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The Voice of Reason

A New Way to ACT

If for some strange reason you haven't yet noticed, this year has also brought a new newsletter format! I hope to be providing you all with a more diverse set of articles and information, and would welcome any suggestions you may have. Keep reading, my friends!

Our New 2013 Leadership

The Atheist Community of Tulsa would like to welcome our new Board of Directors and Triumvirate! The Unholy Trinity will include Eric, Justin, and Stephanie. Your Secretary is Amanda (hello again), Treasurer is West, and your wonderful Trustees are Sandy, Steven, Leah, Tom, Misty, and Sam. Our Bylaws were also amended in the vote last month. I'd like to thank every one of you who voted in this election; you truly make us a successful organization!

To keep you informed on our Bylaws, I'll provide you with a quick recap of the changes:

- increased the number of trustees from three to six
- annual dues will be decided by the Board of Directors
- better defined the roles of Secretary and Treasurer
- allowed for electronic voting for elections
- reduced the time to challenge election results from ninety to thirty days

If you have any questions about the Bylaws, leadership, dues, etc., feel free to ask any Board Member at any time. Our new emails will be included at the end of this newsletter.

Book Club and Bible Babble Changes

It's finally happened: we have all decided that reading the Bible is frustrating, boring, or otherwise a waste of our time. The knowledge we have gained from discussing its horrible allegories, contradictions, and vague timeline have been helpful to many of us; but now we want to expand our horizons to a world of real knowledge.

We've decided to change the format from Bible Babble to an actual Book Club, where most of our focus will be on books relating to secularism, morality, and evolutionary studies.

Since we have less than a month to prepare, the first book will be "Letter to a Christian Nation" by Sam Harris. With only 97 pages of actual text, this book has managed to make the entire argument for religion and morality accessible to everyone.

The Book Club format will be somewhat similar to previous Bible Babble events. We hope to spend more time discussing the subject of our book and getting ideas for the future. We welcome kids and new members to this event. You will not be disappointed!

Membership and Dues Drive

Later this month, we will be starting a membership and dues drive that will last through the month of February. At least one ACT Officer will be in attendance at all of our regularly scheduled events and will be able to collect dues via credit card, check, or cash. (Buying us drinks is always appreciated but will not count toward dues.) Eric has put together a list of expenses from 2012, as well as a 2013 wish list. We are hoping that if the general membership is aware of our annual budget, more people will see the value of their contributions.

This past year we have seen an exponential increase in our online members, with our Facebook group alone at over 900, yet ACT had less than 60 actual dues-paying members by

December. This was a very real problem for the voting process, and something the new Board of Directors is taking into account.

Actual Profit from Dues

In the past year, the Atheist Community of Tulsa had 51 dues-paying members. (And here I will state that there are some of you who did not pay the \$20 dues but instead contributed more to our charitable programs.) It is also important to note that the charitable contributions from our members, dues-paying or not, when specified, have gone directly to the programs we have supported. According to our records, the membership dues we received (from the 51 people who paid) raised \$1020 for the Atheist Community of Tulsa. In all actuality, this is about an EIGHTH of what we have to spend every year. (Feel guilty all you want.... It gets worse.)

Actual Total Cost of ACT Gatherings in 2012

- Feeding the Homeless: \$300/month, \$3600/year
- Agora Rental Fees: \$50/month, \$600/year
- Website: \$30/month, \$360/year
- Meetup Fees: \$12/month, \$144/year
- ACT shirts (trial) \$200
- Safety Vests for Adopt-A-Highway: \$150
- FreeOK 2012: \$1300 loan
- FreeOK Cookout: \$200
- Bible Babble Beer: \$500+/year
- Camp Quest OK Sponsorship: \$350 contribution from the Board of Directors
- Movie Night Room Rental: \$100
- Radio Ad: \$100
- Tulsa Pride Parade Table: \$300
- EvolveFish ACT Fundraiser: \$500

The ACT expenditures for 2012 total \$8,404.00. This was only possible because of many personal donations from the 2012 Board of Directors and some of our more generous members.

Our goal for this year is to have at least 500 dues-paying members, which will put our budget at \$10,000. At that point we can afford to host speaking events, take ACT bus trips, have printed literature, and possibly do a radio show or podcast. Please make sure you help us help others. We can't get bigger in the future without your support here and now!

ACT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 30, 2012, 11:15am

Present: Eric, Stephanie, Justin, William, Amanda, Leah, Steven, Sandy, Misty, Tom, Terry

- Motion passed to create formal non-profit status for ACT
- Motion passed to withdraw funds from current ACT bank account, hold in a secure location, and transfer to a new account with non-profit status with records from treasurer
- Motion passed to transfer actok.org domain and create new email addresses
- Motion passed to make Tom an Assistant Treasurer under the title of "Finance Committee"
- Motion passed to send a letter to an individual regarding involvement with Big Brothers and Big Sisters

Online BoD decisions:

- Motion passed to allow Terry to continue his role as Events Coordinator
- Motion passed to allow Terry, Ric, and Douglas to be FB moderators
- Motion passed to renew Meetup account at \$72 for 6 months
- Motion passed to hold Monthly Meetings at Hardesty Library for 2013

New Dates and Location for Official Monthly Meetings

In order to better serve our members and to eliminate unnecessary expenses, the Board of Directors has voted to use a different location for our Official ACT Monthly Meetings this year. We have not burned any bridges with the new owners of the Agora Coffee House, but we did come to the conclusion that paying \$50 every month from the general funds was not exactly in our budget at this time.

Our new location will be at the Hardesty Library located at 93rd Street and Memorial Drive in Tulsa. The library is easily accessible to our members, close to the Creek turnpike and Highway 169. Their meeting rooms will easily be able to accommodate the size of our group, and will not cost us anything to reserve.

Since Hardesty Library is a quite popular meeting place, we were unable to continue holding our meetings on the fourth Sunday of every month. Instead, the Board of Directors decided to change the dates to the first Sunday of the month to allow for an adequate amount of time to transition (and because the library had those dates open all year).

Food and drinks are welcome in the meeting room; but just like any event, we ask that you refrain from making a mess or at least clean up after yourselves. There will be adequate parking and plenty of space for the kids to play as well.

It is also important for me to note that due to the scheduling change there will not be an Official Monthly Meeting for the month of January. Our regularly scheduled meetings will continue starting February 3.

ACT Community Updates

Perhaps one of the best things about the Atheist Community of Tulsa is the overwhelming desire to help others. We are truly a community of caring individuals. From donating blood to helping fellow members fix a flat tire, the men and women in this organization have shown repeatedly that two hands working can do more than a thousand clasped in prayer.

Last year we volunteered for the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless a number of times. Personally, it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my entire life and I am so very glad we had the opportunity to serve the community in this way. We will still be doing so this year but on a “fill-in” basis. When the Tulsa Day Center has a cancellation in their meal calendar, they will call us with a week notice so we can step up and help.

When this happens, we will be sure to contact our members in every way possible to let you know our need for volunteers and/or donations. This will include an email from Meetup, a notification in the Facebook group, and a special note on our website if possible.

Even though we will not be volunteering for the Tulsa Day Center on a regularly scheduled basis, we still maintain close contact with them. We have always been welcome, and always will be. And when the time comes to step up and save the day, we expect you all to help out if you can.

Thank you all for your continued works in our community. Remember that you are making a difference in the world every day by doing good for goodness’ sake alone.

This Month’s Events

Saturday, January 12
12:00pm, Philbrook Museum
Philbrook Second Saturday and Kid Meetup

Bring your kids and imaginations from 12:00pm-4:00pm. It’ll be free and fun for the whole family!

Saturday, January 12
7:30pm, Kilkenny’s Irish Pub
DWA

Come have a drink with your fellow heathens at our most popular event!

Wednesday, January 16
7:00pm, Elote Café
Social Dinner

Their amazing menu has something for everyone, including some amazing margaritas!

Sunday, January 20
2:00pm, Yost Residence in BA
Book Club/Bible Babble

This month we will be reviewing “Letter to a Christian Nation” and choosing next month’s book.

Friday, January 25
7:00pm, Fox and Hound
DWA

The DWA South location this month has pool tables and a sports bar atmosphere, not to mention the coolest heathens in town!

Sunday, January 27
7:00pm, Sheridan Lanes
Unholy Rollers

If you have any talent in the sport of bowling, ACT needs you to build up the team so we can beat the Oklahoma City Atheists!

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Our Membership and Dues Drive is ongoing through the month of February. You may pay your dues to any ACT Board Member or online.

There will not be an Official Monthly Meeting for January. Our next Official Meeting will be held Sunday, February 3, at the Maple meeting room in Hardesty Library.

ACT Kids' Corner

A Diamond Planet

Scientists have been learning a lot about a planet called "55 Cancri e". They gave it that name because it orbits the star 55 Cancri, about 40 light-years from Earth. (A light-year is how far light travels in a year, about 6 trillion miles.) Although all of the planets around 55 Cancri are invisible to astronomers, they are so big that their gravity pulls on the star and causes it to "wobble" back and forth! Using extremely sensitive instruments, the scientists have discovered some interesting things about 55 Cancri e.

This far-away planet travels all the way around its star every 18 hours. Just imagine having a year on Earth that was less than a day long! It orbits the star so quickly because it's a lot closer. In fact, it's so close that scientists tell us the surface temperature is almost 4,000 degrees!

Based on the amount of light 55 Cancri e blocks when it passes in front of its star, astronomers estimate that its diameter (the distance from one side to the other, straight through the planet) is about twice as big as our own planet. Using other information, they also found that the mass of the planet is about 8.4 times that of Earth, and they can now guess what it's made from.

One of the most interesting studies show that 55 Cancri e might be made from mostly carbon. Carbon is a very important element on Earth, and it is what makes up everything from pencil lead to diamonds. That has scientists really excited. Some of them think that up to one-third of the planet could be a solid diamond!

There are a lot more studies to be done before scientists will know for sure about what makes up the planet 55 Cancri e, but the thought of a diamond planet is pretty cool!

Contacts and Links:

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Please visit the Atheist Community of Tulsa on:

[Facebook](#)

[Meetup](#)

Our Website, www.actok.org

