



HOUSTON FREETHOUGHT ALLIANCE

Newsletter

For the Humanist and Freethought Community

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Calendar of Events:

Sunday, November 5 | 10:30 am - 12:00 noon | *Coffee Social* | at Borders Books & Music in Meyerland Plaza (I-610 W Loop S at Beechnut) | Spontaneous informal discussions are held on first & third Sundays monthly | Contact: [Art Fay*](#)

Sunday, November 5 | 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm | *Humanists of Houston (HOH) Brunch* | Randall's 11041 Westheimer Road at Wilcrest (S.E. corner) | Topics chosen by the group are discussed on first Sunday monthly | Contact: [Tom Brucia*](#)

Monday, Weekly | 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm | Freethought Forum | Starbucks at Louetta and Kuykendahl | Freethinkers gathering socially to discuss current events and anything else on our minds | Contact: [Curt Loose*](#).

Wednesday, November 8 | 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm | North Houston Atheist Meetup | Bennigan's Grill & Tavern at 4505 Fm 1960 Rd W | Social dinner with humanists and atheists on Houston's north side, first Wednesday monthly | [Contact Nigel Bedrock.](#)

Saturday, November 11 | 1:00 pm | *HAMCIAC Regular Meeting* | Montgomery Co. Library in the Woodlands (2nd floor) [From I-45 go west on Woodland Pkwy to 2nd traffic light; turn north (right) on Six Pines Dr; cross bridge & watch for wavy sculptures in the median; turn west (left) to Lake Robbins Rd; pass Woodlands Pavilion; turn left into Library parking lot] | Regular meetings are held on second Saturdays monthly | Contact: [Curt Loose*](#)

Sunday, November 12 | 10:30 am -11:30 am with coffee available at 10:00 AM. | *Houston Church Of Freethought (HCOF) Service* | at the Courtyard by Marriott on 3131 West Loop (northbound just north of Richmond) | Services (including song, humor, lectures & discussion with children's classes & baby sitting available) are held on second Sundays monthly | Contact: [Art Fay*](#)

Saturday November 18 | 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm | *Humanists of Houston (HOH) Regular meeting* | in the Unitarian Fellowship hall at 1504 Wirt Rd Meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month | Contact: [Tom Brucia*](#)

Sunday, November 19 | 10:30 am - 12:00 noon | *Coffee Social* | at Borders Books & Music in Meyerland Plaza (I-610 W Loop S at Beechnut) | Spontaneous informal discussions are held on first & third Sundays monthly | Contact: [Art Fay*](#)

Sunday November 19 | 10:30 am - 12:00 noon | *Ideas Club* | At Dr Louis Daily's family house at 1506 North Boulevard. See HOH WEB site for directions | Book reviews by members are held on fourth Sundays monthly, Contact: [Bob Finch*](#)

Wednesday November 22 | 5:00 pm | *Newsletter Deadline* | all articles, letters, and submissions of interest are welcome if on editor's desk, postmarks notwithstanding (e-mail format required), | Contact: [Jim Knierien*](#)

Sunday, December 3 | 10:00 am - 12:00 noon | *Coffee Social* | at Borders Books & Music in Meyerland Plaza (I-610 W Loop S at Beechnut) | Spontaneous informal discussions are held on first & third Sundays monthly | [Contact: Art Fay*](#)

Sunday December 3 | 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm | *Humanists of Houston (HOH) Brunch* | Randall's employee training room 11041 Westheimer Road at Wilcrest (S.E. corner) | Topics chosen by the group are discussed on first Sundays monthly | Contact: [Tom Brucia*](#)

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About the Houston Humanist Alliance:

The *Houston Freethought Alliance* is a collection of local humanist and freethought organizations in Houston, which have come together to provide a wider range of services, information, and activities to their members. While still separated in their membership, leadership, and schedules, member-organizations of the *Alliance* share the same newsletter and mailing lists. This allows our organizations to cooperate effectively and enables individual members to be kept informed of virtually all activities of interests to Freethinkers in the Houston area.

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Publisher:

[1] The Houston Freethought Alliance Newsletter (HFA NL) is published monthly by the Houston Humanist Alliance (HFA).

[2] The purpose of the HFA NL is (1) publicizing events, i.e., keeping members informed of regularly and specially scheduled meetings, (2) providing for the public at large information about humanism and humanist thought, and (3) providing a platform for members to express their viewpoints and opinions.

[3] The HFA and the editor do not necessarily agree with nor endorse the views expressed herein. Many humanists and freethinkers pride themselves with being individuals. Consensus among Humanists is therefore difficult to achieve. No one humanist can speak for all other humanists.

[4] Anyone may quote from the newsletter but is asked to please give credit where credit is due, i.e., cite author, newsletter issue (number or date), & page.

[5] All articles, letters, and submissions of interest are welcome if on editor's desk by deadline (12:00 noon on the 15th of each month), postmarks not withstanding. E-mail format required. <mailto:Jim.Knierien@thermo.com> Name, phone number, & street address required for editorial contact purposes only.

[6] The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions for space or clarity, but never with the intent to alter the thrust of the author.

[7] Snailmail editions are sent gratis to paid members of the AHA/HOH. Email editions are sent gratis to anyone else upon request. Adobe PDF editions are available gratis by sending an email to: <mailto:jim.knierien@thermo.com>.

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Explanation of iih symbol:

The ii of the iih represents two or more people. The h of the iih represents the humanness to which they aspire. A lower case h is used instead of an upper case H to indicate that it is better to become human (as opposed to inhuman) than it is to join a Humanist organization.

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Alliance member's reports:

HCOF

Houston Church of Freethought

OCTOBER PROGRAM:

Welcome and Introduction Jim
"The Journey to Morality" Bennie Matusek
FTOTM - Robert Sapolsky Page Williams
"One at A Time" Jim
Closing and Announcements Anthony

After the service, many gathered for lunch at Jason's Deli on Westheimer between Augusta and Fountain View (north side of Westheimer).

As always, your directors Jim Ashmore, Ed Uthman, Anthony Stott, Nancy and Art Fay welcome your feedback and participation in Church Services and Sunday school.

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HOH

The October monthly meeting of **The Humanists of Houston** was a review and discussion of chapter 5 of the book *Natural Atheism* by David Eller. The review was given and the discussion was moderated by Daniel Strain. The November meeting will continue with chapter 6.

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Ideas Club

The October meeting of the **Idea's Club** was a review of the book *Breaking the Spell* by Daniel Dennett. The review was presented by Jim Knierien.

The book to be reviewed for November is *Atheism: A Reader*, S.T. Joshi, Editor. The review will be presented by Ron Titus. A review is also included in this newsletter.

Bob Finch <mailto:rdfinch@houston.rr.com> will provide interested parties with updated lists of books to be reviewed and the review dates.

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Dimming the Sun

By Robert D. Finch

This was the title of a NOVA program broadcast early this year. NASA scientist James Hansen warned us 25 years ago about global warming. It is now quite well established that the phenomenon is real, the planet having become 8/10°C hotter in the past century. But this program reports on a new phenomenon: the dimming of solar radiation reaching the Earth's surface. This was found to be due to scattering from particulate matter, and as the emissions causing this are removed from the atmosphere it is to be expected that global warming will accelerate. At present rates it is claimed there will be irreversible effects starting within less than a decade.

The investigation started with the work of Gerald Stanhill, an Israeli scientist who found a 22% drop in solar radiation over a 40 year period starting in 1957. His results were initially ignored. However similar results were reported by Beate Liepert in the Bavarian Alps. Beate and Stanhill then looked into meteorological results records world-wide and found an average 2 – 4% reduction in solar irradiation and as much as 30% in some places. The increase in CO₂ causes heating so this effect is in the opposite direction.

There were other related results such as a reduction in what is called the pan evaporation rate. This measured by finding how much water has to be added to a pan to bring it back to the same weight in a given time. Apparently only people in agriculture noticed that the pan evaporation rate was going down, even as the temperature was going up. Some theory developed by Michael Roderick & Graham Farquhar showed that it is indeed the sunlight which is the determinant of the effect. Other papers were found that reported a similar decline in the evaporation rate in Russia, eastern Europe and the United States. The amount of the dimming is actually enormous and so the question arose as to what causes it. Nothing is wrong with the Sun itself so the culprit must be on the Earth.

At this point our attention is moved to the Maldives where a Dr Ramanathan was doing some investigating of pollution in the form of haze which was affecting the northern islands while the southerly ones remained clean. In a \$25 million project it was found that there was a 10% decline in sunlight due to particles reflecting light. The pollution was carried by winds from the Indian sub-continent and he found that there were ten times more particles in the polluted air than the clean air. This means that there are ten times as many sites for small droplets to form and these small droplets reflect much more light. The clouds formed act like mirrors to reflect more sunlight back into space.

Ramanathan began to study satellite images from all over the world. Scientists arrived at the conclusion that the effect of global dimming could alter the pattern of rainfall. The cause of the 1984 Ethiopian famine was a failure of the summer rains over the Sahel, where there is usually a seasonal monsoon. For twenty

years in the 1970's and 1980's this monsoon failed to arrive. Pollution from North America blows across the Atlantic. Rostayn of CSIRO modeled this and found that the rainbelt was not drawn north in the usual way with reduced sunlight. Over 50 million people died as a consequence. Could the Asian monsoon be affected? This could affect 3.6 billion people. In Europe and North America air pollution is already being reduced. But in India and China the air quality is declining and a million people die each year in India due to respiratory problems. Both countries intend to try to reduce pollution.

But the greatest threat is accelerated global warming. David Travis glimpsed the effect in his 15 year study of jet contrails. Normally contrails spread out to blanket the sky and cover up to 75% of the earth's surface. Travis got the chance to measure the result of this after the 9/11 raids when there was a 3 day grounding of aircraft. The day-night temperature differential was found to increase from close to zero to 1.2°C, the conclusion being that global dimming is tending to cool the Earth down. Climate modeler Peter Cox of the University of Exeter explained that the combined effects are like a tug-of-war: global warming results in a 2.6 w/m² input while the effect of global dimming is a reduction of about one half of this amount. There has been a 0.6 – 0.8 °F rise over the past century but we may expect a 2-3 °C rise in the next 100 years if we continue as we have been doing.

James Hansen of the Goddard Space Center was interviewed on the effect on the Greenland ice-sheet. Melting is already underway. Ice sheets will melt at a rate of several meters per century. The last time the ice-sheets melted was 3 million years ago producing a 25m sea level rise. New York City and Washington DC will be mostly underwater as will Florida and Louisiana. The Amazon basin will be drier and the forests could burn away. If we produce yet more CO₂ we will accelerate global warming. The program claims that a strong scientific consensus exists that global warming is underway. Some workers think the models are under sensitive to CO₂. They believe that all trees will die, that agricultural land will be under drought and that famine will result.

Warming could destabilize the methane hydrates under the permafrost. Methane is 8 times stronger than CO₂ in its effect on global warming. This last happened 25 million years ago. The program concluded with a warning that we have less than a decade to avoid these very bad effects.

Even if some of the scarier predictions of this program are exaggerated, it seems there is a real problem building up. We watched Al Gore's film "An Inconvenient Truth" and bought his book of the same title. I have been culling articles from magazines on the subject and collecting book reviews. Most of the World is convinced that the effect is real.

Ron Jones recently sent me a copy of a speech by Senator James Inhofe, Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Inhofe complains about coverage by the media of climate change. Since 1895 he maintains that the media has alternated between global warming and cooling scares. He believes that there are advocates of alarmism who are seeking to stifle the voices of scientists skeptical of global warming. He has a list of specific rebuttals to claims made by Gore and others. I will do my best to check these out, but I am afraid that our US

government does not have a good record for scientific judgement. I am joining the ranks of the proponents of air quality control. I remember when the UK adopted the Clean Air Act in 1953. London, which previously was filthy from coal burning, was cleaned up in a decade. We should be pursuing means of keeping both CO₂ and particulate emissions within reasonable limits

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CONNECT THE DOTS: WHY THE IMMIGRANT PROBLEM?

By Ariel J. Thomann, M.D.

<mailto:ajthomann@pol.net>

In 1798, the Rev. Robert Thomas Malthus was wrong. He predicted mass starvation when the world's population exceeded what the world could feed. He was wrong because he had limited data, and no crystal ball. He was wrong as to when and how the catastrophe would arrive.

We have better data now. Earth's sustainable "carrying capacity" for human beings is between 3-4 billion. But current world population is well over 6 billion, and growing fast.

The Biblical book of Genesis (1:28) ordered "be fruitful, and multiply; fill the earth, and subdue it". Well, the Earth has been filled. Why has that order not yet been rescinded?

The reasons (for many in what we now call the Evangelical Christian right) relate to ideas embodied in two Papal Encyclicals: "Casti Connubii" (1930) and "Humanae Vitae" (1968). The latter was questioned as soon as it had been promulgated because it was known then that worldwide, upwards of 3 million people would continue to starve every year. Someone calculated in 1968 that the two Encyclicals doomed 20 million Catholic babies to be conceived and born by the year 2000, for the sole purpose of starving to death.

Many other Catholic babies did not starve. They lived on, and continue to overfill the Earth. Many of them are now in Mexico and Central America, and they struggle to feed the next

generations. Millions of them have entered the United States illegally as they struggle to feed their families.

Population control was at one time perceived by some in Latin America as a plot to enslave their nations by keeping them underpopulated while Americans and Europeans steal their resources. We may have come full circle. The current Bap-tholic government of our nation is denying much of the rest of the world the resources that might enable them to get their population growth under control.

If our government continues to allow the Earth to be increasingly overfilled, they are simply aggravating the illegal immigration problem for many decades to come. Fences and armed guards will not hold back the hungry millions. Just as water finds weak spots in levees, so too the desperate will find (or create) cracks and crevices along the border.

The time has come for our leaders to abandon unrealistic "convictions" and "beliefs", and start using reason and science as the basis for their decisions. I hope they do so very soon, before human overconsumption of fossil fuels and potable water ruins our atmosphere, oceans and arable lands beyond the point of no return.

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Ron's Ramblings

By Ron Titus

[1] Living in the real world is not necessarily easy. **To survive**, different people use different tactics. "Flight or fight" are traditional responses to threats of danger.

Some use flight by escaping to a safer place in this physical world (as in "an undisclosed location"), while others use flight by escaping to the psychic world of the creative imagination (what I call fantasyland). For many this fantasyland can be and too often is the supernatural world of religion.

Of course, the Cheney-Bush Administration uses fight as a way to deal with what appears to be threatening (as in pre-emptive acts of violence).

The humanist approach to threats is to face (fight) them by using one's natural reason aided by the collective wisdom of the secular community.

[2] I **struggle** (daily?) with trying to live in peace and harmony with the people of my two worlds: of theists and atheists.

[3] When I expressed these concerns at a recent HOH (Humanists of Houston) meeting, **Jerry Harris** slipped me a note which said: "This Above All Else. Unto Thine Own Self Be True. (Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 3)"

[4] At that same meeting, **Tom Brucia** pointed out to the group that Samson (of Samson & Delilah fame) was equivalent to a modern day suicide bomber: He killed himself to kill his enemies.

[5] At the October HCOF (Houston Church Of Freethought) service, three presentations were made:

(1) **Bennie Matusek** defined morality as "society's most basic rules". The rules are based on (a) necessity (which he seemed to describe as survival by exemplifying it with the Eskimo tradition of abandoning female infants in the snow) and (b) opportunity (which Matusek interpreted as the phenomenon of voids in leadership are generally if not always filled by the "might is right" principle). People accept the rules by (an unwritten) social contract.

Then, Matusek listed the conditions required for an "ideal morality": a world that is (a) free, (b) open minded, (c) fair, and (d) respecting other beliefs.

(2) **Page Williams** reviewed the works of Robert M Sapolsky PhD who among other things studied baboons.

One of his (or Williams'?) humorous conclusions was: the grooming behavior in humans can be described in psychiatric terminology as a compulsive obsessive disorder.

(3) **Jim Ashmore** described his interest in and work to rehabilitate homeless dogs ... one dog at a time.

[6] At a luncheon I said that my **new Trinity** are Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins. They are modern day prophets, saying what needs to be said.

[7] As long as I am free of Alzheimer's, I will always remember **Nancy Chancey** (the Freethinker who died 2006 0911) as a person who never "put on airs", had keen insight, and expressed herself in a disarmingly charming and humorous way.

To wit: When Enron Inc was going through the final stages of its scandalous demise, with a straight face Nancy said "You know, I never thought I had enough education to work at Enron. (pause) 'But I could shred paper.'" (uproar laughter by audience)

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Food for thought and/or thought for indigestion

By Ron Titus

[1] Friendships end when the value of truth surpasses the value of friendship.

[Idea attributed by Art Mouser Jr to Aristotle, 2006 0924su]

[2] A friendship founded on business is a good deal better than a business founded on friendship.

[John D Rockefeller, quoted in *The New York Times* and re-quoted in *The Week*, 2006 0929, P 10]

[3] When a man tells you that he got rich through hard work, ask him: Whose?

[Don Marquis, quoted in the *St Petersburg (Fla) Times* and requoted in *The Week*, 2006 0929, P 10]

[4] "Hell is other people."

[Jean Paul Sartre, quoted by Tom Brucia, 2006 1001]

"The more I get to know people, the more I love my dog."

[HFA NL, 2006 09, P 5]

[5] "Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use."

[Emily Post, *Writer's Almanac*, 2006 1003]

[6] Stupidity is unreasonable ignorance, incomprehensible ignorance.

[7] "There is no sin except stupidity."

[Oscar Wilde, quoted by Francis Macnab, "Preaching the New Faith", *The Historical Jesus Goes to Church*, P 119]

[8] "Everybody complains of his memory, but nobody of his judgment,"

[[François VI, duke de La Rochefoucauld](#), *Writer's Almanac*, 2006 0915]

[9] "A man ought to read just as inclination leads him, for what he reads as a task will do him little good."

[[Samuel Johnson](#), *Writer's Almanac*, 2006 0918]

[10] "Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures."

[[Samuel Johnson](#), *Writer's Almanac*, 2006 0918]

[11] "I want nothing to do with any religion concerned with keeping the masses satisfied to live in hunger, filth, and ignorance."

[Jawaharlal Nehru, *GrassRoots News*, 2000 12, P 3]

[12] (T)he term globalization is simply an updated, clearer-sounding word for colonialization and all that goes with it.

[Glenna S Jackson, "The Jesus Seminar in Africa", *The Historical Jesus Goes to Church*, P 84]

[13] If a nation expects to be both ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."

"A society that will trade a little liberty for a little order will lose both and deserve neither."

[Thomas Jefferson, *GrassRoots News*, 2000 12, P 4]

[14] Water in Bolivia costs one-fifth of one's income.

[Democracy Now, KPFT Radio, 2006 1005th0936]

[15] "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."

[Pope Benedict XVI, quoting the 14th century Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologus during a lecture in Germany, *Time*, 2006 0925]

"The Holy Father is very sorry that some passages of his speech may have sounded offensive to the sensibilities of Muslim believers."

[Vatican Secretary of State Tarcisio Bertone, reading a statement of apology after the Pope's remarks sparked a worldwide furor, *Time*, 2006 0925]

"I'm sorry my remarks about Islamic violence provoked Islamic violence."

[Pope Benedict XVI in an *Akron Beacon Journal* cartoon, *The Week*, 2006 0929, P 20]

[16] American tax money is killing Palestinians.

[heard on KPFT Radio, 2006 0926tu1300(c)]

[17] "The cost of maintaining people as inmates in prison is so appalling - \$60-80,000 a year - that I feel as if our culture is the 'criminal'. Imagine, instead, our front-loading that volume of money into community improvement, inner city and rural job development, and genuine education instead of waiting 'til these ignored and abused kids are beyond the pale, unable to learn or trust.

"Child rearing is a real challenge. Let a culture invest in that and stop arguing about how best to punish and kill offenders. It's an obscene situation."

[Holly Nolan, *GrassRoots News*, 2000 12, P 6]

[18] Q - How does Dubya deal with mistakes?

A - "Stay the course!"

[19] "If we had it to do over again, we'd do exactly the same thing."

[US VP Dick Cheney on the Iraq war, *National Catholic Reporter*, 2009 0922, P 3]

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The Only Debate On Intelligent Design That Is Worthy Of Its subject

Moderator: We're here today to debate the hot new topic, evolution versus Intelligent Des---

(Scientist pulls out baseball bat.)

Moderator: Hey, what are you doing?

(Scientist breaks Intelligent Design advocate's kneecap.)

Intelligent Design advocate: YEAAARRRRRGGGHHHH!
YOU BROKE MY KNEECAP!

Scientist: Perhaps it only appears that I broke your kneecap. Certainly, all the evidence points to the hypothesis I broke your kneecap. For example, your kneecap is broken; it appears to be a fresh wound; and I am holding a baseball bat, which is spattered with your blood. However, a mere preponderance of evidence doesn't mean anything. Perhaps your kneecap was designed that way.

Certainly, there are some features of the current situation that are inexplicable according to the "naturalistic" explanation you have just advanced, such as the exact contours of the excruciating pain that you are experiencing right now.

Intelligent Design advocate: AAAAH! THE PAIN!

Scientist: Frankly, I personally find it completely implausible that the random actions of a scientist such as

myself could cause pain of this particular kind. I have no precise explanation for why I find this hypothesis implausible --- it just is. Your knee must have been designed that way!

Intelligent Design advocate: YOU BASTARD! YOU KNOW YOU DID IT!

Scientist: I surely do not. How can we know anything for certain? Frankly, I think we should expose people to all points of view. Furthermore, you should really re-examine whether your hypothesis is scientific at all: the breaking of your kneecap happened in the past, so we can't rewind and run it over again, like a laboratory experiment. Even if we could, it wouldn't prove that I broke your kneecap the previous time. Plus, let's not even get into the fact that the entire universe might have just popped into existence right before I said this sentence, with all the evidence of my alleged kneecap-breaking already pre-formed.

Intelligent Design advocate: That's a load of bullshit sophistry! Get me a doctor and a lawyer, not necessarily in that order, and we'll see how that plays in court!

Scientist (turning to audience): And so we see, ladies and gentlemen, when push comes to shove, advocates of Intelligent Design do not actually believe any of the arguments that they profess to believe. When it comes to

matters that hit home, they prefer evidence, the scientific method, testable hypotheses, and naturalistic explanations.

In fact, they strongly privilege naturalistic explanations over supernatural hocus-pocus or metaphysical wankery. It is only within the reality-distortion field of their ideological crusade that they give credence to the flimsy, ridiculous arguments which we so commonly see on display. I must confess, it kind of felt good, for once, to be the one spouting free-form bullshit; it's so terribly easy and

relaxing, compared to marshaling rigorous arguments backed up by empirical evidence. But I fear that if I were to continue, then it would be habit-forming, and bad for my soul. Therefore, I bid you adieu.

Have a good day :-)

Mark Siskel

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Book Review

Atheism: A Reader

S.T. Joshi, Editor

Review by New Jersey Humanist Network

[This book will be reviewed at the 'Idea's Club' November meeting.]

ATHEISM: A Reader is a unique anthology that presents for the first time a comprehensive selection of writings on atheism, agnosticism, and skepticism by some of the world's most celebrated thinkers, past and present. Arranged thematically, the essays in this valuable collection cover many of the significant areas in which atheists have questioned religious orthodoxy. The authors eloquently address the most significant questions concerning religious belief: Is belief in God justified? Is religion necessary to live a moral life? What is the role of religion in the political arena? Should religion be taught in schools? How harmful has religion been in the suppression of women's rights, the subversion of clear thinking, and the advancement of science?

Included are essays by Bertrand Russell and A.J. Ayer on the existence of God; Percy Bysshe Shelley on the "argument from design"; John Stuart Mill and Antony Flew on immortality and life after death; David Hume and George Eliot on the dangers of fanaticism, superstition, and religious fundamentalism; Charles Darwin on how his scientific studies led him to discard his religious beliefs; H.L. Mencken on the 1925 Scopes trial; Carl

Sagan on demons and the persecution of witches; Elizabeth Cady Stanton on Christianity's demeaning influence on women's social status; Robert Ingersoll on God and the constitution; Gore Vidal on modern American fundamentalism; and many other notable writers on controversial issues.

Editor S.T. Joshi has carefully selected these essays, many of which are landmarks in the history of atheistic thought. He has also supplied explanatory annotations and a comprehensive introduction that succinctly and forcefully summarizes the atheist critique of religion.

, S.T.

Genre: Philosophy

Subject: Atheism

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Membership and Contact Information:

Whether you are a Humanist, atheist, or Freethinker seeking to pursue a meaningful life without theism, or simply reexamining your beliefs and exploring the Freethought approach to knowledge and moral issues, consider contacting one of our organizations. We will be happy to answer any questions about Freethought, Humanism, or atheism.

Humanists of Houston (HOH): Houston chapter of the American Humanist Association (AHA) / Founded 1978 / Tom Brucia (281-273-9030) <mailto:tbrucia@houston.rr.com>

Humanist Association of Montgomery County, Isaac Asimov Chapter (Asimov Humanists): Montgomery County chapter of the American Humanist Association / Curt Loose <mailto:contact@asimovhumanists.org>

Houston Church Of Freethought (HCOF) / Art Fay <mailto:afay3@houston.rr.com>

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Statement of Principles:

The following are the core principles upon which our member-organizations are allied. Individual member-organizations may have missions beyond the scope of the Alliance itself, but any Houston-based group whose mission is compatible with these principles is welcome to join our community of organizations.

We are committed to freedom of thought and expression, as well as human rights and equality.

Our beliefs are based on healthy skepticism, physical evidence, the scientific method, and naturalistic philosophy - unfettered by faith, mysticism, the supernatural, or any other form of superstition.

We stand for the pursuit of moral excellence, ethical integrity, and social responsibility based on humanity's needs and happiness in *this* world and not in an alleged "after life."

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