

Atheists of Florida CHAPTER EVENTS

MIAMI: For information about meetings, call the Atheist Hotline at (305) 936-0210.

TAMPA: Saturday, July 25, and Saturday, August 29 (last Saturday of each month) 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. in meeting room B of the Clearwater East Public Library, 2251 Drew Street, Clearwater. FMI: Ed (813) 839-7567.

PALM BEACH: Meetings are held the third Sunday of each month at the Herb Watt Rec. Building, just north of the Palm Beach Library at 2:30 p.m. FMI: Charles Schisler (561) 627-6340.

NORTHEAST FLORIDA: Meetings will be notified by mail.
FMI: C.W. Mitchell (404) 824-6281.

Was it something we said?

TAMPA - THE TAMPA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT chapel (read "church") is now under construction.

Atheists of Florida had raised strong objections to its implementation during Airport Authority board meetings which were open to public comment on the issue. We told them in no uncertain terms that their actions violated the state constitution and we would bring legal action to stop them. Having made up their minds in advance to build the chapel at a cost of \$20,000, our comment caused considerable discussion about how to identify the structure. Should it be called a "quiet room" or a "chapel"? Two months later at another board meeting, again open to public comment at which we spoke out, the board voted unanimously to call the room a chapel.

Several weeks ago, Ed Golly met with Airport Director Louis Miller to inspect the plans for the chapel. What emerged was a room containing four blank walls and 12 chairs. The entry is a wood door flanked by stained glass panels in which there will be no religious symbolism. On the wall opposite the entry is a relief wood panel flanked by more back-lighted stained glass again, with no symbolism involved. No tables or counters for bibles or religious tracts will be in the room. No electric or telephone outlets will be on the walls to discourage businessmen from using the room to operate laptop computers or e-mail connections. And no lectern will occupy the room so no sermons or services may be conducted.

Miller admitted that members of the group behind the movement to build the chapel were hounding him daily to accommodate more religious icons into the room. But he has held fast to his concept of the room by keeping it clean. Nevertheless, by its very existence, it's only a matter of time before these relent-

less people move in on the chapel. They may wait out Miller's retirement then work on the next director who may be more sympathetic to their cause. Or they may simply wear Miller down or use political pressure on him to appoint a paid chaplain and begin conducting scheduled services.

It's important to note the exact wording of the state constitution. Article I, Section 3, entitled "Religious freedom," specifically states: "No revenue of the state or any political subdivision or agency thereof shall ever be taken from the public treasury directly or indirectly in aid of any church, sect or religious denomination or in aid of any sectarian institution." The Airport Authority would likely argue in court that since the chapel is "non-denominational," the public money used to construct it does not aid any *specific* sectarian institution.

Consequently, our attorney, John MacKay, has become cautious about bringing a suit. Familiar with the judges in the area who would likely hear the case, he is concerned that a legal case may need to be pursued all the way to the state supreme court. Lacking the inclusion of so much as a single Xian cross in the room, we may have difficulty demonstrating the establishment of religion.

Still, now that construction has begun and public money has been spent, we will continue to consider bringing legal action against the airport.



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Atheists of Florida

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8 May/June 1998

ADDRESS CORRECTION
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Atheists of Florida

Dedicated to the absolute separation of State and church

Atheists of Florida annual Board of Directors meeting

Volume VII
Number 4
May/June,
1998

PEMBORKE PINES, FL The A of F board of directors met for its annual meeting on May 17, 1998.

Treasurer Charles Ross submitted the financial report for the year ended Dec. 31, 1997 abbreviated here:

TOTAL REVENUES:	\$ 9,377.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	6,836.00
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES:	2,541.00
OPENING BALANCE:	2,739.00
ENDING BALANCE:	5,280.00

President Tzanetakos gave his annual report. He reiterated that from the original date of incorporation, the purpose of Atheists of Florida was to promote atheism and the positive aspects of the atheist lifestyle. He was disappointed with the recent Atheist Alliance board of director's meeting (April, 1997, see *story, page 6*) concerning some of their efforts to align with other freethought organizations which specifically do not comply with non-profit regulations for membership organizations which require election of officers by the membership, even though many of them are doing a good job disseminating information about atheism. Tzanetakos asked the Board and a motion was submitted and seconded for A of F to dissolve association with four specific atheist/freethought groups.

Several board members felt that as atheists we are engaged in a struggle with extremely powerful and wealthy right-wing organizations within this country which want to convert our nation to a theocracy. Continuing alliances with all freethought groups is essential if we are to effectively oppose these Xian groups. After lengthy discussion, a vote for the motion was evenly divided. In that case, the chairman is given two votes and, since he had



1998-99 Atheists of Florida officers: Jim Strayer, Secretary; Ed Golly, President; Charles Schisler, VP; Dr. John Xanthopoulos, Chairman; Charles Ross, Treasurer.

(turn page)

voted against the motion, it was narrowly defeated.

Committee reports were given next. The Web page is shaping up and should be published any day now. The address will become part of the nameplate in our next newsletter.

The greeting card committee submitted several designs for cards. The board agreed that one design will be produced and offered for sale through our newsletter. If we have significant sales, we will proceed with other designs.

We are having difficulty obtaining approval for production of another series of the Atheists of Florida Forum. The Miami Cable-TAP facility where we have always produced the Forum is under new management and with a plethora of non-profit groups requesting time slots, we must move to the back of the line. Our Forum producer, Rebecca Porto, will continue to submit applications in hopes we can get a slot sometime soon.

Our library consists of well over 100 volumes of books. Titles consist of single copies to multiples. We will be offering some of the books we have for sale in future newsletters. The single titles which we can't sell along with Forum videos will be available for loaning to members.

The Mark Twain Scholarship Fund is now offered in most major universities in Florida. This year's topic is *Imagine a World without national armies* and the prizes are still to be determined. Our funding should be adequate due to a contribution by the father of Ed Golly to the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay,



Published eight times a year by Atheists of Florida, Inc., a non-profit, educational organization designed to heighten public awareness about atheism and to provide intellectually stimulating contacts for the membership.

Membership dues and general correspondence should be sent to:
Atheists of Florida
P.O. Box 3893
Ft. Pierce, FL 34948-3893
E-mail: AthAI@FLCable.com
Contact Phone: (305) 936-0210

Membership dues
Life Member \$500.00
Sustaining 50.00 yr.
Couple 40.00 yr.
Individual 30.00 yr.
Student (under 25 yrs) 10.00 yr.
Send newsletter correspondence to:
Tampa Bay Chapter
P.O. Box 130753
Tampa, FL 33681

Florida, Inc., a non-profit, educational organization designed to heighten public awareness about atheism and to provide intellectually stimulating contacts for the membership.

Officers

Chairman: John Xanthopoulos, Ph.D.

President: Ed Golly

Vice President: Charles Schisler

Secretary: Jim Strayer

Treasurer: Charles A. Ross

Attorney: Herbie Grant

State Board of Directors

Allan Armani

Rebecca Porto

Lon Katz

Steven M. Eyer

John Eyer

Ed Golly

Ed Golly

camp this year which will run July 18-26. If you would like to contribute to the sponsorship, please send any donations to Atheists of Florida, P.O. Box 3893, Ft. Pierce, FL 34948 and designate Camp Quest.

Each standing committee of Atheists of Florida was reviewed. The Guidelines committee had been formed at the special board meeting of Dec. 7, 1997 to develop guidelines for spokespersons of A of F. The approved guidelines appoint the Chairperson and President as official spokespersons for A of F, responsible to the board of directors. They have full authority on how and what is promoted. It is agreed that the minutia of bible criticism should not be encouraged because it is childish and unprofessional. It is far better to engage philosophically and analytically in principles. Those who do engage in biblical debate should make it clear they speak for themselves and do not represent the official position of Atheists of Florida. Our mission would not be directed to negate any specific cult, but rather to show as best we can the many important, positive aspects of atheism. We think such an approach is intellectually and psychologically most persuasive.

Having laid out these guidelines for A of F, the Guidelines Committee was dissolved. The Public Relations Committee absorbed the Membership Expansion Committee. All members of both committees were merged into the single committee.

The Fund Raising Committee, Membership/Greeting Card Committee, and the Library Committee were all maintained as they presently stand. The T-shirt Committee, having produced the t-shirts, was dissolved.

The Organizational Manual Committee, the most recently formed, will develop a manual for the organization of future A of F chapters. The Atheists of Florida Investment Club is undergoing a change of presidents and upon making the change will become active again.

Three amendments were made to the bylaws of A of F. Any board member who is absent from two consecutive meetings will be removed. The president's term is now limited to two terms. And a quorum for board meetings will consist of 50% of the standing number of board members. After these changes are made, the bylaws will be made available to any member upon request and will also be made available at chapter meetings.

Results of the elections for officers for the 1998-99 term were:

President — Ed Golly
Vice-President — Charles Schisler
Secretary — Jim Strayer
Treasurer — Charles Ross
Chairman of the Board — Dr. John Xanthopoulos

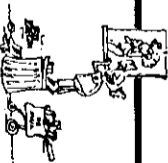
Jan Eisler described the status of Camp Quest and its projected activities for this year. A nine-day schedule is planned at Camp Kern, a YMCA facility in central Ohio. The board agreed to sponsor a child at the

The best of human reason

A self-explanatory response which appeared in the Tampa Tribune May 14, 1998.

I agree with Pam Olsen (Letters, May 6) that our nation needs guidance, but the guidance we need is that which springs from the best of human reason. Waiting for God to save our planet

Letters



is not likely to achieve anything and will probably distract us from the real problems at hand.

One has only to recall the terrible Holocaust in which 6 million people, mostly Jews, were executed. The prayers of these victims were not answered. There was a time when most of Europe was Christian. This did not lead to peace, but to the stupid Crusades and the so-called holy wars between Christians.

If you have read the Bible, then you must know that poor God could not even maintain peace among his angels. Read Revelations 12:7-9. The idea of looking forward to a time when our Constitution will be scrapped and our country run by the Vatican and television evangelists, et al., makes me want to vomit.

*Mich Modisen
Zephyrhills*

Don't blame lack of religion

Here's a response to a letter in the St. Petersburg Times which was titled Ugly lessons were too well learned. The writer suggested a national conversion to theocracy as a response to the Jonesboro, Ark. school shootings.

The letter writer makes some very valid points in attempting to explain the violence in our schools. TV, movies and rap music all share some blame for our deteriorating culture, but he also makes a statement that is not true. He states that our schools are not allowed to teach

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MARY BENNETT HUDSON

"Thou shalt not kill" anymore, implying that a return to this practice would stop school violence. Our Florida public schools never did teach "Thou shalt not kill."

I began teaching in the public schools in Miami in 1953. At that time, every school day began with an innocuous 30-second recitation of the

Lord's Prayer, which does not contain any reference to "Thou shalt not kill," which the religious right is attempting to reintroduce into our public schools as a panacea for all our ills. This ritual continued for a number of years until the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was a violation of the separation of church and state.

The two boys responsible for killing five people in Jonesboro, Ark., one 13 and one 11, apparently had been well-grounded in biblical lore, including "Thou shalt not kill." After their arrests, they both asked for, and received, a Bible. It was also reported that they attended fundamentalist Christian churches.

The United States is the most religious nation on earth, with the possible exception of India. If the Bible and religion were the answers to violence, including violence in our schools, this country should be largely free of murder, rape, robbery, etc. On the contrary, we lead all nations when it comes to murder and violent crimes.

To rely on "In God we trust" to return this nation to greatness, as the writer suggests, is naive. To blame the schools because they are not allowed to teach "Thou shalt not kill" is a fatuous statement that cannot be taken seriously.

*Jerry Morgenroth
St. Petersburg*

Flip-flop

Some notable facts regarding the church and abortion.

In a letter of April 15 by Barbara Coggins, she fulminated against abortion. She quotes U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde, a practicing Catholic, and Pope John Paul II, saying that he, the Pope, teaches that the "killing of an innocent human being is always immoral."

Apparently Ms. Coggins is unaware that until the latter part of the 16th century abortion was considered moral and legal by the Catholic Church. It was not only condoned as a method of church but was actively promoted as a method to control over-population.

At that time, Pope Pius IV issued an edict banning all abortions; there were no exceptions, not even to save the life of the mother.

Until this edict in the late 16th century the Catholic Church permitted abortions, but with one caveat: It had to be done during the 1st trimester. Why? Because the church hierarchy believed that the soul entered the fetus after three months and abortion was no longer a viable option.

If Pope Pius IV could forbid abortions with a single stroke of the pen, then why couldn't a future pope with a single stroke of a pen declare abortions moral and permissible once again? What then, Ms. Coggins?

*Jerry Morgenroth
St. Petersburg*

From Marie Castle
President, Atheist Alliance

THE FOURTH ANNUAL ATHEIST Alliance convention held Easter weekend in St. Louis was an outstanding gathering of unbelievers.

Atheist Alliance convention report

The Rationalist Society of St. Louis did a great job organizing and hosting the event. The speeches, workshops, entertainment and bus tour of freethought historical sites made it a lively three days.

The July-September issue of *Secular Nation* magazine will have complete coverage so this report will summarize only a few highlights, including actions taken by the Atheist Alliance board of directors to support and strengthen local organizations and build coalitions among all groups of unbelievers.

The inclusive coalition-building nature of the Atheist Alliance was evident from the array of convention speakers who represented other national freethought organizations. Annie Laurie Gaylor from Freedom From Religion Foundation gave a slide presentation based on her book *Women Without Superstition*. Verle Muhrer from the Council for Secular Humanism gave an eloquent defense of atheism and Tom Flynn (also from CSH) moderated a general exchange of ideas and opinions during the convention wrapup. Steve Schafersman

Lee Eisler 1909 - 1998

Atheists of Florida extends its deepest regrets to board member Jan Eisler whose husband, Lee, died on April 22 at the age of 89.

Eisler was a member of many freethought organizations besides Atheists of Florida, including the American Humanist Association, The North American Council for Humanism, Humanist Association: St. Petersburg, the Southern Poverty Law Center, ACLU, NOW, and Planned Parenthood.

He was a founding member and vice president emeritus of the Bertrand Russell Society, and served on the council for Secular Humanism. Three years ago, he was the featured guest on the Atheist of Florida Forum video series appearing as an expert on Russell.

As a writer, he produced such notable books as *Morals Without Mystery* and *The Quotable Bertrand Russell*, along with many other essays and articles over the course of a long and distinguished career.

A graduate of Dartmouth University in Hanover, NH, Eisler is survived by wife Jan, two stepdaughters, both of Ohio, and six grandchildren. He was a native of New York City and came to Florida in 1993 from Bucks County, Pennsylvania. We will miss him greatly.

from the American Humanist Association conducted a workshop on how to spread humanism throughout the Internet.

Our convention hosts, of course, represented the national Rationalist Association, which was celebrating its 50th anniversary.

One of the truly outstanding speakers was Herb Silverman, the "Candidate without a Prayer." He described with great poignancy and humor his attempts to gain public office in South Carolina, which prohibits atheists from holding office. After failing his initial attempt to challenge that constitutional bigotry by running unsuccessfully for governor, Silverman aimed for certification as a notary public. Out of 30,000 applications for a notary public license, Silverman's was the only one ever to be rejected, solely because he was an admitted atheist. The state wasted five years, the efforts of three lawyers and over \$30,000 of taxpayers' money in an unsuccessful effort to keep Silverman from becoming a notary public. Silverman, a math professor, said it took him longer to become a notary public than to get his math degree.

We are going to get Silverman's presentation on video and distribute it nationwide through the Alliance's public access TV network.

At the Atheist Alliance board meeting, representatives from 15 independent member societies (not including the Atheist Centre in India) voted to expand assistance to new local atheist organizations by providing startup funds as needed up to \$500 per year or \$100 per organization. This can be used for initial mailings, ads or whatever a group needs. The board also ratified the appointment of Brett Welch (Minnesota Atheists) and Dwayne Walker (Atheists United, Los Angeles) as co-directors of ATVOP (Atheist TV Outreach Project). With its recent purchase of dubbing equipment, the Alliance can now greatly expand its nationwide TV distribution of atheist programming. This also helps new groups to form by locating clusters of atheists wherever the videos are shown.

The Alliance also voted to donate \$500 to help fund a monument in Comfort, Texas, to the memory of a heroic community of German immigrant freethinkers, many of whom were massacred for their refusal to join the Confederate forces during the Civil War because they abhorred slavery. Watch for details about this important memorial.

The Alliance has been making overtures to other organizations for purposes of forming a coalition of unbelievers to defend our rights. So far, the most feasible approach appears to be our CART project (Coalition to Advance Rational Thinking). This is an ad hoc effort in which any group can initiate a project and carry it through. Other groups sign on as supporters to lend the strength of numbers. You'll be hearing more about this.

Ben Akerley's publication, The X-Rated Bible, was one of the best sellers ever offered by the American Atheists inventory. The newly revised version of the book will be published by Feral House, Los Angeles, this summer. Atheists of Florida will have them available for you as soon as the ink dries. Here is the preface to the revised edition.

X-Rated Bible returns

IN THE YEARS intervening between the publication of the original version (1985) and the present revised volume (1998), the rise of the Religious Right and the resurgence of Protestant Fundamentalism have exerted a tremendous impact on three critical areas of American life: (1) sex education, (2) creationism vs. evolution and (3) family values vs. gay rights.

Abstinence only sex education has been aggressively subsidized by both state and federal governments. The best known curriculum, *Sex Respect*, was previously titled *Love and Life: A Christian Sexual Morality Guide for Teens* and is currently in use in at least 1,500 public school districts with the blessing of religious extremists everywhere. Planned Parenthood has evaluated the program as follows: unrealistic, misleading, medically inaccurate and nothing more than fear and shame based indoctrination.

The absurdity of the anti-evolution campaign can best be summarized by their coinage of the neologism and oxymoron *creation science*. Nonetheless, with a straight face, fundamentalist religious gurus have successfully intimidated public school boards and even textbook publishers into giving creationism equal time with evolution in the classroom.

Much more disastrous consequences have resulted from the unrelenting and extremely lucrative anti-gay propaganda machine. Employing such inane slogans as "God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve," televangelists have lavishly filled their coffers with generous contri-

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butions from sincere but misguided followers who become fearful that the Gay Agenda includes not only corrupting America's youth but also in seeking not just equal but special rights for gays and in undermining the Bible-based moral fabric of any God-fearing nation: the heterosexual nuclear family.

When president Bill Clinton made a campaign promise to lift the ban on gays in the military as a top priority of his 1993 reelection, the Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution and sent a memorandum directly to the White House reminding Clinton of his Baptist roots which teach the Scriptural condemnation of homosexuality as immoral, perverted and sinful behavior and demanding that he retain the ban. In 1997, these same devout Baptist brethren commanded their followers to boycott all Disney enterprises because the corporation had the temerity to offer full domestic partner benefits to unmarried and same sex couples and for their sponsorship of the TV sitcom *Ellen* with real-life lesbian Ellen DeGeneres playing her openly gay namesake. With the charitable spirit of true Christian love, the Rev. Jerry Falwell denounced the program calling its star Ellen Degenerate.

It has also been seductively easy to convince most true believers that AIDS is a plague and scourge sent by the Almighty to carry out the death sentence promised in Leviticus as a reward for the abomination of all those who "lie with mankind as with womankind." And it certainly should boggle our minds that as we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, nearly half of these United States still have sodomy laws on their statute books some of which even criminalize non-genital sex acts of married couples!

Now is it any wonder that although gay teens comprise no more than 10% of the overall adolescent population, nearly one third of teen suicides are gay kids? I myself could easily have become just another gay teen suicide statistic. When I chanced upon the Leviticus decree of death for gay sex at age 13, I was both devastated and traumatized. As an impressionable teenager, I suddenly realized that my sexual orientation was condemned by the one book I had been taught to revere as an infallible moral guide; that what was perfectly normal and natural for me was called unnatural and sinful by God's Holy Word.

Consequently, if my *X-Rated Bible* can spare only one gay American teenager from going through the guilt, shame, self-hatred, remorse, self-doubt and torment that I suffered, then it will have been well worth the effort.

— Ben Edward Akerley **A**

Prayer of Allegiance Challenged

SAN DIEGO, CA - A 15-year old sophomore at Fallbrook high has sued the school district, saying she is being punished for refusing to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance in class. The San Diego-Imperial Counties Chapter of the ACLU is representing her in court.

NEWS FILES

MaryKait Durkee said she was threatened with detention when she quietly remained in her seat April 1 while the rest of her first-period world history class stood and recited the pledge.

Durkee said. (*San Diego Union Tribune*, 5/30/98) she does not believe in God and cannot pledge allegiance to a country she sees as violent and corrupt. "I don't want to show respect for a country that has all these problems, and I don't think that I should be punished for exercising my rights," Durkee said.

The first time Durkee refused to recite the pledge, her teacher told her to stand in front of the class and recite it alone, then threatened her with detention when she refused.

After sitting out the pledge for three weeks, Durkee was given a detention notice and told that she would have to stand while it was recited.

Durkee's family appealed to school administrators and contacted the ACLU when they got no response from Thomas Anthony, superintendent of the Fallbrook Union High School District. The lawsuit was filed Thursday, May 28, 1998 by the local ACLU.

Since she was told that she faced detention, Durkee has been silently standing under protest during the pledge in her class. Jordan Budd, Managing Attorney for the San Diego-Imperial Counties Chapter of the ACLU filed a motion in US District court June 2, 1998, asking a judge to permit MaryKait Durkee not to be forced to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Superintendent Anthony said he is waiting for legal advice before responding.

Linda Hills, executive director of the local ACLU, pointed out the irony that the incident occurred in a history class where students are taught about countries that do not have the same constitutional protections as the United States.

"It is the schools' role to teach young people about citizenship and they, above all, should be scrupulous in setting an example by their protection of constitutional freedoms," Hills said.

Durkee's mother Ann, fully supports her daughter on the issue. "I've always encouraged her to think for herself," she said.

E-mail follow-up

Subj: Pledge of Allegiance
Date: 98-06-01

From: sikes@ric.net (Mary Ellen Sikes)
I could swear that the Supreme Court has already ruled that students have the right to forego reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Does anyone know? And, if so, does this poor girl have to go through a court battle to reinvent the wheel?

My daughter (and several classmates) also refused to say the Pledge in middle school. Her teachers' response was to inform the class that saying the Pledge was voluntary, and that dissenters were free to abstain so long as they didn't cause any disruption to those choosing otherwise. I'm not sure why the teachers in this other case feel the need for the Gestapo tactics. How in the world can they teach civics or Constitutional history with a straight face in a school where freedom of expression is so blatantly disregarded?

End run scam

SAN DIEGO, CA - San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwenn announced on June 18 that the City is planning to close the sale of one-half acre on Mt. Soledad. The proposed land can be described as the grassy knoll around the cross contained inside a circular one-way road.

According to a City Attorney's Press Release, "The City of San Diego is inviting proposals from private non-profit corporations interested in purchasing approximately one-half acre of property in the Mt. Soledad Natural Park for the purpose of maintaining an historical war memorial. The property is presently the site of a large, Latin cross which has been the subject of litigation since 1989. The City is neither requiring nor precluding the retention or maintenance of a cross in its invitation for proposals." He said, "Proposals will be accepted until the end of July." He added, "The City reserves the right to reject all proposals."

San Diego atheist Philip Paulson is fighting to prevent the scam and is keeping us posted via e-mail. Paulson has secured a lawyer. His name is James McElroy, who defeated White Racist Tom Metzger and his skinhead hate activists in court.

In addition to heading up the legal strategy, he is handling all of Paulson's relations with the print and broadcast news media. Peter Irons, Paulson's appellate attorney, is working in a supporting role on this matter. Also, Jordan Budd, San Diego ACLU managing attorney, is assisting in a cooperative and collaborative manner.

McElroy advised Paulson to keep a low public profile until it's over. Paulson's new Cross strategy - "It's not over until it's over."

Religious Freedom Amendment dumped

The Religious Freedom Amendment finally came up for a vote in the House of Representatives on June 4. Although winning a slight majority, the vote of 224-203 fell 61 votes short of the two-thirds majority required to effect a constitutional amendment.

The proposed amendment would have decimated our freedom from religious intrusion into our lives in all public events such as public schools and graduation exercises, and would have opened all public property in this country to religious intrusion. It also would have opened the door to public subsidies for religious groups and tuition for students at church-run schools, effectively annihilating the public school system.

Support was weaker than the last time the House voted on a similar amendment when Ronald Reagan attempted to deauthorize the nation with his proposed "prayer amendment" in 1971.

"The real winners are the Bill of Rights",

The Atheist Alliance Website: New and Improved

As one of its services to its member organizations and the general free-thought community, the Atheist Alliance maintains a website introducing its member organizations and providing information of interest to atheists, agnostics, secular humanists and freethinkers. Originally launched by AAI Vice President Jim Cox just over a year ago, it soon proved to be a very popular place to visit on the information superhighway.

Because of the increase in visitor traffic, the expansion of the AAI membership organization roster, and the need to make the website as useful as possible to the freethought visitor, Joe Zemel (President of Atheist Outreach, one of the AAI member organizations) has now taken over the responsibilities of AAI webmaster. Joe brings a professional and technical expertise in website development, refinement, and maintenance that is greatly appreciated.

With the authorization of the AAI board of directors, Joe began a number of modernizations and improvements on the AAI website. He has: 1) Selected and contracted a Web Hosting Service; 2) Registered the Atheist Alliance with the Internet for the domain name

The Atheist Alliance website address is:
AtheistAlliance.org

Comments on the content of the site should be sent to:
info@AtheistAlliance.org (Jim Cox)

Comments on features of the site should be sent to:
WebMaster@AtheistAlliance.Org (Joe Zemel)

Despite falling well short, the Christian Coalition called the vote "monumental" because the entire House is now on record for their votes. This will prompt a slew of voter guides in upcoming elections as the CC will identify candidates who endorse state/church separation and oppose their re-election. Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Texas) who led the opposition, called the vote "a major setback" for the Xian Coalition, claiming the group's campaign for the amendment backfired.

"The real winners are the Bill of Rights and the religious freedom it has protected for over two centuries," Edwards said after the vote. "A lot of members withstood political pressure and voted against sound-bite politics. This was a far stronger vote than we had even hoped."

What you can do:

Watch for voter guides and complain to management anywhere you find them. Flo Morgan-genroth spotted one in a Publix once and upon her complaint to the management that they were offensive to her, they were all removed immediately. Shop in a different market each week to keep an eye out for them.

of AtheistAlliance.Org; 3) Moved over the old site to the new server; 4) Added official e-mail aliases for the officers of The Alliance; 5) Updated links to ensure that all current links are active; 6) Forward people going from the old site to the new site (effective until our subscription runs out for that site); 7) Registered the new site with various search engines and freethought web sites; 8) Included the ability to automatically notify people when the web pages change.

Joe will seek to add new features to this site over time such as adding a search feature to the website; add a form for people to request information about AAI, its member organizations and services; and more.

Jim Cox will continue contributing in the area of "content" for various AAI website information areas such as "The Freethought Bookshelf" and "Atheism on the Internet"; adding webpages for new member organizations; linking their AAI icon directly to those member organizations that already have their own web pages; and assisting all member organizations in revising, updating, and expanding the informational content of their individual webpages whenever needed.

Jim will also continue to serve as the screener for website visitor questions, comments and suggestions. One of the principle benefits of the website has been the opportunity to introduce AAI to potential new freethought organizations and freethinkers to existing AAI member organizations in their part of the country, and to answer general questions about atheism and freethought to the interested website visitor.