

# Atheist

## Have You Heard about The Dark Flow?

—by Lisa Mais

Now...are you confused by the name? Well, many members of this atheist community have been too. There had been made in the early (more sober) stages of the most recent Godless Pub Crawl a move to have women meet together who share a common nonbelief system. In the later (much less sober and more goofy) stages, there was a progressively more animated conversation about what to call the group. Many ideas were tossed about. Many were pounced upon and shredded. Some rose to the surface. This conversation resulted in the name **The Dark Flow**. For better or for worse, there it is. In case you're still confused, the Dark Flow is a name given to a net motion of galaxy clusters with respect to the cosmic microwave background radiation. See <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark\\_flow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_flow) or <http://www.livescience.com/space/080923-dark-flows.html>>.

This is a group casually related to atheism and agnosticism (or humanitarianism, secularism, nontheism, and humanism) and women. This group is a special interest group of the Atheist Community of Austin, but it is self-managed. It is not intended to be a dating service for atheists although if it happens, that could be a good thing for some people. Specifically, what it is **NOT** is a male bashing group. It is also **NOT** designed to promote any negative atheism. This group is designed as an opportunity to have women of a wide variety of ages, careers, and lifestyle choices come together and do some fun social stuff, in addition to having intelligent—and maybe not so intelligent—conversations over food and drink. Who knows? There may even be more lively conversation about the name!

The Dark Flow Women's Group has been meeting now for a couple of months and is going strong!



*Dark Flow at a recent group dinner.*

We have met four times over the past 2 months. This group meets on the third Tuesday evening and the first Saturday evening of the month. Tuesday evening is more like a happy hour time where we meet at a coffee shop around 6 p.m. Saturday evening has become more like an evening out and starts around 5:30 p.m. to give people time to get together before they go out for the evening. We have considered extending out the Saturday evening meet up to later evening activities like dancing and/or taking in one of the local downtown clubs. We welcome any ideas of those who are just dying to get out and expand their social horizons.

I would like to extend this network for developing a monthly movie night, playing some controversial movies, such as Dildo Diaries, Vagina Monologues, Why We Wax, Religulous, or Letting Go of God. I personally would like to invite more women out there who are tired of feeling like you have to wait to get to do fun things until there is the "right time."

Come visit our Yahoo page at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/aca\\_darkflow/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/aca_darkflow/)

or on Facebook

The Dark Flow - Women's Division of the ACA

or contact Lisa Mais directly via the ACA online member directory. ■

### In This Issue

<i>Have You Heard about The Dark Flow?</i> _____	Cover
<i>New ACA Board Elected</i> _____	2
<i>The Value of Personal Meaning</i> _____	3
<i>ACA at the Pride Festival</i> _____	3
<i>ACA Calendar</i> _____	3
<i>Atheist Eve (Cartoon)</i> _____	4

## About ACA

ACA provides opportunities for socializing and friendship, promotes atheistic viewpoints, encourages positive atheist culture, defends the First Amendment principle of state/church separation, opposes discrimination against atheists, provides outreach to atheists in the greater Austin area, and works with other organizations in pursuit of common goals.

ACA produces a live cable access TV show and Internet radio show, presents a monthly lecture series, maintains a library of freethought books, protests in support of civil liberties, and participates in various community service activities.

ACA operates in an open and democratic manner to provide a community of like-minded people for social interaction and support.

ACA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational corporation made up of volunteers. The membership is restricted to atheists, but does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, or disability.

## ACA Board of Directors

### President

Matt Dillahunty

### Vice President

Jen Peeples

### Treasurer

John Iacoletti

### Secretary

Don Baker

### Directors

Shilling Cadena

Lisa Mais

Shelley Roberts

Don Rhoades

Joe Rhoades

## Contact

### Atheist Community of Austin

P. O. Box 3798

Austin, TX 78764

512.371.2911 (voice mail)

www.atheist-community.org

info@atheist-community.org

## Austin Atheist Newsletter

Editors: Matt Dillahunty, Don Baker

Design/Production: Tracie Harris

editor@atheist-community.org

## Submission Deadlines

Issue	Deadline
Jan. _____	Dec. 1
Feb. _____	Jan. 1
March _____	Feb. 1
April _____	March 1
May _____	April 1
June _____	May 1
July _____	June 1
Aug. _____	July 1
Sept. _____	Aug. 1
Oct. _____	Sept. 1
Nov. _____	Oct. 1
Dec. _____	Nov. 1

# New ACA Board Elected

—by Don Baker

The 2009-2010 ACA board was elected on May 3, 2009, during a special election meeting. Matt Dillahunty will keep his role as president. Jen Peeples will be the new ACA vice president. The seven at-large board seats were filled by Don Baker, Shilling Cadena, John Iacoletti, Lisa Mais, Shelley Roberts,

Don Rhoades, and Joe Rhoades. We would like to thank outgoing board member Mike Swift for his service as ACA treasurer.

Offices of treasurer and secretary were filled at the May 10, 2009, ACA board meeting. John Iacoletti will be treasurer and Don Baker

will serve again as secretary. These two officers will be confirmed by a vote of the membership at the June 7 lecture meeting.

If you have a question about how the ACA is run or you would like to see us do certain activities or projects, let a board member know. ■



The 2009-2010 ACA board members. Front row: Lisa Mais, Shelley Roberts, Don Rhoades, Matt Dillahunty (President), Jen Peeples (Vice President), and Shilling Cadena. Back row: John Iacoletti (Treasurer), Don Baker (Secretary), and Joe Rhoades.



ACA Members at the May 3 Election Meeting.

# The Value of Personal Meaning

—by Shilling Cadena

Consider a sentimental object. It may be a watch, a ring, or an old letter. Regardless of what the object is, there are two components to its value. First, there's the objective value that is placed on the materials and function. Beyond that, though, there is the personal value attributed by one's self. It is this second value that people cherish. Many will eschew a great deal of objective value in favor of sentiment. That is to say, self-determined value is held in higher regard.

I see no reason that this paradigm cannot extend well beyond

objects to matters of purpose and the value of life itself. Atheists are often thought to be people for whom life has no value, as we do not often accept the given appraisals offered by religion. However, this hardly means we do not value life. It means only that we do not accept any intrinsic value didactically prescribed by superstition. While, to the theist, this may seem a depressing thought, it is one of the most liberating and enriching concepts available.

In the grand scheme, I am irrelevant. There is neither a single iota of significance nor a jot of

true purpose to be found in me. I will die and be forgotten within a generation.

I am, though, a man of free conscience. I can arbitrarily place value by whim. The fact that others do not recognize such values does not make them unimportant; it makes them more important; it makes them of personal importance. Not only can my life have value and purpose as I see fit, but I am free to change at any time. Sometimes I value knowledge, learning, and intellectual pursuit. On other occasions, I may consider my reason for living to be sexual

debauchery and a good Cabernet. The reason for living (or in thieved terms) the answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe, and everything is simply: whatever I damned well please it to be.

The fact that all of these personal relevancies are ultimately worthless does nothing to diminish them. Rather, it strengthens them. Value isn't the value, it's my value; it is something all my own. I not only have the opportunity to live with and indulge in a purpose, but I get to determine it as well. I am the arbiter. I think that's pretty cool. ■

## ACA CALENDAR

### SATURDAY, JUNE 6

• **4-8 p.m.:** *ACA at Austin Pride Festival* (Republic Square Park, 5th and Guadalupe)

• **5:30 p.m.:** *Dark Flow night out* (See Web site for details)

### SUNDAY, JUNE 7

• **12:15-1:45 p.m.:** *ACA Lecture Series* (Austin History Center) Former Texas State Science Director Chris Comer on the state of science education in Texas—"Standing up for science in Texas"; free.

• **4:30-6 p.m.:** *The Atheist Experience* (Channel 16)

• **6:30 p.m.-?:** *Meet-up after The Atheist Experience* (Threadgill's)

### SATURDAY, JUNE 13

• **2-3:30 p.m.:** *Non-Prophets Internet Radio Show* (See Web site for details)

### SUNDAY, JUNE 14

• **11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.:** *Regular Sunday Meeting* (Romeo's)

• **12:30-1:30 p.m.:** *Board Meeting* (Romeo's (outside))

• **4:30-6 p.m.:** *The Atheist Experience* (Channel 16)

• **6:30 p.m.-?:** *Meet-up after The Atheist Experience* (Threadgill's)

### TUESDAY, JUNE 16

• **6 p.m.:** *Dark Flow happy hour* (See Web site for details)

### SATURDAY, JUNE 20

• **11 a.m.-12 p.m.:** *Adopt-a-street Clean Up* (South Location: Old Alligator Grill)

### SUNDAY, JUNE 21

• **11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.:** *Regular Sunday Meeting* (Romeo's)

• **4:30-6 p.m.:** *The Atheist Experience* (Channel 16)

• **6:30 p.m.-?:** *Meet-up after The Atheist Experience* (Threadgill's)

### SATURDAY, JUNE 27

• **2-3:30 p.m.:** *Non-Prophets Internet Radio Show* (See Web site for details)

### SUNDAY, JUNE 28

• **11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.:** *Regular Sunday Meeting* (Romeo's)

• **4:30-6 p.m.:** *The Atheist Experience* (Channel 16)

• **6:30 p.m.-?:** *Meet-up after The Atheist Experience* (Threadgill's)

### REGULAR LOCATIONS:

• **Austin History Center**, 9th and Guadalupe. Building opens at noon. Lectures are free and open to the public.

• **Dog & Duck Pub**, North of the Capitol, 406 W. 17th at Guadalupe, 512.479.0598. Informal gathering; food available.

• **Romeo's**, 1500 Barton Springs Rd. South of Town Lake.

• **Threadgill's**, 301 West Riverside Drive (at Barton Springs Rd.)

Unless otherwise indicated, events are open to all atheist and atheist friendly people, regardless of ACA membership status. Check the calendar on the Web site <[www.atheist-community.org/calendar](http://www.atheist-community.org/calendar)> for last minute changes.

## ACA at the Pride Festival

—by Don Baker

ACA will be participating again in the Austin Gay and Lesbian Pride Festival on June 6. The festival will be at Republic Square Park starting at 4pm. The festival is shortened this year with the Pride Parade immediately following at 8pm. General admission is \$5 this year.

ACA will have a booth at the Pride Festival to promote the organization, gather new members, and build bridges with the larger community. We will need a few volunteers for the booth, but we also encourage ACA members to attend the festival. Donations to the ACA to help defray our costs are also very welcome.

We hope to see you there! ■



Atheist Community of Austin

P. O. Box 3798

Austin, TX 78764

www.atheist-community.org

ATHEIST EVE

DESIGN ©2009



"How do you explain Christian martyrs? Why would anyone be willing to suffer or die for a claim if it wasn't true?"

In 1978, 909 members of the Peoples Temple Christian Church Full Gospel and their children committed "revolutionary suicide" in Jonestown, Guyana, by drinking a cyanide mix, because they believed international conspirators were coming to kill and torture them.

In 1997, 39 members of Heaven's Gate committed suicide (2 more members killed themselves later) because they believed Earth was about to be "recycled" and that death was the only way to "survive" the process.

In the first half of 2000 it was estimated that the number of suicide bombers had reached an average of 180 annually (from 4.7 annually in the 1980s). The profile of the bomber has moved from weak military force member to jihadi—someone who believes he will receive a divine reward for his martyrdom.

According to the John Mack Institute, Harvard professor Dr. Mack was "subjected to widespread ridicule because of his work" (and apparent support of) people claiming to have been abducted by space aliens.

There is no limit to examples of people suffering or dying for claims they believe. That doesn't mean the claims are "true."



Atheist wear available at [www.cafepress.com/atheist\\_eve](http://www.cafepress.com/atheist_eve)