

THE FIRST COAST FREETHINKER

Newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society, Inc.

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

OCTOBER 2004

NUMBER 10

OCTOBER MEETING

Speaker: **Erich Freiberger, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Jacksonville University

Topic: **"A Brief History of Just War Theory"**
Learn its roots, its modern transformations. See how it applies to Iraq today.

Time: **Monday, October 11, 2004**, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in the sanctuary.

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

Please Watch

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Are We Willing to Go Public?

America is engaged in more than one war. We are still engaged in the war on Iraq and the war on drugs. And, in addition, we are engaged in a war being waged on our democracy by the ultraconservative religious groups. The religious groups have been emboldened by the last four years of religiously-based policies of the current administration, beginning with the appointment of the ultra-religious John Ashcroft as attorney general. This was followed by the faith-based initiatives with millions of dollars entrusted to religious institutions with programs headed up by untrained, inexperienced personnel who are practicing job discrimination and who have not been monitored by government personnel to assure that their programs are workable, as well as

monitoring how the tax money is being spent.

In addition, there is the voucher program which allows the states to turn over state funds for children to attend religious schools, many of them being run by untrained and inexperienced personnel. The voucher program has been declared unconstitutional by the high courts of the State of Florida. I fear that many of these religious institutions are borrowing money or obtaining government money to build additional buildings on their property to set up schools so they can apply for all the voucher money they can get to try to advance their program as quickly as possible. Once they have built the buildings and the schools are in place, it is much more likely that they will remain.

In the most recent edition of *Church and State*, published by Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, one of the featured articles is "Targeting Public Schools: Religious right groups are trying a back-door plan

to evangelize public school students.” Franklin Graham, son of famed preacher Billy Graham, announced to the annual gathering of the Southern Baptist Convention that he has a plan to “take back the schools.” He said, “Let’s don’t surrender public schools. Let’s take them back.” His plan is not “to fight for them,” but to teach children to proselytize. They plan to have one child trained in proselytizing who can stand up and share his faith in Jesus Christ in every school program.” These groups have sued to be allowed not only to meet in the schools right after the school day is over, but also to be allowed to have the school advertise their program by sending home fliers with children. Never mind the fact that “school-sponsored religious indoctrination” was banned by the Supreme Court 50 years ago. Their plan now is to “use children as missionaries” to fight the war for children’s minds in the public schools.

One more story illustrating the zeal with which the extreme con-

servative religious right is pursuing a program to “take over” America’s education system was published in last week’s *FolioWeekly* magazine. The article is titled, “The RIGHT Kind of Campus: Right wing organizations are leading a well-coordinated campaign to crusade against ‘leftist’ colleges and universities.” The article was written by Joshua Holland.

The “Crusaders” have “four distinct goals: training conservative campus activists, supporting right-wing student publications, indoctrinating the next generation of culture warriors, and demonstrating the liberal academic

‘bias’ that justifies many conservatives’ reflexive anti-intellectualism.” These goals are backed up by an infusion of 20 million dollars into local campus religious organizations. The many conservative organizations backing this battle for the brain will “provide conservative guest speakers, help start a conservative newspaper, and train students to win campus elections.”

Frequently I hear at meetings and conferences I attend, the necessity for humanist organizations to “Go Public.” Does any of the above make you, as a freethinker, a member of the First Coast Freethought Society, want to take action, speak out, do something to let those in power know that we object to the path our country is taking with regard

to the proliferation of religious influence in every aspect of our lives? In a recent article in the magazine, *UU World*, titled “Humanists, Go Public,” the author tells us, “We are at a critical juncture in American life

“We are at a critical juncture in American life when, more deeply than ever, we of humanist persuasion need to go public . . .”

when, more deeply than ever, we of humanist persuasion need to GO PUBLIC with our most deeply felt convictions and enthusiastically seek out our fellow citizens to help spread anew the message of the democratic faith and its permutations...” “The Hebrew prophets, be it recalled, were not mere rabble-rousers; more important, they were political realists who spoke in the public square and educated the people. In effect, they were ethical educators. There is an old lesson here to be learned again.” Have we, the First Coast Freethought Society, learned the lesson yet? What are we willing to do? --W.W.

THE RIGHT TO KNOW

Every youngster in the world has a right to know what is known. Youngsters in India, for example, in addition to learning science and mathematics have a right to know about Christi-

anity and other major world religions. Likewise, youngsters in Mexico have a right to know about Islam and other world religions. Closer to home, students in the United States have a right to learn about the major world religions as well as the differences between the many varieties of Christian religions.

Our youngsters need global knowledge for global times. They have a right to be free from ignorance and to have access to the same knowledge as their contemporaries around the world. They have a human right to globally accepted knowledge, including science and mathematics.

It should be easy for each of the religions to prepare an official description of their creeds and beliefs. Science and mathematics are even simpler since there is global agreement on these fundamentals. Each country could rely upon

either their respective national academy of science or an international group like the United Nations to resolve any differences.

There are many religions but only one accepted version of science and mathematics. Every effort should be made internationally to prevent science and mathematics from being distorted or diluted by the foremost religion in any country. How else will their youngsters be prepared to compete internationally or to contribute to the elimination of hunger and disease?

--Terry Loucks

ANOTHER DANGEROUS LETTER

A Second Letter to the Editor Remains Unprinted

Since it does not appear that the Florida Time-Union is going to print my letter to the editor (again!), I have decided to share it with my fellow freethinkers. There does appear to be a bias at the Florida Times-Union against letters to the editor that express a critical viewpoint on religion and/or the separation of church and state. --C.W.

After reading the August 8th *Florida Times-Union* editorial on Michael Harvey's invocation at the Tampa City Council meeting, I do not believe that the editors truly understand the issues raised by an atheist opening the meeting with words not directed at a supreme being as is usually the case in past invocations. The question is not whether Michael Harvey's opening words are inappropriate for a prayer when they clearly are, but is the restriction of the content of these opening words to an appeal to God a violation of the First Amendment's separation of church and state? I believe that it is.

Opening the meeting with a prayer is a religious exercise that is being endorsed by a governmental body. Despite the assertions made in the editorial, the purpose of prayer is not secular. It is for the purpose of speaking to God. Even if prayer has secular benefits as stated in the editorial, the same could be said of any well crafted speech. Why wouldn't a thoughtful secular poem put the council members in the right spirit to make wise decisions? Any assertion that prayer has power beyond the expression of ideas is clearly a religious belief that has no place in governmental affairs. Besides, if prayer supposedly leads to greater humility, this assertion was quickly refuted by the arrogant and self-righteous walking out of the meeting by three members of the City Council. I wonder if half the members walked out on an African-American man praying for equality of the races, how would African-American Kevin White and Hispanics Mary Alvarez and Rose Ferlita respond to this rude reception? Not very well, I surmise.

If the government claims to represent all of the people, it should not ignore a growing segment of the American population that rejects belief in God. Despite the insinuations of Councilman Kevin White that an atheist group cannot represent Americans, the fact is atheists, agnostics, and other assorted free-thinkers are just as American as Christians, Jews, and Muslims. We have the right to open governmental meetings with words of inspiration that can have as much meaning for people as any prayer to God.

Curtis Wolf

FAITH DOESN'T ALWAYS DESERVE RESPECT

This gem came to me in a recent email and was quite a welcome relief from the abundant religious material I frequently receive. Of course I hastened to share it! --C.R.

Civilized people are supposed to respect each other's religious beliefs, said author Sam Harris in the *Los Angeles Times*. It may be rude to ask, but why? Any clear-eyed person can see that blind faith in "ancient religious texts" serves as the foundation for much of what troubles the world today.

In the Islamic world, tyrants and terrorists rely upon the Koran to justify the brutal repression of women and homosexuals, the use of children as suicide bombers, and the murder of Americans for the crime of their disbelief.

Not all Muslims have such retrograde views, just those, like Osama bin Laden, who insist that the Koran is the literal word of God. In the Koran, "non-Muslims are vilified on every page" as tools of Satan and worthless infidels; in Koran sura 9:123, for example, every Muslim man is commanded to "make war on the infidels who dwell around you."

Christianity also is afflicted with dangerous literalism. Here in the U.S., fundamentalists in the White House and Congress use the Bible as justification to block condom distribution and family planning education, to choke off vital stem cell research in defiance of the public will, and to mount a mean-spirited war on gay marriage.

"It's in the Bible!" the literalists cry. But so is God's command that men "who lie with" men "shall be put to death." In fact, the Bible also calls for the faithful to kill adulterers, infidels who work on the Sabbath, and children who curse their parents.

We properly ignore such nonsense, all of which was written when mankind thought the world was flat and eclipses were signs of divine displeasure. "Perhaps it is time we subjected our religious beliefs to the same standards of evi-

dence we require in every other sphere of our lives." (Source: E-mail, author unknown)

--C.R.

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OCTOBER 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, OCT 26, 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., October 24, 2004!**

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PERSECUTION: HOW LIBERALS ARE WAGING WAR AGAINST CHRISTIANITY

A Book by David Limbaugh - Reviewed

This is a review of reviews because this reviewer has not read the book. Instead, three favorable reviews of it on the Internet include enough quotations from Limbaugh and the reviewers to indicate the contents. The book was five weeks on the New York Times best-seller list. --H.B.

The author, the brother of Rush Limbaugh, is an attorney who has collected almost 800 examples from the courts, media, academia, and business about persecution of Christians. He wants this to stop and the public to wake up. Two reviews are followed by a very condensed interview and then evaluation.

The first reviewer, who is anonymous, states, "Limbaugh shows how the left is systematically purging American life of Christianity.

School children are harassed for praying. Christian symbols are forbidden within schools. Christian values are ridiculed. Christians are subjected to brainwashing 'sensitivity' training. Leftists strive to eliminate all [sic] signs of Christian symbols and values from contemporary America. Crosses and Christian pictures and symbols are forbidden in the workplace. Employers fire people for daring to bring in to work the slightest [sic] sign of their Christian belief, practice or culture." The book shows "the fall into decadence of current American life."

Limbaugh explains "why you won't see the evil word 'Christmas' on public school calendars," why Christmas cards and parties are not seen, crosses but not pornography are covered from view, "why Kwanzaa and the Koran are promoted by the government, why Christian and Jewish bibles are treated like pornography should be." "Anti-Christian forces control portions of our society and target Christianity for discrimination." (booksfortheright.com)

The second reviewer mentions that acknowledging the existence of God in the Pledge of Allegiance has come under fire along with widespread intolerance of the Christian faith. He quotes Limbaugh, "While tolerance is touted as the highest virtue in our popular culture, Christians are often subjected to scorn and ridicule and denied their religious freedoms."

Conflicting views are fought over in the name of the First Amendment, but "to condemn Christianity from the public square is to set aside American tradition stemming from the Mayflower to the Founding Fathers and beyond."

The reviewer continues, "The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment is stretched to absurd proportions, with apparently no thought given to the letter or spirit of the Constitution's original designs." He then quotes Limbaugh, "When you consider that the first common schools in this country were established for the purpose of Christian instruction, the current climate of all things Christian in the public school environment is sobering."

And those who advocate strict separation of church and state "object to the slightest scintilla [sic] of Christianity in the public sector (and

the private sector). But they either overlook or actively encourage the state's endorsement of certain secular values they deem worthy, from the homosexual rights agenda to the precepts of radical feminism--including a woman's unfettered right to terminate her pregnancy--on to the promotion of anti-Christian obscenity masquerading as art." (townhall.com, by Travis K. McSherley)

Third, Deborah Caldwell interviews Limbaugh, mentioning he converted to Christianity in his 30s, to get the following. "I rarely mention the word persecution in the book. I talk about discrimination. The title was not mine, but I'll stand by it." "People normally think of persecution as what Christians experienced during the Roman period and what the Jews experienced in the Holocaust."

"We can disagree about the degree of persecution in different examples, but there is a double-standard being applied to Christians. People will suppress our religious liberty under the separation of church and state language, while they promote the concept of the state endorsing humanist values or those of other major religions. They demand tolerance from everyone, but they are willing to give none toward Christians."

"The framers of the Constitution, who were predominantly Christian, incorporated their biblical world view into the Constitution." "You're telling kindergarteners they can't hold hands over their snack table and pray, even when it's voluntary." "A loud minority is changing the underlying value structure we've had in place for hundreds of years." "I can accept in theory that we strive to be values-neutral in society, but secular humanists should not be able to promote their nonsense, either."

"The principles that founded this country were Judeo-Christian" and "The idea that man was created in God's image is the principal biblical precept that gives rise to the notion that we have inalienable rights. We are entitled to rights because of God, and no government should be able to take them away. When you have a secular foundation, you don't have any way to sustain religious freedom, ultimately." (beliefnet.com)

Let's examine Mr. Limbaugh's thoughts more closely. First, some facts are wrong. The United States was not founded as a Christian nation. American governments do not promote secular humanism because they promote Christianity when they can. Government-sponsored Christianity has been removed from public schools because our nation has become enormously diverse and may not favor Protestant fundamentalism as it has done in the past.

Second, the nation has benefited enormously by becoming more secular. Racial discrimination is less socially acceptable. Crime, illegitimacy, poverty, slavery, alcoholism, pedophilia, police brutality, violence in the media, child labor, racial prejudice, lynchings, and scores of other social ills have ended, decreased, or been more openly condemned, often despite Christian opposition. This is not "decadence."

Third, assumptions abound. God has given us freedom. Public schools should be used to spread a specific religion. Christianity is the one true religion, it improves society, and believers have the right to spread it wherever and whenever they wish. Secular humanists seek to remove all religion from public life. Change is bad.

Fourth, the loss of religious freedom is beyond Limbaugh's comprehension. It would include licensing and registration of all clergy, like doctors and lawyers; paying for police and fire protection; paying taxes on sales of "holy hardware" like Bibles; having lay people representing the public sitting on church boards; and making budgets available to any person wanting financial information about the church.

It would involve punishing the harassment of women and other employees; requiring more participation of women in church administration; requiring church members to take courses in the history of the denomination, world and American Christianity, and the Bible; reporting monthly finances and activities to a government board, to local newspapers, and in newsletters to all church members, including filing of civil suits and charges, and reporting arrests, trials, convictions, and sentences for criminal behavior by clergy.

--H.B.

RELIGION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Simple Overview of the Facts

What's allowed:

- Students may pray, read the Bible or other religious texts, or engage in non-disruptive religious activities during their free time.
- Students may discuss religious topics with their peers or talk about their personal beliefs.
- Schools may permit secondary school students to form voluntary religious clubs that meet during "non-instructional" time if non-religious groups have the right to do so.
- Schools may teach about religion and offer "Bible as literature" courses as long as the approach is objective and not designed to evangelize.

What's not allowed:

- Schools may not sponsor prayer, Bible reading or forms of religious worship.
- Teachers and school personnel may not lead students in prayer or preach about personal beliefs to students.
- Schools may not teach religious ideas or teach human or world origins in science classes.
- When teaching about religion, schools may not teach religious dogma or present the Bible as it would be taught in a sectarian school or church.

(Leaflet from Americans United for Separation of Church and State)

--H.B.



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:

- Oct. 17, 2004 - Continuation of previous discussion on the Bush administration and implications for November elections. Book of your choice. Recommended: *The New American Empire*, by Rodrigue Tremblay.
- Nov. 21, 2004 - *Best of Robert Ingersoll: Selections from his Writings and Speeches*, Robert E. Greeley, Ed. (This prominent lawyer and statesman was known as the Great Agnostic.)

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

* * * * *

ANNE BRADSTREET AND THE PSYCHOSIS OF PURITANISM

By Michael Fitzgerald

Poet Anne Bradstreet was the wife of the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, a separatist settlement founded by British Puritans in 1630. She was also an unwitting essayist. Her husband, William, a celebrated essayist himself, arranged to have her tormented journals published without her knowledge.¹ Bradstreet's private prose sheds much light on the Calvinist underpinnings of American religious thought and tradition.

Her writings indicate clinical symptoms of mental illness, yet in her day Bradstreet was considered an outstanding spokesperson for Christianity.

Bradstreet's journals focus on her quixotic relationship with an angry, abusive Jehovah, a spiteful god who punishes his subjects mercilessly, and often whimsically, without rhyme or reason. It is up to believers to accept his punishment meekly, just as Job of the Old Testament accepted it.²

In her letter, "To My Dear Children," she outlines the travails of her early life, hoping to spare them the same temptations--and presumably, the same punishments--she suffered. She confesses to such childhood sins as "lying and disobedience" but adds that she immediately became repentant. At age 14 or 15, she found her heart "more carnal" and herself "sitting loose from God." In her mind, God became so angry at this betrayal he "smote" her with smallpox.³

Feminist historians might be momentarily inspired by her writings--Bradstreet reveals a glimpse of her innate sexuality as well as her opposition to a domineering husband who drags her off to the wilderness despite her protestations. This is heady stuff for a woman writing in the 1650s. After her bout with smallpox, however, she becomes convinced her subservient station in life is "God's plan" for her and that she must submit to it.⁴

Such determinism removes personal responsibility from our lives. By this reasoning, any fait accompli would be "God's plan." For example, if you stepped in front of a truck and were killed, it's God's plan, not your own bad judgment. Predestination is a major component of Calvinism: Every event is foreordained; nothing can be changed or gained by struggling against God's will.⁵

After being struck down, Bradstreet concludes God had been monitoring her thoughts all along and that he decided to punish her for her rebellious ideas.

Rational people would find it a bizarre assumption--and a huge conceit--to suppose God is spying on them every minute of every day and is concerned not only with every move they make but their every contemplation. Mental

health professionals generally ascribe such assumptions to paranoia, characterized by delusions of grandeur and/or persecution. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), pioneering psychiatrist Sigmund Freud characterizes religious zealotry as “primary narcissism.” In *Future of an Illusion* (1927), he calls it “a disavowal of reality such as we find nowhere else... a state of blissful, hallucinatory confusion.”⁶

A 1976 report, “Mysticism: Spiritual Quest or Psychic Disturbance,” from the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP), agrees with Freud, defining religiosity as “a projection upon the world of a primitive infantile state.”⁷ Other clinical literature has described religious mania as symptomatic of borderline psychosis (GAP, 1976),⁸ psychotic episodes (Horton, 1974),⁹ and temporal lobe dysfunction (Mandel, 1980).¹⁰

The latter item is a bell-ringer. Recovering alcoholics and drug abusers--such as our current president--often become religious fanatics. Could this be a result of damage or overstimulation in certain areas of the brain? Scientists have observed permanent changes in brain function as a result of alcohol and drug abuse, writes author and University of Northern Iowa professor Katharine van Wormer. Wormer characterizes this chemical corruption as “barely noticeable but meaningful.”¹¹

Many scientists have concluded that mystical and religious experiences are triggered by a dysfunction in the temporal lobes.¹² A University of California at Los Angeles study revealed that the temporal lobe is where religious experiences occur. The patients studied were reported to have displayed “an unusual obsession with religious matters.”¹³ Similar symptoms have been reported by people with temporal-lobe epilepsy. In fact, many famous mystics and religious visionaries, including Moses, St. Paul, Joan of Arc, and Ellen G. White, founder of the Seventh-Day Adventists, are said to have been epileptics.¹⁴

In some cases, people with temporal-lobe

dysfunction cannot distinguish their own thoughts from external “voices.” This is true of schizophrenics and was also true of most human beings 3,500 years ago, writes Princeton psychologist Julian Jaynes.¹⁵ Some artists and musicians cannot distinguish their own intuition, emanating from the right side of their brains, from an external “presence.” These people often claim to receive their inspiration and abilities from some external source, as if they were mere conduits for cosmic enlightenment.

The temporal lobe has been shown to house “other important brain functions, such as causal thinking.”¹⁶ Recall that Bradstreet made the fallacious assumption (post hoc, ergo propter hoc) that because event a) her rebellion--occurred prior to event; b) her case of smallpox--

that the former was the cause of the latter. She clearly had a cognitive problem in this area. Although it is unlikely that Bradstreet abused alcohol or drugs, the fever associated with smallpox could cause permanent brain damage.¹⁷

Many scientists have concluded that mystical and religious experiences are triggered by a dysfunction in the temporal lobes.

Whatever the cause, there is a thin line between religious fervor and mental illness--and Bradstreet seems to have crossed it. As a celebrated spokesperson for Puritanical Christianity, she does, however, provide us with great insight into the Puritan mind and some of the origins of American myth and ideology. Anne Bradstreet and her and her husband’s mental contortions and written apologia are typical of Calvinist conventions. Puritans were, in fact, strict Calvinists and believed they were members of Jean Calvin’s Elect.

Some scientific light has been shed on these Chauvinist beliefs by Michael Persinger, a neuroscientist at Laurentian University in Ontario. In a 1997 study of 1,480 students, he concluded that people who have had religious experiences “see themselves as favoured from God, members of an elect among the godless throng.” Moreover, being members of such an elite group “strengthens their sense of self-esteem, which is often low.” One in 20 of the

students questioned answered they would kill for God “if they thought He wanted it.”¹⁸

We now have a man in the White House, an admitted former substance abuser, who says he gets orders directly from God. Moreover, he is one of those one-in-20 who would kill if God told him to: Meeting with Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Abu Mazen in 2003, President Bush said, “God told me to strike at al Qaeda and I struck them, and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam [Hussein], which I did.”¹⁹

Bush and Bradstreet have much in common. Puritans built the foundations of U.S. tradition, and their brand of Calvinism has always bubbled just beneath the surface in our political and moral discourse. America is in fact one of the most profoundly religious countries on earth. Nearly every president has deployed the time-tested “City on the Hill” metaphor, borrowed from the New Testament by Puritan leader John Winthrop, William Bradstreet’s predecessor.²⁰ Whether Bush is playing to the quite sizable religious electorate or truly believes he gets orders directly from God is anyone’s guess.

Fortunately, rationalists such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson came along to rescue America from the Calvinist theocracy in which Bradstreet lived. If Franklin and company had lived in Europe during the Inquisition--or even in early Massachusetts--they might well have been burned alive for their blasphemy. Still, the U.S. may be in the midst of a reactionary movement to re-establish theocracy, another “Great Awakening.”

Whether this country should be run by religious fanatics who may be affected by brain disorders is a question the electorate--rather than the Elect--should be asking itself. --M.F.

Notes:

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4. Bradstreet, p. 65.
5. Bjelajac, David. American Art: A Cultural History. New York: Harry M. Abrams, 2001. p. 63.
6. Freud, Sigmund, quoted in Lukoff, David. “Definitions of Spirituality and Religion.” Internet Guided Learning: Online Course in Spiritual Competency. <http://www.virtualcs.com/recovery/lesson3.html>
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9. Cited in Lukoff.
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11. van Wormer, Katherine and Davis, Diane Rae. Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective. New York: Wadsworth Publishing 2002. Cited in Thomas, Will. “Is Bush Nuts?” www.willthomas.net/isbushnuts.htm
12. Persinger, Michael, M.D. Cited in Magee, M.D. “God’s Truth: Mystical Experiences.” 30 August, 2002. On-line. <http://www.askwhy.co.uk/truth/470Mystical.html>
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16. Newberg, p. 190.
17. Mayo Clinic. “Smallpox.” <http://www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?objectid=07875ABC-B89D-4A02-B794025BE72> FCA90.
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20. Horsman, Reginald. Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism. Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1981.

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NEWSLETTER

The First Coast Freethinker is published for members of the First Coast Freethought Society, Inc., 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, Inc. is to serve the needs of the nonreligious 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

October 11, 2004 - Monthly Meeting
 October 17, 2004 - Book Discussion Group
 October 26, 2004 - **STEAK & ALE**
 November 8, 2004 - Monthly Meeting
 November 21, 2004 - Book Discussion Group
 November 23, 2004 - **STEAK & ALE**
 December 13, 2004 - Monthly Meeting
 December 19, 2004 - Book Discussion Group
 December 28, 2004 - **STEAK & ALE**

FIRST COAST FREETHOUGHT SOCIETY, INC.

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, Inc., 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 October**

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**

Denis Diderot (1713-84) French editor of *Encyclopedia*, 28 volumes plus six of supplement and two of tables.

John Dewey (1859-1952) philosopher, educator, expounder of pragmatism.

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) Dutch leader in Renaissance learning in north Europe, edited the New Testament.

Fannie Lou Hamer (1917-77) African-American who registered Mississippi Blacks and challenged the all-white Democratic Party.

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) eyes and ears of president, humanitarian, delegate to United Nations.

Jonas Salk (1914-95) physician who developed poliomyelitis vaccine

Charles Francis Potter (1885-1962) Baptist minister who switched to Unitarianism and wrote prolifically about liberal religion.

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**