

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

AUGUST 2004

NUMBER 8

AUGUST MEETING

Speaker: **Lauren Jones**, Coordinator of Public Policy, Health Educator, Planned Parenthood of Northeast Florida.

Topic: **"The Status of Reproductive Health"**
Learn the history and current status of reproductive health and birth control under the Bush administration.

Time: **Monday, August 9 2004**, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in the sanctuary.

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

Reminder

Saturday, September, 11, 2004 at 7:00 p.m.
MOLLY IVINS CAN'T SAY THAT!
at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall
777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL

Americans United Meeting
GREG WARNER
Assoc. Baptist Press News Service
Tuesday, September 14, 2004 at 6:45 p.m.
at the Regency Square Library
(See page 9 for more details)

FCFTS BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP
(See page 8 for details)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Does Science Really Matter?

Those who DON'T think conservative religious fundamentalism is impeding the progress of science in America are not paying attention. They are not listening to radio and television, reading all print media, or talking to scientists. Several times a week, news stories reveal efforts by the conservative fundamentalists which, if allowed to be implemented, would negatively impact scientific research and education.

The religious fundamentalists pursue an aggressive policy of expanding their influence into every facet of public life through any means they can conjure up. This is taking its toll on scientific progress by pushing schools and all levels of government to legitimize fundamentalists' Biblical beliefs.

On Wednesday, July 14, National Public Radio reported on the efforts of the conservative school board in the State of Texas, influenced by fundamentalist religion, to change the science text books for the State of Texas to emphasize an unscientific AIDS prevention policy of abstinence and marital monogamy while downplaying the role of condom use in prevention of AIDS. Instead of pointing out that the use of condoms is highly effective in the prevention of AIDS, they emphasize only the failure rate of condoms. On that same date, NPR reported from the International AIDS Conference that the United States is proposing **the same unscientific policy** in the battle for control of the AIDS epidemic on a world wide basis.

However, sexual abstinence is not an option for married women in the third world countries, a fact borne out by findings that the biggest increase in new cases of AIDS is, of course, young married women. It has been shown un-

equivocally that when condoms are used correctly during sexual contact, they are most effective in preventing the spread of AIDS; perhaps not 100%, but effective nonetheless. On the other hand, the likelihood of men being monogamous is negligible.

The State of Texas wields a lot of influence in the textbook industry because of its large number of students, and textbook companies are hesitant to be uncooperative with their policies. The textbook companies fear other states may cancel orders for books and cause them to lose money if they don't agree to cooperate in this unscientific effort to support the AIDS initiative.

When the *New York Times* celebrated the 25th Anniversary of its Science Times Section, several articles from past editions were republished. The lead article in this celebratory edition was, "Does Science Matter?" by William Broad and James Glanz. In commenting on the fundamentalist influence on science the authors quoted Dr. George Keyworth, science adviser under Ronald Reagan who said, "Isn't it in-

credible that you have so much fundamentalism retreating back to so much ignorance?" The massive efforts by fundamentalists to undermine the teaching of evolutionism in our science programs at every level of education is resulting in a shortage of science teachers and professors, as well as scientific researchers to meet the demands for research in industry and medicine.

Even the *Times-Union* recently published an article expressing concern about science education. Articles in *Free Inquiry*, *Skeptic Magazine*, *Church and State* (published by Americans United for Separation of Church) and *Free-thought Today* (published by the Freedom From Religion Foundation), and others have shown concern for the future of scientific education. The evidence for fundamentalist influence is

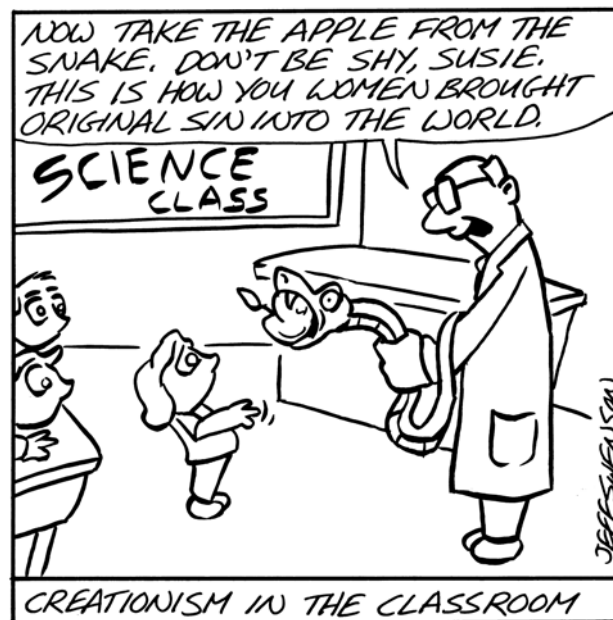
everywhere and growing. Drug manufacturers are suffering a slump in the discovery of new drugs and are turning to academia for support and assistance with research. *Skeptic Magazine* reported that colleges in the United States now have more than half of the students in upper level Engineering, Math and Science classes coming from foreign countries. Good for those other countries, but not so good for the United States.

Though still the most highly regarded profession, scientists have lost some of their prestige and public trust mainly because of discoveries that have possible unpredictable conse-

quences such as nuclear bombs, human cloning, stem cell research, as well as discoveries that threaten established cultural and religious mores. At the same time, according to one *New York Times* article, scientists have lost some of their willingness to explain their work and to keep the public informed about what science is; that is, science is simply a way of explaining how the world works, a fluid, ever-changing process. The first step, accord-

ing to E. O. Wilson, is learning the proper terminology, which can come only from those who actually do science or from some very gifted science writers. Many people, young and old, don't understand scientific method, the meaning of scientific theory, and the difference between the words "theory" and "hypothesis," as well as the importance of basic scientific research.

The one ray of hope for meaningful progress in this area for those of us who do not have sophisticated technology is **public radio and television**. Maybe it's time to take a fresh look at ways we interact with fundamentalists. Instead of approaching the problem with the fundamentalists in an adversarial way, if we were to approach it as a problem that we both need to work on solving, we could be more effective in



CREATIONISM IN THE CLASSROOM

reaching consensus on acceptance of scientific findings as beneficial for all. Maybe we should be more vocal yet sensitive to religious belief, but firm in arguing for the legitimacy and efficacy of science, and stressing the necessity of keeping religion a more private matter. It would take the efforts of many informed and insightful minds to effect this type of approach.

In *Skeptic Magazine*, Eugenie Scott introduces some techniques for teaching evolution and ways that you can teach ABOUT creationism without teaching creationism as a scientific hypothesis. Another article in this same magazine, taken from Reports of the National Center for Science Education, introduces ideas on how to avoid conflict between evolution and creationism. She suggests students can be told that science and religion are not necessarily incompatible and that many people who are religious accept the evidence for evolution but also hold on to their religious beliefs. This type of teaching recognizes students' religious beliefs and shows

them that the teacher is sensitive to their personal beliefs.

The First Coast Freethought Society is an educational organization. Much effort is required to provide the informative and educational programs such as we have and through which we find meaning for our lives here on earth since we do not believe there is another. Only through knowledge can we learn to use the resources of this earth wisely for the common good of all mankind.

Keep in mind that all the knowledge from every book will not make a difference unless some action follows. It is hoped that through our lectures on science that we learn to look at problems of living more carefully and demand legitimate evidence before accepting the truth of statements by others that don't seem rational. If science really does matter, and the First Coast Freethought Society certainly contends that it does, we must continue to make it one of our priorities. --W.W.

THE REAL GAME **Is Humanity Destined for the** **Stars or the Dark Ages?**

We've learned a lot in recent years about our fascinating universe: It counts everything in billions, it's a hazardous place to live and yet, paradoxically, it readily synthesizes life. We see solar systems being born and dying almost daily throughout the universe, and from this process ironically come the chemical elements themselves, the ones throughout the universe and in our bodies.

These chemical elements are amazingly well-suited for the evolution of complex forms of life. Further, we know that the organic precursors of life, the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, are widely distributed in space and eager to form RNA and simple living organisms like bacteria—our earliest ancestors.

Our universe is paradoxical, readily creating and destroying life. The real game, it

seems, for any conscious life form that finds itself in this precarious situation is to learn quickly as much as it can about the universe in order to improve the odds of its survival.

Closer to home, our own Sun is already middle aged at five billion years. We can't stay here forever because it will eventually explode, taking us and the other planets with it. By sheer luck, our first star happened to have a relatively long life (10 billion years), but in order to survive we must begin our nomadic migration from star to star as soon as we have the knowledge.

We made it to the semi-finals of this "real game" through a combination of good luck and fitness...but mostly luck. Our ancestors, all the way back to the sea worms, managed to avoid dozens of major extinctions. In most cases, these survivors were not the dominant species. Our ancestors were as unremarkable as the marsupials that scurried underneath the dinosaurs, or the fish that walked on their fins to avoid competition with the more successful predators in the seas; or for that matter, the ape that learned to walk on two hind legs and carry a

club, and that later learned to speak, write, and do mathematics.

We also had some good luck in our choice of a planet: Earth is an ideal distance from the Sun, giving us a nice orbit—not too hot and not too cold—at least for now. The atmosphere here is both stable and hospitable, and we have more than our share of water, the magical elixir of life. Equally fortunate, our Sun has shined steadily for 5 billion years, and life has evolved for 3.5 billion of these. Further, we have recently learned that our Sun is in a relatively safe part of the galaxy, and even our galaxy has a lot going for it compared to some.

“Location, location, location,” as they say in real estate.

But it would be foolish for us to bet the future on this string of good luck. We know, for example, that our weather, problematic as it can be at times, is in a rare temperate period between recurring ice ages. We also know that both super volcanoes (like the one that scientists are monitoring at Yellowstone Park) and huge asteroids have led to major extinctions in the recent geological past. They will certainly be part of our future, whether we like it or not, along with rapidly evolving viruses and bacteria.

The long-term astronomical and galactic challenges we face are daunting compared to hurricanes, tornadoes and other natural disasters (now including global warming) that command our immediate attention; even compared to world wars. Nevertheless, we are making some progress, especially since we began liberating science from the bonds of religion a few centuries ago. Starting with the Copernican revolution, our scientists have steadily improved our understanding of the physical laws governing the universe, the laws that will enable our solar migration.

Today, our scientists understand not only mechanics, electricity, and magnetism but also the inner workings of atoms and the nucleus. They also understand the fundamental particles, quantum mechanics, relativity, and the evolution of the cosmos. In our times, at the threshold of the genetics revolution, they will soon understand the molecular basis of life. Scientists at the leading edge of physics and mathematics are

searching today for the overreaching principles, such as “string theory,” that will hopefully tie many of these ideas together.

The responsibility for migrating to other suns, both the science and the implementation, falls disproportionately on those few individuals who strive to understand the world around them. Representing only a small percentage of humanity today, these rationalists have developed immunities to the sundry religious viruses and are not handicapped by delusions of benevolent gods or an afterlife. Instead of sticking their heads into the sands of superstition, they have accepted responsibility for humanity’s survival.

Over the reaches of time, hopefully, the rationalists will multiply as more humans give up the crutches of religion. Cultural evolution, which is much faster than biological evolution, has been a major factor for only the past 35,000 years. We have come a long way from small bands of hunter/gatherers to large societies in only 10,000 years, and there is every reason to expect this progress to continue. In as little as 3,000 years of cultural evolution, a majority of humans could value their species more highly than race, religion, or nationality.

Along the way, the faithful will worry that without religion humanity will slide inexorably into the dark hole of immorality. Fortunately, we now know from scientific studies that our morality, basically the Golden Rule, evolved with our species long before it was codified into myths by religions around the world. If anything, our morality will evolve further as we place increasing emphasis on our species and our biosphere; as we spend less time defending our faiths, and more time in search of veracity.

Today, however, religious people are limited in the contributions they can make to our solar migration. They fully expect to be saved by their local gods, if not now then sometime in the future; and they are frozen in place by the very kerygmas that bring them comfort. The rationalists will have to go about their research and planning with the masses maligning them and praying to their various gods.

Religious balm for the masses, however, is a two-edged sword. When empowered, the churches have tried to strangle the very science

we will need to find new suns. We do not have to go all the way back to Bruno, Galileo, and the Inquisitions to find scientists and their ideas burned at the stake. The Christians (not to mention Muslims) also fought Darwin's and Einstein's ideas. Since the '20s, they have substituted Bible stories for biology and geology, bringing American science education to new lows, and today they want to ban embryonic stem cell research.

We must remain eternally vigilant of efforts by fundamentalists of all stripes to recombine church and state, sending us not to the stars but back to the Dark Ages. Our renaissance in science during the past 200 years is due in large measure to the American experiment in secular government, and we must rebuild the Jeffersonian wall between church and state every time someone removes a brick. The church has never been as good at either science or government as We the People have, and the pulpit certainly won't find us a new Sun.

The major world religions could, however, make a significant contribution to our eventual migration to new suns. Our limited natural resources, including the environment, are under increasing pressure from burgeoning world population, and most of this can be blamed on anachronistic church dogmas. We certainly can't get to a new sun on an empty tank, so we need to conserve everything for this journey.

Our only hope as a species is the scientific process and our growing base of tested scientific knowledge. From the perspective of today, we can see the folly of the pathetic believers who carried statues of Jesus and Mary in the streets to combat the virulent Black Plague. Cures came from science not prayer, as has the food on our plates, the planes we fly, and our advanced electronics. Science, not religion, has shown us the mathematical fabric of the universe and created the ever-expanding Handbook of

Chemistry and Physics. Books like these, not sacred texts from ancient civilizations, will be used to discover and explore new solar systems.

The challenges ahead of us are daunting but manageable. If we are to have the knowledge and the resources needed for solar migrations, we must first stabilize world populations (hopefully with some reforms from the world religions.) At the same time we must convert our planet to sustainable economies, taking the pressure off of our irreplaceable resources.

Meanwhile some of our scientists, with increased government funding, must continue to buttress our defenses against evolving viruses and bacteria. Others must develop plans for addressing both global warming and the next Ice

Age, not knowing for certain which will come first. Still other scientists must accelerate our understanding of the universe and the molecular basis of life; we have only scratched the surface of this knowledge in spite of our amazing recent progress.

Advances in the sciences will not come without a matching commitment to education. If our species is to have new homes before our Sun explodes, more of us must take the "hardest" courses in college, and the religious pendulum against science must swing the other way if we are to end up in the galactic winners circle.

The real game here on Earth, in spite of what we are being told, is not the conversion of "souls" from one religion to another and the wars spawned by this proselytizing. It is the survival of our species in a crap shoot of astronomical proportions. Hopefully, history will show that a few brave rationalists have already accepted the challenge and that our species is giving new meaning to the ancient word, Sun Day.

We must remain eternally vigilant of efforts by fundamentalists of all stripes to recombine church and state, sending us not to the stars but back to the Dark Ages.

--T. L. Loucks
FCFTS Member
Physicist, Author

“WE THE PEOPLE”

by J. Dan DuPree

*Dan explains that this article was inspired largely by Susan Jacoby's book, **FREE-THINKERS: A History of American Secularism**, as well as by Christian postings on the web. He goes on to say, “As Jacoby suggests in **Freethinkers**, it is time we (freethinkers) stop being afraid to speak up, and use the power words to attack those who would attack our Constitution and our Liberty.”*

“**W**e the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

But in a 2002 speech at the Chicago School of Divinity, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia gave this speech clearly speaking of Our Nation having power ordained by God.

<http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0205/articles/scalia.html>

“Few doubted the morality of the death penalty in the age that believed in the divine right of kings. Or even in earlier times. St. Paul had this to say (I am quoting, as you might expect, the King James Version):

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. (Romans 13:1–5)

“This is not the Old Testament, I emphasize, but St. Paul. One can understand his words as referring only to lawfully constituted authority, or even only to lawfully constituted authority that rules justly. But the core of his message is that government—however you want to limit that concept—derives its moral authority from God. It is the ‘minister of God’ with powers to ‘revenge,’ to ‘exe-

cute wrath,’ including even wrath by the sword (which is unmistakably a reference to the death penalty). Paul of course did not believe that the individual possessed any such powers.” --A. Scalia

The Constitution of the United States of America clearly states in its opening line that **the Nation’s power is derived from Its People**. Scalia was sworn in with an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution. Nowhere did it give him authority to add words or change the intent of the Authors of that Great Document. The attempt to do so should have led to his impeachment.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

Thomas Jefferson referred to the “wall of separation” between church and state and said it should be high and impregnable.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/guidance/>

But here, we find the official White House web site offering assistance to ‘faith-based’ groups to apply for and receive federal monies for programs where the teaching of religion is actually part of programs.

When the Catholic Church tried to use state funds to support religious schooling in the 19th century, it was fought and defeated on legal grounds. Today Americans are encouraged to use federal funds to pay for religious education for their children, and the encouragement comes in the form of the under-funding and decline of the public school system.

Our Constitution was written as a Secular document. Early colonists endured the terror of government-mandated religion under European rulers and clearly made a document designed to prevent that from happening here. But the evangelical rightwing has never given up its desire for the Nation to become religion’s tool. Government by Clergy is their true mission and do not be fooled. Each intrusion by religion into government gets easier and easier as Americans forget the past and become complacent.

The evangelicals in the South and West preached the “superiority” and “divine right” of white Christians to own slaves. Not only the

Southern Baptists, but almost all organized religion slandered, lied, and promoted violence against women fighting for suffrage. A very few took up the fight for equal rights for Blacks in the '50s and '60s, but most refused involvement. Southern Churches preached desegregation as the work of Satan.

Our school teachers in many states are not allowed to teach evolution theory in its complete form, and many must teach the oxymoron, "creation science." The teaching of the science of biology has been dumbed down. Too many young Americans do not have the information they need to make informed decisions about medical cloning and stem cell research.

House Leader Tom Delay recently blamed youth violence on the teaching of evolution in schools, saying that children who were taught they were "nothing but glorified apes" then chose to act like animals.

Our Constitution is being usurped by superstitious simpletons who will force their myths and ghost stories on the whole of society if they are not checked by rational humans.

An insight from a little-known but legal document written in the late 1700s explicitly reveals the secular nature of the United States to a foreign nation. Officially called the "Treaty of peace and friendship between the United States of America and the Bey and Subjects of Tripoli, of Barbary," most refer to it as simply the Treaty of Tripoli. Article 11 states:

"As the Government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility, of Musselmen; and as the said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mehomitan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries."

The preliminary treaty began with a signing on November 4, 1796, (the end of George

Washington's last term as president). Joel Barlow, the American diplomat, served as counsel to Algiers and held responsibility for the treaty negotiations. Barlow had once served under Washington as a chaplain in the Revolutionary Army. He became good friends with Paine and Jefferson, and he read Enlightenment literature. Later he abandoned Christian orthodoxy for rationalism and became an advocate of secular government. Barlow, along with his associate, Captain Richard O'Brien, et al., translated and modified the Arabic version of the treaty into English. From this came the added Amendment 11. Barlow forwarded the treaty to U.S. legislators for approval in 1797. Timothy Pickering, Secretary of State, endorsed it; and John Adams concurred (now during his presidency), sending

the document on to the Senate. The Senate approved the treaty on June 7, 1797, and it was officially ratified by the Senate, with John Adams' signature, on June, 10, 1797. All during this multi-review process, the wording of Article 11 never raised the slightest concern. The treaty even

became public through its publication in The Philadelphia Gazette on June 17, 1797.

So, here we have a clear admission by the United States that our government did not found itself upon Christianity. Unlike the Declaration of Independence, this treaty represented U.S. law as all treaties do according to the Constitution (see Article VI, Sect. 2).

George Washington: "The government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion."

Benjamin Franklin: "Too much religion is worse than too little."

Our Founding Fathers gave us everything we need to keep religion an individual choice. By design, our laws are created from and for the intellect, wisdom, and ethical thought of humans and are not subject to religious interpretation or interference. We must not let their work be in vain. Do not let our Constitution be trampled by

Our Constitution is being usurped by superstitious simpletons who will force their myths and ghost stories on the whole of society if they are not checked by rational humans.

radical Conservatives who would interpret our Constitution Liberally and our rights according to their religious creed.

Note: All quotes except the next one, from that author, were independently researched from the free-use sights on the WWW, and most are notated. All other verbiage is my own and any plagiarism is unintentional. --J.D.D.

“It is time to revive the evocative and honorable [word] *freethinker*, with the insistence that Americans think for themselves instead of relying on received opinion. The combination of *free* and *thought* embodies every ideal that secularists still hold out for a nation founded not on dreams of justice in heaven but on the best human hopes for a more just earth.” --Susan Jacoby

--J. Dan DuPree

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HUMANIST BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



When: 2:00 p.m. the 3rd Sunday of each month.

Where: Borders Books, 8801 Southside Blvd.
Phone 519-6500. Books for the group
may be purchased at Borders.

What: Books planned for discussion are:

- August 15, 2004 - *Writings on an Ethical Life*, by Peter Singer. (Singer is a controversial philosopher of morality.)
- September 19, 2004 - *The Bush-Hater's Handbook*, by Jack Huberman. See also “The Despoiling of America” by Katherine Yurica. (Either use your favorite search engine, or click here: [Despoiling](#).)

For further information about the discussion group, leave a message at 996-1553.

AUGUST 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, August 24, 2004**, (4th Tues.)
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., August 22, 2004!**

* * * * *

RELIGION AFFECTS ELECTION

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry mentioned religion at a Baptist church recently by quoting Scripture. “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but doesn’t have works?” He wanted to know where the Bush works of compassion went. Republicans were incensed by political attacks from the pulpit. Then the Democrats were upset by Republicans seeking religious congregations to bring in votes with their partisan politics.

The separation of church and state is weakening. Bush got 62% of votes from churchgoers in 2000, with Al Gore getting about the same from those who attend church less.

But 70% of Democrats and 80% of Republicans claim they are religious. So finding a flock of supporters builds political success. Voters feel comfortable with a candidate’s familiar belief and can then consider their stand on issues. From the time of Franklin Roosevelt to now, concern for religion has increased. Teacher-led prayer was removed from public schools. A former governor was not permitted to speak at the 1992 Democratic convention because he opposed abortion. Bill Clinton raised questions of national values, Ronald Reagan

held prayer breakfasts, Bush is born-again. So the emphasis has shifted from race to culture and religion.

Older Catholics are generally Democrats, while younger ones tend to be Republican. African-American Protestants are usually Democrats while evangelical Protestants are Republicans. Jewish voters are largely Democrats. Small shifts can decide winners in swing states.

Bush is wooing Catholics because they are one-fourth of the voters, courting conservatives who oppose abortion and oppose gay marriage. He gave the Medal of Freedom to the Pope probably for political gain.

So we have the strange situation where John Kerry is criticized for not being Catholic enough while John F. Kennedy was too Catholic. Some bishops threaten to deny communion to Kerry for supporting abortion rights, but many Catholics support him because they dislike the Church's policies. Kerry can be expected to make more statements about his faith.

"With the aging of the baby boomers, there's a religious revival in this country. Being seen as the secular candidate is an enormous danger," says a White House aide.

(*U.S. News and World Report*, Oct. 14, 2004)

Since this was written, Kerry has mentioned religion at least once in his campaign. But believers are so diverse that predicting their behavior is risky. One-fourth of fundamentalists did not vote in the 2000 election. Reagan was religious but had ethical problems in the Iran-Contra scandal.

Money and votes can easily weaken ethical standards. --H.B.

* * * * *

LETTERS TO GOD

A nun asked her students to write notes to god . . .

- Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't you keep the ones you already have?
- Maybe Cain and Abel would not have killed each other if they had their own rooms.

That's what my Mom did for me and my brothers.

- In school they told us what you do. Who does it when you are on vacation?
- I bet it is very hard to love everyone in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I'm having a hard time loving all of them.
- Are you really invisible or is it just a trick?
- Is it true my father won't get to heaven if he uses his bowling words in the house?
- You don't have to worry about me. I always look both ways.
- Of all the people who worked for you, I like Noah and David the best.
- I would like to live 900 years just like the guys in the Bible.
- We read Thomas Edison made light. But in Sunday school they said you did it. I bet he stole your idea.
- Thank you for the baby brother, but I think you got confused because what I prayed for was a puppy.

--H.B.

* * * * *

AMERICANS UNITED MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

What: Americans United Forum, "**CHURCH AND STATE**" sponsored by the Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Northeast Florida.

Place: Regency Square Branch, Jacksonville Public Library, 9900 Regency Sq. Blvd.

When: **TUESDAY, Sept. 14, 2004**, at 6:45 p.m.

Topic: Guest speaker **Greg Warner**, Editor of the Associated Baptist Press News Service. Mr. Warner will discuss one Baptist's views on faith-based initiatives, church politicking, and other public-policy issues at the intersection of church and state, as well as give an overview of the Baptist political landscape.

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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 (Phone 904-725-8133)
 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

August 9, 2004 - Monthly Meeting
 August 15, 2004 - Book Discussion Group
 August 24, 2004 - **STEAK & ALE**
 September 13, 2004 - Monthly Meeting
 September 19, 2004 - Book Discussion Group
 September 28, 2004 - **STEAK & ALE**
 October 11, 2004 - Monthly Meeting
 October 17, 2004 - Book Discussion Group
 October 26, 2004 - **STEAK & ALE**

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



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

FREETHOUGHT HEROES **Born in August**

MEETING DATES

**Usually the Second
Monday of every
month:**

**May 10, 2004
June 14, 2004
July 12, 2004
August 9, 2004
September 13, 2004
October 11, 2004
November 8, 2004
December 13, 2004**

Jean Baptiste LaMarck (1744-1829) naturalist for Louis XVI, taxonomist, early theorist about evolution

Helen Caldicott (1938-) physician, anti-nuclear activist, nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize

Felix Adler (1851-1933) educator, founder of Society for Ethical Culture

Gene Roddenberry (1921-91) author-producer, creator of Star Trek for television and films

James Randi (1928-) magician, exposé of hoaxes and supernaturalism

Edwin O. Wilson (1898-1993) minister, signer of Humanist Manifesto I, first editor of *The Humanist*, helped organize International Humanist & Ethical Union

Robert Green Ingersoll (1833-99) attorney, lecturer, prominent orator; "Hands that help are better far than lips that pray."

FREETHINKER DEADLINES

**Kindly submit items
to Hugo or Carrie by
Friday:**

**May 21, 2004
June 18, 2004
July 16, 2004
August 20, 2004
September 17, 2004
October 15, 2004
November 19, 2004
December 17, 2004**