

# 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

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NUMBER 5

### MAY MEETING

Speaker: **Anthony M. Rossi, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Biology, at the University of North Florida.

Topic: **"Evolution and Creation: Two Sides of a Different Coin."** In addition to exploring the above, Dr. Rossi will recount his recent experience debating noted creationist, "Dr." Kent Hovind.

Time: **Monday, May 10, 2004**, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in the sanctuary.

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

### Annual FREETHOUGHT FROLIC at Willa Manor

*(See page 9)*

### The ACLU is presenting NADINE STROSSEN

in St. Augustine  
*(See page 8)*

### Remember the HUMANIST BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

2:00 p.m., Sun., May 16, 2004  
*(See page 4)*

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

#### Fundamentalism is Incompatible With Democracy

**O**ur democratic form of government grants certain basic rights to all citizens, and none is more precious and necessary to democracy and freedom than the first amendment to the Constitution in the Bill of Rights which states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Edward O. Wilson calls religion a "perpetual fountainhead of human emotion." It is because of that emotional character of religion

that it can trigger unreasonable reactions in so many people. Religion is open to a wide variety of interpretations, and disagreement regarding its meaning and veracity is widespread. Is there a more explosive issue that you can bring up for discussion? That is the very reason the founders of our country handled religion with such caution. Extremism in anything is dangerous, but in religion it is deadly.

Settlers of the new world had had experience with religious extremism when they came to this country. They had seen it get out of hand in Europe with religious restrictions imposed by state religions, the Inquisition, the Crusades, and people being jailed and fined for not adhering to church laws. Our country's founders knew religion had to be kept in check to make democracy work. Religious disharmony had also been evident in the early days of settlement in the new world. The authors of the Constitution intended

to make it clear that the government would remain neutral on religion.

In recent years, government has become anything but neutral. Fifty years ago, candidates were not asked about their religion. But today it can be one of the main focuses of those seeking elected office: each candidate tries to out-religion the opposition. Being religious is supposed to be a reflection of high moral character, while many people believe that nonbelievers are amoral and unethical. Some news analysts have observed that an atheist could not be elected president in today's world.

Fundamentalists have a goal of tearing down the "wall of separation between church and state." They are working towards this goal diligently. Religion has become very big busi-

ness with the Christian stores, books, music, CDs, TV exposure, and movies, and it is flourishing. One reason for fundamentalists' growth is that they have built a phenomenal grass roots organization to spread their message of intolerance and to influence legislation. A list of 16 fundamentalist organizations appears in the book, "Why the Religious Right Is Wrong" and this list is only partial.

The Fundamentalists' intolerant message seeks to chip away at free speech, free exercise of religion, as well as the establishment clause. The message of fundamentalism is that "ours is the only true religion." It is a clear example of religious extremism no less than the that of the 9/11 World Trade Center bombers and has no place in a democratic government. --W.W.

## FOUNDING GRANDFATHERS

*Terry Loucks takes a fascinating look not at our founding fathers but at their predecessors to examine more deeply the evolution of the principles on which our country was built and the roots of the freedoms we enjoy today.*

Thomas Jefferson was one of the most learned men of his time, which is saying a lot considering his intellectual peers in Europe and the Colonies. Nevertheless when he, John Adams, James Madison, Ben Franklin, and others framed the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, they were standing on the shoulders of many who had struggled for freedom before them.

Thomas Jefferson was influenced by ideas from Edward Coke, John Locke, Adam Smith, Baron de Montesquieu, and Adam Ferguson (*An Essay on the History of Civil Society*). James Madison had the same favorites and also liked Joseph Priestley's. Both of these founders enjoyed the works of their fiery contemporary, Thomas Paine, who wrote *Common Sense*, *Rights of Man*, and *Age of Reason*.

Ben Franklin, very much the senior of Jefferson and Madison, was also influenced by

the ideas of Coke, Locke, Smith, and Montesquieu, and also put them into practice as a statesman, as an inventor, and as an entrepreneur publisher.

It is interesting to look at the history of the ideas that became the foundation for the freedoms we enjoy in America today.

It all started with the Roman, Marcus Cicero (106-43 BC), who insisted that law is legitimate only when it is consistent with standards of liberty and justice, based on what he called natural law.

Much more recently, Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), earned the wrath of Protestants and Catholics alike by challenging the power of both the Pope and his pretender, Martin Luther. Erasmus believed in human free will and was an early fighter for religious tolerance.

Historical Note: He also dared to question the official Latin Vulgate edition of the Bible and produced his own translation of the New Testament by going back to the Greek manuscripts. Many other translations were soon to follow, including Luther's in German, Tyndale's in English, and others in Hungarian and Spanish.

The Englishman, Sir Edward Coke ("Cook") (1552-1634), took the lead in developing what today is called common laws; he was also committed to the idea of an independent

judiciary. Both of these concepts were quite bold in the days when the King's word was law, but they later made their way into our Constitution. Coke paid for his radical views in a damp, bitter cold, urine-soaked cell in the Tower of London.

Historical Note: Many miles away in Italy, Galileo (1564-1642) was conducting his own fight against the Pope for the freedom of scientific ideas. A little later the Dutchman, Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) developed international law and was a brave voice for natural law and peace between nations.

The concept of "rule of law" (instead of clergy or kings) took the blood of many brave martyrs. John Lilburne (1614-1657) challenged the standard practice of imprisoning people without filing formal charges, and also judges who tried to intimidate juries. He challenged the royal prerogative of imprisoning adversaries and extracting self-incriminating confessions. For his meddlesome views, he spent most of his own life in prison.

Algernon Sidney (1623-1683), who spent his life escaping assassins, fought for the principle of popular sovereignty: people should be able to choose their rulers and throw them out when they become scoundrels. His major work, *Discourses Concerning Government*, appeared 15 years after he was beheaded, and it did much to develop the case for liberty that was to inspire Americans and sweep the world. He knew John Locke and William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, his new colony of brotherly love.

The most influential case for natural rights came from the pen of scholar John Locke (1632-1704). He expressed the radical view that government is morally obliged to serve people by protecting life, liberty, and property. He explained the principle of checks and balances to limit government power and favored representative government and a rule of law. Jefferson, Madison, Franklin, Adams, and other founders

were inspired by Locke; and many of Thomas Paine's revolutionary ideas came from him.

Historical Note: At the same time, Isaac Newton (1642-1722) was strengthening Galileo's case for natural laws in the maturing world of science. It is interesting that humans were struggling for political and economic freedom at the same time they were fighting for scientific reason over arbitrary religious dogmas.

Another important voice in the colonies was that of the French baron, Montesquieu (1689-1755), whose ideas also made their way into the French Enlightenment. Both the institution of the Supreme Court and the entire structure of our Constitution can be traced to his major work, *Spirit of the Law*. Studying the British system, he ascribed its merits to the division of legislative, executive, and judicial functions, and to the system of checks and balances that preserved its equilibrium.

Another Frenchman, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1727-1781) and his Scottish contemporary Adam Smith (1723-1790) later developed arguments for

economic freedom that strongly influenced our founders. Turgot promoted market competition and the idea of Laissez Faire, as did Adam Smith in his famous *Wealth of Nations*. These two men were also important voices in their respective French and Scottish Enlightenments, which by our good fortune bloomed during the birth of our nation.

It took a man of letters, such as Jefferson (dubbed by his friend Dupont as the American Turgot), to capture for the first time the ideas underlying institutionalized freedom, but he was building on the precepts and sacrifices of many before him. Lilburne and Locke taught him the importance of natural rights, and from Scotsman Adam Smith came the seeds of economic liberty. Edward Coke trumpeted the importance of an independent judiciary, and Montesquieu saw the importance of separation of powers in the fledgling English parliamentary system. And Jeffer-

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son's best friend, James Madison, shared his commitment to a written constitution.

These are the principles upon which our country was founded. --T.L.

*Acknowledgement: I just finished reading Jim Powell's "The Triumph of Liberty" (Free Press) from which I have borrowed unmercifully. If you want to enjoy literally dozens of biographies on the heroes of freedom, then let this be a small inducement to explore his wonderful book. --T.L*

\* \* \* \* \*

## MY DANGEROUS LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*Curtis Wolf explains: Since the Florida Times-Union will not print this letter to the editor, I thought that I might share it with my fellow infidels!*

**O**n March 12th, Drew Edwards claimed that homosexuality is condemned by the Bible and therefore should be condemned in our country as well. Before we recognize the authority of the Bible on this matter, let us look at other Bible verses.

- **Slavery** - Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you. Of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Leviticus 25:44 Slaves, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Ephesians 6:5
- **Genocide** - And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it [city in Canaan] into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. Deuteronomy 20:13
- **Children's disobedience** - If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them, all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die. Deuteronomy 21:18, 21

- **Female virginity upon entering marriage** - If any man take a wife, and go in unto her ... and say, I took this woman, and when I came nigh to her, I found not in her the tokens of virginity. But if this thing be true, that the tokens of virginity were not found in the damsel then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones. Deuteronomy 22:13,14,20,21

Unless we believe in slavery, genocide and the stoning of disobedient children and sexually active women, we should reject the Bible as the basis for criminal and civil law.

We should instead base our laws on the fact that actions have consequences. If two people - even two gay people - commit to each other, how could that have anything but good consequences? --C.W.

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## HUMANIST BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



The FCFTS humanist book discussion group meets at 2:00 p.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month at Borders Books, 8801 Southside Blvd., phone 519-6500. Books for each meeting will be held behind the register under the name of Kross. The schedule is as follows:

- May 16, 2004 - *Beyond Civilization*, by Daniel Quinn
- June 20, 2004 - *The Third Chimpanzee*, by Jared Diamond

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

## INTEGRATING LITTLE ROCK

The fiftieth anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* has reminded us of the battle to integrate public schools. The U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision was unanimous, but many Southerners were opposed. One of the most memorable events was the integration three years later of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. City officials had made careful plans for peaceful integration, but Governor Orval Faubus called out the National Guard ostensibly to prevent hostility but actually to win reelection.

The morning of September 4, 1957, Elizabeth Eckford, age 15, put on her new black and white dress to go to school. Her television showed a mob forming at the school so her mother and father were concerned, but the three of them prayed, and Elizabeth took the bus. She got off a block away and walked to the school; the eight other black students came together separately

from another direction accompanied by four (black?) ministers. A crowd of five hundred people had gathered. They yelled, "Lynch her" and "Go home, you bastard of a black bitch" and "Get a rope and drag her over to the tree."

A photograph showed her followed by student Hazel Bryan Massery whose mouth is open, heckling her. Gov. Orval Faubus had ordered the Arkansas National Guard to maintain order. Elizabeth saw white students enter the school but when she tried, soldiers with bayonets blocked her three times. She walked toward other soldiers to seek protection, but they did not respond. She remembers thinking, "I thought they were there for my protection."



She turned toward an older woman but the woman spat on her. When she sat down on a bench at the bus stop, Benjamin Fine, education editor for *The New York Times* put his arm around her and told her not to show the mob she was crying. He was called a "dirty Jew" and spat upon. Then a white woman sat with her and made sure she got on the bus safely because Elizabeth dared not walk home alone.

After several days Gov. Faubus withdrew the National Guard. Federal troops were then sent in to protect all nine African Americans. President Dwight D. Eisenhower spoke to the nation to explain the necessity for this move. When the "Little Rock Nine" (as the students were called) entered, one white male student befriended Elizabeth but was harassed by other

students. They were not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, service and social clubs, hold offices, attend dances, or play in bands.

Each student was assigned an armed soldier who went with them from class to class and waited outside the classroom door.

The withdrawal of the soldiers in November left them without protection. Several of the African American students were then beaten and knocked down, hit with food, had books knocked out of their hands, kicked down stairs, had broken glass thrown into showers they used. One black girl was angry enough to dump a plate of chili on a white boy who was deriding her, to the applause of the black staff.

Parents of four of the students lost their jobs. Of the Little Rock Nine, only one graduated from Central High, a testimony to his determination. The others left Central High. Heckler Hazel several years later telephoned Elizabeth and apologized. They met on the for-

tieth anniversary and shared their experiences before an assembly. Hazel explained that in church she sang, "Jesus loves the little children of the world / red and yellow, black and white / They are precious in His sight," likely not recognizing the irony until years later.

All nine students left Little Rock. Elizabeth graduated, held several jobs including teacher, and later returned to the city. A new high school in an affluent section of the city later integrated with no difficulty, suggesting that the hostility was possibly based on social class difference rather than primarily racial prejudice plus incitement from the governor. Faubus later mellowed and became more tolerant. The photograph of the harassing Hazel following Elizabeth with hatred on her face has appeared in many publications, reminding viewers of a dark chapter in American history. It raises the question: How many of the mob, the National Guard, and students were Christians? (Internet, numerous articles about Elizabeth Eckford)

--H.B.

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### MAY SOCIAL

To: All **freethinkers**, FCFTS members, friends, and guests.

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

When: **TUESDAY, May 25, 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 SUN., May 23, 2004!**

*As long as every question is answered by the word "God," scientific inquiry is simply impossible.*

--Robert Ingersoll

## SO MISUNDERSTOOD

### Giving Voice to the Godless

**F**rom April 9-11, 2004, American Atheists—the largest organization of its sort—held its 30th annual convention in San Diego. At the conference, American Atheists president, Ellen Johnson, announced that in March, GAMPAC—the Godless Americans Political Action Committee—was formed, to give atheists a stronger political voice.

Kelly Davis of the *San Diego CityBEAT* interviewed Dave Kong, director of the California branch of American Atheists, to talk about the atheist foray into politics, the public perception of living a "Godless" life, and the existential hurdles that come with being an atheist. This condensation of the Davis's article gives Mr. Kong's direct statements in quotation marks.

Asks *CityBEAT*: Could atheist support for a candidate backfire? "It's not a concern for us; for the elected official, it might be a concern. We had given an award to Mayor Ralph Appezato from Alameda for removing the [religious] invocation from City Council meetings...and at that point he was getting ready to run for county Board of Supervisors... He asked if we could hold off and do the ceremony a month from now. So we waited a month. He actually won the run-off and, sure enough, we had our meeting and he was just as pleased as punch. On the other hand, [Congressman] Pete Stark got his award, and the next week he was in the [*San Francisco*] *Chronicle*, big article, totally standing up for the separation of church and state, and I think we had an influence on that."

"Right now our main beef is, of course, government funding of religion. We also totally disagree with any symbolic endorsement of religion and that includes crosses on public property, includes 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance. We changed our national motto to 'In God We Trust' back in 1955 or '56..."

"...Some people don't want to use the 'A' word because they're afraid it's going to stigmatize [them]. The point of American Atheists is if you don't use the word 'atheist,' it's never going to be destigmatized. We've used it enough and



it's starting to get out in the press, and rather than—gasp!—there's atheists in the paper, now it's, oh, it's just the atheists again."

"There's one [stereotype] where people think we're just cold, analytical people who look at a sunset and say, 'It's just the sun brings its rays down and radiation and all that, and taking the romance out of life....the big issue with religious people was, well, if you're an atheist, you must do bad things... And if you do good things, somehow they feel that you must couch it in religious terms. To me that's very distressing..."

Religious based conflict is "just distressing. It's a hard thing for us to watch. September 11 was obviously religiously based, and you've got our side going, 'Our God would never do that and our God is better than your God.' That was really frightening for us because we just saw this Christian-versus-Muslim thing starting to build very quickly, and once you get that started, how do you turn back?"

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***"You've got to make the most of your life... Maybe atheists are trying to leave the world a better place than we found it; maybe that's our bid for immortality."***

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Regarding support for President Bush, "I'm sure that if you talked to a large group of our members, you'd find Bush supporters. Like I say, we're a mixed group and that's why this political action committee is going to be a definite challenge....If an individual feels they need support from a religion, I'm not going to knock it as much as I may think religion is silly and worthless and all that. It's individual choice."

About life after death, "'Worm food' is my favorite term to use. When we die, we're going to be worm food. It is a scary prospect..." but "you realize, though, that death just happens, so you've got to live. You've got to make the most of your life... Maybe atheists are trying to leave the world a better place than we found it; maybe that's our bid for immortality."

About converting theists, "There are some atheists who are very evangelical, for lack

of a better word. They see a religious person and they will go and try to talk to them until they are blue in the face...Sure, if anybody wants to wake up and admit there is no God, we're certainly happy to encourage that along. American Atheists ourselves have never really been into proselytizing..."

About the Shroud of Turin, "I think it's a total sham, of course." (*San Diego CityBEAT*, "So Misunderstood" an article by Kelly Davis)

--H.B.

\* \* \* \* \*



*"Same with us. We go to the burnings and the beheadings, but we're not really religious."*

\* \* \* \* \*

## WHY DIDN'T GOD ...

**A**ron Ralston is an avid, young outdoorsman who had a severe accident. He was climbing alone in a canyon in Utah on April 26, 2003, when his right arm became pinned under an 800-pound boulder. He was unable to free himself so on the fifth day, he snapped his bones and cut through his arm with a knife. He now tells people that with a prosthetic arm he is learning to play the piano, climb more mountains, and go skiing and mountain biking. He claims he survived due to a miracle from God, whose presence he felt at the site. (*Florida Times-Union*, 4-10-04) A skeptic has asked, Why didn't God just lift the boulder?

The ACLU is presenting  
President of the ACLU

## NADINE STROSSEN

Nationally-known Champion of Civil Liberties

**Saturday, May 8, 2004 at 7:00 pm**  
**in the Troon & Wentworth Ballroom**  
Renaissance Resort Conference Center  
World Golf Village

500 South Legacy Trail, St. Augustine, FL  
and

**Sunday, May 9, 2004 at 10:30 am**  
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\* \* \* \* \*

### “AS ABOVE, SO BELOW”

#### Thoughts as we ponder the universe

It is definitely worth the effort and fun in the process, but I doubt if we will ever figure out where we are in this seemingly endless "powers of ten." No matter how small we look, or how large, we always find another layer of laws and order.

The challenge is more easily visualized if we imagine ourselves to be protons. What chance would a conscious proton have of figuring out its world? The proton would first discover that it was made of quarks, and this would only be the first leg of its journey into the very small. As it looked outward into its night sky, it would first see neutrons and further away electrons. Its universe, if you will, would consist of atoms stuck together into crystals or molecules.

What chance would it have, however, of visualizing the Earth with all its life? At some point it might find its journey into the very large simply too overwhelming. --T.L.

### LIBERALISM ADVANCES STEADILY

The (Jacksonville) *Florida Times-Union* prints one to three columnists every day who praise conservative ideas; every week one or more letters to the editor praises conservatives. Most newspapers are conservative. Conservative columnists often attack liberals as being barely human, ignorant and prejudiced, making endless mistakes which harm good people. The Republican administration is very conservative. Billionaire Richard Mellon Scaife spent \$10 million attacking Democrats and President Bill Clinton and his administration during his two terms of office, which is about \$100,000 a month. But in 2000, the Democrats and Republicans were nationally close in votes. Despite such opposition, liberals are doing quite well.

Liberalism stands for progress, the goodness of people, rights of individuals, and civil liberties. But it has also been extended to include help for those who need it so they can take care of themselves. It stands for the fullest development of the individual with as few restrictions on the individual as possible. To many it also means government help and the money to pay for it.

Fundamentalists who push a conservative agency are evidently not doing well. Abortion is still legal. Creationism is not taught in public schools; Kansas tried it but reversed in 18 months. Classroom prayer in public schools is gone. Equal rights for homosexuals is becoming more acceptable. Faith-based social welfare has not proceeded very far because of opposition; evangelical congregations are not always eager to take government money with the strings attached, and they fear that the Nation of Islam and liberal Protestant groups will take money. Rights for women gets increasing support, as in reproduction.

Furthermore, laws against sodomy are disappearing. The Texas law outlawing sodomy when performed by gays but not by straights is gone. Couples of the same gender are seeking to be married as the law provides. Sex education emphasizing abstinence until marriage has become unpopular with many parents. Restriction



on stem-cell research is quite unpopular among scientists and much of the public. Homosexuality among some military personnel is increasingly tolerated.

Also, church attendance is declining slowly. Opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has died. Trent Lott's racism expressed when honoring Senator Strom Thurmond caused him to lose his post as senate leader. African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans are being courted for the coming election. The federal control of education in the No Child Left Behind program is increasingly opposed and now only speaks of not denying "constitutionally protected prayer." Immigrants are regarded more tolerantly now. (Richard Parker, Matthew Yglesias, *The American Prospect*, March 2004)

We can help these two authors with examples such as abolition of child labor, and challenges to corporate crime and welfare, guns, war on drugs, freedom for women, and censorship. Some of these changes over the last twenty or thirty years have been made in courts in spite of fundamentalist hostility. But popular opinion has also shifted enough to give the conservatives second thoughts about what they can achieve. We can expect many more changes in the future. These changing values make a better democracy to serve all people. --H.B.

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## UPHOLD SECULAR RULE

**A Letter to the Editor  
By Beth Perry**

I was reared during the years when God was not included in the Pledge of Allegiance. When I became a Girl Scout leader in the 1950s, I was stunned the first time my troop said the pledge. I stumbled around it, and I still refuse to say it.

Our nation was formed as a secular nation. James Madison, who wrote the majority of the U.S. Constitution, was an avowed atheist. Thomas Jefferson was a deist. After years of religious squabbles between the colonies, they realized it was important to keep religion out of

the Constitution, yet give everyone the freedom of religion so citizens could worship or not worship, believe or not believe as they chose.

We have lived well for more than 200 years under a secular government. Yet religious zealots keep chipping away at it. We are reverting to religious wars. There have been more wars in the name of gods than for any other reason. It's time to put a stop to it and keep our government secular. "Under God" does not belong in the pledge. --Beth Perry

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# Freethought Frolic

**(Why not join now, if you haven't already?)**

**Y**es, **Members and your Guests**, the Annual Spring Freethought Frolic for the First Coast Freethought Society will be held at Willa Manor, on Saturday, May 15, 2004, from 2:00 until - we are through. Ya'll come for a day of fun, frolic, food, and fellowship.

The hostess will furnish paper plates, paper cups, and utensils. Bring a dish to share, your beverage of choice, and a lawn chair (or blanket if you would rather sit on the ground).

Suggested items of food are vegetable and/or meat casseroles; vegetable and/or meat salads; fried, broiled or bar-b-qued chicken, ribs, fried fish or boiled or fried shrimp, hot wings, veggies, baked ham, deviled eggs; deserts - cake, pies or cookies.

Let's all get to know each other better and talk about humanism, freethinking, what you think of our programs, suggestions, etc.

Be on the lookout for your special invitation which will have all necessary details. Mark your calendar and save the date for Freethought Frolicking. If you haven't yet sent your dues for 2004, this might be a good time to do it, so you can join the party.

We hope to see you there! --Wilhelmina

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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, in 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

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  
 July 18, 2004 - Book Discussion Group  
 July 27, 2004 - **SOCIAL**  
 August 9, 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**

[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** **May 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**

**Horace Mann** (1796-1859) Father of public school system and teacher training  
**Elizabeth Cochran Seaman** (1867-1922) As journalist Nelly Bly concerned with social problems and women's rights  
**John Brown** (1800-1859) Abolitionist who died to free slaves  
**Florence Nightingale** (1820-1910) Nurse who improved hospital, health care  
**Elizabeth Palmer Peabody** (1804-94) First woman publisher and founder of American kindergarten  
**Bertrand Russell** (1872-1970) Philosopher, mathematician, author  
**Clara Barton** (1821-1912) Humanitarian who cared for wounded soldiers, founded American Red Cross  
**Rachel Carson** (1907-64) Biologist who popularized concern for environment

### **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**