

First Coast

# FreeThinker



The Newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society

January 2008

Volume 6, Issue 1

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### Earl Coggins

**E**very year at this time, the recurring, inevitable questions appear from the echoes of accomplishments of the previous year. What do we do now, where do we go from here, and why are we doing this?

The opening words used on the inside jacket of Richard Dawkins' remarkable book *Climbing Mount Improbable* state that "the towering cliffs of Mount Improbable can never, it seems, be climbed."

I remember reading the book 10 years ago and thinking about my own Mount Improbable: Will the First Coast Freethought Society survive its first year in Jacksonville?

*... I want our organization to be there as one of Carl Sagan's "candles in the dark."*

Will it have a second year anniversary? A fifth? Could it possibly live and grow for a decade?

In the beginning,

we had curious Christians attending meetings



and phone calls from antagonists. Later we had struggles to find a place to meet, on where to find fresh leadership, and how to effectively promote our presence within the Jacksonville community.

Incredibly and unbelievably, our selfish genes prevailed and we are now headed into a

*(Continued on page 3)*

*State Senator Ernie Chambers of Nebraska is quoted as saying, "The Catholic Church is more effective as a criminal enterprise than the Mafia." According to a New York Times article (June 22, 2003), the comparison is hardly new.*

## Remember to pay your 2008 dues!

### January 2008 Meeting

David R. Simon, Ph.D., retired UNF criminology professor and author

**"Crimes of the Catholic Church and the Myths Attached Thereto"**

**Monday, January 21, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

(Upstairs in the Sanctuary - Doors open at 6:00)

Unitarian Universalist Church • 7405 Arlington Expressway • Jacksonville, FL

## HUMANIST BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

**When:** 2:00 p.m., the third Sunday of each month.

**Where:** Borders Books, 8801 Southside Blvd., 519-6500, books are usually in stock.

**What:** Books/magazines planned for discussion:

- January 20, 2008 - *Fire and Ice*, by Michael Adams
- February 17, 2008 - Book of your choice.



For more information, contact moderator Jewell Kross at [JKross@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org](mailto:JKross@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org) or call 904-996-1553.

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### 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.

### Newsletter Staff

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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.

### ***The President's Message for 2008***

*(Continued from page 1)*

tenth year with an improbable mountain of accomplishments.

Who would have thought nine years ago that a small band of freethinking dissidents could have a regularly occurring announcement on NPR, *Free Inquiry* magazine in all of the Jacksonville Public Libraries, a website, be consulted by local newspapers, magazines, and television stations for our opinion on religious matters, and get international recognition for our involvement (it was actually our idea) with the University of North Florida in producing the spectacularly successful Science Under Siege event, to name but a few?

With the generosity of all our members, the commitment of our boards of directors, and the perseverance and cooperation of everyone, all of the above materialized in an inspiring and extraordinary manner. The First Coast Freethought Society has built an

impressive reputation and foundation upon which to build and expand—something to be extremely proud of.

I think our greatest accomplishment has been our membership growth. It was the intent of this organization, back in 1998 when it was founded, to be a candle in the dark for freethinkers to find each other.



Not only have we found each other, but the community has also found us. Being invited to participate in Religious Awareness Week at the University of North Florida, where religious organizations from all over our community partici-

pated in an educational and awareness forum for better understanding our religious and non-religious similarities and differences was a wakeup call that we have arrived!

My intent as your new president is to stay the course. As I embark on this journey as your newly-elected leader, I hope to add to the great list of accomplishments.

I intend to live up to our motto, "To Question is the Answer," by remaining assertive in the face of the challenges we encounter. When any branch of government endorses or appears to endorse religion, I want our organization to respectfully and civilly question their intent. When non-religious members or organizations of our community are unfairly treated, I want our organization to respectfully and civilly speak out. When the teaching of scientific principles is challenged in the public square, I want the FCFS to be there as one of Carl Sagan's "candles in the dark."



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## **Jan Eisler Receives FCFS Honorary Lifetime Membership**

**T**he FCFS is delighted to present Jan Loeb Eisler with an Honorary Lifetime Membership in the First Coast Freethought Society. Eisler has been an activist for secular humanism for many years and in many capacities. She has lectured extensively (even in Russia). Currently, she holds the titles of Center

for Inquiry International Board Member Emerita, Center for Inquiry Florida Founder, and Center for Inquiry Tampa Chair. As far as the FCFS goes, Jan has been a wonderful friend and staunch supporter ever since our first gathering in September 1998! She has generously shared her knowledge and wisdom with us and has provided

support to the FCFS in the form of advice, encouragement, kind words of praise, as well as generous financial support. A truer friend cannot be found.



## Religion and Other Fairytales in Ireland

Sigrun Buckley

**S**aint Patrick first introduced Christianity to Ireland in the 6th century. The famous Book of Kells is the most important example for the excellence Irish monks and scholars achieved in the following centuries.

Since Oliver Cromwell's arrival in Hibernia, British oppression included the suppression of Catholicism. Not only were the Irish forbidden to own more than one acre of land or a horse, they were also forced to practice their religion in secrecy. Mass was banned to hedgerows where traveling priests secretly visited to hear confessions and say mass. Over the centuries, this made for firm Catholic grass-roots in the Irish population and hatred towards the British landlords and oppressors.

In 1921 Ireland became a free state, and the Catholic Church became the leading provider of education, establishing a firm grip. Ninety-two percent of the Republic's populace is Roman Catholic. Three percent identify themselves as Protestant, and the remainder claims no religious beliefs, or belongs to the small communities of believers such as Muslims, Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Orthodox.

In contrast to Northern Ireland, discrimination based on religion is almost non-existent. In fact, in 1992 a Muslim and three Jews were elected to the

Dail, or Parliament, as representatives. The Muslim community has been growing rapidly but still numbers only around 25,000 (2005).

The Republic of Ireland's flag is a testimonial to the fact that religions respect each other and have learned to live with each other. The Irish "Tricolor" is made of three equal-sized rectangles of orange, white, and green. The green color on the flag represents the native people of Ireland (most of whom are Roman Catholic). The orange color represents the British support-

*The Irish like their folklore and have retained a sense of wonder believing in ancient myths.*

ers of William of Orange who settled in Northern Ireland in the 17th century (predominantly Protestant). The white in the center represents peace between these two groups of people.

I didn't encounter animosity between people of different religions in the Republic. The religious-based hatred that led to the "Troubles" in the North was sometimes seen as a purely social phenomenon. Or, as my Head of Department at the University of Limerick, hailing from Belfast, called it, "recreational rioting."

On a personal level, the Irish

get along with the British, although they may be biased against Britain as a nation. A colorful example for "live and let live" was my Irish housekeeper, a grandniece of Michael Collins, one of Ireland's freedom fighters and national heroes. She still works for Northern Irish and British Protestants and made friends with them.



My experience of almost 20 years of living there has seen dramatic changes, with the Catholic Church gradually losing its firm grip on a previously-devout population since joining the European Union. The first divorce referendum in 1983 was rejected. As the local plumber explained to me, the priest (from the pulpit) forbade his flock to vote for it. A second referendum eventually wrote divorce into law in 1996.

The unquestioned acceptance of the Church's moral authority has been rocked by a series of scandals involving pedophile priests and a popular bishop, Casey of Galway, who turned out to be using diocesan funds to support a mistress and son. A BBC-TV report hammered a few more nails into the Church's coffin when abuse victims came forward publicly. A film called "The Magdalene Sisters" (2002) depicts the inhumane doings of church-affiliated institutions in days not so long ago. My afore-

mentioned housekeeper, Pauline, a sufferer at the hands of nuns, assured me that the situation was even worse.

According to statistics, Ireland still has the highest percentage of regular churchgoers in Western Europe, although men and youths like to linger at the door—with the purpose of arriving late, leaving early, or in the meantime, going for a pint. Modern Irish call themselves *à-la-carte* Catholics, do the christening, wedding and funeral bit, otherwise neglecting religion when inconvenient or unneces-

sary.

Old habits die hard though



**Castle in Canamara, Ireland**

even among the very young who surprisingly still make the sign

of the cross when going by a church. “To be sure, to be sure.”

The Irish like their folklore and have retained a sense of wonder believing in ancient myths. Even educated people believe in tales of fairies, little people, and ghosts. A banker advised us not to buy a certain property because of its mischievous ghost. A farming neighbor warned us not to cut a certain tree to avoid wrath of the fairies living in it. And another neighbor, a teacher, swore she saw little people passing an abandoned cottage at night. So now, for you...



## 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](mailto: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](mailto:pitrymnd@comcast.net). If you prefer, leave a notation on the sign-in sheet at the back table at one of our monthly meetings.

## Church and State

Robert Pendell

**R**ecently I saw another example of the Christian complaint that the idea of the separation of Church and State is a sort of conspiracy against the Church, preventing the religious authorities from providing their invaluable “moral guidance” to the world of politics. In this sentiment, as in so many other of their ideas, they are missing the point and longing for something that they would definitely not enjoy if they were to get it.

If the Church and the State were permitted to influence each other on a regular basis, who would have the most influence? Think about it. The Church can only persuade; the State has most of the guns—and the prisons. As Ayn Rand put it, the State has “the monopoly on the legal use of force.” In fact, that pretty much defines the function of the State.

A few minutes’ thought should show anyone with an ounce of sense that any form of partnership between these two dinosaur organizations will quickly devolve into a power struggle—one in which the Church is almost guaranteed to go down in defeat. It needs only a hint of disagreement between the interests of the institutions to touch off such a struggle between them. Trust me on this, citizens, the Church’s ability to influence the laws is nothing to

the laws’ ability to control the Church. No prelate in his right mind would want the Church controlled by the State, yet that would be the almost inevitable result of their partnership. There can be only two, or at most three outcomes to such a “partnership.” One, the State will gain control of the Church and institute a State religion. This has been done before and is the case currently in England, but only with rather cautious and often inefficient compromises to protect the Church from the impact of the government on religion.

***Far better to keep the State out of the Church’s business and the Church out of the State’s.***

Two, the Church will gain control of the State—not very likely but it can happen. Then we have such wonderful opportunities for mischief as the Taliban or the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Surely, we cannot look on this as a desirable outcome.

Three, we might wind up with a deadlock in which the two adversaries struggle with each other in an eternal contest to reign supreme over the hearts and minds and especially the bodies and, even more especially, the wallets of the populace. So, take your pick, folks. Which of these three situations strikes

you as a utopian dream? For my money, the appropriate word is “dystopian.”



That is why our Constitution forbids an establishment of religion in this country. It’s true that the document itself doesn’t speak of a “wall of separation” between Church and State; the Christians are quite accurate in that critique. The claim that this invalidates the idea of such a wall, however, does not follow; in fact, it is a deliberate attempt at misdirection. The men who wrote the Constitution certainly used that very phrase rather often in debating the merits of the First Amendment. They seemed to think it an excellent idea to have such a wall between the two entities that have the greatest claims on the loyalties of the citizens. It is ironic to realize that the Church would be the first to suffer if they got their wish for greater influence in politics.

And they really should know better to begin with. Wasn’t it their “founder” who once said, “Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s?” That strikes me as a perfectly clear endorsement of the separation of Church and State. It is an even greater irony to think that the Church seeks such influence in direct opposition to the prophet in

whose name they seek it.

God told me once that as the Church is a spiritual organization, answerable to Him, the State is a human organization answerable to its citizens. The Church, the true Church, is a holy institution, ordained by God for His purposes. The State is a human organization ordained by mankind for our purposes, just as the Declaration of Independence claims. Why is this so hard for them to see? The Church's desire for political power is equivalent to a death wish; from the dynamic of the situation, it can have no other result. To me they seem like little children wanting something that their parents know is not good for them, but crying because they can't get their way.

Far better to keep the State out of the Church's business and the Church out of the State's. Better most especially for the

Church if they only could see that. I believe this so strongly that I take an extreme view. I am bothered by the expression "In God we trust" on our currency. Whether any of us trust in God should be an individual decision; it is of no spiritual value at all if enforced



by law. Nor should a State trust in God; that is an option for its citizens. I am bothered by prayer in schools; not every student in those schools comes from a Christian household. The effort to find an ultimately "non-denominational prayer," one that can be accepted by Christians,

Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Shintoists, Taoists, Satanists, Deists, and atheists is a fool's errand, yet only such a prayer could be fair to all our citizens. And even then, a required prayer is of no spiritual value whatever. I am uncomfortable with the phrase "one nation under God" in our Pledge of Allegiance. A man or woman or even a child can be "under God," if they choose to be. A nation, being a human institution, does not have that option. I am even uncomfortable with a Pledge of Allegiance, or with amendments against desecration of our flag, as these seem to me to be an attempt to deify the State, a result that we should resist with every fiber of our being and with all the love of liberty we may enjoy.

I hope this clarifies the issue somewhat. God knows there has been enough nonsense spouted from the Christians about it already.



## Strong Support For Science Standards at Public Meeting

**Curtis Wolf**

Science made a strong showing among the nearly one hundred people who attended the January 3, 2008, Florida Department of Education-sponsored public hearing on the proposed Florida science education standards. The science standards identify the important scientific ideas that every public school student

should know before he or she graduates from high school. They will come up for a vote before the Florida Board of Education in February.

The meeting began with a presentation on the standards by Florida Department of Education Secondary Science Specialist Lance King who talked about the need to improve science education in Florida and how the standards help science teachers to do that. It was

followed by a discussion by science standards framer and writer Jan McKay that summarized the efforts of Florida schools to teach science to the cognitively impaired.



Evolution also made a impressive showing at the meeting. Forty-three people

*(Continued on page 12)*

## Overdosing on Christmas Carols

Fred W. Hill

**B**y the time this newsletter is available for perusal, I trust that our readers who were unable to avoid department stores and seasonal parties have recovered from overdosing on Christmas carols and spiked eggnog. Admittedly, I actually enjoy listening to some of the popular holiday tunes, although after hearing “Grandma Got Ran Over by a Reindeer” one time too many on a co-workers’ CD player, I feel inclined to run over grandpa, grandson, the reindeer, Santa, and the stereo with a steamroller.

With that aside, I’ve also noted that many favorite American Christmas hymns insist that we revel in the birth of a newborn king, which strikes me as rather incongruous as most Americans also celebrate the fact that this nation was founded when our celebrated forefathers renounced the rule of kings and other nobles and eventually established a federal constitutional republic. Hereditary monarchs are now relatively few in number, and most of those remaining are mere ceremonial relics with no real power to impose their will. Exceptions include Saudi Arabia and North Korea which, despite calling themselves a “Democratic People’s Republic,” are a de facto form of absolutist monarchism, and neither are regarded as particularly pleasant places to visit by rational

people who enjoy practicing meaningful freedom. In our patriotic songs, Americans rejoice in being the land of the free; yet come Christmas time, in malls and other public places throughout the land, paeans to an infant king are played over and over. Clearly, the theistic majority wants to feast on freedom and have its divine autocracy, too.

Of course, the theists will remind us that Jesus is not just any king, he is the prince of peace! The king of kings! Yes, the grand pooh bah of Heaven itself, at once the son of God and

**... [a better world will come about] only through the greater spread of reason and a humanistic outlook.**

god himself and his own ghost, the supreme grantor of human freedom itself, as politicians such as our current President and his would-be successors, Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee, keep reminding us.

Never mind that there’s no record that Jesus freed anybody during his supposed lifetime or even during the following 20 centuries. From the biblical record, in fact, Jesus appears to advocate absolute subservience rather than freedom. Slavery was ubiquitous in the time and place that Jesus reputedly lived, but the savior of mankind is not known to have ever spoken out

against either slavery or the abuse of slaves

However, Jesus does speak out against freedom of thought, according to the Gospel of John, 3:36, assuring that anyone who does not believe he is the son of God and obey him shall suffer the “wrath of God” and be condemned to Hell for eternity. Naturally, devout Christians will claim that such a choice is an example of God’s wonderful gift of “free will,” though to my mind this merely equates Jesus with a mugger pointing a gun at my head and demanding, “your money or your life,” although I’d be inclined to take the physical threat of a gun far more seriously than the metaphysical threat of damnation. Since Jesus’ threat is hearsay at best—and very likely pure invention by unknown scribes who put words in his mouth—I’ll continue to use my free will to doubt both his existence and his divinity.

Moreover, I must look askance at the designation of Jesus as the “Prince of Peace.” Now, I’ll grant that the conception of Christ apparently does bring some peace of mind to millions of his most devoted adherents who are fearful of the prospect of death or even of the fate of humanity and the world. Yet history contains a vast catalogue of vicious wars fought and outrageous cruelties committed in the





name of Jesus.

Certainly, Jesus can hardly be credited with bringing about any lasting peace to the Levant or any region where his adherents gained dominance. Indeed, the Roman Empire was divided and gradually destroyed in the centuries after it became Christian, its final remnant, Constantinople, conquered by Muslim Turks in 1452.

Even when they weren't battling Muslims, however, Christians in Europe were nearly incessantly warring on one another, often over disputes about the supposed will of Christ. With the exception of the Turks, the major belligerents of World War I were all led by devout Christian leaders, including cousins King George V of Britain, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, and Czar Nicholas II of Russia.

Nicholas' intense piety likely contributed to his own downfall, as he believed God had granted him the right to rule however he saw fit and that Jesus directed his every action. As Nicholas' actions resulted in Russia undergoing two revolutions in one year, with atheist Communists taking over the nation and capitulating to the Germans and slaughtering him and his equally devout wife and children, Jesus

apparently had no more idea how to effectively rule a vast empire than did Nicholas, who in recent decades has been named a Saint by branches of the Orthodox Church (hopefully his skeletal remains don't rise up once a year to climb down chimneys and deliver goodies to good Orthodox Christians)...

Excluding the continuing troubles between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, western Europe has arguably experienced its longest period of peace and prosperity over the last 60 years even as church attendance, and presumably faith in Christ, has reached its lowest ebb in the region in over a thousand years.

No, it was not Jesus or belief in Jesus that has spread peace and good will and freedom. Rather, it was the philosophers who espoused such once radical ideas as the equality of all people, humane ethics, justice and reason; legislators who wrote laws to put those ideas into effect; military forces that, when not ill-used to build empires, fought to protect those ideas against tyranny. It was people, famous revolutionaries and multitudes forgotten by history, who for all their faults and frailties, struggled and even died for freedom and justice in the here and

now, rather than have faith in the potential righting of all wrongs in an imagined hereafter. Many did believe in Christ and even gave him credit for the good they did, but there were also many who did not recognize the divinity of Jesus and needed no supernatural inspiration to work for a better world.

Moreover, there are many modern Christians who pray for war and destruction and even work for it out of a twisted desire to accelerate the prophesized second coming of their mythic lord who, in their various and contradictory beliefs, will eventually reward everyone who loves and kowtows to him and punish all who don't. God rest ye merry Christian gentlemen who believe they are better than everyone else, indeed!

Still, I can appreciate the sentiment of wishing for a better world, of peace and good cheer. However, I believe that if it ever comes about, it will never come about through universal acceptance of the notion that a virginal woman gave birth to a demigod destined to temporarily die for our sins, but only through the greater spread of reason and a humanistic outlook. That would be a genuine cause worth caroling in the streets.



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## **FCFS Membership Dues Are Due in January—NOW!**

**E**specially to folks without e-mail! Let this little reminder nudge you to pop a check in

the mail to the FCFS, P.O. Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255. (Application in newsletter.) I encourage you to consider one of

the higher levels of membership we offer. Note, any amount over the basic dues is a tax-deductible donation!



First Coast Freethought Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box 550591  
Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591  
(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.

### Committees and Chairs

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## January Social - All Welcome!

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

**WHEN:** Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2008. Gather in Lounge at 6:00 p.m., Dinner at 7:00 p.m.

**RSVP:** [CarrieRen@att.net](mailto:CarrieRen@att.net) (or 268-8826) by Jan. 21, **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](mailto:CarrieRen@att.net) • <http://www.firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/>  
All inquiries are held in the strictest confidence.

**Strong Support For Science Standards at Public Meeting!**

(Continued from page 7)

spoke in public comment period of the meeting. By my count, twenty two supported the teaching of evolution in public school and nineteen opposed it. It was unclear how two speakers

stood on the issue. I would like to thank everyone who spoke in support of science education that is free from religion and pseudo-science. It kept the meeting from becoming a one sided rally for Intelligent Design.

What is next? There is one more public hearing in South Florida. The framers and

writers will meet in January to consider the numerous public comments on the standards, then submit a final draft to the Florida Board of Education for their vote in February (more about that next month). If you want to help, go to:

<http://www.flasciencestandards.org/howyoucanhelp.htm>.



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**Next deadline for article submission: January 26, 2008**

**First Coast Freethought Society 2008 Events**

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
March	17 - Monthly meeting	16 - Book discussion group	25- Social at Steak and Ale

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

(In the Adobe version, the links are **LIVE!** Ctrl & Click will take you there.)

Return service requested



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