

# THE FIRST COAST FREETHINKER

## Newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society

*An organization of freethinkers and secular humanists supporting free inquiry, education, and community in the Northeast Florida area*

**Our Motto: "To Question is the Answer."**



VOLUME 2

MARCH 2004

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### MARCH 2004 MEETING

Speaker: **David Simon, PhD**, Adjunct Professor of Criminology and Social Justice, UNF.

Topic: **"Myths about Crime and Criminal Justice"** Dr. Simon will examine how images of crime, criminals, and criminal justice agencies are represented unrealistically by the media.

Time: **Monday, March 8, 2004**, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Place: **Unitarian Universalist Church**, 7405 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, FL

### ***NEW MEETING LOCATION!!***

The March meeting is being held at the **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH in Arlington**. In fact, so are the remaining meetings of 2004. (For details, see article, Page 3, "Do Miracles Happen...")

### ***NEW BOOK GROUP!***

A Humanist Book Group has been organized to meet at Borders on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month. (See announcement, Page 8.)

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**T**he Humanist Conference sponsored by the Humanists of Florida Association and the Institute for Humanist Studies had as its theme, "Progressive Action in Regressive Times." Seven members of the FCFTS were in attendance as well as a contingency of about 35 college students who made their presence felt in a very positive way.

The conference got underway Friday night with a delightful get-acquainted reception allowing attendees to mingle and get acquainted. However on Saturday morning, the laid back atmosphere of Friday evening quickly kicked into gear, and there was a frenzy of amazingly informative sessions separated by only 10-minute breaks throughout the day.

Matt Cherry, Executive Director of the Institute for Humanist Studies who co-sponsored the conference, gave the welcoming remarks.

The highlight of the conference was a sold-out luncheon lecture by Barry Lynn, Executive Director and National Spokesman for Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Ideas flowed freely throughout the conference. "Humanists, come out of the closet," was the main theme. A national "humanist awareness campaign" is needed. We are an educational organization, and educating the community as well as our own members so that we have a better understanding of the humanist movement is called for. If the community understands that we are good citizens and promote the general welfare of all society, I believe we can have a positive effect. Looking for ways to accomplish that was an important idea which was discussed in a number of workshops.

Creating alliances with organizations that have similar goals such as the local Interfaith Council, ACLU, American United for Separation of Church and State, People For the Ameri-

can Way, and the Unitarian Church affords the opportunity to work together for the betterment of the local and world communities. I feel that we can accomplish so much more working with like-minded groups than alone.

Jennifer Hancock, Executive Director for the Humanist of Florida talked a lot about compassionate activism. Expressing a point of view based on reason and rationality with respect is more effective and apt to be listened to than using abrasive, crude language. Remember, you

are an ambassador of reason. We are awash in a sea of religion at this particular time with the imminent release of *The Passion of Christ*, a movie portraying the last hours of the life of Christ. There are likely to be many opportunities to speak out for the voice of reason.

We can have our conferences and our local meetings but until we take some chances and speak out, we will remain in oblivion.

--W.W.

## PROGRESSIVE PANORAMA

*We are the heirs of the great progressive movement which has made this country what it is, says veteran television journalist of Washington and New York, Bill Moyers.*

**I**t started in the late 1800s and peaked in the last third of the 1900s. Progressives created the prosperity of the times and brought the people together with their leaders. The Founding Fathers did not put property qualification for holding public office in the Constitution.

Conservative farmers from the reconstructed South and Great Plains wanted changes, starting in the 1800s. Prices rose along with interest, as freight rates and supply costs rose. They complained about elections, government, newspapers, judges, and other concentrations of wealth and power. The People's Party (better known as the Populists) wanted a return to the revolution of the Founding Fathers.

Andrew Jackson vetoed the Second Bank of the U.S. to ease credit. Concerned people created the Republican Party in 1854 to abolish slavery. People favored small government to reduce favoritism to the few, tariffs, monopolies, give-away of land; they wanted more opportunities and separation of wealth and government.

To help the people, Populists pushed loans to farmers, granaries to store crops, government ownership of railroads, telephone and telegraph systems, progressive taxes, and a ban on subsidies to private corporations. They

reached peak political power in 1892 and then declined. But their ideas were eventually adopted.

Technology developed via telephones, automobiles, electric lighting, indoor heating and plumbing, processed food, machine-made clothing. Along with this came awareness of poverty, slums, low wages, sickness, accidents, hard times. There was a need to correct what Henry George called "the maldistribution of wealth, status, and opportunity."

In contrast, the ideal time for conservatives was the era of William McKinley (1897-1901) and his mentor, Mark Hanna. Government was small and businesses held enormous power. The ruling class gained wealth through monopoly, using the state for private ends. Therefore, business should run the government for personal profit. Darwin's concept of the survival of the fittest was adopted.

But there were also reformers like Jane Adams, Jacob Riis, Ray Stannard Baker, and scores of others less well known. They wanted to improve democracy. "If Congress were true to the principles of democracy it would be the people's lobby," said Tom Johnson. Even Republicans sometimes joined them.

Progressives developed public transportation, sanitation and utilities, improved antitrust laws, helped restore competition in the marketplace, made taxation more fair, expanded education and the justice system, improved worker safety and compensation. They purified water, medicines, and food; conserved the wilderness; and also improved lives in other ways.

After several decades, their ideas were revived by Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Lyndon Johnson. Bill Moyers does not understand why the present events are taking place. He wants to return to the idea that this is a nation where all people work together and all people have equal rights. (*Progressive Populist*, July 15, 2003) --H.B.

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**DO MIRACLES HAPPEN TO NONBELIEVERS??**  
**“A New Home for the FCFTS”**

If by “miracles” one means unplanned, unpremeditated, unexpected, happenstances construed as delightfully fortuitous and beneficial, of course they do! And conversely, occurrences construed as miserable, wretched, and unfortunate happen to nonbelievers (and believers alike, of course) because “stuff” happens to us all! Needless to say, “stuff” is neither innately good nor bad except as how we perceive it, but that is a topic for another article. Meanwhile, I have a perfect example a very nice “miracle” happening to nonbelievers.

At the February monthly meeting of the FCFTS, we learned that due to imminent renovation of the Jacksonville Public Library Southeast Branch, we cannot meet there until January 2005. The day after the meeting, I called the library to learn the actual starting date, and the official construction schedule confirmed the worst. We cannot meet there in March! I viewed this news as definitely not good.

Relocating a group such as ours (with members, nonmembers, and open to the public) is not to be taken lightly. Not only is it difficult making sure everyone knows about the change, but finding a safe, centrally-located, easily-accessible and affordable (i.e. free) place for 50 or more people to meet on a regular basis is not an easy task. The board immediately set about finding a new location but without very much success.

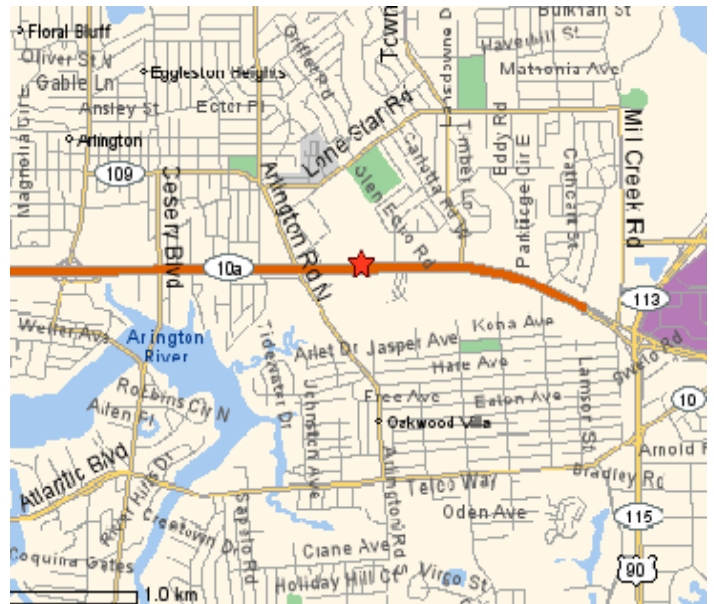
Wilhelmina Walton then had the brainstorm of checking with the Unitarian Church

although we were quite sure we could not afford to meet there. First, they set our minds to rest by allowing us to meet there in March. Upon further questioning about the possibility of meeting there regularly, imagine our amazement, joy, and relief when the Unitarian Church welcomed the FCFTS with open arms, to meet regularly, on our second Monday of the month, and at NO CHARGE --an offer the board could hardly refuse!!

Now, I can assure you of this fact with all honesty. Wilhelmina and I did most fervently and earnestly NOT PRAY for a meeting place, thus proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that miracles DO happen to nonpraying nonbelievers! --C.R.

**MAP TO UNITARIAN CHURCH**

The UUC is located on the north access road (i.e., the service road running beside Arlington Expy, to the north), between **Townsend Blvd.** and **Arlington Rd.** Only the large sign shows from the road! The church is hidden in the trees. Follow the driveway down to the church building.



**7405 Arlington Expy, Jacksonville, FL 32211**  
**Telephone 904-725-8133**

The link below has maps and driving directions.

[Click Here for This Map and More](#)

## DUBIOUS CHRISTIANS

The December newspaper from the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) contains an article about hate mail received. The Center keeps watch on hate groups. It won a million-dollar lawsuit that devastated a Ku Klux Klan and is now looking at the Arian Nations and others like it who claim to be “good Christians.”

SPLC joined with the American Civil Liberties Union, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and other groups to help defeat Judge Roy Moore and his Ten Commandments in AL. Founder and attorney Morris Dees has been bombarded with mail, e-mails, and phone calls. His life and the welfare of his co-workers are constantly threatened.

Dees and his staff have been called “scumbags,” “subhumans,” “Christ-killers,” and hundreds of other names. He and some of his staff are Jewish. Threatening communications are sent to the security department.

Some printable excerpts include: “Dees and Cohen are a pair of chickenhawk jackals who never tell the truth.” “Dees is a godless s.o.b. Jew and deserves to burn in hell.” “May the wrath of God be delivered upon you.”

“You’re the lowest form of human waste - just human maggots... our #1 enemy in America is Morris Dees and his Southern Poverty Law Center. We Christians are watching you closely now.” “I hope all of you who had anything to do with removing the Ten Commandments die in a car accident with a fuel tanker along with the rest of your filthy, stinking, traitorous families.”

Granted, I’m sure these hate-filled Christians are in the minority. Many Christians as well as other religious American citizens do not condone this. But juxtapose these hate-filled Christians with the Taliban, or any radical fundamentalist believers of whatever religion. One is no different from the other. Here are some examples.

“I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle... I point the finger in their face and say, ‘you helped this happen.’” --Jerry

Falwell, regarding September 11, *The 700 Club*  
 “You say you’re supposed to be nice to the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians and the Methodists and this, that, and the other thing.

Nonsense. I don’t have to be nice to the spirit of the Antichrist.” --Pat Robertson, *The 700 Club*

“The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians.” --Pat Robertson, *the Washington Post*

“Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a biblical duty, we are called by God to conquer this country. We don’t want equal time. We don’t want pluralism.” --Randall Terry, *Indiana News Sentinel*

“Women are less equipped physically to ‘stay on course’ in the brawling areas of business, commerce, industry, and the professions.” --Pat Buchanan, *San Francisco Chronicle*

This is the type we, as well as the Inter-faith Alliance and other modern Christian groups, are up against. Maybe some day in the very distant future, the fundamentalists of the world will square off and destroy each other. Would that be Armageddon? Sounds like it. In the meantime, my bet is we’d better watch our backs.  
 --Beth Perry

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## INFALLIBLE THE BIBLE IS NOT!

Archaeology has undermined the historical contents of the Old Testament’s first five books. The events of the Bible are not supported by the findings of carbon dating of shards and bones excavated in the field.

Researchers know the Red Sea was not parted nor did Moses’s staff turn into a snake. The Israelites did not seize Canaan by force but rather lived there all the time. The walls of Jericho were knocked down but not at the time of Joshua. Abraham, the father of the Jews, did not exist.

Moses is a myth. David was not a

mighty leader but the head of a small, unimportant nation. Israelites did not escape from Egypt and through the Red Sea because they were never there. Evidence for these claimed events does not exist outside the Bible.

Awareness of Bible errors began well over a century ago when German scholars, in their Higher Criticism, determined that many characters in the Old Testament were no more real than were Greek and Roman gods.

The many Bible stories were probably collected by rabbis after they returned from exile in Babylon in the sixth century B.C. Yahweh would not want duplicate or overlapping stories destroyed so they were all combined, leaving two Ten Commandments, two Floods, and several other pairs.

The research began over 150 years ago when Protestants went to the Holy Land to find the true story of events, before Catholics added details. Zionists also sought evidence for their claim that their Jewish ancestors had lived there many years. Israel has made much of the one thousand Jewish warriors who died fighting the Roman army at Masada, but no evidence for this exists.

Doubts arose in the 1920s when an Israeli archaeologist found evidence for the conquest of Canaan was weak. Later a woman noted that the conquest of Jericho was the wrong date. Abraham did not leave Ur of the Chaldees as part of a great migration some time between 1800 and 2100 B.C. He had a servant make a trip with several camels when few of these existed there at that time, evidenced by the lack of camel bones. Also, the Bible fails to mention some cities that existed at that time.

No evidence exists of the Hebrews living in Egypt for five centuries, or over 600,000 people leaving, or of their wandering in Sinai for 40 years. The cities of Arad, Heshbon, and Edom did not exist when the Bible claims they did. The Israelites were probably claiming the land was theirs by military conquest rather than by less impressive peaceful residence as slaves.

David in Judah was supposed to have conquered Israel to the north while Solomon is described as a powerful and rich builder, but no evidence for their existence has been found.

Rabbis serving Yahweh objected to multiple gods in Israel, so Josiah destroyed them and preserved monotheism. He called all the people together, read to them the Book of the Covenant found in the temple, and had them pledge their loyalty to one god. It required one set of books which became the Bible.

A sense of nationhood developed and also a spirit of universalism recognizing other parts of the world's population. Closely related conflicts arose from making decisions between the in-and-out-groups--Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Fundamentalists will categorically deny the fact that historical information found outside the Bible actually proves the Bible to be untrue. But the rest of us will understand and have a clearer picture of Christian history. (Details in *Harper's Magazine*, March 2002) --H.B.

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#### AN AWARD FOR HERB SILVERMAN



*Many of you will remember hearing gentle activist Herb Silverman tell his story (among others) of his run for Governor of South Carolina (in "Candidate Without a Prayer") when he visited us in September 2003.*

*This item comes to us from the newsletter of his group, the Secular Humanists of the Low Country (SHL) in Charleston, SC.*

The Institute for Humanist Studies (IHS) surprised SHL President Herb Silverman recently with the first "Humanist Innovator of the Year" award.

The event took place at the Humanists of Florida-IHS Conference in Tampa, Florida, on January 24, 2004. Matt Cherry, Executive Director of IHS, cited Herb's enduring, patient determination to persuade many national free-

thought organizations to work together for the benefit of all freethinkers. The multi-organizational Coalition for the Community of Reason and its successor, the Secular Coalition for America, were inspired by Herb's vision.

With his usual perceptive humor, Herb gratefully accepted the award and later noted that the award, a golden globe, bears an uncanny resemblance to a bomb. Fortunately, it did not cause any delays at the airport when Herb flew home from Tampa. (SHL newsletter 02/04)

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### REASON vs. EMOTION

*Editor Hugo Borresen takes a refreshingly objective and analytical look at the fine art of proselytizing.*

**P**roselytizing has not changed in many years. The would-be convert is ready to overwhelm his victim with emotional tactics which have succeeded with other victims in the past. But the two speak two different languages unless the potential convert is already ready to be persuaded. These dynamics have not changed as this personal account shows.

"Marion" and "Carol" knocked at the door asking how my wife is doing after she had had some medical problems. (My wife attends the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville; however she has not gone regularly to Sunday School recently because of her health.) We chatted briefly, and I asked if they would like to come in, which they did. They are white, middle class, and well dressed.

Marion then asked why I did not go to church on Sundays. I replied that I vehemently disagree with Dr. Jerry Vines' preaching. Marion replied that one has to believe in Jesus to be saved. God is perfect. The Bible explains all the details. Those who repent and accept Jesus go to Heaven. (This means ninety percent of all people who have lived are damned. Ed.)

In the discussion, I mentioned not believing in heaven or hell. I asked about Jews, Catholics, and Muslims. They all go to hell.

Isn't Christianity a religion of love? Marion says to forget about religion and church. Just believe.

Marion does most of the talking, is very articulate, and uses excellent grammar. She has obviously found her role in life and is intensely focused on her calling.

I mention that the Bible does not object to slavery, racial segregation, or child labor. Baptists were the largest denomination in the Ku Klux Klan. Marion is slightly deaf, so she missed some of my comments but would not have heard them in any case.

She warned about the harm from Satan, but I do not believe in Satan. There are three forms of Heaven, the highest with God. Hell is completely dark but is somehow hot from fire.

In the dialogue, she mentions her religious background in a church-going family but considers herself a convert, having recently been "born again." She has saved 61 persons. Her mother was healed of an illness in a miracle.

At the end of some thirty minutes, she asked if I wished to accept Jesus. I said no. She asked if I objected to a prayer for me. I said no. So she asked God to care for me. We wished each other well, and the ladies left with no hostility among us. They are of course welcome to return at any time.

# # #

The key to the discourse was "forget about religion and church." Accept Jesus and ignore what organized religion does and has done. Respond emotionally to the thought of living in bliss forever with God. Do not examine principles. Tentative words like "maybe," "assume," and "could" were absent. Studying the history of Christianity and the Bible, and the beliefs of other religions is rejected.

So, the Baptist Church with 26,000 members attracts with promise of eternal life just for believing, guidance in making right decisions, avoidance of critical thinking, and God's Bible from which to choose teachings to believe or reject.

No Sunday sermon ends with a need to make a moral decision or look at the world outside this city. Members feed the poor and com-

fort the sick who are nearby but do not complain if sixteen million children are growing up in poverty across the nation. Sermons send the faithful home feeling very comfortable with their lives, their dreams of eternal life in Heaven, and rarely thinking of anything else. --H.B.

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### FRANKLIN'S LIGHTNING ROD

Everyone knows about Ben Franklin's experiment to determine that lightning is electricity. He upset a lot of Christians, but he also helped them.

St. Augustine held that the air was filled with devils, demons, and witches, according to the Bible. St. Thomas Aquinas stated that demons can cause winds, storms, and a rain of fire from heaven. Even Martin Luther said that a stone thrown into a specific pond would cause a storm because of the devils kept prisoner there.

To prevent storms, Christians said prayers, consecrated church bells, sprinkled holy water, and burned witches. Bells were hung in church towers, often the highest structure in villages. Bell ringers pulled ropes wet from rain and were often electrocuted. A writer advised in 1745 to avoid churches in storms and find refuge elsewhere. In 1786 the French Parliament prohibited ringing bells in storms. In Germany nearly 400 towers were damaged and 120 bell ringers killed over 33 years.

In 1752 Franklin flew his kite, demonstrating how God struck his holy temples. He then invented the lightning rod, which foiled the will of the holy, loving, and supreme being, and infuriated believers.

Christians tore down lightning rods from buildings in Switzerland, France, and Italy, including that of the leading scientific institution in Bologna. In Geneva, a chemist had to remove a rod from his house to prevent a riot. In France a man went to court to gain the right to put up a rod despite his neighbors' objections.

In Boston, Rev. Thomas Prince of Old South Church blamed the rod for causing the earthquake of 1755. "Oh! There is no getting out of the mighty hand of God."

Fourteen years after Franklin's discovery, a rod was finally put in the tower of St. Mark's church in Venice along with the angel at the top, bells, holy relics, and processions below.

Seventeen years after the discovery, tragedy struck the church of San Nazaro in Brescia. The church was used to store gunpowder, which exploded in a storm, killing over three thousand persons and destroying a sixth of the city. The Rosenberg, Austria, church had been hit so many times that peasants feared to attend services. So 26 years after Franklin's discovery a rod was finally put up. Today, most people accept this new way to "control the artillery of heaven." (evolvefish.com) --H.B.

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### THE NEED FOR TOLERANCE IN HUMANISM

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the French National Assembly overwhelmingly approved a ban on Muslim headscarves and other religious symbols in French schools. This is the first step in the French parliamentary process, but it should be the last step for this intolerant and unnecessary legislation. I believe that this legislation will move the French in the wrong direction--away from freedom of expression and towards a suffocating political correctness that seeks out religious groups for forced conformity to the secular state. Is this what humanism is about? As our world becomes less religious, have humanists inherited Christianity's evangelistic zeal and intolerance toward ideas that it finds to be abhorrent? Do we believe so strongly in a secularized society that we must drag the religious dissenters kicking and screaming into our perfect little world in the same way that you introduce a cat to a tub full of water? I hope not since I believe that it will lead to the death of humanism as a viable alternative to religion and superstition.

Is the headscarf a symbol of oppression of Muslim woman? Often in the Islamic world, headscarves as well as burkhas and veils are used by fundamentalists to repress the rights of women in Islamic countries. Clearly, the forced

wearing of headscarves by Muslim women should not be tolerated. However, when the wearing of headscarves is a voluntary expression of faith by Muslim women, at what point do we start thinking for them? Are we not oppressing women more if we assume that they are not intelligent enough to make the decision to wear headscarves on their own? In order to be truly free, we have to allow people to form their own ideas about religion no matter how much we may disagree with them.

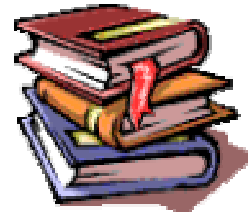
Does the wearing of headscarves violate the separation of church and state? The state often walks a tight rope between not promoting religion in public schools and not expecting school children to become "school day atheists" when they walk through the front doors of their schools. However, the French ban ignores this tightrope and goes out of its way to eradicate even the most non-disruptive expressions of religious faith. It is one thing for a student to pray in class rather than participate in a discussion about American history. It is another thing when the same student prays on school grounds before the start of the school day. The teacher should stop the student from praying in the first example since it interferes with the ability of the student to learn American history (that is why he or she is in the class in the first place), but should not interfere with the religious expression of any student who otherwise meets his or her academic requirements and does not disrupt the ability of other students to do the same.

In the Affirmations of Humanism: A Statement of Principles found at our website, we affirm that tolerance is favored over fear. The French ban irrationally appeals to the fear of Islamic fundamentalism prevalent in Western society. If humanism truly believes in tolerance instead of fear, there should be a public and unequivocal rejection of the French ban by every humanist group in the world. In 1770, Voltaire wrote, "I detest what you write, but I would give my life to make it possible for you to continue to write."

We as humanists should practice this degree of tolerance towards constitutionally protected religious expression even when at the same time we reject it as self delusion. --C. Wolf

## HUMANIST BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP ORGANIZED!

Jewell Kross, a FCFTS member and avid reader, has organized a humanist book discussion group which will meet on the third Sunday of each month at Borders on Southside Blvd. Feel free to borrow a book from the library; books will also be available at Borders. A small group will give us an opportunity to explore new ideas and gain a better understanding about the world we live in as well as our humanist beliefs. --W.W.



A humanist book discussion group will meet at 2:00 p.m. on the third Sunday of each month. We will go to lunch after the meeting.

The location is Borders Books (8801 Southside Boulevard, phone 519-6500). Borders will order a small number of books for each meeting.

The schedule so far is as follows:

- March 21, 2004 - *The Demon Haunted World*, by Carl Sagan
- April 18, 2004 - *The Harlot By The Side of the Road*, by Jonathan Kirsch

For further information, leave a message at 996-1553, or write [jewellkross@yahoo.com](mailto:jewellkross@yahoo.com)  
Hope you can join us!

--Jewell Kross

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## A PLACE AT THE TABLE Book Review

The subtitle is *Struggles for Equality in America*, Maria Fleming, Editor, Oxford University Press, 2001. The titles of the chapters listed below give a good overview of such struggles.



1. 1768 - Apostles of Liberty. Virginia Baptists want religious liberty.
2. 1851 - Who Claims Me? Bostonians oppose Fugitive Slave Law.
3. 1870 - Freedom's Main Line. Blacks in St Louis protest public streetcar segregation.
4. 1877 - This Land is Ours. Ponca Indian leader in Nebraska gets rights to his people's ancestral home.
5. 1912 - The Strike for Three Loaves. Massachusetts immigrant laborers demand fair pay for day's work.
6. 1915 - Road Trip for Suffrage. Three women travel across the nation to get women's right to vote.
7. 1916 - The House on Lemon Street. Riverside CA family gets equal rights for immigrants of Japanese ancestry.
8. 1945 - A Tale of Two Schools. In Westminster CA Mexican American parents end school segregation.
9. 1974 - Against the Current. Native Americans get treaty fishing rights in Pacific Northwest.
10. 1977 - Wheels of Justice. Activists demonstrate for rights for the disabled in San Francisco.
11. 1992 - Going to Bat for Girls. Nebraska family gets equal opportunity in sports for girls.
12. 1997 - The Battle of Spanish Forks. A homosexual teacher in Utah gets the right to teach in a public school.

This oversized, beautifully written and illustrated, book gives many examples of the heroism of those who wanted to help others. Benjamin Lay of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) pushed his fellow believers who, after his death in 1759, sent the first petition to Congress to condemn slavery as evil and to call for the emancipation of all slaves.

Whites seized two billion acres of land from Native Americans. The whites signed 371 treaties and violated them although the Indians held them to be sacred. But in 1987 Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and other denominations apologized to

tribal councils in the Pacific Northwest for their churches' religious role in oppressing Native Americans. Native Americans were recognized as U.S. citizens in 1924.

Two photographs taken by Lewis Hine show children working in mills instead of being in school. His pictures helped develop the outrage needed to end child labor in the 1920s.

The U. S. Constitution guaranteed freedom of religion, but the states required profession of belief in Jesus Christ to hold public office or practice law. Thomas Kennedy in Maryland protested although he did not know any of the 150 Jews in the last state to discriminate. His colleagues in the Assembly called him an enemy of Christianity, a Judas, an attacker of the Christian religion. He was voted out of office.

When he was returned to office, he submitted his bill which passed in 1825, eight years after first submitted. His crusade was forgotten, but a Jewish former legislator learned of the Christian who had defended religious freedom and helped raise money to place these words where Kennedy is buried:

TO ONE WHO LOVED HIS FELLOW MAN

Comment: Society does not give rights. People have to demand and fight for them.

--H.B.

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## MARCH SOCIAL

To: Freethinkers, FCFTS members, friends, and guests.

What: **DINNER and SOCIALIZING** at the **STEAK AND ALE** Restaurant, corner of BAYMEADOWS & I-95 South.

When: **TUESDAY, March 23, 2004**, (4th Tue.) Gather at **6:00 p.m.** for cocktails in the LOUNGE; **7:00 p.m.** for dinner.

RSVP to **Carrie Renwick**, at 268-8826, or e-mail [CarrieRen@att.net](mailto:CarrieRen@att.net) . **The deadline to RSVP is SUNDAY, 5:00 p.m. on March 21, 2004!**

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## NEWSLETTER

*The First Coast Freethinker* is published for members of the First Coast Freethought Society, other freethinkers, and potential freethinkers. We exchange newsletters with other freethought groups and get information from many other sources. Readers are invited and encouraged to reprint our original materials if they give credit to this publication.

**Submit** contributions via e-mail to Hugo or Carrie, or mail to Hugo at 8831 Taurus Circle, South, Jacksonville, FL 32222. See monthly deadlines on back cover of the newsletter.

**NOTE: The officials of this organization do not take responsibility for opinions and other statements expressed by anyone in this newsletter. It is intended to convey ideas to stimulate thinking and for discussion about a wide variety of subjects.**

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## MEMBERSHIP

Regular: \$30 per year • Senior/Student: \$15  
 First Coast Freethought Society  
 Post Office Box 550591  
 Jacksonville, FL 32550-0591  
 904-288-6291 • E-mail: [Wilwalt@juno.com](mailto:Wilwalt@juno.com)  
 Web site: [FirstCoastFreethoughtSociety.org](http://FirstCoastFreethoughtSociety.org)  
 (See application in newsletter or on web site)

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the First Coast Freethought Society is to serve the needs of the non-religious population of Northeast Florida; to promote freethought and secular humanism; to provide a place for agnostics, rationalists, atheists, skeptics, and other freethinkers, to hear speakers and discuss philosophy, science, ethics, and other topics of interest, and to enjoy fellowship with like-minded people.

## MEETINGS

We meet the second Monday of every month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, 7405 Arlington Expressway, in Jacksonville, Florida. Time: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

## FREETHINKER

A freethinker is a person who forms opinions about religion or any other subject on the basis of reason, **independent** of tradition, authority, or established belief.

## BRIEF CALENDAR - 2004

March 8, 2004 - Monthly Meeting  
 March 21, 2004 - Book Discussion Group  
 March 23, 2004 - **SOCIAL**  
 April 12, 2004 - Monthly Meeting  
 April 18, 2004 - Book Discussion Group  
 April 27, 2004 - **SOCIAL**  
 May 10, 2004 - Monthly Meeting  
 May 25, 2004 - **SOCIAL**

# FIRST COAST FREETHOUGHT SOCIETY

*An organization of freethinkers and secular humanists supporting free inquiry, education, and community in the Northeast Florida area*

Post Office Box 550591 • Jacksonville, Florida 32255-0591 • 904-288-6291



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION – 2004

**We are an organization of freethinkers and secular humanists supporting free inquiry, education, and community in the Northeast Florida area. We do not believe in the supernatural. The First Coast Freethought Society welcomes you as a member. For further information, visit our web site, address below.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address (legibly!): \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of interest and/or expertise: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

Regular (\$30.00) \_\_\_\_\_ Senior (15.00) \_\_\_\_\_ Student (\$15.00) \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in being involved in the FCFTS as a:

General Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Financial Supporter: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

TO MEMBERS: Do you object to your name appearing on the Membership List which would be distributed only to other members? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make check payable to:* **FIRST COAST FREETHOUGHT SOCIETY**

*Mail to:* Post Office Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591

Visit our web site at: <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org>

President: **Wilhelmina Walton**

[Wilwalt@Juno.com](mailto:Wilwalt@Juno.com)



**THE FIRST COAST FREETHINKER**  
Newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society  
8831 Taurus Circle South  
Jacksonville, Florida 32222

## FREETHOUGHT HEROES

March 2004

### MEETING DATES

Usually the Second  
Monday of every  
month:

March 8, 2004  
April 12, 2004  
May 10, 2004  
June 14, 2004  
July 12, 2004  
August 9, 2004  
September 13, 2004  
October 11, 2004

**Harriet Tubman** (1820-1913) abolitionist who operated underground railroad.

**James Madison** (1751-1836) considered father of the U. S. Constitution.

**Jeanette Rankin** (1881-1973) first U.S. Congresswoman, voted against entry into World Wars I and II.

**Rene Descartes** (1596-1650) father of modern philosophy and science of thought.

**Juliette Low** (1860-1927) founder of Girl Scouts of America.

**Frances Perkins** (1882-1965) first woman in president's cabinet as secretary of labor.

**Albert Einstein** (1879-1955) brilliant physicist, developed theory of relativity, a leading scientific thinker.

### FREETHINKER DEADLINES

Kindly submit items  
to Hugo or Carrie by  
Friday:

March 19, 2004  
April 16, 2004  
May 21, 2004  
June 18, 2004  
July 16, 2004  
August 20, 2004  
September 17, 2004  
October 15, 2004