

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

DECEMBER 2004

NUMBER 12

DECEMBER MEETING

Who: **Members and Friends of the FCFTS** will gather for freethought fellowship, festivities, food, and frolic!

What: **"Human Light Celebration"** In honor of the season, we are having a **covered dish dinner**. We will elect 2005 officers and discuss the past, present, and future of the FCFTS. (No formal speaker.)

When: **Monday, December 13, 2004**, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Place: The **Social Hall**, downstairs, in the **Unitarian Universalist Church**, 7405 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, FL

Please Watch

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Contact: ACLUjax@Yahoo.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Reflections on Humanism and on the FCFTS

December marks the end of my service as president of the FCFTS. It is with mixed emotions that I anticipate leaving office. On the one hand, I am thinking about the things I will have time to do again; and on the other, I get nostalgic thinking of the excitement of doing things to promote the First Coast Freethought Society. Promoting the values of freethinking and humanism is a worthy endeavor, and there is so much that needs to be done.

Right after my election I felt over-

whelmed by the thought of being president. I didn't have a clue where to begin. I wondered, what in the world made me think I wanted to be president? It began to dawn on me that I had bitten off a large chunk of responsibility. So, there was only one thing to do and that was to just dig in, set up a planning meeting, make a list of speakers, and start planning meetings. Of course I realized I had an excellent board I could call on for support, and this has bolstered my confidence in my own ability to do the job of being president.

Serving as president has been a great experience in many ways, and in retrospect I wonder why I was so apprehensive. The FCFTS is made up of really above-average and inspiring people. I have learned from this experience that there are two things of the utmost importance for

freethinkers if we are to effect changes in our world. We must continue working for the advancement of science and reason in solving humankind's problems, and we must persist in our work towards maintaining separation of church and state.

A conciliatory approach in advancing the cause of science and evolution may be more productive than a confrontational one in the attempt to reconcile religion and science. Can we concede to those steeped in the biblical scriptures that religion plays a sustaining role in our culture for many people? Maybe instead of insisting that the scripturists' beliefs are misguided, we could emphasize the idea that religion and science are not necessarily exclusive. Many people, including the Pope, have granted legitimacy to everything past the big bang.

Edward O. Wilson, who is my inspiration, takes a much softer approach to the role of religion than the average scientist does. As a young man, he was deeply religious. He drifted away from his Baptist beginnings in college, not "definitively atheistic or agnostic, just Baptist no more." In his book *Consilience*, he tells us, "I had no desire to purge religious feelings." He wrote, "people must belong to a tribe, they yearn to have a purpose larger than themselves. . . to make ourselves more than animated dust, and we must have a story to tell about where we came from and why we are here. Could Holy Writ be just the first literate attempt to explain the universe? . . . Perhaps science is a continuation on new and better-tested ground to attain the same end. If so, then in that sense **science is religion liberated** and writ large."

Wilson was captured by the "Ionian Enchantment" which he explains as "preferring a

search for objective reality over revelation as another way of **satisfying religious hunger.**" Such a search "aims to save the spirit not by surrender but by liberation of the human mind." He believes, "When we have unified enough certain knowledge, **we will understand who we are and why we are here.**" [Emphasis mine.]

The other problem that we must deal with is the separation of church and state. Like our founding fathers, we must somehow convince Christians that keeping church and state separate is to everyone's advantage. As much as Christians would like to see religion intertwined into every aspect of daily life, if America is to remain the leader and innovator of the free world and a government to be emulated, it must remain a secular nation. We have been assured that our president is going to be the president of all religions, even those people who profess no religion.

However, I believe that it will take the continued effort of humanists and secular organizations for some time to come to keep church and state separate. The only way to maintain freedom of religion is to keep religion out of government and government out of religion.

I am extremely grateful to all who took their time to speak to FCFTS, to all who served as board members, committee chairpersons, and committee members over the last two years. And last but not least, I would like to thank all those members who have attended meetings and contributed their thoughts and ideas to the FCFTS. It is my hope that we will continue to grow and prosper here in Jacksonville to the point that we are a recognized, full-fledged contributor to our community.

--W.W.

VEILED THREAT

This letter by an FCFTS member was published in the Fernandina News-Leader on August 20, 2004. Great letter, Bob! --C.R.

The July 30 "Sodom and Gomorrah" letter warned America about the danger of same-

sex marriages and God's impending wrath. Such marriages, the Religious Right has assured us, will bring about our destruction. On this note an *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* editorial-page cartoon showed Osama Bin Laden addressing a group of his colleagues, saying, "Here's my plan for destroying American: we sneak in and marry each other."

An August 13 letter pointed out that, in addition to our homosexual marriages, we defy another biblical edict, that against eating any seafood that does not have fins and scales. We not only consume tons of shrimp year round but even flaunt our defiance each May with a bacchanalian orgy, the Shrimp Festival.

But there is yet another biblical command that we flout. In his first letter to the Corinthians I (11:4-7), St. Paul decreed that while men will pray with their heads uncovered, women shall have theirs veiled. Paul implied that this is because women, unlike men, were not created in God's image.

Perhaps some ecclesiastical explanation of the connection will be forthcoming for the readership. In any case, at Sunday church services this writer glances about him with alarm--while the men are bareheaded, so are the women!

So far, we have covered safely through each service, the congregation having not yet been struck by a bolt of lightning. But as with our eating shrimp, how long will God tolerate this flagrant transgression? --Bob Awtry

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ROCKING ROY AND HIS RAMBLING TEN COMMANDMENTS CRUSADE

As he promised, Curtis Wolf attended the Westside Baptist Church to hear Roy Moore. Here is Curtis's report. --C.R.

On November 7th, I went to the Westside Baptist Church to hear former Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore speak. This church is the usual Baptist megachurch with a capacity of several hundred. In the front of the church, there is a sunken orchestra pit in front of five rows of graduated seating capable of holding a large choir. In front of the orchestra pit is a raised stage with a large podium. Above everyone is a video screen where flashy hi-tech presentations made the church look more like a MTV music video awards show than a house of worship. I wonder if Jesus would have been crucified if he had used a laptop computer and Power Point to get his message across to the crowds screaming for his execution.

In his speech, Roy talked about America being a Christian nation. Evil federal judges are keeping our country from acknowledging God. This is destroying the moral fiber of our country. Christians should not sit back and let this happen. This is nothing new. We have been hearing this from fundamentalist Christians for years. Here is where Roy went wrong. We are not a Christian nation. Our nation was founded on the ideas of the Enlightenment, an 18th century intellectual movement based on empirical science and reason. The words that shaped the minds of our founding fathers came not from the Bible, but from men like John Locke, Adam Smith, and David Hume. While our founding fathers were not atheists, they certainly had a different view of religion and its role in society than is found in fundamentalist Christianity today.

Federal judges are not keeping Americans from acknowledging God. I saw quite a bit of acknowledging God at the church in which



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Roy spoke. For some reason, this is not enough. In Roy's world, governments must also acknowledge publicly that the Christians are right about God. Sorry, Roy. That is not the government's job.

Despite what Roy says, our rights are not given to us by God. Neither is the state the source of our rights. Individual rights are intrinsic to us as human beings. Of course, I do not live alone on an island and my actions have consequences for others. Therefore, we have governments that limit our freedom to do as we please. However, governments should protect our individual rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and nothing more. Government is not a tool for creating somebody's perfect utopia. It should allow each of us to create his or her own "utopia."

We should stand up for the separation of church and state and against those who would use the government to coerce us into the Christian mold regardless of how poorly we fit into its irrational nonsense. It doesn't matter whether you are conservative or liberal. I would contend that either political label is consistent with humanism. What matters is that humanists should fight for a government which relies upon reason and science instead of religion and superstition when decisions that affect us all are made.

I do not have a problem with Christians believing what they believe. It is a free country and it is their right to believe what they want to believe. However, why do they feel that they have to drag the rest of us along for the ride?

--C.W.

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HOMELAND SECURITY FLAWED

The much-discussed Department of Homeland Security touted before and after the election has serious problems. It was put together hurriedly, has enormous responsibilities, is under funded and run by political appointees, suffers interference from special interests, and gets inadequate attention from the White House. Despite such treatment, it has performed surprisingly well.

It was formed from 22 formerly separate federal agencies, now has 186,200 employees, and started with a budget of \$27 billion. On a typical day it screens 1.5 million airline passengers, inspects 57,000 trucks and shipping containers, makes 266 arrests and 24 drug seizures, and trains 3,500 federal officers from 75 agencies. It uses 108 patrol aircraft, has 350,000 vehicles, operates 238 remote video surveillance systems, and watches over 8,000 federal buildings, ports, power plants, tunnels, and bridges.

It spends \$75 million a day, its head sits in the president's cabinet, and it is the largest agency in the government. The administration was not enthusiastic about creating it, because it wanted to keep government small; but the public clamored for action. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is housed in a nondescript building in a residential section of the District of Columbia. It had no home when it started in March 2003.

Now it coordinates thirteen compartments of the nation's infrastructure—water, energy, communications, etc. The chemical industry has 15,000 chemical plants with a hundred of them vulnerable and hazardous to the public second only to biological warfare. Congress created legislation to require protection, storage, and transfer of toxins. But the petrochemical industry protested, lobbied, persuaded, and gave money to Congress as the public lost interest. The Chemical Security Act was not even voted on. Private factory owners now do little to increase protection because they have no incentive to do so.

Lobbyists for security companies have increased five-fold, seeking government money. Smallpox vaccinations for 500,000 personnel were called for but only 40,000 received them because they would not receive paid leave if they had adverse reactions from the vaccines they received but distrusted.

DHS must depend on the FBI to collect and analyze raw intelligence because this is not included in the organization by the White House. The FBI and Secret Service did not want to be long. Tracking terrorist financing was given to the Department of Justice. Many individuals refused to join the DHS because they would lose

status in employment. Transferees from intelligence would be lower than the FBI and CIA and use computers which were not secure and could not receive classified data.

Finances are tight. There is a shortage of telephones, radios on the same frequency, and cargo screeners. The DHS budget of \$40 billion is misleading. One third goes to the Pentagon (compared to \$150 billion for Iraq). Of the remaining \$27 billion, \$19 billion comes from the pre-existing budgets of many of the 22 original agencies. The current administration does not want to spend more and even wants to give away radio frequencies for public safety (worth \$5 billion) to private telecommunications companies. People on the front lines at ports, borders, fire-fighting stations, hospitals, transit points, bio-hazard laboratories, and rail hubs are underfunded, understaffed, and poorly equipped. The Bureau of Customs and Border Protection and the Citizenship and Immigration Service (formerly INS) with important responsibilities have a hiring freeze.

Customs bought 4,000 radiation pagers for \$1,600 each (\$6.4 million) to screen cargo containers for nuclear materials before learning they are unreliable. Ceramic tiles, granite, some marble, cat litter, and bananas might set them off. They must be used with more sophisticated detectors to avoid false alarms. The need is for 1,600 detectors but only 165 are budgeted. Interest in security increased when ABC News sent 15 pounds of depleted uranium through undetected in a container from Istanbul.

Gamma-ray machines can look for contraband through steel walls of containers, but only 200 are available. The busiest port, Los Angeles/Long Beach, has only four. So 95% of cargo containers enter the country without any inspection at all. The Coast Guard used to send cutters out to intercept suspicious entering ships before they entered the port, but had to cut back because of the cost of diesel fuel.

Concern has waned. The FBI's monitoring of terrorists fell behind but the request for more agents was denied. Ninety percent of 168 cities which were to receive some of the \$1.5 billion to developed security got nothing. When per capita money is available, distribution is bi-

zarre: Alaska and North Dakota got twice as much as New York, and Wyoming got four times as much as California. --H.B.

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DECEMBER 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, DEC. 28, 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., December 26, 2004!**

* * * * *

PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

Education is a very important part of American civilization. It has been praised and criticized, supported well and poorly, and has been the center of controversy. This article summarizes some information which may help provide perspective on public schools, kindergarten to grade 12. These recent numbers come from the U.S. Department of Education and some are rounded here to be more easily read. The + sign equals "more" and the - sign equals "less."

First, public education is a huge enterprise: Pupils: 48 million. Teachers: 3.4 million. Local systems: 14,891. Expenditure: \$454 billion. G.D.P.: 7.4%; per pupil: \$7,424.

Second, details: Special Education: 6.5 million, 13% of the total. Expenditure: \$2.5 billion, twice that for normal child.

Third, more details: Minorities: African American: 17%+; Hispanic: 16%+; Asian 4%+; Native Americans: 1%+. Total: 39%. Not speaking English at home: 20% (9.8 million).

Fourth, sources of funding: Local: 43%, and decreasing; State: 49%, and increasing; Federal 7%, and increasing.

Control is local, with each district having its own school board. State legislatures set general requirements, outline the curriculum, and provide financial and other assistance for needy districts. In forty states, the wealthiest district spends twice as much money per child as the poorest district, but they have the same requirements. The federal government has now set national requirements and methods of enforcement (withhold money), minimizing local innovation.

Achievement in reading, writing, mathematics, and related subjects has been fairly steady for two or three decades. This has aroused critics who want to privatize education in order to get control of just one percent of the expenditure which would be \$4.5 billion. Achievement test scores have stayed level despite change in quality of students. Now more students include the disabled, immigrants, non-English, addicted; and the less motivated, academic, and responsible.

The disabled are classified in twelve categories. Pupils in large cities like New York and Los Angeles speak maybe 50 languages at home. Half of Americans do not speak correct English, and half of adults have not read a book since leaving high school. Probably only 15% of homes receive a daily newspaper, only 10% have books, and 10% have appropriate magazines. Publishing of books is increasing as readership declines. Yet teachers are expected to teach pupils successfully.

Increased costs of education have also agitated critics. They complain that funding went up as test scores remained level. But very little of the increased money reached pupils in the typical classroom. It is due to inflation, better pay and benefits for teachers, smaller classes, especially special education, technology like computers, services like speech and hearing, and government mandates (in Jacksonville, seven from the federal government and 25 from the state).

Critics of public education can find employment. When they find problems, they propose a narrow solution: smaller classes, better

teacher training, separation of boys from girls, uniforms, etc. Public schools do not have much money for research, so researchers go to the federal government and produce studies and may even get some good publicity. Manipulation or misinterpretation of data is not unusual. Some studies are merely the researcher's opinion.

A related problem is dumping problems on public schools. For example, in the 1960s when racial integration was a national concern, children were bused to other schools to mix whites and blacks while ignoring the racial discrimination in housing and other elements of society. It failed. Presently, when children need to lose weight, get more exercise, get sex education, learn about AIDS, and avoid pregnancy, public officials turn to public schools. When employees read or write poorly, schools are blamed.

A few more numbers may help. A fourth of teenagers work, so have less time for study. Most study only a few hours a week, often devoting more time to television. A fourth of kindergarteners enter school not yet ready to learn. Roughly, a third of schools are first rate, a third a disgrace to a civilized society, and a third can get by. The average school building is 42 years old, and 68 years old in the District of Columbia; half need to be repaired or replaced, but states do not have much money, and Congress is not interested.

The best prediction of success in school is related to the economic, cultural, and social condition of the parents and to the location of the school. The best predictor of which children will attend college a decade into the future is not intelligence quotient or grades in subjects but family income.

But the most important problem is rarely mentioned in all the literature, the four hundred Internet sites which deal with education, editorials, and letters to the editor, and other media: What is the definition of education? That is, what is the job of schools, what are the expected outcomes, what is the final product?

Even the web site which claims to be the voice of education boasts a glossary but omits the term.

--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:

- Dec. 19, 2004 - *Drug Crazy*, by Mike Gray
(See brief article in this newsletter.)
- Jan. 16, 2005 - *The Philosophy of Humanism*, by Corliss Lamont

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

SUPREME COURT CREATED JIM CROW

The recent celebration of the 50th anniversary of the end of segregation of public schools gives credit to the Supreme Court. This needs examination.

There was much public demand for an end to segregation in 1954. The House of Representatives passed legislation in the 1940s to end the poll tax. The Democratic Party had a strong civil rights plank in 1948. The House in the mid 1950s passed legislation to end segregation in public schools and in private businesses. But these did not become law because southern senators (who had not been popularly elected in the first place) filibustered them, and because of lynchings and racist voting laws against blacks.

Reconstruction after the end of the Civil War included laws that protected the right to vote, prevent state governments and Klan-type harassment of voters, and segregation in hotels, restaurants, and other public accommodations.

The Supreme Court repealed them. The

culmination was the decision in 1875 that the federal government could not prosecute private murder which was meant to overthrow southern Reconstruction governments. It arose out of the Colfax Massacre (Louisiana) two years previously when a hundred blacks were killed defending their county courthouse against a white mob who overthrew the local government.

The Supreme Court permitted private groups to use violence to overthrow state governments or prevent individuals from voting. The 14th Amendment providing equal protection of the law was in effect null and void.

Violence spread across the south for a century to protect white supremacy and did not end till the 1970s. This included the opposition to civil rights in the 1950s. The Supreme Court gets the credit for this also. (Progressive Populist, 7-1-04)

In 1875, the Supreme Court also declared that states would decide if women may vote. The article omits that most racial violence took place in the south, which has the highest percentage of Christians and churches in the nation. Southern senators made sure that lynching never became a federal crime. A hundred Southern members of Congress signed the Southern Manifesto to oppose racial integration. The Ku Klux Klan is the American version of the Taliban. When racial integration was slow after the 1954 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that it should proceed "with all deliberate speed," which had no deadlines and delayed integration. The Supreme Court is as fallible as the other two branches of federal government and seems to ignore possible consequences of its decisions. It is not even elected. Joel D. Joseph summarizes many decisions in *Black Mondays, Worst Decisions of the Supreme Court* (1987) --H.B.

SUPPORT FOR BILL OF RIGHTS

Here is the current (2003) popular support for the Bill of Rights which includes freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, and press.

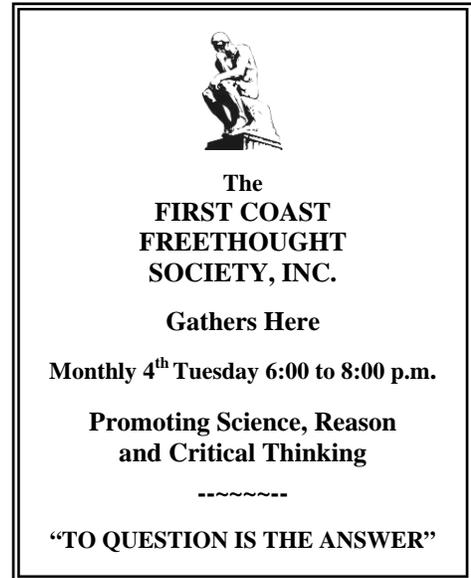
1. The First Amendment "goes too far." - 34%
2. There is too much press freedom. - 46%

3. The Ten Commandments should be allowed in government buildings - 62%
4. Newspapers should not be able to publish freely without government approval. - 28%
5. Public protest of a war should not be allowed during active military combat. - 31%
6. The American press has been too aggressive in asking government officials for information regarding the war on terror. - 38%
7. The government should have the right to monitor "certain religious groups" and even infringe on their religious freedom in the name of the war on terror. - 50%
8. Americans have "too much freedom to speak freely." - 12% (University of Conn 2003 survey, in *Mother Jones*, 5/6/2004) --H.B.

STEAK AND ALE

The Steak and Ale, which has treated us so well for the past several years, has plaques on

the wall of groups regularly meeting there. Thanks to the efforts Wilhelmina and the Board, ours now hangs among them, to the right of the door as you enter. This is what it says:



Selected Bibliography for WHAT I'VE DISCOVERED ABOUT OUR COUNTRY'S CONTINUAL INVOLVEMENT IN WARS"

Compiled by David Henderson - November 2004

Because of the positive response of listeners to David Henderson's November 2004 presentation at the FCFTS regular monthly meeting and the requests for further information, he has kindly provided this list of references for further reading. Thank you, David! --C.R.

MANIFESTO:

The quotation I read at the end and referred to as a manifesto for activists and those who would like to change the world was from:

1. **Why Bother?: Getting a Life in a Locked-Down Land** by Sam Smith (Feral Books, 2001)

AFGHANISTAN:

Because the invasion of Afghanistan occurred so soon after 9-11 and was eclipsed so soon by the Iraqi invasion, it has never been properly examined. The references which are primarily about 9-11 contain important references to Afghanistan as well.

2. **Dollars for Terror – The United States and Islam** by Richard Labeviere (Algora Publishing, 2000)
3. **The Grand Chessboard - American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives** by Zbigniew Brzezinski (Basic Books, 1997)

4. **Forbidden Truth - U.S.-Taliban Secret Oil Diplomacy And The Failed Hunt for Bin Laden** by Jean-Charles Brisard & Guillaume Dasque (Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2002)
5. **The War On Freedom - How and Why America Was Attacked on September 11, 2001** by Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed (Tree of Life Publications, 2002)
6. **The New Pearl Harbor - Disturbing Questions About the Bush Administration and 9/11** by David Ray Griffin (Olive Branch Press, 2004)

IRAQ:

There have been dozens of books written in the recent past about Iraq. This one, however, includes the history of U. S. involvement with that country and the last edition (shown) has an update that includes U. S. War Strategy Since 9/11.

7. **The Fire This Time - U. S. War Crimes in the Gulf** by Ramsey Clark (International Action Center, 2002)

CORPORATIONS:

8. **The Elite Consensus - When Corporations Wield the Constitution** by George Draffan (POCLAD, 2003)
9. **Take the Rich Off Welfare** by Mark Zepezauer (South End Press, 2004)
10. **Defying Corporations, Defining Democracy - Book of History & Strategy** edited by Dean Ritz (POCLAD, 2001)

WAR:

11. **War Is A Racket** by Brig. General Smedley D. Butler (Feral House, 2003) Note: The article, "War Is A Racket" is available on the internet in at least two spots. The book contains two additional articles by General Butler plus an introduction that brings the work up to date.

WORLD WAR II:

12. **Day of Deceit - The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbor** by Robert B. Stinnett (Simon & Schuster, 2001)
13. **Wall Street And The Rise of Hitler** by Antony C. Sutton ('76 Press, 1976) Note: This book is part of a trilogy. The other titles are Wall Street and the Bolshevik Revolution, and Wall Street and FDR

THE FEDERAL RESERVE:

14. **How The World REALLY Works** by Alan B. Jones (ABJ Press, 1996) This book is intended as a quick read. Each chapter is a summary of a different book.
15. **The Case Against the Fed** by Murray N. Rothbard (Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1994)
16. **The Federal Reserve Conspiracy** by Antony C. Sutton (CPA Publishers, 1995)
17. **The Creature From Jekyll Island** by G. Edward Griffin (American Media, 1994)
18. **The Money Masters** (a video) See www.themoneymasters.com - This is a 3-1/2 hour video in two volumes.

MONETARY REFORM:

19. **The Lost Science of Money - The Mythology of Money - The Story of Power** by Stephen Zarlenga (American Monetary Institute, 2002)

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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 – 2005

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@bellsouth.net



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

FREETHOUGHT HEROES **Born in December**

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

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 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