

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

APRIL 2004

NUMBER 4

APRIL MEETING

Speaker: **Assya Pascalev, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, at UNF.

Topic: **"The Schiavo Case: Moral Quandaries and Legal Pitfalls in Surrogate Decision Making"**

Time: **Monday, April 12, 2004**, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in the sanctuary.

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

This issue marks the **1st Anniversary of The First Coast Freethinker**

Remember, the FCFTS now meets at the
UNITARIAN CHURCH OF JACKSONVILLE

Remember also, the
HUMANIST BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Meets at 2:00 p.m.
3rd Sunday of the Month
At **Borders Books, 8801 Southside Blvd.**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE An Open Letter to Creationists Everywhere

Dear Creationists:

The creation/evolution debate has been going on for eons, and it continued at the University of North Florida on February 9, 2004, between Dr. Kent Hovind, creationist, and the team of Toni Rossi, PhD, and Matt Gilg, PhD, both biologists. Dr. Hovind makes his living as a professional creationist debater; and Drs. Rossi and Gilg make their livings teaching biology at UNF. We assume Dr. Hovind is an authority on creationism which covers two chapters in the Bible. So, I ask, who is the authority on evolution--this very complex theory?

I would invite anyone interested in Dr. Hovind's credentials and expertise to search the internet under, "Hovind" and "creationism." He has no background in biology which is necessary

to understand evolution. On the other hand, Drs. Rossi and Gilg each have a PhD in biology, a degree which takes many years to obtain.

It is the opinion of many scientists that the creation/evolution debate has taken its toll on advancements in the field of biology. One scientist in particular has become my science mentor via his many books. I challenge you (creationists) to read some of Dr. Edward O. Wilson's books. I recommend you first read *Naturalist*, then *On Human Nature*. Reading these books may help you put creationism and evolutionism in their proper perspectives.

From what I have learned, I believe it is imperative that we, as a country, grasp the importance of the role of science and, in particular, evolutionism to our educational system. Dr. Wilson has studied nature (biology) for more than 60 years, since he was a young boy, which makes him eminently qualified to explain evolutionism. Dr. Wilson's background and education qualifies him thoroughly to explain evolutionism in such a way that it is clear and understandable

even if you do not agree with what he teaches. (For Dr. Wilson's credentials, click: [Wilson](#).)

What we need to understand is that evolution is not just believed and taught and used in a myriad of ways in the United States. It is taught all over the world, in every country. It is the standard everywhere. At the present time (since the sequencing of the human genome) according to a publication by the National Academy of Science, evolution is the most "active field of scientific research at this particular time, and new findings that have broad applications for the future for cures for diseases are being made on a daily basis." (*Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science*)

I feel that you do not have to believe in evolution, but it is essential that you learn it thoroughly if you are going to be able to compete in the colleges in our country in science, if you want to be able to get a job in any legitimate scientific field, if you want our schools to be accredited, if you want our economy to grow, and if you want the United States to remain the innovative leader that it has been.

I honestly believe the reason for the debate over evolution is that the whole process has not been made clear enough and that one of the reasons for this has to do with the strident opposition from creationists. Even the Pope has finally conceded the legitimacy of evolution in everything since the "big bang." I don't see that there has to be a controversy between religion and science as there are many scientists who are Christians and accept the teachings of the Bible. But since there is, science has to win out because of its proven value to discovery. The story of

creationism in the Bible is too simplistic to be effective in explaining the way the world works.

Many scientists explain science as a way of learning and knowing about the universe. As Dr. Rossi pointed out in the debate I attended, nothing is ever 100% proven, especially in science. Every theory advanced is under scrutiny all the time because of on-going basic scientific research regarding **all of life**. It is possible at any point in time that a scientific theory could be found to be flawed in some way. If this happens, the problem is investigated and researched to confirm the facts before that information is integrated into the general body of scientific knowledge.

Creationism lacks this ability because the biblical account of creation lacks explanatory detail. Evolution, on the other hand, is just the best way to explain the way the world works. I believe that scientists need to speak out more about the efficacy of evolution and its importance to future discovery. Read the first two chapters of Genesis in the Bible and tell me how this information could be useful in learning how the world works. It may have some other uses, but not this!

This is my account of why Ken Hovind's argument is not acceptable. It is my hope that I have helped you (creationists) clarify your thinking about evolution in some way. I know there are many people who believe that God is responsible for creating the universe, but I don't think it has to compete with evolution. I think it is a huge mistake to cloud scientific research with creationism.

--W.W.

MORE ON OUR NEW HOME

Some of you may not know much about the Unitarian Universalist Church which is our new temporary home. The Unitarian Universalist Church is a very liberal organization with many humanists as members. I think you will find their goals and purposes to be very similar to our own. Many of our own members of FCFTS are Uni-

tarian Universalists. In fact, some Unitarian ministers are professed atheists.

At our February FCFTS meeting, we were advised by the Southeast Branch of the Public library that we would have to find a new place to meet due to the fact that a renovation project will be going on until January of 2005. The first place we looked for a meeting place was the libraries in our general area, but no rooms were found for meetings. We contacted

the Southside Campus of FCCJ and the Jacobson Campus of FCCJ with no luck there.

The Board felt that the UU Church was an appropriate place to hold our meetings since they had graciously allowed us to hold our Video Science Series there, so the next place we turned to was the UU Church. I think we will find a welcoming environment in the UU Church. I think they will be good for us and we will be good for them. --W.W.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY *First Coast Freethinker* !



**One Year Old This Month
Can you believe it??**

The First Coast Freethinker staff looks back over the accomplishments during our first year. Here are our three perspectives. Of course we continue to welcome feedback and suggestions from our readers.

Carrie starts, then Hugo takes his turn, and Wilhelmina finishes.

Yes, this month marks the one-year anniversary of *The First Coast Freethinker*. The first year has been one of great progress. The *Freethinker* started out literally being “cut and pasted” using scissors and glue-stick, and the banner was originally created with rub-on lettering! Over several issues, it phased into being done entirely in Word for Windows, which was quite a learning experience for the assistant editor. I cor-

dially detested Word, and I’m sure my ill will was reciprocated!

However, gradually, with small improvements from month to month and with great persistence and patience on my part, I have for the most part learned to get along with Word. Of course, once the copy was all prepared in Word, it allowed the next step, e-mailing.

In my opinion, our crowning publishing achievement has been attaining e-mail distribution and web-site availability. I would say this has, indeed, been a year of progress. --C.R.

This issue of *The First Coast Freethinker* celebrates a year of contact with members and nonmembers alike. The past twelve issues, starting in April, have covered many topics relating to those who live without belief in the supernatural. They have looked without flattery at what the religious as well as nonbelievers have done and have not done. Hopefully, the balance has been fairly good.

Much content has concentrated on providing information so readers can make up their own minds. It is hoped that some readers may learn things they did not previously know. Opinion pieces are marked as editorials.

We presented a difference of opinion about being called “brights,” a variety of other topics by different authors, and even some verse. The purpose is to provide variety of content and writers. We have had some outstanding contributions from the membership for which we thank you.

Selecting content is sometimes difficult. The temptation is to stray from freethought to provide other information on the assumption that freethinkers need to be well informed about the world they live in. This means filling some of the gaps that the local monopoly newspaper does not provide.

Articles have the sources given whenever possible so readers can search further for themselves. The sources are varied in hopes of showing some that may not be familiar, such as internet sites.

The limitation of ten pages plus cover allows it to be mailed for a first class postage stamp and also conveniently delivered electroni-

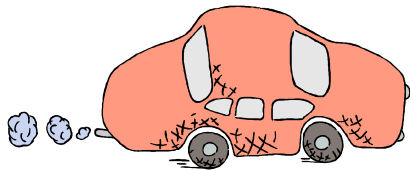
cally. So one question is whether to present fewer long items, or more short ones. We welcome feedback from readers.

Should we include Supreme Court cases, Islam and the Koran, women in public life, experiences with Christians, freethinker activities, politics and government, social welfare, good books and web sites, rebuttals to Times-Union letters and editorials, sources of morality, role of media, improving education, brief biographies, or other? Your suggestions and contributions are encouraged. --H.B.

GREAT JOB, HUGO AND CARRIE! It is so gratifying to have two experienced and knowledgeable editors publishing our newsletter. It took Hugo volunteering to be responsible for putting out a newsletter and Carrie's devotion to making it the best it can be to produce the outstanding publication they come up with each month. What a fine team! So much can be achieved when you have dedicated people working together on a project. Many, many thanks to our editors. --W.W.

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CARPOOLING!



It has come to our attention that some of us who no longer drive at night, or don't drive at all, cannot always get to regular meetings or other FCFTS activities.

Hugo Borresen has agreed to head up a Carpool Committee designed to match up drivers and passengers. We would like to see this idea catch on. But even if only a few folks benefit, I feel we will have succeeded.

If you're interested, please contact Hugo at HBorreson@juno.com or call 779-6883 with your location and the capacity in which you would like to participate. --C.R.

APRIL 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, April 27, 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. **The deadline to RSVP is SUN., April 25, 2004!**

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SEEKING SPIRITUAL ANSWERS

Try not to be alarmed by the title! This article comes to us courtesy of the Spinnaker, the UNF student newspaper. It is written by Ann Pahlic, Contributing Writer.

In it, you will learn a little of the activities of our "new home" and in addition, how FCFTS member and friend Jay Huebner is helping teach students to think.

Part of the college experience is discovering who one is and learning new ways of looking at the world.

At least one group at the University of North Florida offers a way to expand the minds of students and give them a chance to express themselves in an open environment without fear of looking "less than intelligent."

Through the efforts of Dr. Jay Huebner, a professor of physics, and the Rev. Dr. John Young, an adjunct instructor of religious studies, the organization **yoU U/UNF** has been created to give students a chance to explore various topics in a positive atmosphere.

"Most people do not know what they think," Huebner says. "To discover what you think, discuss it with other people."

Monthly discussions center on topics that are current and important to the people who attend. A topic recently discussed was romantic love. The subject of discussion for March is the engineering of love, concerning women and contraception.

According to Young and Huebner, such dialogue strengthens faith.

The foundation of **yoU U/UNF** is Unitarian Universalism, a 400-year-old national denomination that teaches followers to be rational and thoughtful.

“This is a religion in which seeking the answer is the goal,” Huebner says. “It recognizes that modern science is our best explanation of what the world is.”

Unitarians do not force their children to accept their religion. Instead, Huebner says the religion is about helping children become well-adjusted, happy adults.

“This is a religion in which seeking the answer is the goal,” Huebner says. “It recognizes that modern science is our best explanation of what the world is.”

The group’s beliefs also encourage debate within the church, so all have a chance to state their opinions without being looked down upon. This gives people the opportunity to learn what others think and to share ideas.

Part of the reason **yoU U/UNF** was established nearly four years ago was to make sure students have a chance to learn about another religion.

“One of the things that bothers me about college students now is that they do not explore the world of religion,” Huebner says.

YoU U/UNF is part of Campus Ministries and invites students of all denominations to attend its meetings. According to Young, such a group can give new perspectives on topics that might not be discussed elsewhere on campus.

“I think that it is important to have this group on campus because other groups are but-tressing their faith,” Young says. “We are more

of a ‘spiritual searching’ group.”

Students are not the only ones to attend the meetings. Faculty, staff and people from outside the UNF community attend the meetings as well.

“We welcome all people,” Young says.

Those at the meetings are encouraged to share, discuss and debate what they believe with others. The group works to maintain an inviting environment in which no idea is thrown out or ridiculed. People listen to comments and state whether they agree and why they think the way they do.

The members of the Unitarian Universalist religion may all have an opinion, but it is not necessarily the same.

Huebner says though the student organization is affiliated with the church, its purpose is not to give the church new members. Its purpose is to help people understand there are other religions in the world.

YoU U/UNF meets every Tuesday from noon to 1 p.m. in the Robinson Student Center (Bldg. 14), Room 1601. --Ann Pahlic (Ann may be contacted at uspinnak@unf.edu.)

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WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

In honor of Women’s History Month, we present the stories of two absolutely amazing individuals. One can barely imagine the hardships they must have endured.

Antoinette Brown Blackwell (1825-1921) was the first ordained woman minister in the U.S. She worked to promote civil rights for blacks and women’s right to vote. She studied religion at Oberlin College but was not permitted to graduate because it opposed women becoming ordained ministers. She lectured against slavery and favored women’s rights and outlawing alcoholic beverages.

Blackwell preached at any church that accepted her, was ordained a minister in a Congregational church in New York State, but resigned because its doctrine was too strict. Then she joined the Unitarian church, where she occa-

sionally preached. She wrote a book accusing Charles Darwin of using evolution to try to prove women inferior to men.

Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910) (no relationship to Antoinette Blackwell, above) was the first woman in the U.S. to receive a medical degree. When she applied to Geneva College after 29 other medical schools turned her down, the administration thought that admitting a woman was so preposterous, they passed the joke to their students who admitted her.

She was barred from classroom demonstrations and had to control blushing in lectures on reproductive organs. But she graduated at the top of her class and continued studies in Europe. There she lost the use of one eye from disease so she could not become a surgeon.

When she returned to the U.S., New York hospitals refused to hire her, colleagues ignored her, and landlords refused to rent her office space. She opened a small clinic in a tenement area and was joined by her sister, Emily, a surgeon. It grew to become the New York Infirmary for Women and Children. She founded the Woman's Medical College of the New York Infirmary which operated until Cornell University Medical School admitted women.

She then returned to England, where she was born, to a large and successful practice. She wrote and lectured, emphasizing sanitation and personal hygiene.

The American Medical Association awards the Elizabeth Blackwell Medal each year to the woman physicians who has made the most outstanding contribution to the cause of women in medicine. (*Woman's Almanac, World Book*)

--H.B.

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“As long as people believe in absurdities they will continue to commit atrocities.”

--Voltaire

HUMANIST BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



The FCFTS humanist book discussion group meets at 2:00 p.m. on the 3rd Sunday of each month at Borders Books, 8801 Southside Blvd., phone 519-6500. Borders will order a small number of books for each meeting. We will go for a snack afterwards.

The schedule is as follows:

- April 18, 2004 - *The Harlot By The Side of the Road*, by Jonathan Kirsch
- May 16, 2004 - *Beyond Civilization*, by Daniel Quinn

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

--Jewell Kross

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GLOBAL FUNDAMENTALISM

This article is provided by member and physicist, Terry Loucks. Terry and his wife, Ursula, are currently having adventure on the high seas on their sailboat, the S/V VoltAire, named after the famous French philosopher.

A recent article by Dr. Davidson Loehr in *UU World* nicely summarizes the interdisciplinary study known as The Fundamentalism Project sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. It was the largest such study ever performed with more than 100 scholars from all over the world reporting on every imaginable kind of fundamentalism. What they discovered was that the agenda of all fundamentalist move-

ments in the world is virtually identical, regardless of nationality or religion.

They identified four characteristics shared by virtually all fundamentalisms, independent of culture or century. First is the insistence that their rules must be made to apply to all people and to all areas of life. There can be no separation of church and state or of public and private life. Second is that men are on top and they determine the roles of women through both physical and legal domination.

Fundamentalism is absolutely natural, ancient, and powerful, but it is also inadequate.

Third, the fundamentalists must dictate what is taught to the next generation through the control of textbooks and teaching styles. Otherwise they cannot be certain that their one right picture of the world (with one right set of beliefs and one right set of rules for men, women, and children) will be faithfully transmitted. Fourth is to spurn the modern and long for a golden nostalgic past that never really existed, including the times when their infallible scriptures were handed down from Above.

The only way all fundamentalisms can have the same agenda is if the agenda preceded all the religions, and it did. These men are acting the role of “alpha males” who define the boundaries of their group's territory and the norms and behaviors that define members of their in-group. In biological terms, these are the characteristic behaviors of sexually dimorphous territorial animals: males set and enforce the rules; females obey the males and raise the children. And there is a clear separation between the in-group and the out-group.

What conservatives are conserving is the biological “default setting” of our species, which has a strong resemblance to the default setting of thousands of other species. Fundamentalism is absolutely natural, ancient, and powerful, but it is also inadequate. It's a means of structuring relationships that evolved when we lived in troops of 150 or less and is completely incapable

of the nuance or flexibility needed to structure humane societies.

Fundamentalism's conservative impulse wants stability in societies. Liberal impulses give us not stability but civility or humanity by expanding the definitions of our inherited territorial categories. The essential job of liberals in human societies is to enlarge our understanding of who belongs in our in-group. Two good examples of this are the women's suffrage movement eighty years ago and the more recent civil rights movement. Both have expanded our in-group from white males only and both are gradually being accepted even by our fundamentalists.

Loehr says that there is a “slow dance” between the conservative and liberal impulses, and it can be good for our society. One promotes stability while the other expands our in-group and is often more humane. (*UU World Jan-Feb 2004*)
--Terry Loucks

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**EXCERPT FROM AN EDITORIAL
IN THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
(2/27/04)**

by Walter Cronkite

Where is the tolerance, where is the Christian spirit in the effort to criminalize the personal choices of our fellow citizens, personal choices that do not physically threaten others? Where is the Christian tolerance in the conceit of those Christian leaders who dare suggest that they alone can be trusted to properly interpret the lessons of their Bible, and who would impose that belief on this nation's highly diverse peoples by threatening to throw them in jail if they don't agree with the Christian Right's version of God's wishes?

Besides wishing to criminalize individual behavior, the more radical members of the Christian Right would like their proposed federal law to dictate what individual churches could do in regard to recognizing or performing same-sex

marriages. This is another abomination. Shouldn't that decision be made by the individual church or denomination? What possible excuse is there for government intervention in this decision except an unreasonable, unchristian intolerance for freedom of worship?

Where is the Christian tolerance in those right-wing Christian leaders who would impose their religious beliefs on the entire diverse population of the United States, even to the extent of a Constitutional amendment curtailing our rights of religious freedom?

Editor's Note: The Interfaith Alliance was founded in order to promote cooperation through similar beliefs. It is made up of a broad base of denominations as well as Humanists and Atheists. Walter Cronkite is the spokesperson. (These excerpts reprinted with permission from The Separationist, March 2004. To see the original, click: [Cronkite Article.](#))

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ELECTRONIC VOTING PROBLEMS

Freethinkers are good citizens. Good citizens vote. But some questions have arisen in several states about the dependability of electronic voting machines to replace punched cards.

Accurate and non-controversial voting machines are needed for the November election. The concern is important after the debacle in the 2000 presidential election, especially in Florida. So electronic machines will be used, but they are controversial. For one reason, they are a threat to democracy for the following four reasons.

1. **Secrecy:** The process of the operation of the machines is proprietary because private companies provide the machines which are more complicated than previous ones.
2. **Ownership:** Voting-machine companies are not obligated to tell anyone who owns them. One is English and another is owned by Saudi Arabians. Three of the top six firms have conflict of interest. (a) The largest is owned by the campaign finance director of

Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE, Episcopalian); Hagel is head of the company that built the machines that counted his votes. (b) Diebold, the second largest, is headed by a man who has visited George W. Bush in Texas and has promised to "deliver the votes" for Bush. (c) The third is headed by a man who is close to Dick Cheney and other high ranking members of the Bush administration. Key members in these and other companies have close relationships and share software and optical scan machines.

3. **Disabling safeguards:** Attempts at tampering is common, but now the scale of operation is much larger, more sophisticated, and less visible. This creates two major problems. (a) The audit trail is missing, the parallel set of data to match the votes cast. Some machines have no optical scanner to produce a paper ballot as a record. (b) Incorrect programming has been identified in over a hundred elections, but is unknown because of lack of paper ballots. Some programs are slightly in error, others totally wrong. In a small Ohio county the machine miscounted by three million votes.
4. **Secret certification and testing:** The machines are supposed to be extensively certified and tested. But the testers refuse to state what the tests are. Some officials do not test carefully but just ask perfunctory questions and miss major problems. Scientific Applications International, Inc. (SAIC) found in one system 328 flaws, 26 of them "critical." This was discovered only by accident.

When software is certified and approved, officials accept it as accurate. Parts or all are sometimes updated and certified without testing. Some programmers are foreign and not proficient in English.

Seven companies furnish machines and programs. Only AccuPoll has touch screens and paper ballot to verify results plus software which is open to inspection. Avante has touch screens with a paper trail and a secure ballot box. Several have conflicts of interest because they interchange programs and information, and some officials want a Republican victory.

In Volusia County a replacement took away over 16,000 votes from Al Gore but this was discovered by an alert clerk. Diebold maintains its system is safe.

(Buzzflash.com specializes in interviews with informed people; here, Bev Harris, who runs blackboxvoting.org. Some conditions have changed since the September interview.) --H.B.

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U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

Several decades ago, the Secretary of State asked for a list of U.S. military interventions in other nations. He received a list of 150, but it was not publicized. Since then the U.S. has added perhaps two dozen interventions, for a total of 175.

A speaker on the radio recently gave the number as 225, which is probably the most accurate. This contrasts with proclamations of Peace on Earth in the Christmas season by the public and by whichever political party controls Congress and the White House.

One Internet site lists 137 interventions in 73 nations. But it excludes about twenty categories such as covert action, rescue, proxy troops, and civic action. It also excludes Indian

wars; and lists of wars in two books on Indian history were so dissimilar they could not be reconciled.

Here is a sampling from this list: Presently, U.S. troops are protecting American property in Haiti for the fourth time. U.S. troops were there in 1891, 1914-34 (19 years), and in 1994-96. U.S. troops have also been present in such dangerous locations as Chicago, Colorado, Detroit, Hawaii, Idaho, Los Angeles, Minnesota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Washington DC, and West Virginia. Troops have been used to quell strikers who demanded decent wages and good working conditions.

Troops were present nationwide in 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr. was shot and in 2001 after the Muslim terrorists attacked the World Trade Center. World Wars I and II and Vietnam also count. The bloodiest one-nation occupation may have been in the Philippines in 1898-1910 where 600,000 Filipinos are estimated to have died.

Here are some of the interventions in the last ten years: 1995, Croatia; 1996-97, Zaire (Congo); 1997, Liberia; 1997, Albania; 1998, Sudan; 1998, Afghanistan; 1998, Iraq; 1999, Yugoslavia; 2000, Yemen; 2001 Macedonia; 2001, Afghanistan; 2003, Iraq. (zmag.org, etc.)

--H.B.

In Memory of Llewellyn Nienkierk

Llewellyn Nienkierk, one of the founding members of the First Coast Freethought Society, succumbed on February 3, 2004 after an extended illness.

Llewellyn was there at the very first meeting and from the beginning became involved in the organization. She was one of the original members of the Refreshment Committee and remained so throughout the remainder of her life. Back in 2001, Llewellyn and her husband assumed responsibility for the refreshments for 2-1/2 years, even after the onset of her illness until she was forced to give it up about a year ago.

Llewellyn actively engaged in the discussions and all other activities of the Society and rarely missed a meeting. When we had our first social meeting, she bought a new dress for the occasion which she wanted to celebrate because we had talked about starting a monthly social for so long.

The First Coast Freethought Society was an important part of her life and we will miss her.

--W. Walton

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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 by 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 every 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.

For web site postings, contact Carrie.

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 (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, Jacksonville, FL 32211 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

April 12, 2004 - Monthly Meeting
 April 18, 2004 - Book Discussion Group
 April 27, 2004 - **SOCIAL**
 May 10, 2004 - Monthly Meeting
 May 16, 2004 - Book Discussion Group
 May 25, 2004 - **SOCIAL**
 June 14, 2004 - Monthly Meeting
 June 20, 2004 - Book Discussion Group
 June 22, 2004 - **SOCIAL**
 July 12, 2004 - Monthly Meeting

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**

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

FREETHOUGHT HEROES **April 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

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1820)
President, author of the Declaration of Independence, popularizer of “wall” of separation between church and state

Joseph Fletcher (1905-91) Ex-pounder of biomedical and situational ethics

A. Phillip Randolph (1889-1979)
Founder of African-American Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Union

Clarence Darrow (1857-1938) Attorney who defended John Scopes in Dayton “Monkey” evolution trial and the Scottsboro boys

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1759-1797) Early defender of equal rights and education for women

Thomas Szasz (1920-) Psychiatrist who challenged definitions and treatment of mental illness

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