

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion ..."  
The first words of the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution

## San Francisco Atheists

December 2009 Newsletter

### December meeting program

#### Winter Solstice Party

Come join us for our annual Winter Solstice party.

**Location:**

Chevys 201 3rd Street (cross Howard), Montgomery BART station

**Date:**

December 19 at 6:30 PM

**Menu:**

Fajitas Buffet including Sizzling Steak\* and Chicken, veggies, enchiladas, Caesar salad, chips, fixins'

**Price:**

\$25 per person includes all you can eat, unlimited soft drinks, tax, tip, raffle ticket; \$8 for children 12 and under. Cash bar for alcoholic drinks. You have to pay at the door – check or cash only please.

**Set-up:**

This year we will have a mingle dinner. Sit some, stand some, talk to your fellow Solsticers. We will only have table/seats for about 50 – if you need to sit all evening – no worry we will have a seat for you.

**RSVP:**

By December 12th to [larry.kaufman@yahoo.com](mailto:larry.kaufman@yahoo.com). We have an 80 person limit.



Look forward to seeing you all there!

### November meeting

#### Religulous

It was a very lively meeting. After viewing Religulous the Bill Maher movie Larry Hicok led the group in a very informative open discussion of the movie's messages. The conversation was very stimulating. The biggest take away for me was the idea that being open about your Atheist point of view can have an effect on others. For example if you grow up in an environ-

ment where no one around you is openly stating they are an Atheist then you will have little exposure, or none, to other non-Theist views. We do not always need to proactively try to convert others, sometimes its good enough just to be public about your views. And be ready and willing to share them.

[Photos from the meeting](#)

### East Bay Atheists meeting

#### Annual Solstice Party

**Annual Solstice Party**  
**Sunday, December 13,**  
**1:30 PM**

**King Dong**  
**Chinese Restaurant**  
**2429 Shattuck Ave.,**  
**Berkeley**

This year, at the request of several members, we are trying something new for our Solstice Dinner. The King Dong Restaurant is located in downtown Berkeley, between Haste and Channing, with nearby access to free parking. The food is quite good, the prices are reasonable, and they are able to arrange tables so we can sit together.

Besides as our Jewish friends love to say, Jews usually celebrate Christmas by going out for Chinese food. If it works for them...

Each year we have an informal dinner and pleasant conversation. Tell us what you would like next year's meetings to be like.

Larry Hicok, Coordinator:  
510-222-7580

Ski Grabowski, Treasurer:  
510-652-8350  
[info@eastbayatheists.org](mailto:info@eastbayatheists.org)

Our January meeting will take place on Sunday, January 17 in the Library. Details next month.

### What's on

#### Calendar of events

Click on an icon below to see what's on:



Let us know what's on in your world

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## Atheists News by Larry Hicok

### Atheists and the Gay and Women Rights Movements

With the passage of Prop 8, banning same sex marriage, the Gay Rights movement has become not only increasingly angry with the level of discrimination they face, but also increasingly aware of the role played by the Religious Right in determining government policy. Recent large anti-Prop 8 demonstrations have prominently demanded the separation of church and state. If we as Atheists want to develop even the beginnings of political strength, we must respond to this budding awareness.



Shortly before the passage of Prop 8, San Francisco Atheists and East Bay Atheists sponsored a demonstration at the Mormon Temple in Oakland, protesting the predominance of Mormon money in the Prop 8 campaign. As far as I am able to determine, this was the first anti-Prop 8 demonstration focusing on the Mormons. We reached out to other groups, and this fortunately made

the event a success, since only about ten Atheists bothered to attend. Most of the attendees were gay refugees from the Mormon Church. Soon after the passage of Prop 8, approximately 500 people showed up at the Oakland Temple in a spirited protest. Later an even larger demonstration took place at the Mormon Temple in Los Angeles.

Originally the No On 8 campaign was reluctant to mention the role of religion, as some liberal religionists are strong supporters. We provided the spark that initiated this increased awareness of religion in suppressing gay rights. Unfortunately we were unable to provide the people power necessary to establish our strength as allies of this large and powerful movement.

Led by the Catholics, the Right-to-Life movement has staged an annual West Coast "Walk for Life" in San Francisco for several years. Each January they bus in thousands

of well-meaning theists who can only understand reproductive rights issues in terms of the woman's duty to give birth to the human soul divinely created at the moment of conception. Four years ago organizers of the counter demonstration in favor of women's rights reached out to us for support. Both East Bay and San Francisco Atheists participated in the last three counter demonstrations, but again the turnout by members was very poor.

As they say organizing Atheists is like herding cats. We are justifiably proud at not being herd animals, but all of us would like to see Atheists rights and perspectives more respected. The answer to this is not finding an acceptable name to call ourselves, one that will mask our position and ingratiate us to theists. Several groups of nonbelievers already fill that niche.

The solution for us is the same as the solution for the Civil Rights and Gay Rights movements. We will be respected when we can get people into the streets for crucial demonstrations, when our vote needs to be courted by politicians, when we simply say "Enough!" If we don't respect ourselves enough to become politically active around our issues, then we cannot expect to earn the respect of society and the other minority rights movements.

East Bay and San Francisco Atheists will again participate in the counter demonstration to the Walk for Life on Saturday, January 23, in San Francisco. This time, in response to member feedback, we will mainly participate in the march, arriving toward the end of the long rally. Please help us take advantage of this excellent opportunity to enhance the understanding of the need for the separation of religion and government, and to develop respect among our natural allies. Details will be released to members in a special email preceding the event. It really does feel so much better to take part in creating the world we want, rather than sitting back and complaining about how backwards people are.

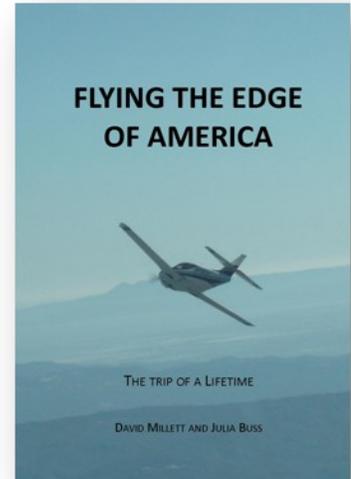


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## Flying the Edge of America

### A new book by one of our own

In the summer of 2008 we flew our small, single engine, airplane around the edges of the contiguous United States of America. Along the way, we encountered America's small towns, National Parks, and National Monuments. On the most dangerous and exciting adventure of our lives we flew into unanticipated ghastly weather, thunderstorms, and brushed with hurricanes. In the end, we discovered a land much more complex than we had imagined, far larger than we could believe, and more beautiful than we dreamed possible. This book is the story of our flight around the edge of America, and the journey that brought us to a deeper understanding and love of our adopted country.



Available At:  
[Createspace.com](http://Createspace.com)  
[www.createspace.com/3400048](http://www.createspace.com/3400048)

## Quote of the month

### Nature of God

"It is said that men may not be the dreams of the Gods, but rather that the Gods are the dreams of men." - Carl Sagan

## Joke of the month

