on the contributions received by all churches within the municipality.

The city finance department sent letters to all churches informing them that "a review of our records indicates that your agency is not registered and/or licensed to operate in the City of Berkeley."

City officials are in effect requiring that churches and other non-profit organizations must purchase business licenses and pay an annual tax of .06% on contributions (that's six one-hundredths of one percent) or six cents on every \$100 of income.

Since the tax has been consistently collected from non-profit organizations, national experts on state/church separation issues have concluded that



although Berkeley's church tax is probably unprecedented, it does not appear to be unconstitutional.

Naturally, the churches are far from being in agreement. They may be expected to fight this every step of the way, because it signals the beginning of the end of the grand free ride they take on the backs of all taxpayers. They assume the world exists to support them simply for the function of spinning forth a medievalist superstition which is worthless not only monetarily but also ideologically.

issue by simply casting a vote. And let's not forget the spineless, self-serving city officials who, bowing to pressure from religious interest groups, agree to pervert our laws concerning the use of public lands.

This miscarriage of constitutional law might make a handful of people look like heroes in their respective churches, but everyone in San Diego will have to pick up the tab for the legal costs incurred when Howard is forced to sue the city again.

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## Baby boomers staying away from church

We spotted an article early this month in *The Fort Pierce Tribune* which cited a study indicating that children who grew up in the '50s and '60s and left church upon reaching adulthood are not returning to worship. In addition, they are not brainwashing their children with superstitious nonsense, either.

The study found that the survey participants, who were all confirmed in the Presbyterian Church, are not angry with religion. Rather, they simply have no interest in it. Easy enough for us to understand.

But the article, directed toward congregations who would like to attract members, attempts to stir up a panic: "...the children of this lost generation are probably not going to gravitate toward religion either. And when the boomers' kids grow up, they will not expect their children to worship. Thus it will continue into the centuries, a Godless society without a hint of values." Wow. Those of us who are not superstitious are giving rise to the end of civilization as we know it.

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## Berkeley to tax churches

Berkeley setting standards