

THE ATHEIST

Newsletter of the Atheist Community of Austin, a Nonprofit Organization

P.O. Box 3798, Austin, Texas 78764

512-371-2911

www.atheist-community.org

25 June 2000 CE

Volume # 4 No. #6

Thank You Ray



Ray Blevins

There have been recent developments in the production of "Atheist Experience". Ray Blevins has stepped down from active production of the T.V. show for personal reasons. I wish to take the time to wish Ray well and to thank him for his service to the cause of Atheism. His devotion to "Atheist Experience" has been inspirational. The show is

directly responsible for my discovery of the Atheist Community of Austin and for this alone I am eternally grateful. Thank You Ray.

There is now a delay in the production of our second show "Freethinker's Forum". Due to time limitations on studio reservations there is a need for a new producer to head up the new show. This requires a member with time to take some classes at the Austin Community Access Center. (I have details) The production of atheist T.V. is a rewarding experience and a vital service to the cause of the rational atheist message. I am sure that this important position will be filled quickly.

As the new producer of "Atheist Experience" I intend to continue in the footsteps of Ray and strive to provide a positive Atheist message to offset the barrage of theistic nonsense that pervades this state and nation.

~Vic Farrow

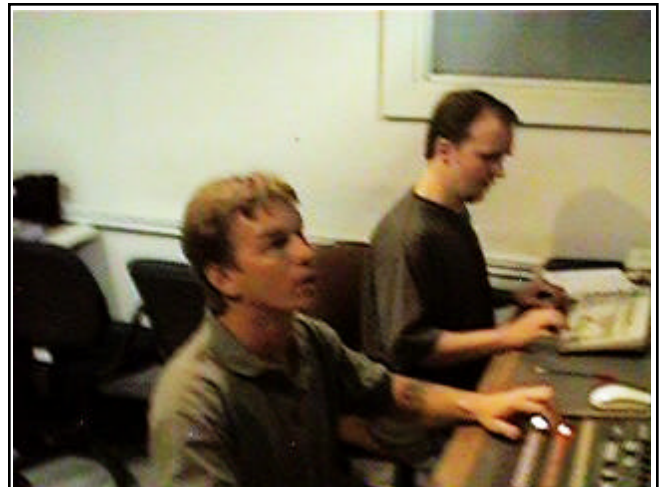
Producer of "The Atheist Experience"

Errors

#1 In Miguel Lerma letter "historical materialism" should have said "dialectical materialism". Miguel had pointed out his own mistake right after he sent me the letter, but I forgot to make the change.

Freethinkers Forum

Taping has begun on our new cable access television show "Freethinkers Forum". Instead of the call-in format used on "The Atheist Experience", each episode of this show will feature a panel discussion on some topic of interest to atheists.



Vic Farrow (left) and Martin Wagner getting ready for the taping of another episode of Freethinkers Forum.

While we all agree that there is no good evidence to support a belief in a god, we hold a wide variety of views on other subjects. It is hoped that the panel discussion format will allow for intelligent discussion between atheists.

According to ACAC rules, there must be three shows on tape before a time slot can be assigned. Since the season begins in October, producer Vic Farrow and host Martin Wagner have decided to wait until then to get the show on the air. In the mean time, they are planning to tape as many shows as possible.

Before each show, the crew checks the microphones to make sure everything is working. This involves having each guest speak in turn. The funny thing is, even talkative and highly opinionated atheists find it hard to speak on command.

WE WANT YOU



Paul Wilson has a moment of silence before the show.

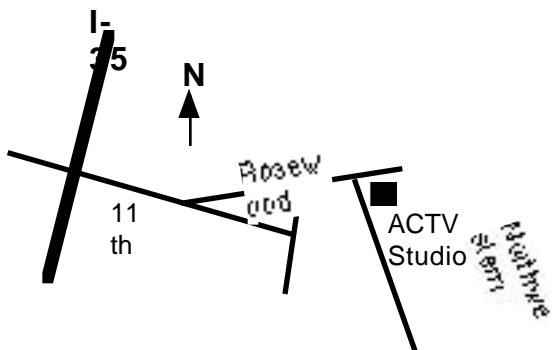
Helping tape a show is a lot of fun. You don't need to have any experience. We really need a one person to operate each camera.



Co-chair Susan Brown operating an ACAC camera

The ACAC studio is reserved from 6-10 on the nights we tape. It takes time to set up the equipment, but we are rarely there for the full time. If you are interested in helping, please contact Martin (mw_director@yahoo.com) or Vic (VicFlicvideo@hotmail.com).

The ACAC studio is located at 1143 Northwestern Av.
Phone # 478-8600



TO BELONG TO the ATHEIST COMMUNITY of AUSTIN

Membership Drive

Although the details are still being worked out, ACA will be having a membership drive. We have decided to time it so that as many new members as possible would be eligible to hold positions on our ACA board of directors next year.

If you know of anyone interested in joining, please invite them down to the bagel shop.

If you have any ideas for the membership drive committee, please see John Koonz (koonz@geoblox.com), Jeff Dee (antix@io.com), or Keith Berka (aafab@hotmail.com).

If you have not renewed your membership, please do so.

Don't make us send Howard out to find you!

Positive Atheism at Work

Earlier this year, members of the Atheist Community of Austin gathered at to take a group photo to send to the Doe families in the Santa Fe case. What follows is part of the thank you letter I received from Debbie. Debbie is the Baptist grandmother who has been the contact for the two Doe families.

"I want to thank all of you for the picture and banner. It was a nice surprise. I know they [Doe families] will be surprised and as thrilled as we were to get your package. My grand daughter, who is 6, said grandma they sent you this because of your stand on religion? I said yes, she said they are really good people.

. . . Some say Ms Ward is doing Gods work. [Ward is the high school girl who said the prayer at the football game and again at the commencement] I differ with that. I think my family was put in this little town to fight her and the religious leaders who feel as she does. I feel this in my heart and soul. As do my daughters. As our youngest daughter told someone, 'They can burn our home down, they can kill us. But they can not take my soul.' And how right she is. I know your belief is different when it comes to religion, and that's a good thing. Not wrong.

. . . We all are people with hearts and feelings. No one is better or less than another. No one is more important than the other. If we lose one, be it in death, a killing, a war, or to pure hate toward another then we have lost part of mankind.

. . . I noticed a lot of children in your picture. And to them I want them to know what a honor it was to get this picture. Some of them may be young and may not understand a lot of things said to them or sometimes the hate towards non-believers. To each of you young children [and] teens I say to you: I am proud you have stood your ground, I am proud that you have a belief in yourself.

. . . Don't ever back down to people like them [theocrats]. There are more who feel like I do and you do then you know. It's just [that] the nasty people sometimes scream louder than us. And that's ok. Because it shows everyone what their true self is. Never believe you're wrong on this, never believe you have to follow Christians. You have to follow your heart and your self. I would rather be with a person who does this then one who can only hate, and name call. They can not be truly happy people. Be proud and stand tall. I know it can be hard. I have cried more tears then I can tell you for my children. I have seen our own daughters cry themselves to sleep. I know the pain and hate they can deliver. I watched my own daughters be turned on by classmates and friends they have had since they entered school. Its hard, but you will be a stronger, better person then the mean ones will ever be. Just always

remember [to] follow your belief. We did and I would never do it differently. I have been asked if I could do it again would I, by many reporters. "In a heartbeat" is my answer. Not for myself, but for others, like you children who believe different then I do. I do it for all children because I want your pain to stop and the ugliness with it. Be proud, be glad your different. We are suppose to be different. As my grand daughter said if we were all the same how would she find her mommy.

I shall hang your picture with all of my family pictures. I will make a wooden box for your banner to be put in to hang with the picture. Along side my family pictures, and a poem about where was I, written by a Rabbi during the war. That tells why we must speak out on the wrongs of the world. If any would like this poem I will email it to all of you. remember we must always keep our beliefs, protect these rights and never let anyone take them.

Thank all of you for standing beside us. We shall do great things as One Nation of People Under our convictions and beliefs. You will never know how much your support has helped us."

~Debbie



Howard Thompson was one of the founding fathers of ACA and has recently rejoined the group. Howard and Rodeney Florence are also involved with 'Respect Our Constitution', a non-partisan effort to involve atheists in political activism. Howard and others atheists went to the Democratic State convention in Fort Worth. The event was a big success for ROC.

Notes From the Board

ACA Board Meeting, June 11,2000:
Old Business:

Treasurer's report:

- Checking account balance, \$569.90
- Building Fund Balance, \$7,815.77
- Permanent Fund balance, \$5000 (This has not been invested yet, and Don will look into this.)
- A \$35 bill for our domain name is due.
- The donated ring will be placed in a safe deposit box for safe keeping.
- ☑ The board adopted a new policy for writing checks. Checks over \$500 will requires the signatures of two member of the executive committee.

Blood Drive:

- ☑ The next Blood Drive will be July 29th, 10 am, at the Regional Blood and Tissue Center on N. Lamar. The fall blood drive is scheduled for Saturday, September 23rd.

Signs:

- ☐ Jeff was busy getting ready for the ROC effort at the democratic convention. He really will finish off the artwork so that Rodney can get the new banner made.

Products:

- ☐ Susan Loehner has volunteered to help Michelle order new products for a few months. Please see Michelle (gadush@mail.utexas.edu) if you would like to volunteer to take Susans place when she moves.

TV:

- ☑ The need for a new producer was discussed. The decision as to who will be paid for the necessary training was left in the capable hands of the TV committee.

Library:

- ☐ The best suggestion for the library location seems to be the Bagel Shop. Keith will ask the owner if we can leave our books in a locked cabinet.

New Business:

Replacing Ray:

- ☑ The board has selected Manda Dee to take Rays place on the board. This will be voted on by the general membership at next weeks meeting.

Membership Drive:

- ☑ A membership drive committee (John Koonz, Keith Berka, Jeff Dee) has been established. The general goal is for ACA to have 100 members by late October. This will allow new members to be elected to serve on the board next year. The board approved \$500 to cover initial costs. This

committee will report back to the board in November. If you have any suggestions for increasing membership, see one of the committee members.

Ex bagelification policy:

- ☐ A policy for the removal of members was discussed. The ACA policy will be based on a policy used by the Humanists of Austin. John will make the necessary modifications and present the policy at the next board meeting.

Discussion of the survey results was put off until next month.

Your ACA board of directors:

Co-chairs:

Susan Brown
John Koonz

Treasurer:

Don Rhoades

Secretary:

Earle Beach

Board members:

Keith Berka
Paul Wilson
Michelle Gadush
Russell Glasser
Arval Bohn
Ray Blevins
Vic Farrow
Jeff Dee
Howard King

And The Survey Says:

Q. Where are morals derived from?

A. From the very underrated Golden Rule. There are many versions of this basic rule for living and, if practiced "religiously", it will teach us all about love, compassion, patience, fairness, consideration for others, and just about every one of the worthwhile virtues. If most people who consider themselves Christians would follow the Golden Rule thoughtfully and sincerely instead of feeling that they can live their lives any way they want as long as they dedicate 90 minutes each Sunday for worship, our community would be a better place to live.

A Quote to put on your refrigerator

“My own view of religion is that of Lucretius. I regard it as a disease born of fear and as a source of untold misery to the human race. I cannot, however, deny that it has made some contributions to civilization. It helped in early days to fix the calendar, and it caused Egyptian priests to chronicle eclipses with such care that in time they became able to predict them. These two services I am prepared to acknowledge, but I do not know of any others.”

Bertrand Russell

Announcements

- **Weekly Meetings** Sunday Mornings at Hot Jumbo Bagelry, 307 West 5th Street at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings when lectures are not scheduled at Furr's Cafeteria.
- **ACA Board meetings** are on the second Sunday of the month at 12:00. Board meetings are open to all members.
- **Guest Speakers**
 - **July:** Our July 2 lecture will be a panel discussion on political activism. Howard Thompson, Rodney Florence, Jeff Dee, John Koonz, and Mark Loewe will be on the panel. Lectures are held at Furr's Cafeteria in Northcross Mall, 11:00 am on the first Sunday of the month. Susan Brown (liatris@mail.utexas.edu) is in charge of scheduling our lectures.
- The **TV committee** is always looking for volunteers on Sunday mornings. They also need donations to pay for tapes and training. ACA TV Tapes are now available for \$20.00 each and will be offered over the web soon.



Martin Wagner hosts Freethinkers Forum

- **Products** New t-shirts have arrived. We still have our original ACA t-shirts which list a number of famous atheists. We also have 'top ten reasons beer is better than Jesus' beer mugs. See Michelle Gadush (gadush@mail.utexas.edu) for more information on these and other exciting atheist products.
- **Library** If you want to check out a book, contact Earle Beach (earleb@jumpnet.com) so he can be sure to bring it to the bagelry. If you would like to donate a book, please be sure to put your name in it so we know who to thank. See Rodney if you would like to check out the newsletters from other atheist groups.
- The next **blood drive** will be on July 29th. Meet at the blood bank at 10:00AM at the Regional Blood and Tissue Center on N. Lamar.. Vic Farrow has taken of the role of blood drive coordinator. After you donate, be sure to give him your coupon so that our account can be credited.



A scene from the Bagel shop. Our meetings are informal. All atheists and atheist friendly people are welcome.

- Annual Freethought and Thought-Free Awards Ray is heading up this effort. These awards will be given on January 4th, 2001, the anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Tripoli. Send nominations to John Koonz (jknz@hotmail.com).
- **Randalls Donations** Randalls will donate a percentage of the money you spend there to the Atheist Community of Austin. To take advantage of this offer, contact the customer service department of your nearest Randalls. The ACA number is 5158.

For more information about any of these coming events, call (512) 371-2911 or e-mail liatris@mail.utexas.edu
The Atheist is printed on somewhat recycled paper!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR THE ATHEIST COMMUNITY OF AUSTIN, INC.

Last name: _____ First name: _____

Companion's name (if family or couple membership)

Last name: _____ First name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone : (_____) _____ e-mail address: _____

This is to certify that I am a non-theist, that I have read the "Purpose" of the Atheist Community of Austin, Inc. as stated in the Constitution (below), and that I am in agreement with the principles stated herein. I understand that membership is open only to non-theists.

Purpose

The Atheist Community of Austin is organized as a nonprofit educational corporation to develop and support atheist community; to provide opportunities for socializing and friendship, to promote atheist viewpoints, to encourage positive atheist culture, to defend the First Amendment principle of state/church separation, to oppose discrimination against atheists, and to work with other organizations in pursuit of common goals.

This organization shall operate in an open, democratic manner, without discrimination as to gender, race, age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, nationality, or disability.

The Bylaws to this Constitution are intended to further define and explain the operating procedure of this organization. Changes may be made to the Bylaws when necessary to improve the operation of this organization. Changes to the Bylaws shall not alter the purpose of this organization as set forth in its Constitution.

Check all that apply

I wish to become a member of the Atheist Community of Austin, Inc. Membership fees are \$24.00 per year, but our membership year does not begin until the 1st of March. My prorated membership fee, at \$2.00 per month u n t i l next March, is enclosed.

I wish to make a tax exempt donation to ACA .Please direct my donation to the following fund:

General Fund Building Fund Permanent Fund

I only wish to participate in the e-mail group. My e-mail address is above. No fee is required.

I wish to help ACA save money by receiving The Atheist by e-mail. No fee is required.

I wish to receive a hard copy of The Atheist in the mail. \$10 is enclosed.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form to: Atheist Community of Austin, Inc., P.O. Box 3798, Austin, Texas 78764

Atheist Community of Austin
P.O. Box 3798
Austin, TX 78764

