



"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

### June 2010 Newsletter

## June meeting program

## Rally against the Pope

### Summer Solstice potluck picnic

### Not even god is exempt from child rape!

Our normal Saturday night monthly meeting is to be replaced by this year's: Summer Solstice potluck picnic on **Saturday June 19 at 11:00 a.m.**

Join us for our annual Summer Solstice potluck picnic at Pine Lake in Stern Grove. We will provide hot dogs, burgers (veggie and beef), drinks, and condiments. Please bring a dish to share.

It will cost \$5 per person. Children and dogs are very welcome (only atheist dogs allowed). And we will have lots of: food, drink, and discussion. Please bring your Frisbees, ball games, and good cheer.

Come and share some time with your fellow Atheists.



On Sunday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, the San Francisco Atheists sponsored a protest demonstration aimed at the Pope of the world-wide Catholic Church.

The demonstration was held at the large St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral at the corner of Gough and Geary Streets, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Approximately 18 to 20 people participated in the protest. About 10



signs were provided for protesters by Don Havis and Larry Hicok, and a few enterprising participants provided their own signs. Some of the signs brought our message home to parishioners and passers-by with messages such as "The Pope Must Resign," "The Pope is not above the law," "I'm sorry is not good enough", and "The Pope must punish pedophile priests."

A flier detailed a small number of particularly egregious cases of pedophile priest abuse cases and Benedict's role when he was Cardinal Ratzinger in covering up deflecting proper punishment for the involved priests. This flier was handed out by our protesters to parishioners as they entered or exited the church. About a third of the passing parishioners accepted the hand-out. The common theme of the protest was a call for justice for the victims of priest abuse and the immediate resignation of Pope Benedict XVI as a minimal gesture toward that end.

We received some limited TV coverage from NBC, which was briefly shown on Channel 3 Bay Area News, with Diane Dwyer at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Thank you to all that participated, for helping us make visible the guilt of this dubious leader.

Summer Solstice potluck picnic Saturday June 19 at 11:00 a.m.  
Pine Lake in Stern Grove.



**See the photos**

**Don Havis**

**See the video**

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

East Bay Atheists

Meeting program

This month we feature a talk by David O'Brien entitled "Freethought in the World's Most Christian Country," dealing with his efforts in setting up a Freethought organization in the Philippines.



The Philippines is arguably the most Christian nation in the world with a population of 92 million, of which 90% are Christian while the remainder are mostly Muslim. Even though their constitution is similar to that of the USA, the separation between Church and State is always fragile. In particular the Roman Catholic Church exerts a huge influence over politics, education and social issues. However the recent surge in confidence of the worldwide rationalist and secularist viewpoint has inspired an active Freethought movement in the Philippines that is providing a vehicle for attracting freethinkers and offering a forum for debate, education and activism.

David O'Brien has visited the Philippines numerous times over the past decade and has become an active supporter of filipinofreethinkers.org, based in Manila. His talk will cover the challenges facing the Freethought movement there and highlight some of their positive recent activities and future plans.

O'Brien spent 25 years as a technology executive in Silicon Valley, which included 18 years as CEO of several semiconductor companies. Originally from the U.K. he obtained a PhD in electrical engineering from the University of Wales, U.K. and an MBA from Santa Clara University.

Please join us for this talk and the discussions afterwards.

Sunday, June 20, 1:30 to 3:30 PM, Berkeley Main Library, 3rd Floor Meeting Room 2090 Kittredge St., One Block From Downtown Berkeley BART

BART Access: From the downtown Berkeley BART Station, walk 1.5 blocks south on Shattuck Avenue, then turn right on Kittredge. The library is a half block down the street on the left.

Parking: The city parking lot at Allston & Harold Way, a short block from the library, is \$5 for the entire day on Sunday. If you don't mind walking, take University to MLK, turn right and then instead of proceeding left on Allston to the parking lot, turn right. In several blocks you will see parking on the side streets.

Larry Hicok, Coordinator: 510-222-7580, Ski Grabowski, Treasurer: 510-652-8350, info@eastbayatheists.org

The cross is a recognizable brand

Religiously neutral options

If we, the US public, wish to honor our fallen soldiers, which I personally feel we should. Then we need to do it in a religiously neutral way. As an atheist it offends me spending public money on religious symbols. Why not honor our fallen heroes with a US flag or a statue of a soldier; there are so many religiously neutral options. A christian cross is inappropriate as it does not include all of us. And please do not try to pretend that the cross is not a symbol of religious belief. The cross is a recognizable brand.

A brand is the identity of a specific product, service, or business. A brand can take many forms, including a name, sign, symbol, color combination or slogan. The word brand began simply as a way to tell one person's cattle from another by means of a hot iron stamp. A trademark is a legally protected brand name. The word brand has continued to evolve to encompass identity: in effect the personality of a product, company or service.

Given this I think it safe to say that the christian cross is a brand that represents religious belief. The idea behind this country is pluralism and separation of church and state. If you personally believe in a mystical god, that is your own business. When will you learn that the rest of us do not care, and certainly do not wish to spend public moneys on promoting your fantasy?

David Millett

May meeting catch up

What can the Atheist movement learn from the gay movement?

So what did the San Francisco Atheists learn from Greta Christina?

Well the first thing was: when you invite Greta to talk we better find a larger room, as Schroeder's Restaurant was packed to overflowing at her presentation.

The second thing we learnt was: what a fantastic speaker Greta is. With no aid from projected slides or flashing lights, using only well written notes, a clear speaking voice, and her vim and vigor; Greta spoke for over an hour and kept everyone completely enthralled.

The third thing we learnt was: everyone wants atheists kept at a distance. Even "radical" groups like the LGBT often will not associate

publicly with us. Greta made the point that the modern LGBT movement is seeking mainstream acceptance, and association with atheists will not help them with that goal. As always we are the lepers of social movements. Somehow this makes me feel proud.

The third thing we learnt from Greta was: we can learn from the mistakes made by the LGBT movement and that the modern atheist movement is perhaps 20 years behind them.

If you missed this meeting you missed a really good one.





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

How Weird Street Fair



See the photos

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

## Atheist News

### Ultimate Praying Championship

---

[Check out this wacky YouTube video.](#)

---

### Neanderthal genome yields insights into human evolution and evidence of interbreeding

---

After extracting ancient DNA from the 40,000-year-old bones of Neanderthals, scientists have obtained a draft sequence of the Neanderthal genome, yielding important new insights into the evolution of modern humans.

[Read the full story](#)

---

### Bringing the Vatican to Justice

---

I confess that, as a critic of religion, I have paid too little attention to the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Frankly, it always felt unsportsmanlike to shoot so large and languorous a fish in so tiny a barrel. This scandal was one of the most spectacular "own goals" in the history of religion, and there seemed to be no need to deride faith at its most vulnerable and self-abased. Even in retrospect, it is easy to understand the impulse to avert one's eyes: Just imagine a pious mother and father sending their beloved child to the Church of a Thousand Hands for spiritual instruction, only to have him raped and terrified into silence by threats of hell. And then imagine this occurring to tens of thousands of children in our own time -- and to children beyond reckoning for over a thousand years. The spectacle of faith so utterly misplaced, and so fully betrayed, is simply too depressing to think about.

[Read the full story](#)

---

### Replica cross mysteriously appears in Mojave

---

Authorities call it illegal and remove it from federal preserve.

[Read the full story](#)

---

### Red Flag to release '8: The Mormon Proposition'

---

The new documentary "8: The Mormon Proposition" will be released simultaneously in theaters, as an On Demand cable and satellite offering and through digital download channels on June 18. The doc recounts the Mormon Church's involvement in the campaign on behalf of California's Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage in the state. The film will open in San Francisco and East Bay theaters on June 25.

[See web site](#)

---

### Pope admits church's guilt in abuse scandal

---

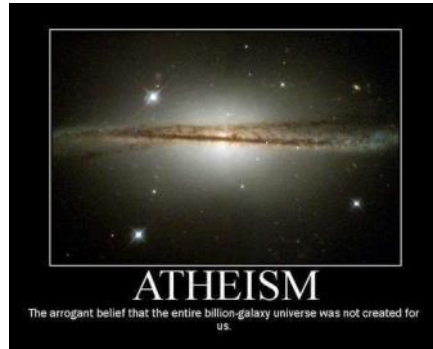
In his most thorough admission of the church's guilt in the clerical sex abuse scandal, Pope Benedict XVI said Tuesday the greatest persecution of the institution "is born from the sins within the church," and not from a campaign by outsiders.

[Read the full story](#)

---



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



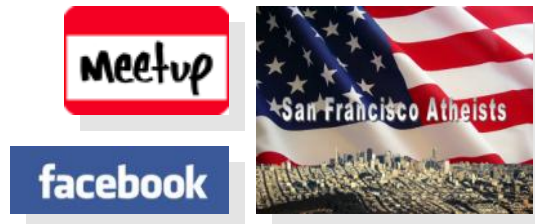
Quote of the month

Gene Roddenberry

We are a young species. I think if we allow ourselves a little development, understanding what we've done already, we'll be surprised what a cherishable, lovely group that humans can evolve into.

Find out what' is coming up

Click a graphic below to open that calendar



Joke of the month

Non Sequitur Wiley Miller

