



P.O. Box 130753
Tampa, FL 33681

**ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED**

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Tampa, Florida
PERMIT No. 2020

Atheists of Florida

DADE&BROWARD: Third Sunday of each month, 2:00 pm on the eighth floor of the Broward County Main Library, 100 S. Andrews Ave. Ft. Lauderdale. Our next meeting is scheduled for August 17.

Third Tuesday each month, 8:00 am, Breakfast meetings at *Denny's* Restaurant, 16751 NW 67th Ave, Hialeah. Specific meeting information and activities published in *NEWSNOTES*, included in all newsletters, or listen 24/7 to the message on 305/940-0442. atheist1@bellsouth.net

LAST YEAR THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE passed FS s.233.0659 requiring that all Florida Schools, K-12, observe "Freedom Week" during the last full week in September. This was implemented for the first time September 23-27, 2002. The law states that during the beginning of each school day or in home-

Memorizing "Creator" during Freedom Week

—Andrea Steele

room during this week, principals and teachers must conduct an oral recitation by all students (K-12) of the following portion of the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all *men* are created equal, that they are endowed by their *Creator* with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among *men*, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

I was informed of this ritual in the week prior but by then my child's teacher had already had her and the class memorize the above in preparation for "Freedom Week" the following week. I went in to inquire about the memorizing of this passage with the word "Creator" in it and it was then that I was informed of the new legislation and that my child could opt out of reciting it the following week.

During that week, my child was excused from her classroom during the daily recitations.

CHAPTER EVENTS

TAMPA BAY: Pinellas County—First Sunday of each odd-numbered month (Jan., Mar., etc.), 1:00-3:30 at the Pinellas Park Public Library, 78th Ave N & 52nd Street.

Tampa—First Sunday of each even-numbered month, 1:00-3:30, Platt Library, 3910 S. Manhattan Ave., Tampa. Dinners follow all meetings at nearby cafeterias. FMI: Ed Golly, 813/835-1500, AthALFLE@aol.com.

SARASOTA: Meetings on various Sundays at Selby Library, 1331 First St. Contact Melinda Masters via www.tampabayatheists.org for specific times and dates.

HISPANIC CHAPTER: Roberto de los Rios Director del Capitulo Hispano. PO Box 127845, Hialeah, FL 33012-1631 vinrob513@aol.com

Here are my personal reflections on this issue. It is obvious what the real intent is. If this passage made no mention of "Creator" it would not have found it's way into this ritual, in fact my opinion is that the entire "Freedom Week" program was simply created as an excuse to make every Florida public school student from Kindergarten to High School seniors memorize and recite 5 times every year that there is a Creator. Again, as "under God" in the Pledge, repetition and an authority figure (the teacher) constitute a dynamic force that indoctrinates. Additionally, a follow-on "benefit" of this particular indoctrinational process is that if there is a "Creator" maybe there is "Creation." This strategy is meant to be repeated annually with no end in sight and has the long range objective to impinge the idea of a Creator into the entirety of Florida students for generations. The eventual acceptance of Creationism into academic curriculums would not be that foreign an ideology after 13 years (K-12) of reciting that a Creator exists.

I remind any State Legislator that voted for this law that it is the US Constitution that guarantees our freedoms, not the Declaration of Independence; however, no Creator is mentioned in that document and therefore was apparently not suitable for the covert intent of the "Freedom Week" tactics.

Again, those are my personal reflections. **In the meantime, I suggest that the "Freedom Week" program with its caveat, that a student may be excused from participating in the recitation of the portion of the Declaration of Independence, as provided per the statute, be included in the SDHC Student Handbook and in all schools' Parent Handbooks so that all parents can be informed in a timely manner of what seems to be an annual event.**

AAI Convention 2003

—Ed Golly, President, Atheists of Florida
TAMPA—The Ninth Annual Convention of the Atheist Alliance International (AAI), hosted by Atheists of Florida, seems to have set the standard for future conventions.

Headliners included James "The Amazing" Randi, Richard Dawkins, Margaret Downey, Michael Shermer, Michael Newdow, Darrell Lambert, Nancy Powell, Herb Silverman and Pastor Deacon Fred.

Events at the hotel began Thursday evening with a pool deck wine and dessert gathering in honor of Dawkins with classical guitar music performed by A of F member Michael Harvey.

The best laid plans have a way of going awry and this convention was no exception. A transportation SNAFU caused Randi to nearly miss his scheduled appearance on the local mid-day news show on the Fox affiliate in the Tampa Bay area. We scrambled to get Shermer off the golf course and to the studio so we would have someone there for the 30-minute segment. Both he and Randi showed up just a few minutes late and gave a stellar performance.

With great press coverage in the local papers, Saturday brought a lot of walk-in traffic and the vendor setup at the entry to the conference hall ensured that conventioners saw all the displays. Following a full day of programs and dinner, Dawkins presented his award for outstanding achievement in the promotion of freethought to James Randi who was quite proud to receive the honor. The remarkable glass sculpture was created by Dennis DeBon.

Sunday evening following the close of the convention, about 30 conventioners took the Starship Dinner Cruise from downtown Tampa which featured a sort of Titanic recap since the convention occurred very near April 15, date of the infamous sinking.

Convention planning began last summer when Jim Young selected and booked the hotel primarily because of its proximity to the airport. We negotiated such a great room rate that many conventioners decided to take advantage of it and arrive early or remain later. As the year 2003 began and the convention planning committee seemed to be getting nowhere, Alex Giannakoulis came aboard and took the reins. Nearly single-handedly he found the speakers and negotiated their fees to fit our budget so we could offer such an outstanding roster at a remarkably low registration fee.

Earlier planning would have allowed for better promotion of the convention and a larger turnout. AAI has addressed this issue with the formation of a committee to work with the local Member Societies for future conventions.

The main reason our timing was so good for hosting this year's convention was that we had begun to attract some outstanding new members in A of F, especially in the Tampa Bay area. Enter Joe Reinhardt, an A of F member who resides in Pinellas County. Owner of a video production company, Reinhardt offered to bring in a professional crew to record the entire convention. With complete mixing facilities and three cameras, every presentation except the breakout sessions was put on tape and has been converted to DVD or video tape.



Brent Yaciw conducts a pre-convention interview with AAI President Bobbie Kirkhart during a live broadcast of the Atheist Forum.

Atheists of Florida is now able to offer the convention recordings with proceeds being split between A of F and the Alliance (see page 5 for ordering information). We expect to be advertising in all Member Society newsletters and *Secular Nation*, the quarterly magazine of the Atheist Alliance International. We will be using most of the presentations on the *Atheist Forum* throughout the year.

The 2004 convention will be hosted by the Colorado Member Society and will likely be in the Denver area or Colorado Springs.

It requires lots of volunteers to pull off a sophisticated convention like we had, and Atheists of Florida members came through when we needed them. From the Internet Café to the book table, hospitality suite to setting up the program folders, volunteers were always at hand to assist the convention planners. We could never have pulled it off without the assistance of: Jim Young; Michael Harvey; Carolyn Davis; David Carlson, who manned our A of F table in the vendors area for the entire convention; Nan Owens who ran the registration table with Jacquie Jordan and Anita Garcia; Patrick Bens and his daughters, Fabiola and Marianna who, with Mindy Singer and Chris O'Connor helped run the Hospitality Suite; Sandra and Pete Spemato; and Brent Yaciw. But the mastermind of the entire convention was, without a doubt, Alex Giannakoulis.

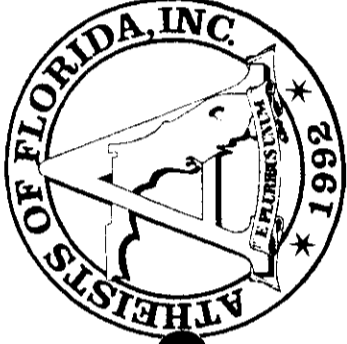
Thanks to everyone—Fantastic Job!

Creationism: the theory that Rome was built in a day.

Atheists of Florida

Dedicated to the absolute separation of State and church
www.atheistalliance.org/florida www.tampabayatheists.org Sponsor of the Mark Twain Scholarship Fund
A Member Society of Atheist Alliance International, the Democratic Alliance of Autonomous Atheist Societies

Volume XI No. 8
June/July 2003





www.atheistalliance.org/florida
www.tampabayatheists.org

Chapters:

Miami/Ft. Lauderdale

P. O. Box 640634

Miami, FL 33164-0634

(305) 940-0442 / (954) 929-0441

Fax: (305) 949-3828

atheist1@bellsouth.net

Tampa Bay

PO Box 130753

Tampa, FL 33681

(813) 835-1500 / (813) 839-7567

ATHALFLE@aol.com

Sarasota/Manatee

(813) 835-1500

ATHALFLE@aol.com

Mark Twain Scholarship Fund

P O Box 3893

Ft. Pierce, FL 34948

Phone/Fax: (772) 465-6402

Membership dues

- Life Member \$ 500.00
- Sustaining 60.00 Yr
- Couple 50.00 Yr
- Individual 40.00 Yr
- Student (under 25 yrs) 10.00 Yr
- Limited Income (over 65) 10.00 Yr
- Newsletter (out of state) 10.00 Yr

Published eight times a year by Atheists of Florida, Inc., a nonprofit, educational corporation founded to heighten public awareness about atheism and monitor state/church separation issues. Newsletter is provided free to our members. Letters are published on a space-available basis. Send newsletter correspondence to Tampa Bay Chapter, address above. Articles may be edited for clarity or length. Atheists of Florida, Inc. is a Member Society of the Atheist Alliance International.

Chairman

James A. Young

Officers

President: Ed Golly
Vice President: Alex Giannakoulas
Secretary: James Young
Treasurer: Brent Yaciv

State Board of Directors

Jim Peterson Melinda Masters
Patrick Bens Dr. Michael Brannon
Roberto De Los Rios Nan Owens
Raymond Erickson Steven Miles
Joe Reinhardt Christos Tzanetakos

Legal Counsel

John W. Mackay

Newsletter Production:

Editor: Ed Golly
NEWSNOTES Editor: Patrick Bens
Staff: Jim Strayer, Rob Curry
Web master: Jim Peterson

JOHN JONES BELIEVES in the Alchemy theory, the transmutation of base metals into gold. Don Miller believes in the theory of phlogiston which states that a volatile substance is found in all combustible materials. Dick Smith believes in the theory of Creationism. Each is an expert in their particular belief. Each would like time to explain their theory to high school science classes. This

THE SOLUTION IS EVOLUTION
No. 21—Failed Hypothesis

—Jim Strayer



presents a problem to educators. Although these three men are fictitious, the theories are not. To be more exact these are examples of "failed

hypotheses." They did not pass the scientific method of testing. They are hypotheses that will not become scientific theories. If the proponents of these hypotheses want them taught in the classroom they must, first of all, convince scientists that the scientific method has been followed and that empirical evidence is available for everyone to examine.

The public school classroom is no place to argue the viability of a scientific theory. Scientists should determine what science is and that is what should be taught. But even more important is to teach how science works. What is the Scientific method, what constitutes empirical evidence, and what evidence is necessary to form a theory are questions that students of all ages should be exposed to.

The overwhelming evidence is that these three hypotheses do not meet scientific standards. If they are to be discussed it should be as examples of failed ideas. Of the three examples here, only creationism is being suggested in today's educational circles. Yet the creationists definition of "Creation Science" is not only rejected by scientists, but also the Supreme Court. To make matters worse they have not described the mechanism of creation. What is the Creation model and how does it advance our understanding of such things as medicine, agriculture, and dozens of related fields?

The main thrust of creationists is to attack evolution. This has nothing to do with "Creation Science." Creation Science must be able to stand on its own. The burden of proof rests with the creationists. Their state-

ments that evolution is wrong and therefore they must be right is, not only unscientific, but not logical.

They argue that evolution is wrong by using examples of meteoritic dust, halos, lack of transitional forms, Paluxy footprints, and other nonsense. All of these examples have been refuted years ago, but the creationists will not let them die a natural death. A great deal of time is wasted on answering these charges again and again. Now creationists are touting "Intelligent Design". There is no mechanism for intelligent design, except the super natural. There is no theory of "Intelligent Design" because it is not based on science and the scientific method.

The Solution is Evolution will continue in the next newsletter. Jim Strayer is a retired biology teacher living with his wife, Bobbe, in Ormond-By-The-Sea.

Mark Twain Scholarship Fund
2003 Fund raising raffle

A very warm thanks to all who participated in the Twain Scholarship Fund raffle. The raffle drawing will take place on August 3, 2003, at the Tampa Bay chapter meeting. Contributions received after August 3rd will be acknowledged in the next newsletter but their participation in the raffle drawing naturally would not be possible. Instead, donors of \$10 or more will receive a copy of the 1995-2001 book of winning Scholarship Fund essays.

NAME	AMOUNT	TICKETS
RAY ERICKSON	\$ 100	20
GEORGIA ALVAREZ	10	2
NIKOLAI JONES	20	4
HERBERT WILLIAMS	10	2
PETER CASTELVECCHI	15	3
ANDREW J HERSCHEL	10	2
DEAN RAY	20	4
HAROLD C. WIEDEMANN	15	3
ABIGAIL ANN MARTIN	5	1
CELIA GLANTZ	25	5
FREDA KERNES	25	5
MARIA RICHARDSON	10	2
MARTHA WILLIAMSON	10	2
FABIO OROZCO	25	5
ROBERT L. PRIBBLE	5	1
ED GOTTFRIED	15	3
JACQUELINE D. JORDAN	5	1
EDWIN CORL	20	4
MELINDA MASTERS	5	1
CHYRISS P. TABONE	10	2
CHARLES ALAN ROSS	50	10
LORI KATZ	50	10
TERESE ROCKEFELLER	50	10
JO ANN GEIST	25	5
WILLIAM A. KILGORE	15	3
NORMA E. COSSEY	500	100
PETER RUMMEL	15	3
TOTAL	—213 TICKETS RAISING \$1,065.00	

Forum comments

I saw your show last night for the first time and I have to say that I thought it was quite interesting. I believe that one would need to be very brave to come on TV to tell everyone that one is an atheist and to talk about the bible the way you do. So, I congratulate you guys for doing so. I have been a silent atheist all of my adult life. The day that I finally said to myself that I did not believe in God was also the day that it became clear to

LETTERS



me that people don't like to hear one say that one does not believe in God. Keep up the good work. We need more people like you who would challenge the bible and those bible preaching con-artists. How often is your show on and do you have a Web site?

—C.R. Tampa

The Atheist Forum is seen twice weekly in Tampa. The schedule varies with the seasons. Our Web site is on the cover of this newsletter. We also have www.tampabayatheists.org.

God's flight plan

Yaciv's attention was caught by a feature story in the Tampa Tribune.

You quoted the late Rick Husband, Columbia Commander, as saying, "There is no way you can look at the stars, at the Earth, at the moon and not come to realize that there is a God out there who has a plan and laid out the universe." Apparently, he said this before realizing that God's plan for him included simultaneous residence in various cities across Texas.

I'm being callous, you say? Try looking in the mirror. Exactly what was your point, to make the man sound like an idiot? Yes, sometimes people say foolish things in moments of bravado, especially those in dangerous jobs who are trying to avoid facing the reality of death. And sometimes people in risky jobs are there because they don't comprehend the risks they are taking. In either case, I'm sure you could have found a less ironic quote to use.

—BRENT YACIV Wesley Chapel, FL

Moral Xians?

Jim Strayer forwarded this letter to us from Ormond Beach.

Dear Atheists friends,
I am posting this in response to the question posed in another forum: "Is it possible to be moral and be a Christian?"

We welcome correspondence from readers.
Address mail to:
Atheists of Florida
P.O. Box 130753
Tampa, FL 33681
Or e-mail:
ATHALFLE@aol.com

asked what he thought of Christians. His reply was, "I don't know, I have never met one!" Ghandi received his education in Britain. He was well read on the Christian faith and the Bible. What Ghandi realized is what anyone who has objectively read the New Testament realizes—there are no Christians.

There are certainly millions who profess to be Christian. But alas, professing to be something is one thing and being that thing is quite another. There are, of course, many persons professing to be Christian who are moral.

It is my contention that they are moral in spite of their religion and not because of it. One cannot, at least sanely, hold two diametrically opposite beliefs simultaneously. It is a safe assumption to state that to be a Christian is to believe in and follow the teachings of Christ.

What are the teachings of Christ? In essence they are as follows:

1. Hate your neighbor, your wife, your children, your brothers and sisters and yourself! (Luke 14:26).
2. Beat your slaves! (Matthew 19:12).
3. If you do something wrong with your eye pluck it out, with your hand, cut it off. (Matthew 5:29-30).
4. Marrying a divorced woman is adultery. (Matthew 5:32).
5. Don't plan for a future. (Matthew 6:34).
6. Don't save money. (Matthew 6:19-20).
7. Don't become wealthy. (Mark 10:21-25).
8. Sell everything and give it to the poor. (Luke 12:33)—A good one for the Televangelists!
9. Don't work to obtain food. (John 6:27).
10. Make people want to persecute you. (Matthew 5:11).
11. Let everyone know you are better than the rest. (Matthew 5:13-16).
12. Take money from those who have no savings and give it to rich investors! (Luke 19:23-26).
13. If someone steals from you, don't try to get it back. (Luke 6:30).
14. If someone hits you, invite them to do it again. (Matthew 5:39).

Are these wise teachings? Is this what you would teach your children?
There are other biblical passages that portray Christ in a different light. However, the key here is contradiction. One cannot love one's neighbor and hate him at the same time. If one practices the teachings of the so-called (I say so-called because Jesus is a myth) Christian one would be in a mental hospital. If one were to follow the teachings of the Old Testament one would necessarily be in prison.

Jefferson noted that there are only two kinds of Christians, "Fools and hypocrites." The hypocrites are of course the clergy. The clergy is not moral. They are thugs. The fools unfortunately are the victims who follow the clergy. Many of these are moral but they are not Christians. They may profess to be Christians, but they obviously don't live by the above teachings. If one were to follow the teachings of Christ today one would not live very long.

Fundamentalists probably come closest to being literal Christians. Fundamentalism is the essence of mental and emotional illness precisely because it demands literal interpretation of the scriptures.

In closing, it is my considered opinion that it is not possible to be a truly moral person and be a literal Christian.
—Jdbgbuster (Joey)

Moore begins plans for appeal of Ten Commandments ruling

MONTGOMERY, AL.—The third time's the charm—or at least Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore hopes it is.

The Republican judge has said he plans to appeal to the Supreme Court over a judgment on his Ten Commandments monument. The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decided in early July to order the removal of a two-and-a-half ton Ten Commandments monument from Alabama's state judicial building.

The ruling upheld a previous decision by U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson, who deemed the monument a state establishment of religion, which is prohibited by the First Amendment.

David Lanoue, chairman of the UA political science department, said Moore's chances of getting a hearing with the Supreme Court are slim. "The odds are against him because the Supreme Court refuses to hear many of the cases brought before them," Lanoue said. "If he does get a hearing, however, all bets are off as to how the court will vote."

Lanoue said the Supreme Court would only hear a case if justices felt it reflected a law or constitutional provision that needed a clearer definition.

"In this case, it is unlikely that the Supreme Court will choose Moore's appeal as an example of the Establishment Clause or any other constitutional issue," Lanoue said. "So it is doubtful the court will find reason to hear the case."

Moore said during a press conference that he felt the court's decision was a personal attack on him.

John Giles, president of the Christian Coalition of Alabama, said his organization is shocked at the ruling as well.

"The Christian Coalition is in full support of Judge Moore," Giles quipped. "Moore made a campaign promise to restore the moral foundation of our law system, and we feel that is what he is fighting to do." He said many people often forget the nation was fashioned after the Ten Commandments and religious beliefs.

Moore lost a similar lawsuit in 1997 over a plaque of the Ten Commandments in an Etowah County courtroom. The fame that Moore gained from that controversy fueled a successful run for Alabama chief justice in 2000.

Aeysha Khan, spokeswoman for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said people in Alabama have many different beliefs and should not be made to feel their judicial system favors one religion over another. "The decision sends a clear message," Khan said. "Thou shalt not merge church and state."

Newdow set for Supreme Court

WASHINGTON—California physician Michael Newdow, who successfully sued to stop recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools, says he doesn't mind being stopped on the street for combative arguments. He sees it as good training for his first Supreme Court case.

Newdow, who appeared at the AAI convention last April, has a little-used law degree and has never seen the high court argue a case. An atheist from Sacramento, he sued the school district where his daughter was a second-grader. Representing himself, he persuaded a federal appeals court that the regular morning classroom salute to the American flag is unconstitutional because of the phrase "one nation, under God." The court agreed with his claim that hearing the pledge violated her constitutional right to religious liberty when recited in a public school, carrying the stamp of government approval.

The Supreme Court will announce this fall whether it will consider the issue.

Most court watchers believe it would be hard for the justices to refuse to consider the decision by the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, which set off a political firestorm last summer.

The Bush administration, attorneys general of all 50 states, the Senate and many others have asked the court to schedule arguments in the case.

Novices and veterans have been left bruised by the court's notoriously brutal questioning. But Newdow encourages the Supreme Court to review the decision, even though he won. He says he's sticking to his plan to represent himself, despite unsolicited advice.

"They say 'You should get a top gun to argue this case for you,' and I say, 'As soon as you convince me they're better than me,'" said Newdow. "I've done the whole thing. Every word written and spoken has been mine and so far it's seemed to be OK."

Newdow wrote: "Those who deny the existence of a supreme being have been turned into second-class citizens by a government that continuously sends messages that 'real Americans' believe in God."

The situation raises a curious dilemma for the court, which begins each session with "God save the United States and this honorable court." Newdow said he'll ask that the practice be stopped, or he'll object at the time; "I want all vestiges of government-endorsed religion removed."

Feds won't enforce School Patriotism law

HARRISBURG, PA—A federal court in July barred education officials from enforcing a state law that requires public and private school students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or sing the national anthem each morning.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Robert Kelly agreed with the arguments of several plaintiffs, including a private school in Harrisburg, that the law violates students' right to freedom of expression under the First Amendment. "I agree that (the law) unconstitutionally interferes with the school plaintiff's ability to express their values and forces them to espouse the commonwealth's views," Kelly wrote in issuing a permanent injunction. The law also requires the American flag to be displayed in every classroom when school is in session. Under the law, students can decline to recite the pledge and salute the flag on the basis of religious conviction or personal belief, but school officials must notify the parents of students who decline.

Each year, The Mark Twain Scholarship Fund conducts an essay contest open to college-level students who fit the criteria found in our qualifications specifications. The Board of Trustees selects a different topic for the essay which must be no less than 750 words. The 2002 second place winner was Shannon Callahan.

Our topic for last year was:

Can Humankind ever be freed from the tyranny of religion, or is this merely a pipedream?

KARL MARX ONCE WROTE, "Religion is the opiate of the masses." These systems of widespread, antiquated, and mundane thought that inhibit cerebral libera-

Mark Twain Scholarship Fund

Religion: Reversible or Unrelenting?

—Shannon Callahan

tion are nothing more than cheap and acceptable substitutes for expensive drugs. In the same way that a substance abuser would use cocaine to escape reality, so would a religious fanatic utilize Jesus (or Buddha or Ala) to buffer real life.

The promise of bliss beyond death provides the necessary diversion from the actual horrors of this world, which makes survival more comfortable. As long as the awful state of present day continues and current problems persist, humankind's freedom from the tyranny of religion will remain merely a pipedream.

Religious affiliation is attractive to the vast majority of the population because it negates the need for solitary thought processes. The basic theories of various religious sects conveniently and readily supply a neat and structured way of

life. For example, the Bible clearly outlines answers (however implausible) to primitive and popular questions about the nature, origin, and function of human existence. Due to the basic fear of the unknown and yearning for these so-called "truths," many people willingly embrace these ready-made explanations for events dating all the way back to the appearance of the earth.

The Bible is also viewed as a (pseudo-) handbook providing rules in the deceiving garb of "commandments," ten standards to reach in order to attain a "heavenly" eternity. Religion might be less offensive to the autonomous part of the population if its only goal was to transform evil into good and maintain the positive. Yet in eagerly and mindlessly accepting an ideology, people sacrifice the ability to exercise their brains, observe for themselves, and formulate individual and possibly original views.

There is always the threat of imposition of religion. Faith is often inherited, passed down from generation to generation, and taught vehemently by parents to children. Those with the courage of conviction and strength to arrive at their own values are usually disowned or forever marked as rebellious. This kind of bombardment is extremely hard to move past.

Furthermore, living in America, it is easy to forget that many citizens of other countries lack the luxurious freedom to choose for themselves. It is this privilege that often muffles the atrocity of government-mandated religion. The power of a divine being behind authority figures enhances the control these rulers have over the public. Just as the kings in historic England claimed (and were believed) to be ordained by God, the ruling bodies of today can utilize religion to further the cause of power.

Religious and criminal law are often so intermingled that America's arbitrary line separating church and state is blurred beyond recognition. Of course this entanglement cannot be denied in the

United States, although it is claimed that one does not affect the other. However, "In God We Trust," is prominently printed on our paper currency. Also compelling matters, the oath to tell the truth in a courtroom is sworn on the Bible. The shadow of Christianity is cast on many of America's governmental affairs. Logically, freedom from the constrictions of religion would mean the abolition of its residue on many of the country's most basic functions.

For true liberation from the superstitious religious teachings, strides must first be made on the individual basis. Theology should be reduced to a completely null and only intellectual pursuit, instead of a quest to "save" others with misguided brainwashing tactics. The fact that many would prefer to consult an outdated source of ideas in the midst of the *Information Age* is truly a depressing reality, as this preference leads to the rapid deterioration of one's mind. Thinking has sadly become a rarely practiced exercise, when there is so much to learn. However, narrow-minded religious leaders have managed for centuries to entrap their followers within these strict ideologies, bound from exploring the broad array of knowledge that lies in the greater world.

In conclusion, it is clear that genuine freedom from the overall oppression of religion is unachievable at this time. Millions of people would first need to be deprogrammed, essentially erased and then taught again. Learning would be a completely different experience in which individuals are presented with all the options and allowed to select their own beliefs. Many of these religions discourage this type of practice, as a great amount of deep thought is not required to realize the impossibility of the teachings.

Therefore, intellectual liberation is unfortunately merely a dream of the present day, but perhaps if more of humankind were encouraged to carry the burden of contemplation, this aspiration would begin to near reality.

Hillsborough County Cable TV subscribers

Atheist Forum

Live at 10:00 every Tuesday night, Channel 20

Rerun Monday night, 10:00 Channel 19

NEWSFILES

"Those who deny the existence of a supreme being have been turned into second-class citizens by a government that continuously sends messages that 'real Americans' believe in God."

The following essay is a perfect description of why I left the field of education. Read it and weep... and then start voting these neandertallic accountability by the numbers, meaningless or not? cowboys out of office! —Brent Yaciv

Learning to be stupid in the Culture of Cash — Luciana Bohne

You might think that reading about a podunk university's English teacher's attempt to connect the dots between the poverty of American education and the gullibility of the American public may be a little trivial, con-

sidering we've just embarked on the first, openly-confessed imperial adventure of senescent capitalism in the US, but bear with me. The question my experiences in the classroom raise is why have these young people been educated to such abysmal depths of ignorance.

"I don't read," says a junior without the slightest self-consciousness. She has not the smallest hint that professing a habitual preference for not reading at a university is like bragging in ordinary life that one chooses not to breathe. She is in my "World Literature" class. She has to read novels by African, Latin American, and Asian authors. She is not there by choice: it's just a "distribution" requirement for graduation, and it's easier than philosophy—she thinks.

The novel she has trouble reading is Isabel Allende's *Of Love and Shadows*, set in the post-coup terror of Pinochet's junta's Nazi-style regime in Chile, 1973-1989. No one in the class, including the English majors, can write a focused essay of analysis, so I have to teach that. No one in the class knows where Chile is, so I make photocopies of general information from world guide surveys. No one knows what socialism or fascism is, so I spend time writing up digestible definitions. No one knows what Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* is, and I supply it because it's impossible to understand the theme of the novel without a basic knowledge of that work—which used to be required reading a few generations ago. And no one in the class has ever heard of 11 September 1973, the CIA-sponsored coup which terminated Chile's mature democracy. There is complete shock when I supply US de-classified documents proving US collusion with the generals' coup and the assassination of elected president Salvador Allende.

Geography, history, philosophy, and political science—all missing from their preparation. I realize that my students are, in fact, the oppressed, as Paulo Freire's *The Education of the Oppressed* pointed out, and that they are paying for their own oppression. So, I patiently explain: no, our government has

not been the friend of democracy in Chile; yes, our government did fund both the coup and the junta torture-machine; yes, the same goes for most of Latin America. Then, one student asks, "Why?" Well, I say, the CIA and the corporations run roughshod over the world in part because of the ignorance of the people of the United States, which apparently is induced by formal education, reinforced by the media, and cheered by Hollywood. As the more people read, the less they know and the more indoctrinated they become, you get this national enabling stupidity to attain which they go into bottomless pools of debt. If it weren't tragic, it would be funny.

Meanwhile, this expensive stupidity facilitates US funding of the bloody work of death squads, juntas, and terror regimes abroad. It permits the war we have just waged—an unfair, illegal, unjust, illogical, and expensive war, which announces to the world the failure of our intelligence and, by the way, the creeping weakness of our economic system. Every man, woman, and child killed by a bomb, bullet, famine, or polluted water was murdered—and a war crime. And it has signaled the impotence of American education to produce brains equipped with the bare necessities for democratic survival: analyzing and asking questions.

Let me put it succinctly: I don't think serious education is possible in America. Anything you touch in the annals of knowledge is a foe of this system of commerce and profit, run amok. The only education that can be permitted is if it acculturates to the status quo, as happens in the expensive schools, or if it produces people to police and enforce the status quo, as in the state school where I teach. Significantly, at my school, which is a third-tier university, servicing working-class, first-generation college graduates who enter lower-echelon jobs in the civil service, education, or middle management, the favored academic concentrations are communications, criminal justice, and social work—basically how to mystify, cage, and control the masses.

This education is a vast waste of the resources and potential of the young. It is boring beyond belief and useless—except to the powers and interests that depend on it. When A Ukrainian student, a three-week arrival on these shores, writes the best-organized and most profound essay in English of the class, American education has something to answer for—especially to our youth.

But the detritus and debris that American education has become is both planned and instrumental. It's why our media succeeds in telling lies. It's why our secretary of state can quote from a graduate-student paper, claiming confidently that the stolen data came from the highest intelligence sources. It's why Picasso's *Guernica* can be covered up during his preposterous "report" to the UN without anyone guessing the political significance of this gesture and the fascist sensibility that it protects.

Cultural fascism manifests itself in an aversion to thought and cultural refinement. "When I hear the word 'culture,'" Goebbels said, "I reach for my re-



volver." One of the infamous and telling reforms the Pinochet regime implemented was educational reform. The basic goal was to end the university's role as a source of social criticism and political opposition. The order came to dismantle the departments of philosophy, social and political science, humanities and the arts—areas in which political discussions were likely to occur. The universities were ordered to issue degrees only in business management, computer programming, engineering, medicine and dentistry—vocational training schools, which in reality is what American educa-

tion has come to resemble, at least at the level of mass education. Our students can graduate without ever touching a foreign language, philosophy, elements of any science, music or art, history, and political science, or economics. In fact, our students learn to live in an electoral democracy devoid of politics—a feature the dwindling crowds at the voting booths well illustrate.

The poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote that, in the rapacity that the industrial revolution created, people first surrendered their minds or the capacity to reason, then their hearts or the capacity to

empathize, until all that was left of the original human equipment was the senses or their selfish demands for gratification. At that point, humans entered the stage of market commodities and market consumers—one more thing in the commercial landscape. Without minds or hearts, they are instrumentalized to buy whatever deadens their clamoring and frightened senses—official lies, immoral wars, Barbie, and bankrupt educations.

Meanwhile, in my state, the governor has ordered a 10% cut across the board for all departments in the state—including education.

The route to get you there —Mynga Futrell

The "AAI/AMAZON ROUTE" sounds a bit like a railroad, or perhaps a designated pathway across a continent or mountain range. It isn't. It's the route you should think about taking (no, make that the route you definitely should take) if you are of a mind to purchase, via the Web, items from Amazon.com or any of the various vendors to be mentioned below. Read on.

Ever go to EvolveFISH to purchase their goodies (bumper stickers, buttons, T-shirts, and such)? If so, The Route can take you there. If you go, take it. Expect an easy trip. Going for ink cartridges or toner, pens, staplers or reams of paper? If you order your office supplies from Office Depot, take The Route to arrive there. Need something to pleasure the youngsters in your life? Taking The Route to Toys R Us is a great way to Web-shop with that company. You can see a huge line of products, and your purchase will benefit AAI. That's right. Benefit AAI. That's why we're recommending "The Route." Each time you use the AAI-Amazon link to reach a vendor, the Alliance will benefit from all the purchases you make at the time.

How do you get onto the Route? You go to the AAI website first and then click on Amazon at the right hand side of the AAI home page. That will take you to Amazon and then, if you wish, onward to additional vendors. AAI will reap benefits at no extra cost to you. The AAI/Amazon route even recognizes any Amazon cookies you may have established.

If you already order from Amazon, it is within your power to benefit a good cause if you go to the AAI (AtheistAlliance.org) web site first. It's the recommended route to certain destinations.

to purchase their goodies (bumper stickers, buttons, T-shirts, and such)? If so, The Route can take you there. If you go, take it. Expect an easy trip. Going for ink cartridges or toner, pens, staplers or reams of paper? If you order your office supplies from Office Depot, take The Route to arrive there. Need something to pleasure the youngsters in your life? Taking The Route to Toys R Us is a great way to Web-shop with that company. You can see a huge line of products, and your purchase will benefit AAI. That's right. Benefit AAI. That's why we're recommending "The Route." Each time you use the AAI-Amazon link to reach a vendor, the Alliance will benefit from all the purchases you make at the time.

How do you get onto the Route? You go to the AAI website first and then click on Amazon at the right hand side of the AAI home page. That will take you to Amazon and then, if you wish, onward to additional vendors. AAI will reap benefits at no extra cost to you. The AAI/Amazon route even recognizes any Amazon cookies you may have established.

If you already order from Amazon, it is within your power to benefit a good cause if you go to the AAI (AtheistAlliance.org) web site first. It's the recommended route to certain destinations.

Now Available
For the first time in AAI history
The Complete Ninth Annual Atheist Alliance International 2003 Convention on DVD or video!

This two-DVD or video set contains every convention presentation except breakouts produced to the highest professional standards.

Atheist Alliance International 2003 Convention
Number of sets _____ DVD or _____ Video tape @ \$25 each.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
E-mail _____



Make check or Money Order for \$25 each set (which includes shipping and handling) payable to:
Atheists of Florida
PO Box 130753
Tampa, FL 33681

John W. Mackay, P.A.

Board Certified
Civil Trial Lawyer
Certified Circuit Court Mediator
201 South Westland Avenue
The Mackay Building
Tampa, FL 33606
Tampa (813) 254-8835
Statewide (800) 813-RIDE
Fax (813) 254-6662
mackay@tamapabay.fl.com

Oddlygaily

A sampling of interesting internet news blurbs from the last few weeks. If you do not receive them yet, send your email address to atheist1@BELLSOUTH.net.

AmishAbuse.com

IN OHIO, THE AMISH are seen by many as gentle, God-fearing people who live an idyllic life, frozen in time.

But NewsChannel's Ted Hart reported that behind the peaceful facade there is a dark side.

Former Amish man David Yoder and his wife Fran left the Amish life because of what they call everyday physical abuse of children. "When I was 12 years old, I took beatings that were beyond human," Yoder said.

He snarled as a child, and that angered his father, who told Yoder to put his big toe under the rocking chair.

"I remember just sitting there watching. I remember as if it was yesterday. He rocked over my toe and blood came squirting out of there. I had no choice but to sit there and take it," Yoder said.

The Amish preach obedience. Hart said. Church doctrine teaches that corporal punishment is good for a child. But the Yoders said the physical and sexual abuse that takes place behind closed doors is out of control.

He reported that there's no evidence to suggest that child abuse, whether physical, sexual or emotional, is any more prevalent in the Amish culture than it is in the rest of religious society. But with the Amish, it's the church elders who decide punishment and there is little or no help for the victims. He said it's handled as a cultural secret, something not to be discussed.

"It has to stop. The cycle has to be broken," says Yoder. "I created a Web site in the hope of bringing a little pressure on the Amish to change their ways: www.amishabuse.com."

Euthanasia causes less grief

DUTCH RESEARCHERS, in a study which appears in the July issue of the *British Medical Journal*, say death by euthanasia may cause less grief for family and friends than a natural death does.

All of the bereaved family members and friends completed a questionnaire that contained seven different psychological assessments of grief, post-traumatic stress, general well-being, depression and personality. The volunteers were also asked

John the Beloved

PHILADELPHIA—A small, cash-trapped Benedictine order is selling "naming rights"—much as sports teams do for stadiums and arenas. The order follows the teachings of the Old Catholic Church, which split from the Roman Catholic Church more than a century ago in a dispute over papal infallibility and the sale of indulgences.

In a seven-day auction on eBay, the Benedictine Order of St. John the Beloved opened bidding at \$1 million for a package including a church building, monastery and bell towers.

The structures can be bid on separately, and the highest bidders will have their items named for them or people of their choice.

If marketing the buildings is a success, future auctions will sell naming rights to choir books, stained glass windows, church pews and maybe the join, already known as "the beloved."

Latter-Day Pedophile

JACKSONVILLE, FL—Rodney Kenneth Staley, 31, was charged with 12 counts of lewd battery, one count of lewd exhibition, and 13 counts of providing obscenities to minors.

Police said Staley admitted the crimes to his church bishop and that raises questions police want answers to as well. They ask anyone with information about Staley or his relationships with area children to call the Clay County Sheriff's Office at 904-264-6312.

Investigators believe Staley—a Marine staff sergeant stationed at Naval Air Station—befriended teenage and pre-teen boys in his neighborhood through his involvement with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Orange Park, and with the Boy Scouts.

D.I.V.O.R.C.E.

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters)—Malaysian Muslim men can divorce their wives through text messages on mobile telephones, the *New Straits Times* daily reported, quoting a religious adviser to the government.

Hamid Othman, adviser to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, said divorce via SMS or short messaging service was in accordance with sharia law if it was clear and unambiguous.

"SMS is just another form of writing," the daily quoted Hamid as saying, following an Islamic court decision that ruled in favor of a man who served divorce on his wife using SMS.

Islamic law permits a man to divorce his wife by declaring "I divorce you, I divorce you, I divorce you" three times.

Sikh Refused Entrance To Strip Club

HARPEET GREWAL, who practices the Sikh faith, says a local strip club stopped him from entering because he was wearing a turban.

The incident happened at *Touch* in Pittsburgh's Strip District.

Grewal said a manager told him he had to remove his turban. Grewal tried to explain that he could not remove the item because it is an article of his faith, but the manager wouldn't listen.

The Sikh faith is based in northern India and requires men to keep their heads covered.

Touch managers told Action News that Grewal was turned away as part of an even-handed dress code.

"Like golf courses, we have a policy," said a club spokeswoman. "No hat, no shoes, no shirt, no service...Michael Jordan came in Friday and he had to take off his ball cap."

Giani Sucha Singh, religious leader of the Sikh temple, told WTAE's Chris Glorioso that nightclubs should be more sensitive because turbans are not a fashion statement.

"This is the essential part of our religion, to keep our hair uncut and unshowered. For them to compare that to baseball caps is just ridiculous," he lamented. "For a Sikh gentleman to remove his turban is akin to someone else

Jesus forgeries

JERUSALEM—Police arrested an Israeli antiquities dealer suspected of creating forgeries that shook the religious world, including a burial box purported to be that of Jesus's brother James.

In court, police unveiled forged equipment found in Golan's home, including stencils, stones and partially completed forgeries.

Golan has insisted the artifacts are authentic. For now, he is unavailable for comment, because he is in jail.

Embezzlement, Child Molestation

KANSAS CITY, MO—An employee of Tri-City Ministries embezzled \$1 million over the last seven years. The church is currently facing a \$15 million debt.

A respected deacon of the church admitted that he molested a young boy. Sexual assault charges were filed against John M. Logan, 41, of Independence.

Having ministered for the last 20 years, the Rev. Carl Herbster called the situation tragic.

Herbster said that prayer will help. But to police, "it's a serious thing. They have predatory behavior and they seek out their victims," said Bill Pross, of Independence police.

Investigators have a sense that there are likely additional victims to be identified and interviewed. Investigators urged other possible victims to contact police.

Logan is no longer a deacon of the church.

Members of the Tri-Cities congregation are reeling from news of the allegations, KMBC reported.

Deacons gave fliers to church members, discouraging them from talking with the media about either case. But despite that, some of the Tri-Cities fellowship want their voices heard and want their daughters and granddaughters pulled from the church-run school.

Pastor Carl Herbster said the church would rely on God to get it through the investigation.

Turning the most segregated hour forward

NEW ORLEANS, LA (Reuters)—A black Baptist minister, looking to diversify his church, wants to pay white people to attend his sermons. Whites who attend Greenwood Acres Full Gospel Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, will get \$5 an hour on Sundays and \$10 an hour on Thursdays. Bishop Fred Caldwell told Reuters. Caldwell's 5,000-member church is exclusively black since 1958, which he thinks was not the way Jesus wanted it.

"Eleven o'clock Sunday morning," he says, "is the most segregated hour in America."

NEWSNOTES

Monthly Bulletin for the members of ATHEISTS of FLORIDA Inc. Chapter DADE&BROWARD

Our next meeting is planned for



August 17, 2002

at 2pm on the 8th floor of the

BROWARD COUNTY
MAIN LIBRARY

100 S Andrews Ave
Fort Lauderdale

Topic:

The godless march
on Washington D.C.

Ateos de la Florida
Director Roberto DeLosRios

vinrob513@aol.com
305-556-6734

MOOSENOTES

EXPOSING THE DANGERS OF RELIGION

MAGDALENE SISTERS

In a theater near you
-Check listings -

BBC: What was the original inspiration for the film?
Peter Mullan (director and script writer): I first came across the story of the Magdalene convents in Ireland in a Channel Four documentary called *Sex in a Cold Climate*, and it blew me away. In bringing the subject of religious oppression to a wider audience, I didn't just want to kick the Catholic Church but to poke a finger in the throat of theocracy and to let it be known that people shouldn't tolerate this anymore.

BBC: What was your reaction when you read the screenplay to "The Magdalene Sisters"?
The British actress Geraldine McEwan (The malicious Sister Bridget in Peter Mullan's award-winning film "The Magdalene Sisters"):

It was a really good script. I told my agent the day I read it that I definitely wanted to do it. I think I was stunned by my character Sister Bridget, and appalled by the horrifying way she treated the young women at the convent. It's like with the concentration camps, I can never believe that women, who generally speaking are thought to be maternal and caring, could treat other human beings like that.

Chapter Director Patrick Bens:
My daughter and I were invited to a free screening of the *MAGDALENE SISTERS* in Miami Beach and guess what, **BIG SURPRISE! BIG TREAT!** one of the actresses: the beautiful and very talented Nora-Jane Noone (Bernadette) was present after the movie sitting in front by the stage doing a Q&A.

I asked her if she had met any of the victims and she answered that one of the actresses was once a victim. Then after the Q&A was over we went to stand next to her and listened to more questions being answered. Boy, she is very pretty. You should have been there. It was exciting to meet a real movie star... (That's her, biting her nails)



More on page 2

13 Questions

An atheist's profile

Kristin Parrotta

ima21stcenturydigitalgirl@hotmail.com

1. Where did you attend school?
Burrell High School
2. What is your occupation?
Student—but I am pursuing a career in songwriting.
3. What influenced you to choose that occupation?
General love of music, language, and politics.
4. In your choice of career, were there any obstacles you had to conquer?
Criticism from myself and others.
5. If you ever wanted another occupation, what would it be?
Teaching nuclear or astro physics.
6. What are your hobbies?
Listening to music, playing guitar, reading, studying.
7. What is your all time favorite book and why?
“A Brief History Of Time” by Stephen Hawking. It’s very well written and simple while explaining the most elusive subject known: the universe.
8. What is your all time favorite movie and why?
“Another State Of Mind.” It’s a documentary about a touring punk rock band that shows the troubles and rewards of the music industry.
9. When did you become aware you were an Atheist?
It was a gradual process when I was 12-13, from Catholicism to atheism.
10. Was there an event or person in your life that influenced your choice of wanting to be an Atheist?
Singer/songwriter Greg Graffin influenced me to be an atheist because, when I was a child, I listened to the often atheistic songs of his band *Bad Religion*. Also I read his essays that scientifically supported atheism and I really admired that.
11. If you were a teacher, what lesson would you teach religious kids?
I would teach them about all different beliefs and encourage them to make their own decision and not belong to a religion just because their parents did.
12. How do you see the future of the Separation of State and Church?
I’m seeing that its starting to be enforced, but its still very lax. I hope that things will start to become more secular as time goes on.
13. If you were to be quoted, what would be your quote?
“I find it degrading to myself to give a divine being that bears no proof credit for my own decisions and triumphs: peace and unity for all.”

eMail Interviews with atheists across the Internet by *NEWSNOTES* teen reporter Fabiola Bens

BBC - Films - Review : *The Magdalene Sisters* Director Peter Mullan

A harrowing insight into a dark period of religious repression

starring Geraldine McEwan, Anne-Marie Duff, Eileen Walsh, Dorothy Duffy, Nora-Jane Noone

The Magdalene Sisters won the Golden Lion at Venice. Italy despite facing a barrage of criticism from the Catholic community. One can understand their dismay: Mullan's film depicts the nuns supervising the infamous Magdalene convents as heartless and vindictive bullies who subjected their charges to both physical and mental abuse.

However, few can question the veracity of what Mullan has called “one of the great injustices of the second half of the 20th century.”

The film—partly financed by Jim Kerr of Simple Minds fame—is based on true accounts, some of which are a lot more horrifying than the events shown here.

The film concentrates on four of the 30,000 women detained in the Magdalene laundries—for having children out of wedlock, for being promiscuous or for just being orphans.

Mullan's grimly naturalistic chronicle sets the cruelty of the nuns (led by McEwan's hatchet-faced Sister Bridget) against the girls' forbearance, solidarity, and eventual revolt against their oppressors.

In a cast of virtual unknowns, Nora-Jane Noone makes a compelling acting debut as the rebellious Bernadette, while Eileen Walsh is heartbreaking as the tragic Crispina.

What members say:

Paul Citro:
citris1@yahoo.com

Richard Spain:
rspanan@finning.ca

Re: Library Group Targets Secrecy of Filters

To screen young minds from pornographic images, libraries can now use e-filters but: The Library Association and other critics fear that some filters have been designed with political or conservative religious biases.

I was reading the online version of *Scientific American* and found this quote from James Watson, of Watson and Crick fame for deciphering the DNA molecule.

JW: “I was born curious. I would rather read economic history than history, for example, because I liked explanations. And so if you wanted an explanation for life, it had to be about the molecular basis for life.

This creates a very difficult situation for libraries. Who is to say what they shall block? My library internet computers are a public service provided by the Broward County Board of Commissioners, an elected body; so politics will strongly influence what happens here. It may well happen that future candidates for a Commission seat will have as part of their platform a liberal or a conservative approach to library internet filtering, and in the end it may be up to the voters.

“I never thought there was a spiritual basis for life; I was very lucky to be brought up by a father who had no religious beliefs. I didn't have that hang-up. My mother was nominally a Catholic, but that's as far as it went.”

Patrick: I have been doing a lot of reading lately and I have to tell you that I am backing off from atheism. For one thing it is just too depressing. I was getting to the point where I could hardly function. The case for atheism/materialism is VERY strong, but I have come across a few things that make me think that it doesn't explain everything. Therefore I must revert to agnosticism.

The man credits his parents for not ramming platitudes and false beliefs on him as a young impressionable child. I wish more parents could understand the harm in forcing religion on their children.

Jim Strayer:
Biojims@aol.com

Re: (un)INTELLIGENT DESIGN Why don't Creationists ever talk about the flaws in design? Here are just a few examples.

POOR DESIGN

1. Eustachian tube, connecting the throat with the inner ear.
2. Breathing and eating—choking, mostly children
3. Sex and elimination—the sewer pipe through the play ground
4. Lets have a little regeneration—lots of animals can, you can't
5. Teeth—two sets are not enough unless you have dental insurance
6. Reproductive inefficiency

A few things we have had to improve on:

IMPROVEMENTS

1. Immune system
2. Dental
3. Eye sight
4. Hearing

Playing jokes on lower forms:

1. Snails have their anus right above their mouth because of torsion.
2. Some leaches have no vaginas (The male just stabs them).
3. Some worms must eat the posterior of the male to get sperm.
4. The female Mantis usually eats the male during mating.
5. Many animals must be eaten by a predator to complete their life cycle.
6. Many animals need the blood of others to complete their life cycle (mosquitoes and rabbit fleas are examples).
7. In some tick species the male lives in the vagina of the female.
8. There are some species of plants and animals where males are not necessary (parthenogenesis).

In my view the “Intelligent designer” never existed or else was not very intelligent. Any engineer or biologist could have done better.