



lished a printing business for a number of years. He remained single and friendly to his many acquaintances. Since becoming a member of Atheists of Florida, Zacchar sent us a donation of \$10 every month without fail. He de-

Michael Zaccar 1917—2007

lighted to assure that atheism will exist to be a force for eons of time through his generous contribution for atheism via his annuity. He changed the beneficiary of his annuity to Atheists of Florida in April 2000 and died June 19, 2007. In November, Atheists of Florida received the benefit distribution of \$69,739.14. Thank you, Michael.

—C. Glantz

ATHEISTS OF FLORIDA MEMBER MICHAEL ZACCAR is to be remembered as a staunch atheist. Mike's interests were dancing and "trying to convert everyone he met to atheism." He was never embarrassed expressing his views of atheist logic.

Zaccar met A of F member Celia Glantz at a dance when he revealed his thoughts to her. She was delighted to inform him of the existing Florida organization and introduced him to Christos Tzanetakos, the Miami chapter director at that time. Zaccar's early life is not known to us in great detail, but he spoke of his parents coming from Greece to settle in New York where an older brother and he, upon maturing, estab-

Top 10 religion stories of 2007

Compiled by TIME Magazine

#10 • Kidnapped Korean Missionaries
 The Taliban killed two of 23 and eventually released the rest.

#9 • The Creation Museum
 A few months after opening its doors, the Petersburg, KY multimillion-dollar monument to the Flintstone (Young Earth) principle doubled projected attendance. Of Americans, 77% believe God at least guided our development.

#8 • Another blow to a megachurch
 A year after Ted Haggard resigned as pastor of Colorado's New Life Church—having admitted to "immorality" involving a gay escort—a gunman killed two congregants in its parking lot.

#7 • Atheist authors out of the closet—and get read
 Dawkins, Hitchens and Harris all published in the top 10.

#6 • Green evangelicals
 Global warming, along with poverty and torture, have become hot issues to the Christian movement.



#5 • Episcopal/Anglican clash

The defection of conservatives from the Episcopal church's positions on gays unseemingly by the Bishop's meeting in New Orleans, left open the likelihood of a worldwide Anglican split over the same issue.

#4 • Latin Mass

Clinging to the Medievalism of Catholicism, pope Ratzinger relieved priests of having to get their bishop's permission to conduct mass in old-school Latin.

#3 • Fatwell fatally succumbs to gluttony

And the torch of superstition is passed to Rick Warren.

#2 • Faith stalks the campaign trail

Billary confessed to Warren about her White House prayer group! Romney explained how he's a Mormon. Huckabee is an actual preacher! Are we electing a president or pope?

And the #1 religion story of 2007 • Mother Teresa's crisis of faith

M. T. questioned the invisible like most others. Saint or self-deceiver? The church demonstrated its focus on profit by ignoring her request that her confession letters be kept private and published them. Either way, the incredible suffering she imposed on this world remains unchecked.

CLASSIFIEDS

Send your ad information to
 AthAIFLE@aol.com

Godless in America: conversations with an atheist by George A. Ricker is now available at most book retailers and online book sellers. For more information about the book and its author, go to www.godlessinamerica.com.

Guitar / Music Lessons:
 College-trained musician with many years performance experience in numerous styles of playing.
 Contact Michael at (813) 545-1071

Atheists of Florida CHAPTER MEETINGS

TAMPA BAY: Pinellas Park Public Library—Second Sunday of each odd-numbered month (Jan., Mar., etc.), 1:30—4:30, 78th Ave North & 52nd Street.
Tampa—Second Sunday of each even-numbered month, 1:30—4:30, Jan Platt Regional Library, 3910 S. Manhattan Ave. Social dinners follow all meetings at nearby cafeterias.
 FMI: Ed Golly, 813/835-1500, AthAIFLE@aol.com.

Public Access assaulted by County Commission

Freedom of expression meets chopping block

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY—DISCERNABLY WITHOUT COMMENT, THE Hillsborough County Commission decided last September to shut down its public-access cable TV channel. This was one of two channels (19 & 20) on which we had been broadcasting the *Atheist Forum* for some 5½ years.

Funding for public-access had come from a surcharge added to the bills of all subscribers to cable TV. The county and City of Tampa received portions of these fees to fund public-access, educational, and government channels. The city provided about two-thirds of the funding with the remainder coming from the county. The result was that in October the county cut channel 19, effectively slamming the door of public-access to all producers who reside in the county.



Guest Sami Al-Arian (right) is interviewed on the set of the *Atheist Forum* by hosts Brent Yechiw (left) and Ed Golly on a show produced by Jim Young in 2004 prior to Al-Arian's arrest on suspicion of involvement in procuring funding for terrorist activities.

Fortunately, *Atheist Forum* producer Ed Golly is a resident of the city allowing us to continue production. This season (Jan. through March) we will only produce taped specials and resume our weekly schedule of live shows in April. However, channel 20 has been dropped as a public-access channel and all programming has been relocated to channel 950.

Speak Up Tampa Bay, Inc. the group that operates public-access, is suing the county in federal court, alleging that county officials terminated the channel because citizens were often critical of the government, thereby stifling speech by citizens based on the content of the speech. The county did continue funding of its own channel.

Atheists of Florida intends to continue production of the *Atheist Forum* as long as the facility is available. There is still no cost to us to produce the shows.

Board Elections

Nominations for members of the

Board of Directors now being accepted

TAMPA—THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ATHEISTS OF FLORIDA is elected to serve three-year terms. This year we will elect a new Board of Directors prior to the annual Board meeting scheduled for Sunday, February 24, 2008.

As specified in the Bylaws, the Board shall consist of not less than six nor more than twenty-four members. The Board elects the officers from within and they serve a term of one year. Members of Atheists of Florida may nominate candidates for the Board, or volunteer to be nominated as candidates themselves. Voting by mail ballot will only be necessary if the number of nominations exceeds the allowable number of Board seats. Chapter Directors are automatically elected to the Board and will not be included on Board voting ballots.

Nominations will be accepted by mail at PO Box 130753, Tampa, FL 33681 if postmarked by January 31, 2008; or they may be e-mailed to ATHALFLE@aol.com by midnight of the same date. Please include the word "Nomination" in the subject line.

All nominees should be prepared to attend the annual Board of Director's meeting on February 24 at the Radisson Hotel in Clearwater, FL (see banquet announcement below).



MOST ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS will be up for renewal in January 2008. A of F Secretary Julia Scott will be mailing renewal forms soon. Members who have changed address during 2007 may e-mail current addresses to ATHALFLE@aol.com and they will be forwarded to Julia for updating in our database.

Second Annual Atheists of Florida Awards Banquet

It's not too early to book the evening of February 24, 2008. Our Board of Director's meeting will be held during the day followed that evening by the second Atheists of Florida Awards Banquet. Please join us at the Radisson Hotelon Gulf-to-Bay Blvd. and US19 Clearwater, and bring a friend, or several. Atheists of Florida would like to recognize all the members who volunteer time and talent to make all our projects a success. Further details will be forthcoming.

"It is far better to grasp the Universe as it really is than to persist in delusion, however satisfying and reassuring."

—Carl Sagan

Defeat House Resolution 888

What's At Stake

Last month, shortly before the Congressional holiday recess, Rep. Forbes of Virginia introduced for consideration House Resolution 888, which designates the first week in May as "American Religious History Week." Although the resolution, even if adopted, would not have the force of law, it nevertheless poses a serious threat to our core values of state/church separation and freedom of conscience, as well as to the fundamental principle that public policy should be based on secular considerations and not religious dogma.

The resolution is intended to express the official view of the House of Representatives about our nation's history and will be cited by

all those who try to impose religious values on the rest of the country, whether through litigation, legislation, or otherwise.

HR 888 specifically states that our "educational resources" should reflect the supposed "fact" that religion provides "the inseparable foundation" for this country's "legal systems and societal structures," so you can be sure that those on the religious right will fight to have this misrepresentation of history taught in our schools. It will provide a basis for arguing that the Ten Commandments should be displayed in public places and that we should "acknowledge" our religious foundations by officially sponsored prayer and religious ceremonies such as the Pledge of Allegiance.

The resolution should not be considered in isolation. The proposed resolution forms part of the strategy that the religious right has followed in recent years of trying to give a veneer of validity to government-sponsored religious practices by arguing that these practices simply reflect our heritage rather than advance religion. Obviously, to the extent that the religious right can cite support for their distorted version of history in official proclamations of Congress, their claim gains more credibility.

This resolution distorts U.S. history and shamelessly attempts to portray religion as the foundation for our government and institutions. If we ignore this resolution and allow it to be adopted, this historical fantasy may become current reality. The resolution contains pages of misleading references to the views of our founders. If you have trouble deciding whether to take action against the proposed resolution, please consider the following accurate quotation from one of our founders, James Madison: In his famous Memorial and Remonstrance to the Virginia Assembly in 1785, in which he urged the Assembly to reject a bill that would provide funding for teachers of Christianity, Madison stated that "it is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties." House Resolution 888 would set a dangerous precedent and it must be rejected.

What you can do...

Campaign Expiration Date—February 9, 2008

Write your Congressperson now and ask them to stand up for the First Amendment.

Here is a sample letter:

Subject: Defeat HR 888

Dear [Congressional Rep's name here],

I am very troubled by proposed House Resolution 888, which designates the first week of May as "American Religious History Week," and respectfully ask that you vote against this resolution when it comes up for consideration. This resolution contains misleading statements about our country's history, selectively quoting some of our founders to create the false picture that religion, and in particular Christianity, provided the basis for our country's laws and institutions. To the contrary, our country was founded as a secular republic, with a separation between state and church and with equal rights for believers and nonbelievers alike. Please vote against this resolution, which distorts rather than commemorates our nation's heritage. At a time when we are urging other countries such as Iraq to put aside sectarian differences and establish secular institutions, it is saddening that a measure such as H.Res. 888 would even be considered.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Abortion rates equal—legal or not

LONDON—In a study examining abortion trends from 1995 to 2003, research discovered that women are just as likely to get an abortion in countries where it is legal as where it is outlawed. Experts also found that abortion rates are virtually equal in rich and poor countries, and that half of all abortions worldwide are unsafe.

"The legal status of abortion has never dissuaded women and couples, who, for whatever reason, seek to end pregnancy," said Beth Frederick of the International Women's Health Coalition in an accompanying commentary.

Abortion accounts for 13% of maternal mortality worldwide. About 70,000 women die every year from unsafe abortions. An additional 5-million women suffer permanent or temporary injury.

The number of worldwide abortions dropped from about 46-million in 1995 to just less than 42-million in 2003, but nearly half of the procedures are still performed illegally in potentially dangerous conditions.

The vast majority of abortions—35-million—were in the Third World. Nearly 97% of all unsafe abortions were in poor countries. Worldwide, one in five pregnancies ends in abortion. Europe has both the highest and lowest abortion rates. In Eastern Europe, there are more abortions than live births: 105 abortions for every 100 live births. But in Western Europe, there are just 12 abortions for every 1,000 women.

In North America, there are about 21 abortions for every 1,000 women.



NEWSFILES

This resolution distorts U.S. history and shamelessly attempts to portray religion as the foundation for our government