

First Coast

FreeThinker

The Newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society



December 2007

Volume 5, Issue 12

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Carrie Renwick

As my second (and final) consecutive year as president of the First Coast Freethought Society draws to a close, I look back at the year 2007 with pride in our accomplishments and with gratitude to all members and friends who made these things possible. In order to fulfill our goal of supporting nonreligious persons in the Northeast Florida area, we first need to increase our visibility throughout the community in many different ways so that people can find us. That way, membership grows, person-power grows, the treasury grows, re-

sources grow, and our credibility grows, thus enabling the FCFS to better fulfill its mission. Thus, the upward spiral of success continues. During the last two years, our efforts have

I have enjoyed every minute as your president, but I know these accomplishments would never have happened without you ...

reinforced one another, resulting in some measurable successes.

For the second year in a row, the FCFS membership and good

friends have raised \$3000 for a special project. Wow!

You can be very proud of yourselves for that!



Our major project this year was to become a Corporate Sponsor for National Public Radio (NPR) member station, WJCT. We purchased a six-month contract for twelve, 15-second announcements each month, with each "spot" scheduled to air during the heaviest traffic times: during Morning Edition and during All Things Considered. In case you have not heard

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You can now join or renew your membership online! Visit the First Coast Freethought Society website support page at <http://www.firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/support.htm>. If you prefer, mail a check to FCFS, PO Box 550591 Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591. Let us know if your contact info has changed.



December 2007 Meeting - No Formal Program

Human Light Celebration

Bring a dish to share • Bring a beverage of choice

Monday, December 17, from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Social Hour at 6 p.m. • Dine at 7 p.m. • Ceremonies at 8 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Church • 7405 Arlington Expressway • Jacksonville, FL
(Downstairs in the Social Hall - Doors open at 5:30)

HUMANIST BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

- When:** 2:00 p.m., the third Sunday of each month.
- Where:** Barnes & Noble, 9282 Atlantic Blvd., 721-2446, books are usually in stock. **Please note, location applies only to December.**
- What:** Books/magazines planned for discussion:
- December 16, 2007 - Christ Stopped At Eboli, by Carlo Levi (**meeting at Barnes & Noble**)
 - January 20, 2008 - Fire and Ice, by Michael Adams (**resume meeting at Borders Books**)



“Michael Adams accurately describes the value structure beneath the current Canadian-American debate”—The Globe and Mail. It was selected by the Literary Review of Canada as one of the hundred most important books ever published in Canada.

Michael Adams is the president of the Environics group of research and communications consulting companies that includes Environics Research, Environics West, CROP, Research House, Environics International, Environics Communications and Environics/Lipkin. These companies have offices in Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Ottawa, New York and Washington. His interests include a partnership in a Napa Valley winery.

For more information, contact moderator Jewell Kross at JKross@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org or call 904-996-1553.

First Coast FreeThinker

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 obtain information from many diverse sources.

Readers are invited and encouraged to reprint our original materials provided they give credit to this publication.

The officials of the FCFS are not responsible for opinions or other statements expressed in this newsletter. It is intended to convey ideas to stimulate discussion on a variety of subjects.

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We welcome submissions. The deadline is the **FOURTH SATURDAY** of each month for the following month's issue. Submit contributions by e-mail to Hugo (see above), or U.S. mail to Hugo Borresen, 8831 Taurus Circle South, Jacksonville, FL 32222. Submit web site contributions to Carrie Renwick at the e-mail address above.

December 2007 President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

it, our announcement says: "The First Coast Freethought Society supports nonreligious persons in the Northeast Florida Area, promoting secular humanism and a nontheistic approach to everyday life. More information at 904-288-6291 or on the web at firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org."

As a direct result of the exposure we gained through the panel discussion, "Science Under Siege," which we co-sponsored with the UNF Department of Biology last November, the FCFS was invited to participate in another UNF function, "Religious Awareness Week" (RAW), sponsored by the UNF Interfaith Center. They said they "wanted a nonreligious perspective at the table." Imagine! We hastened to accept.

Our spokesperson, Earl Coggins, rose to the occasion, attending all their organizational meetings and went on to represent the FCFS just beautifully. At the kick-off breakfast attended by the President of UNF, members of the clergy, and other RAW presenters, there were three invocations given: Baha'i, Muslim, and Earl Coggins gave an eloquent nonreligious invocation which was well received. During RAW, Earl presented two lectures on atheism and participated in two different panel discussions. Friend and FCFS member Heather Wellman of the Humanists of Florida Association had two program slots as

well. The nonreligious perspective was generously represented throughout the entire week.

Because of UNF's RAW and also Peace Awareness Week (PAW), we enjoyed another type of media exposure that is very effective in building our mailing list. We were invited to staff display tables bearing FCFS literature and sign-in sheets. Wilhelmina Walton volunteered to organize the display materials and schedule all the staffing. We



We have a lot to celebrate about the past year!

"tabled" two days at each event, and had several shifts each day. A tremendous thanks to Wilhelmina and her staff which included Jewell Kross, Ray and Nita Pitts, June Applen, Herb and Judy Gerson, Hugo Borresen, Beth Perry, Niki Abate, Alice Ricker, Louis Saffos, June Applen, Earl Coggins, and Wilhelmina, herself. Great job, everyone!

Other very beneficial media exposure included an article by Jeff Brumley appearing on the front page (!) of the Sunday *Times-Union* (06/24/2007), in

which Earl and a Christian representative are pictured back-to-back with aggressive expressions on their faces. They are featured in the article titled, "Christians vs. atheists: Whose side are you on?" The article generated a flurry of comments on both sides, which were published. We commented upon the blatant Separation of Church and State violation represented by the football coach of Bartram Trail High praying with his team on public school grounds, and a reader called me a "Nazi bully." What great publicity! Additionally, we've advertised our meetings more heavily in *Folio* in the past six months, with excellent results. We have had several letters to the editor published in both the *T-U* and *Folio*. We also put a link on the website making it very easy for anyone hearing about us to be placed on our mailing list and also to join or contribute to the FCFS.

Before closing, a few more thanks are in order. First, to the board: Vice President/Program Chair Curtis Wolf has done a tremendous job in both capacities. He also developed an Action Plan in conjunction with our Long-Range Plan, and Hugo Borresen and Curtis consistently produce our excellent newsletter. Kudos to Curtis, also, for his work to improve the Florida Science Education Standards.

Secretary Wilhelmina Walton constantly supports the FCFS. In 2006, it was she who spearheaded "Science Under Siege," and this year, in addition to exemplary performance of her

secretarial duties, she organized the tabling projects, as noted above.

Treasurer Mark Renwick brings his computer skills and finance experience to his duties as treasurer and also to organizing our mailing list of 515, enabling us to keep track of everyone and even to send out personalized letters. He has taught me so much!

Member-at-Large Earl Coggins has done a terrific job with media encounters and at RAW, as I mentioned above.

Thanks are also in order to all committee chairs. These include R. C. (Ray) Pitts, Audit

Committee; Alice Ricker, Hospitality; June Applen, Membership (who also has done an outstanding job handling the back table); Hugo Borresen, Newsletter; Curtis Wolf, Program and Long-Range Planning; Nita Pitts, Telephone and Caring Tree; Mark Renwick, Finance and Website. Thanks to the leadership of Jewell Kross, the Humanist Book Discussion Group has a lively following and also attracts new members to the FCFS. A big thank you to Tom Bowen for kindly accepting appointment as Parliamentarian; and last but not least, thank you to Bobbie Nord, for chairing the Nominating Committee.

As 2007 closes and we enter the year of our 10th Anniversary, membership is at a record high of 133. Our good media exposure, tabling efforts, and even our website, have all come into play, and since our NPR announcements began, our e-mailing list has more than doubled, going from about 250 to 515 people!!

I have enjoyed every minute as your president, but I know these accomplishments would never have happened without you—your generosity of time, your talent, and your financial support as well. Thank you, everyone, from the bottom of my heart!



'Twas the Night

'Twas the night before Any Thing, and all through deep space,

Nothing existed – time, matter, or place.

No stockings, no chimneys. It was hotter than hot.

Every thing was compressed in one very dense dot.

When out of the nothing there appeared with a clatter

A fat guy with reindeer and something the matter.

His nose was all runny, he gave a sick hack.

'Oh Dasher! Oh, Dancer! I can't hold it back!

He huffed and shuffled and sneezed one AH-CHOO!

Then like ten jillian volcanoes, the universe blew.



That dense dot exploded, spewing out stars,

Earth, Venus, Jupiter, Uranus, and Mars.

Helium, hydrogen, the mountains and seas,

The chicken, the egg, the birds and the bees,

Yesterday's newspaper, tomorrow's burnt toast,

Protons and neutrons, your grandma's pork roast.

The universe expanded. The guy said with a wheeze,

"Who will ever believe the world started by sneeze?"

So let's call it something much grander, all right?

Merry BIG BANG to all! And to all – Gesundheit!

(Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, "Twas the Night," *Science Verse*, Viking Juvenile, 2004)



Sam vs. Paul: Does the Atheist Label Hurt Our Cause? — Part Two

Curtis Wolf

Last month, I critiqued Sam Harris's speech at the Atheist Alliance International conference in Washington, D.C. I thought that he made some good points in his speech, but I suggested some caveats to consider when evaluating these points. Now it's Paul Kurtz's chance to counter Sam's rejection of the atheist label.

Kurtz argues that we need labels like atheists, secular humanists, skeptics, etc. It is impossible to organize people into movements that have an impact on society without giving the movement a name to rally around. An individual railing against some perceived evil on a street corner is not as potent a force as a large group of people with a common moniker doing the same thing on that same street corner.

I could not have said it better. Even if we accept Harris' insightful remarks about the dangers of calling ourselves atheists, I do not see how labels can be avoided if we want to influence society.

Imagine if you were asked to vote for a political party without a name. Its leaders just call it "the party that supports the war in Iraq and lower taxes, and opposes illegal immigration." A bit of a mouthful, isn't it? I think it is safe to

say that if the Republican party had done something like this, it would not have had the success that it has.

The fact is that people do not join groups to "meet" ideas. They join groups to meet other people who think as they do. People like to know that they are not alone and that there are others who understand what they are going through.



This is especially true for free-thinkers, atheists, agnostics, skeptics, etc., who feel isolated in a religiously-obsessed culture. To unite under a common name establishes a strong group identity for those who find themselves to be outside of the mainstream.

With that said, I believe that a shift in strategy which has

nothing to do with the atheist label may be in order. I question how far we can take the frontal assault on religion found in atheistic books written by Harris and others. At some point, we are likely to realize diminishing returns as believers dig in their heels and cover their ears in response to our disrespect of their belief in God.

Here is a reality check. Despite what we hear about lack of religiosity of the Europeans, they are not as anti-God as we think. According to a 2005 AP/Ipsos Poll (<http://wid.ap.org/polls/050606religion.html> and click on "Belief in God"), only 23% of the Germans are agnostic or atheist, 19% of the Spanish, 30% of the British and the most unreligious of them all—the French, at 35%. Everyone else in these countries has some kind of belief in a higher power no matter how nebulous this belief might be. Here in the United States, the percentage of Americans who are atheistic or agnostic is only 6%.

My point is that belief in God has been around for a long time and it is not going away any time soon. So maybe, we should consider another strategy. Let's talk about reason and science vs. superstition and faith. Let's talk about meeting human needs now vs. looking forward to the after-life. Let's talk about evidence vs. faith. Let's talk about free-

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Special Announcements!

FCFS ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING - Everyone is welcome!

Sunday, January 13, 2008, from 1:00 to 4:00, at the Renwicks house. Join us and bring your good ideas with you! We'll be brainstorming about **programs, projects, fundraising**. Please RSVP to Carrie (CarrieRen@att.net or call 268-8826) if you are attending.

Speak up for SCIENCE EDUCATION IN FLORIDA!

The Florida Department of Education is holding a **public meeting** on the proposed science education standards on January 3, 2008, 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the address below. These standards help public school teachers teach accurate science, so it is important that they be well written and free from pseudoscience.. **PLEASE ATTEND AND SPEAK OUT!!**

That's **Thursday, January 3, 2008** from **5:30 to 7:00 p.m.**
at the **Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership**
4019 Boulevard Center Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32207

Ongoing FCFS Activities

Dinners For Atheists (and Freethinkers, Humanists, Agnostics, etc.)

Sign up to attend or host a dinner yourself. Sign-up sheets will be at the back table at the monthly meetings. For further details on how this works, see page 9 of the February 2006 *Freethinker*, or ask the hospitality ladies at the back table.

Secular Sunday Morning in the Park (or Atheist Sunday Morning)

Freethinkers... let's get acquainted and enjoy intelligent conversation **every 4th Sunday of the month** (unless inclement weather prevails) at 10 a.m. 'til ? at the pavilion at Losco Park, 10851 Hood Rd., S., Jacksonville 32257, between Shad and Losco Roads. Need directions? Call Beth Perry at 733-5489 or Google the address to get a map and directions. Bring your own cup and breakfast snack. Most of the time coffee is furnished. Mark your calendar and we hope to see you there!

No Atheist Left Behind (or Are You Going My Way?)

If you are seeking a ride to an FCFS event, contact **Hugo Borresen** at HBorresen@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org or call 904-779-6883.

Caring Tree

If a telephone call to a member is in order, or if a sympathy card, flowers, or some form of support is needed, please contact **Nita Pitts** at 904-996-0879 or e-mail her at pitrymnd@comcast.net. If you prefer, leave a notation on the sign-in sheet at the back table at one of our monthly meetings.

Working with Evangelists

Fred W. Hill

It was a dark and stormy evening as I waited to begin an orientation session on the sixth floor offices of Pinkerton Security. The rain intensified and lightning flashed as the instructor peered out a window overlooking the St. Johns River. "I wonder," he mused, "is this what it looked like to Noah as the flood began."

Clearly not an auspicious beginning to my brief career with that firm, although I was temperate enough not to respond by wondering aloud how any educated adult could believe such ancient rubbish and walking off the job then and there. Of course, too many educated adults in the U.S. do believe in myriad absurd myths, legends and outright lies from various religious texts. From my perspective, they were either ill-educated or else they ignored anything that contradicted the dogma they were raised to believe. In any case, they hold positions at all levels of society, from security guards to Presidents. And most freethinkers have to deal with them every working day—as customers, coworkers, subordinates, and bosses.

Fortunately, most workplaces discourage proselytizing, both for the sake of maintaining decorum and adhering to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requiring that a company that employs 15 or more people must

reasonably accommodate employees' sincerely held religious practices unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the employer. Further, the U.S. Constitution bars government from favoring one religion over another and explicitly states "no religious Test shall ever be required as Qualification to any Office or Public Trust under the United States."

As discussed by Dean Schaner in the *Houston Business Journal* ("Court rulings say the

Yet, no one should have to be subjected to any sort of harassment at work, including repeated exhortations to join one sect or another, especially after having expressed a clear lack of interest in the joy of sects.

workplace is not the place for proselytizing," October 13, 2006), "Employers must engage in a precarious balancing act to reconcile the Title VII accommodation duty with the duty to prevent religious harassment in the workplace." Employers across the nation have found themselves in Court accused of either too strictly banishing any hint of religion or allowing too much religion at work. Generally, courts have ruled against zealots

who push their beliefs too stridently as an extracurricular on-the-job activity.

Not that mere civil law or judicial interpretations thereof prevent some god-pushers from peddling their holy ware at work when that has nothing to do with their occupation. Heavy-handed proselytizing by fundamentalist Christians at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs was exposed by cadets of other faiths as well as the non-religious who did not appreciate being told by their high-ranking instructors and fellow students that they would burn in Hell if they failed to accept Christ as their personal savior (see the September/October 2007 issue of *The Humanist* for a special report on the controversy). Former Attorney General John Ashcroft held daily prayer meetings in the Justice Building; reportedly his staff was not required to attend but any who did not might naturally have felt he would disfavor them (as reported in 2001 on the ACLU website, <http://www.aclu.org/religion/govtfunding/16331prs20010514.html>).

More recently, Daniel Cooper, Under Secretary for Benefits at the Department of Veterans Affairs, appeared with other Pentagon officials in a promotional video for the evangelist Christian Embassy which targets Pentagon personnel for con-



version, to avow that his duty to his religion took precedence over his duty to comply with the requirements of his job (see <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/press-releases/albertogonzales.html>). In our own First Coast region, *Folio Weekly* recently spotlighted the numerous public officials in St. John's County, including "the Sheriff, Superintendent, State Attorney and the former Mayor of St. Augustine," engaged in attempting to convert their subordinates and co-workers to their faith ("Prophet Motive" by Gwynedd Stuart, *Folio Weekly*, October 30, 2007).

And those are all just examples of on-the-job proselytizing by people paid with our tax dollars, contravening the U.S. Constitution! There's also plenty of "spreading the word" going on in private sector jobs as well, and not just in the "Bible Belt." For example, a bank in Otsego, Minnesota, describes itself as a "Christian Financial Institution" and openly mixes business and religion, to the extent that its owner, Chuck Ripka, admits he sometimes "says to people, 'Come on over to the church—I mean the bank'" ("Faith at Work," Russell Shorto, October 31, 2004, *New York Times*). And, of course, Christians aren't alone in proselytizing, as a friend of mine who lives in Con-

necticut has related numerous efforts of the optometrist she works for to induct his employees into the wonders of Scientology. Christians, being far more common, are the worst offenders, however, as exemplified by all the little Christian fish symbols floating throughout the Yellow Pages, signifying advertising by "Christian" firms.

In my own case, most of my civil service co-workers are devout Christians of various denominations. Some praise Jesus with nearly every breath but so far only one was pushy about his faith. One year, he put up a banner where customers could read in big, bold letters, "Christ: The Reason for the Season." Senior personnel took it down but permitted the more discreet miniature nativity scene on his desk. He also regularly spouted opinions on religion and politics I considered so outrageous I was compelled to respond just to let him know that not everyone agreed with him and his favorite Fox News pundits. Of course, for me to push my atheism at work would be as wrong as his pushing his religion, and I kept that in mind as we argued. Admittedly, I initially responded too heatedly, which I regret, but I learned to not get riled but to simply inform him that the office was not the proper forum for overtly religious or political pro-

nouncements. We were both there, after all, to earn a living by serving the public to the best of our ability while adhering to the rules and regulations of our jobs. Promoting or disparaging religion had nothing to do with why either of us was there and would detract from our performance by creating a hostile atmosphere.

Even the most enjoyable job has its share of pitfalls, most often involving dealing with difficult people. No human culture has ever been entirely homogeneous, not even those that attempted to exterminate diversity (and thereby often accelerated their own collapse). Certainly, differences of opinion should not be banished from the workplace, particularly as they may generate new ideas that improve productivity. Yet, no one should have to be subjected to any sort of harassment at work, including repeated exhortations to join one sect or another, especially after having expressed a clear lack of interest in the joy of sects. As a matter of civil rights, proselytizing, as with sexual and racial harassment, has no place at any secular-orientated job, including the military and government. Work can be grueling enough without having to worry about being damned or, worse, fired for not believing in a co-worker's or boss's shabby myths.



Embattled Oral Roberts University president Richard Roberts recently declared that he would resign because God

told him to do it. He wanted to fight back against his "persecutors" who accused him of lavish spending at a time that

the university was in debt, but God told him no. Strangely enough, God did not tell him "Thou shalt not steal."



Secular Homeschooling Has a Bright Future

Hugo Borresen

As the result of an invitation to FCFS, Carrie Renwick, Wilhelmina Walton, and Hugo Borresen attended a Florida United meeting to learn about secular homeschooling in Jacksonville.

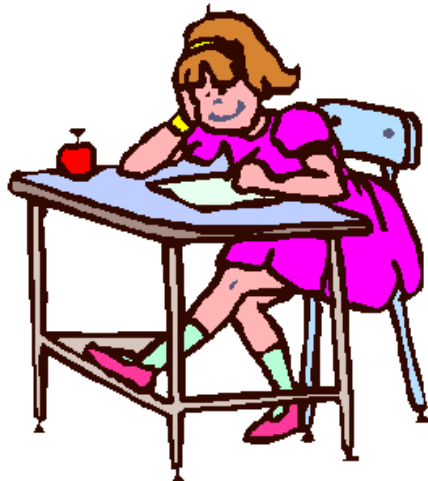
Florida United Secular Homeschoolers Association is a Jacksonville-based organization focused on serving the needs of secular homeschoolers throughout the state. The group frequently holds seminars and discussions locally. While homeschooling is usually the topic of conversation, the group also offers events for secular parents in general, as was the case recently when they hosted readings from, and open discussion of, Dale McGowan's new book, "Parenting Beyond Belief."

The book is a collection of essays on parenting written by prominent freethinkers, atheists, and agnostics over the last three centuries. Topics covered range from how to handle Christmas, the Tooth Fairy, sneezing and death, to the importance of raising children to be good and do good.

Hailed by many as a long overdue mandatory reference for secular parents, the author and publisher encountered setback after setback while promoting the book. Mainstream parenting publications refused to review it for fear of offending their Christian readers, thereby keeping mass market bookstores from carrying it due to a lack of demand. A core group of supporters took to the internet to generate interest in "Parenting

Beyond Belief" through blogs, podcasts, and message board chatter. Florida United joins other groups across the country in promoting this book and is currently planning similar discussions throughout the state. Next up is Orlando.

While most First Coast homeschooling families do so for religious reasons, a growing number of parents locally are choosing to keep their home education faith-free. Citing alarming drop-out



rates, failing test scores, the inability of public schools to adequately protect their students, and the lack of a healthy environment, record numbers of parents are opting to bring their kids home for study. Many of these families are looking for secular options in a community that overtly promotes Christian teachings and beliefs.

Florida United wants secular parents to know that home education is an option. To meet minimal state homeschooling requirements, Florida allows options ranging from evaluations to standardized testing, to enrollment in

non-traditional private schools. Parents can create their own lessons or buy pre-packaged curricula. Virtual schools are also popular.

Participating in a support group is an important part of homeschooling. Some groups are designed more like a playgroup, where kids get together occasionally for a park day or fun field trip. Others are more organized, with activities every week, both educational and play centered. Co-ops are highly organized and function like a school, with parents working together to offer classes in a group setting. Interaction with others is vital to learning, and finding a strong, nurturing community for your family is a key component to successful schooling at home.

The newest additions to the local homeschool scene are strictly secular groups. Secular families who gave up on other support groups are finally finding a home of their own in an otherwise judgmental jungle. No longer forced to remain quiet about their beliefs, perhaps this generation will know they are not alone in their view of the world. Maybe freethought and true tolerance are that much closer to not just being acknowledged, but celebrated.

Florida United is led by Christina Schriver, as is Not Your Average Homeschoolers, a local secular support group. For more info on either organization, e-mail christina@floridaunited.org.



First Coast Freethought Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 550591
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(904) 288-6291
<http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org>

Statement of Purpose

The First Coast Freethought Society, Inc. is an educational, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization dedicated to supporting nonreligious persons in the Northeast Florida area and promoting a nontheistic approach to everyday life.

Meetings

The FCFS meets the THIRD Monday of each month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, upstairs in the sanctuary, 7405 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, Florida 32211, (904) 725-8133. Meeting time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Meetings are free and open to the public. Doors open at 6:00 p.m.

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December Social - All Welcome!

WHERE: STEAK & ALE at Baymeadows and I-95 South

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, December 26, 2007 (the day after Christmas!). Gather in Lounge at 6:00 p.m., Dinner at 7:00 p.m.

RSVP: CarrieRen@att.net (or 268-8826) by December 25, if you plan to attend!

First Coast Freethought Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591 • (904) 288-6291

2008 Membership Application



Name		Date	
Home address	City	State	Zip Code
E-mail address	Home phone	Business phone	
Occupation	Areas of interest and/or expertise		

How did you hear about us? _____

Membership level (please select one):

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular (\$30/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Carl Sagan (\$50/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Charles Darwin (\$200/yr.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (\$15/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bertrand Russell (\$75/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Robert Ingersoll (\$500/yr.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior - 65+ (\$15/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas Paine (\$100/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime (\$1,000) |

I'm interested in getting involved in the FCFS as a(n):

- General member Committee member Officer Financial supporter

Do you object to your name appearing on our membership list, which is only distributed to other members? YES

Comments: _____

***You can make a lasting impact on the future of
freethought and secular humanism in this community
...if you provide for the First Coast Freethought Society in your Will.***

Your bequest will ensure that the FCFS continues to be a beacon for freethinkers on the First Coast and to remain a vital Voice of Reason in the Northeast Florida area. Several options are available for establishing a bequest (specific, percentage, residual, or contingent). We will be happy to provide the appropriate wording to you and your attorney, depending upon your wishes.

For further information, contact
Carrie Renwick, P.O. Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591 or
904-288-6291 • CarrieRen@att.net • <http://www.firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/>
All inquiries are held in the strictest confidence.

Sam vs Paul: Does the Atheist Label Hurt Our Cause? - Part Two

(Continued from page 5)

dom of thought vs. religious intolerance. Every time we talk about these things, we start a rational dialogue that moderates the most destructive and irra-

tional aspects of religion. To say it another way, let's nibble around the edges rather than take a big bite out of the cracker. If we cannot rid our planet of religion, let's at least neuter it!

This does not mean that books espousing an atheistic point of view should no longer be

written. They definitely have their usefulness. However, I do believe that the promotion of a humanistic perspective based on reason and informed by science has a better chance of getting us what we want than an all-out attack on religion.



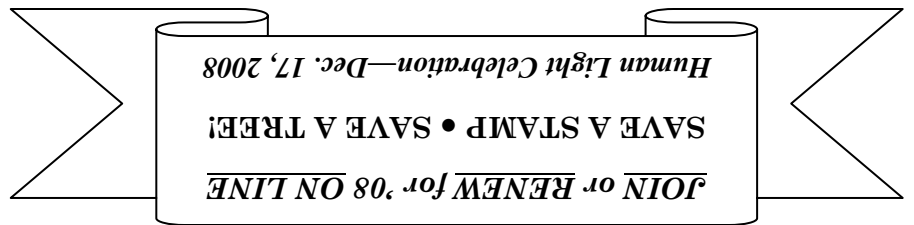
Next deadline for article submission: December 30, 2007

First Coast Freethought Society 2007/2008 Events

December	17 - Monthly meeting	16 - Book discussion group	26- Social at Steak and Ale
January	21 - Monthly meeting	20 - Book discussion group	22- Social at Steak and Ale
February	18 - Monthly meeting	17 - Book discussion group	26- Social at Steak and Ale

Visit our website at <http://www.firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/>.

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