

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.”

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The Newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society

April 2010

Volume 8, Issue 4

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Earl Coggins

Are you someone who doesn't believe in a god? Do you know someone who doesn't have a belief in God? You're not alone. There are 50 million Americans and 1 billion people worldwide who have no religious beliefs yet lead meaningful and moral lives. That's 1 out of every 6 people. They are your family

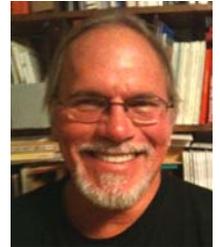
members, your neighbors, your coworkers, and people working in every profession you rely upon for goods and services.

The "Don't Believe in God? You Are Not

"Nonreligious people don't want to take over the world. They merely want to be an equal and participatory part of it."

Alone" billboard project sponsored by the Northeast Florida Coalition of

Reason hopes to bring light to these facts and create an awareness campaign aimed at creating visi-



bility, acceptance, and mutual respect. It is my hope that this campaign will be a catalyst for creating dialogue and building bridges between the nonreligious community and people

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April 2010 Meeting

Ken Hurley, Founder and Director of Civication, Inc.

A non-profit organization dedicated to promoting civics education and civil responsibility

"What Should It Mean to Be an American?"

Monday, April 19, 2009, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

In the Sanctuary, upper parking lot level • Doors open at 6:00

Unitarian Universalist Church • 7405 Arlington Expressway • Jacksonville, FL

Humanist Book Discussion Group

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

Where: BARNES & NOBLE, 11112 San Jose Blvd., Jax • 904-886-9904

What: Books planned for discussion:

- May 2, 2010 - *The Closing of the Western Mind* by Charles Freeman
- June 6, 2010 - *Where Was God: Evil, Theodicy and Modern Science* by Gary Stilwell



Books may be found in the library, may be purchased from local book stores, or purchased online. The First Coast Freethought Society will receive a small remuneration from your purchase (at no additional cost to you) if you first go to <http://www.firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/> and then click the link to Amazon.com for your purchase.

Draving on an encyclopedic knowledge of the ancient world, in *The Closing of the Western Mind*, Charles Freeman shows how the alliance between the Christian church and the Roman state resulted in the abandonment of the Greek intellectual tradition. Freeman explains how the efforts of Christian leaders to establish an orthodoxy and solidify their position within the state led them to stifle debate and dissent and to paper over doctrinal contradictions. And he examines early church councils, writings, art, and such personalities as Augustine and Ambrose of Milan, in a fascinating chronicle of the church's expanding influence, the origins of its uneasiness with sexuality, its profound opposition to science, and the development of anti-Semitism.

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

First Coast FreeThinker

The *First Coast FreeThinker* is published for all freethinkers and potential freethinkers. Nonmembers may receive the e-mail version indefinitely. Nonmembers may receive three hard-copy issues free of charge, after which they must join the FCFS to continue to receive hard copy.

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. The *FreeThinker* is intended to convey ideas that stimulate thought and promote discussion on a variety of subjects.

We welcome submissions. The deadline is the **FOURTH SATURDAY** of each month for the following month's issue. Submit contributions by e-mail or by U.S. mail to Hugo Borresen, 8831 Taurus

Circle South, Jacksonville, FL 32222.

ADVERTISING RATES: *Eighth-page (business card size) \$25.00, quarter-page \$50.00, half-page \$75.00, and whole page \$100.*

To advertise, contact Patrice Bennett, 904-352-7005, or PBennett@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org

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(October 2009 President's Message
Continued from page 1)

of faith.

The time has come for everyone to accept people with no belief in a god as equals.

A good starting point would be to dispel the myths associated with nonreligious people, i.e., they want to rid the world of religion, have no morals, and are trying to convert the world to their way of thinking.

I haven't met many nonreligious people who want to rid the world of religion. I think that

perception comes from wanting to rid the world of harm done in the name of religion. I suspect that most people having no religion aren't apprehensive or worried about a person's beliefs or lack thereof. Promoting reason, rationality, justice, rule-of-law, separation of state and church, fairness, critical thinking, humane practices, and ethical principles are much bigger concerns for most nonreligious people.

In the marketplace of ideas, the consumers will ultimately decide individually which worldview best suits their needs. We need choices and the freedom to make them without fear of being marginalized, ostracized, or discriminated against for nothing more than an alternative way of

thinking.

A wholesale condemnation without cause of any worldview is unreasonable. None should be categorized as either superior or inferior, regardless of its age or number of members. How any world view came to outnumber another is irrelevant. To use that argument as a way to classify one view as superior to another is illogical.

An aboriginal in the outback of Australia has the same brain size and cognitive capacity to contemplate the universe as does any pope, priest, minister,



or atheistic academic. No worldview has a historical or superior advantage over another.

Of all the words used to describe the nonreligious, *atheism* is the most fascinating. Rick Warren, Evangelical Christian pastor and author of the book *The Purpose Driven Life*, stated during the last Presidential election that he would never vote for an atheist. Does he think them incapable of moral behavior or not intelligent enough to take on huge responsibilities?

We have long since moved

beyond the myth that all atheists are immoral, communists, or can never possess presidential qualifications. Article VI, section 3 of the U.S. Constitution specifically states there will be no religious test for any public office.

Morality is independent of religious belief. The fact that a majority of nonreligious people act morally negates any claim to the assertion that nonreligious people are inherently immoral.

You cannot define someone's morality based solely on whether or not they are religious

or nonreligious. It has no bearing on how people gain or lose their moral compass.

Nonreligious people do not want to convert anyone to anything other

than living life in a way that doesn't cause harm. I think most nonreligious people would agree with the 19th century philosopher John Stuart Mill who said in his book *On Liberty*:

"The fact of living in society renders it indispensable that each should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct towards the rest."

Nonreligious people don't want to take over the world. They merely want to be an equal and participatory part of it.



Community Responses to the NE Florida Coalition of Reason Billboards: Positive, Negative and Apocalyptic

Fred W. Hill

The “godless billboards” went up in late March beside Blanding Blvd. in Orange Park, a few miles south of the Jacksonville border, and beside US-1, near St. Augustine. As expected, they generated much publicity and commentary. Media coverage may be found at the following links:

Florida Times-Union: <http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2010-03-24/story/billboard-campaign-announce-atheists%E2%80%99-first-coast-presence>;

St. Augustine Record: <http://staugustine.com/news/local->

news/2010-03-25/atheist-billboard-coming;

WJXT Jax News: <http://www.news4jax.com/news/22930720/detail.html>;

WJXT News Video: <http://www.news4jax.com/video/22948183/index.html>;

Action News Jacksonville: <http://www.actionnewsjax.com/content/actionlocal/story/Anti-God-Bill-board/bJku8ozLjEmxxpOgP23IAQ.csp?rss=1>

Orlando Atheist Examiner: <http://www.examiner.com/examiner/x-40162-Orlando-Atheism-Examiner~y2010m3d24-Atheist-billboard-campaign-arrives-in->

St-Augustine-and-Jacksonville

The following are some of the messages we have received regarding the billboards, compiled by Carrie Renwick. Most are plaudits for our cause of promoting reason and providing fellowship for free-thinkers. Unsurprisingly, there were also many less than laudatory missives. Readers who wish to respond to the latter, or any other items in this newsletter, are encouraged to do so for possible inclusion in a future issue. (Please limit Letters to the Editor to under 250 words.) Enjoy!



I just read the *Florida Times-Union's* article about the two billboards going up to support atheism. I was so happy I could have cried. Finally, a group with the courage to stand up to the tyranny of the religious right here in Jacksonville (and St. Augustine).

I have already had run-ins with co-workers who are offended at the thought of someone advertising that there might not be a god. How dare they! I was quick to point out that this is America and everyone including us (the

godless atheists) have a right to FREE SPEECH, not just Christians. I wish you would blanket the city with billboards!!! The

thrilled that this is happening!!

Please continue the fight, get more boards up, advertise, anyway you can to get the message out!! Logic, science, and common sense need to prevail or else our society will suffer in the long run.

Thank you again.
—Craig Harvey

“I know there are more of us in the closet than anyone realizes, afraid to speak out. I think this billboard will serve a real, meaningful purpose to people who don’t realize there is a forum out there for us. Thanks for the much needed billboard.” —S.B.

church has no problem shoving their message down our throats everywhere you drive.

Again, as an atheist, I am

I thought there were only three of us in Jax. Go figure... —T.B.

Hi, I’m a like minded person, like the members of your

(Continued from page 4)

group and would like to know more about a meeting in the Jacksonville area. I don't know if I have ever met anyone who did not believe in a higher power. —R.D.

want to make it to your meetings and gatherings, but just haven't had the chance yet. Thanks for all the emails and updates! —T.B.

excited to see positive PR from atheists and freethinkers.

Keep up the good work!
—R.L.

It is easy to prove that there is a God. **JUST DIE!!!!** —Baptist Preacher1611

(Ed. Note: This method of research is not recommended. Thus far we are unaware of any reports from any deceased persons on the matter of god, or any other aspect of the afterlife, that have held up to objective, scientific scrutiny. —fwh)



Stephen Peek, coordinator of the Northeast Florida Coalition of Reason, proudly indicates the billboard on Blanding Blvd., located in Orange Park, FL.

In Jacksonville, FL, one cannot buy a pack of gum without having the store clerk wish you a "blessed day." I thank you for your billboard. It's not easy pretending. —R.M.

Way to go, FCFS! That area is (or used to be) KKK country! (I actually saw a cross burning there when I was 10.) I'm still scared to go out the

Blanding! Great place for the billboard! —K.W.

Hello, I've lived in tiny Welaka for a bit over a year and find that everyone I have met is pretty fundamentalist Christian. It is good to know that within an hour's drive there are others like me. Let me know when and where there are meetups, please. —J.C.

I want to thank you for the billboard in Orange Park/Bellair-Meadowbrook Terrace. I am a non-theist. Thank You for providing the member groups links on your website. —L.M.

Hearthwarming. Slowly gaining progress. And I know the deep-felt feeling to find I was not alone. I think we can have a few more signs around Jacksonville. Congrats! —C.M.

Great stuff! I faithfully read your newsletter. I am a former seminary graduate/chaplain/xian, and I left the church in 2003. I always

To you and the other member groups on the sign in NE Fla. I've wanted to make it to one of your meetings for a while now but never find the time. I know the 1st Coast Freethought Society has been around a while, but I'm always

What flawed faith you must have. You cannot name one thing on Earth that doesn't have a crea-

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The 3 B's: Beg, Bargain, and Beseech

Sigrun Buckley

With so many read-worthy, fascinating books out there that one cannot possibly keep up with, I'd like to bring Hank Davis's *Caveman Logic* to your attention by summarizing, paraphrasing and plagiarizing one thread. Guilty as charged. Seriously, I want to thank Prometheus Books, Inc., the publisher, for allowing brief quotations. Davis's thoughts deeply resonated with me.

The book crossed my path at the time when I heard about the most recent Gallup poll that 80% of Americans not only believe in God but also in miracles, the after-life, hell, demons, and angels. For Davis, it's amazing that superstitions and irrationalities prevail in the 21st century, when we can

download all kinds of technology on iPods and other devices, and medicine makes advanced leaps into stem cell research. He compares our reading of "signs," such as the "appearance of the face of the Virgin Mary on a grilled cheese sandwich" and belief in ghosts, to the "sophistication of Neanderthals," i.e., on par with the level of believers in medieval Europe.

Growing up in a not particularly religious family, Davis

found it confusing when his parents described God as an abstract idea in which they somehow believed: "up there," like a spirit in the sky. On the other hand, at school and in church, people talked about him as if they *knew* him and prayed to *him*, like a good rich uncle that you wanted to keep on your side because he had the power. "Was this God idea made up by adults, as was Santa Claus who was found out and eventually discarded?" he wondered. Why do people talk about God like just another person? His mother answered, "I guess they like him better that way."

"... [Religion] is also the cause of ever-widening terrorist attacks, wars, and general ill-will. Are these problems attributable to a few bad individuals or to the concept that my god is better than yours?"

"Wherever you look" (Islam/Judaism/Christianity), God "remains essentially humanoid." The cognitive architecture of our species sets some boundaries in which we see the world and our place in it. And the things we need to do in order to get along. Early on, children learn that a lot of things are out of their control: that their parents control their world (the amount of candy we get; when we go to bed). Parents have the power. So in or-

der to get more candy or stay up an hour longer, we try to manipulate the one(s) with power. We beg, bargain, and beseech. Evolutionary speaking, these are good skills to have: "1) Determine the limits of your personal power; 2) Find out who has more power; 3) Establish a working relationship with them in order to maximize the outcomes."

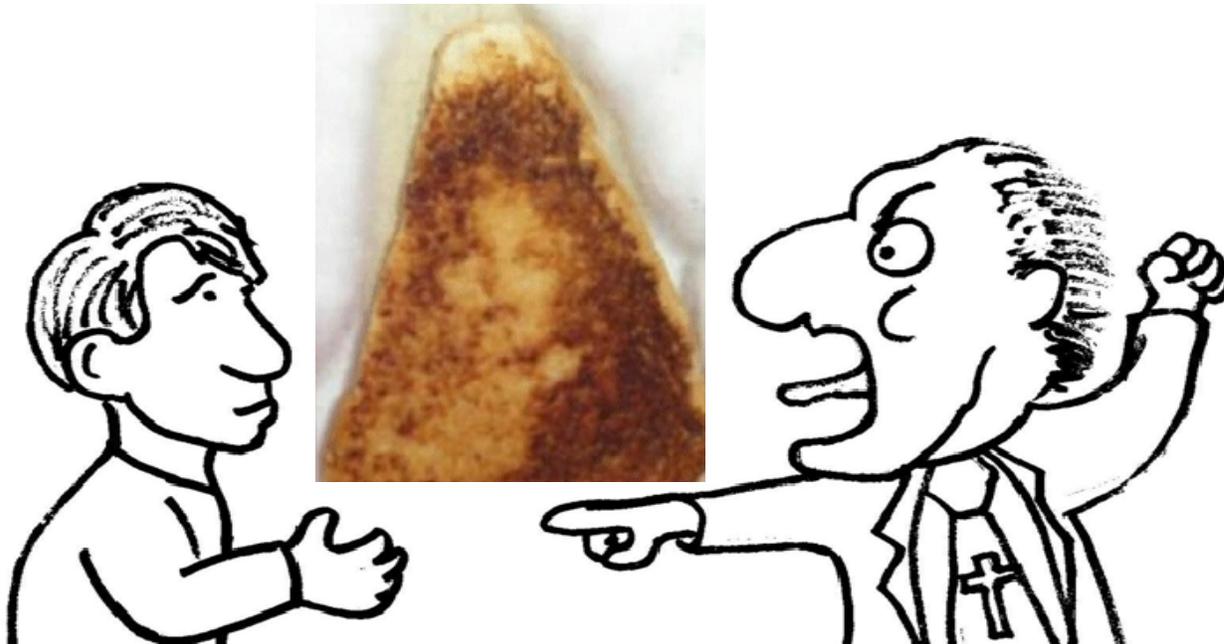
Even after growing up, we pursue this strategy when we find out that as adults we



don't have all the power over important events like health, success, etc. "A little kernel of *Caveman Logic* gets activated. Somebody must have the

power around here; it sure isn't me." It never occurs to us that maybe there is no power broker out there. Why should things be different when we become adults? Instead of rethinking how the universe works, we keep the same, old, all-powerful, parent-like agent. So we break out the 3 B's again. Of course, we call it "prayer."

History is filled with examples of what happened to people who oppose the powerful. The



“While I can see a woman’s face in the toast, that’s hardly a sign of a miracle. How do you even know it’s the Virgin Mary? Maybe it’s Marlene Dietrich.”

“How dare you question the validity of this obvious sign from God??? And to compare the Mother of God to some Hollywood strumpet? You heathens have no shame at all!!”

unbiased hand of natural selection may easily have worked to cull out ever so glacially gene variants whose owners didn’t understand their 3 B’s.

If religion brought all light and sunshine and peace into our world, it “would be a cause for celebration.” Yes, “it may bring a modicum of personal comfort,” but alas, it is also the cause of ever-widening terrorist attacks, wars, and general ill-

will. Are these problems attributable to a few bad individuals or to the concept that my god is better than yours?

“Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.” (Blaise Pascal)

Which leads to the question whether it wouldn’t be better to abolish the whole enterprise? As David Berreby has argued in his book *Us and Them*, defining

in-group/out-group membership is an essential part of human nature and “will continue to fuel conflict and bloodshed between cultures until humans decide to consciously transcend their Pleistocene predisposition.” *Us and Them* is next on my reading list.

—Hank Davis is a psychology professor at the University of Guelph, Ontario.



“I would defend the liberty of consenting adult creationists to practice whatever intellectual perversions they like in the privacy of their own homes; but it is also necessary to protect the young and innocent.”

—Arthur C. Clarke (1917—2008), science fiction author, inventor, futurist, Humanist Laureate



The Great Recession: Did Greed Run Amok Lead to the Financial Crisis?

Curtis Wolf

Note: This is not freethought related, however the Editorial Committee feels it is informative and provides a nice balance to the Borresen's March article. Ed.

I suppose it is not surprising after the financial meltdown broke in 2008 that liberals would come out of the woodwork with an "I told you so!" on their lips. So it goes with Hugo Borresen's article "What Happened in the Recent Economic Catastrophe?" (published in the March 2010 *FreeThinker*). The main theme of his article is summarized in a line from his article "In a nutshell, materialism has overshadowed morality." However, is materialism really

such a bad thing? First, let me make it clear that this article is not a line by line refutation of Borresen's article. His article summarizes information found in the January/February 2010 issue of *Mother Jones*. It would

take too big an article and too much research time for me to respond to an entire magazine in depth. Instead, I will try to place the recent financial meltdown in perspective.

One of the best analyses that I have read concerning the financial meltdown was found in Chapter 6 of *From Poverty to Prosperity* by Arnold Kling and Nick Schulz. In this chapter, the

authors explain why our financial system is inherently fragile. Basically, financial intermediation is imperfectly transparent but this is necessary to maintain the liquidity of and therefore the proper functioning of asset markets. To understand this statement, let's look at the modern mortgage market.

The mortgage originator gathers a lot of information concerning the borrower and property being bought before approving the mortgage. This includes credit scores, financial information, and property appraisals. The mortgage is then sold into the secondary market to investment bankers who bundle up the loans and sell them to investors as mortgage-backed securities

different from the (loan bundler) as mortgage-backed securities, knows the range of credit scores and LTV ratios. The investor relies on the ratings of MBSs by bond rating agencies. Each layer knows less about the underlying mortgages than the layer below it and relies on the layer below it to do a good job of managing the riskiness of the underlying mortgages. While this appears to be problematic, it is necessary for the asset market to work since the investor can hardly be expected to inspect carefully every bundled loan associated with his MBS. This lack of transparency allows the MBSs to be bought

and sold more easily, thus allowing the market to become highly liquid. This ultimately results in lower mortgage interest rates and greater availability of mortgages due to spreading of risk from the mortgage originator to a large pool of investors.

This all works well as long as the underlying mortgages reflect sound loan underwriting practices. Alas, that was not the case. Before we blame it all on Wall Street, we should acknowledge the role of the government in this mess. As noted by historian Thomas Woods in his book

"Over the last two hundred years, there has been an astonishing number of innovations that improved our lives greatly and this trend continues to this day. However, innovation and risk go hand in hand. Whenever you try something new, there is a good chance that it will fail."

(MBS) who rely on bond rating agencies to judge the riskiness of these investments.

So the mortgage market is multi-layered. The mortgage originator knows everything about the loan. The loan bundler knows only the credit score and the loan to value (LTV) ratio. The company that sells the slices of these bundles (if it is



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Meltdown, government policies played a significant role in causing the housing bubble and the resulting economic crisis, when it burst. He pointed out that the federal government had been promoting an expansion of home ownership through government-sponsored enterprises Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the Community Reinvestment Act, pro home ownership tax code, etc. This aligned with the Federal Reserve's easy money policy to create a "perfect storm," of sorts, in the mortgage market.

The problem was that there are only so many people who have sufficient income and are responsible enough to own a house. The mortgage originators were flush with money created out of thin air by the Federal Reserve, and there was a government push to increase home ownership. This resulted in the loosening of loan underwriting standards and smaller, if any, down payments required of borrowers. Mortgages were increasingly becoming available to riskier borrowers, which then resulted in riskier investments for many MBS investors who were often blissfully unaware of the impending doom. Add to

that the fact that home prices were going through the roof, which stretched the budgets of many households applying for mortgages. When loan defaults started piling up when the housing bubble burst, investors burned by their losses expected higher returns to compensate for the higher risks, and the house



"How can we afford this beautiful house on your guard dog salary?"

"Relax, honey, Mr. Fox said we don't even have to make a down payment, and the interest rate would be really low during the first year! I trust him so much I didn't even bother to read the rest of the contract before putting my pawprint on it."

of cards soon after came tumbling down. The pooling of risks that comes with bundling loans together only goes so far when you have too many bad loans.

While government policies are largely to blame for the recent financial meltdown, Wall Street is not completely off the hook. Yes, Wall Street was responding to the government policies and tax incentives, but ulti-

mately the bucks stops with the mortgage originators who made the loans and the investment bankers who packaged the loans and sold them to investors. Maybe it was the misguided belief that mortgages are always a safe investment. Maybe it was the boatload of money being made that blinded so many to the fragile nature of the current housing boom. Whatever the reason, Wall Street should be held accountable for its mistakes. If there was fraud, then those involved should be prosecuted. Businesses that made bad decisions should go bankrupt.

The last thing, I repeat, the very last thing that we should even consider doing is to bail these companies out! When you bail out companies, you create moral hazard. In doing this, you privatize the rewards but socialize the risks. This leads to companies taking greater risks in the future when they realize that

they do not have to take the fall when their plans backfire on them. It should be noted that bailouts took place during both Republican and Democratic administrations.

I asked in the first paragraph of this article whether materialism is so bad. I say no. Materialism has led to our high stan-

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dard of living and long life expectancy that is unique in human history. Over the last two hundred years, there has been an astonishing number of innovations that improved our lives greatly, and this trend continues to this day. However, innovation and risk go hand in hand. Whenever you try something new, there is a good chance that it will fail. Decentralized adaptive systems like the free market and evolution by natural selection are similar in this respect: Both are messy in that they involve a lot of trial and error. Both result in useful innovations that are then copied throughout the system. Both are necessary when an all-knowing, all-

powerful intelligent designer is not available to construct large complex systems from scratch according to some optimal plan.

The trick is balancing the rewards promised by the innovation against the risks of unanticipated consequences when the innovation is implemented. I believe that this is possible only if you allow entrepreneurs to try new ideas and to suffer the consequences when these ideas fail. When the entrepreneur understands that he will lose his shirt if he takes on too much risk and there is no one to bail him out, he will be reluctant to foolishly bet the farm on a long shot, or at least he will seek ways to try the new idea in a more limited manner, so that when it blows up in

his face, he can contain the damage so that his company doesn't go under.

My concern is that federal regulators who did little to prevent the financial crisis before it happened will respond to the financial crisis in a way that will stifle innovation in our financial sector in the name of reducing risky loan practices. A far better way is not to artificially inflate the money supply, avoid government policies that lead financial companies into making bad loans, and not bail out these companies when they throw caution to the wind and take on risks that are manageable only as long as the bubble does not burst.



Ongoing FCFS Activities

Dinners for Doubters

Sign up to attend or to host a dinner yourself. Sign-up sheets will be at the back table at the monthly meetings. For details on how this works, see **page 7 of the August 2008 *FreeThinker*** (available on website) or ask a greeter 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. until ? at the pavilion at Losco Park, 10851 Hood Rd., S., Jacksonville 32257, between Shad and Losco Roads. Need directions? Call Beth Perry at 904-733-5489 or Google the address to get a map and directions. We generally provide coffee. Bring a breakfast snack and **a chair**. Mark your calendar. 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 **Judy Hankins** at 904-724-8188, or e-mail her at JHankins@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org, or leave a notation on a meeting sign-in sheet.

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tor. Phone, shirt, pants, or anything you could think of, all had creators. The math involved in holding the universe together is staggering but you would rather not believe in God. Your free thought is stupid thought. True freedom is the power to do right, not to do whatever you might believe to be right. Even Albert Einstein stated he didn't believe that God "played dice" with the universe. To believe nothing created something is the most ignorant thing I have ever heard of. Dead matter is dead matter and has never, ever, been anything else nor has it ever changed except to decay completely. —R.P.

I know there are more of us in the closet than anyone realizes, afraid to speak out. I think this billboard will serve a real, meaningful purpose to people who don't realize there is a forum out there for us.

Thanks for the much needed billboard. —S.B.

Wow! It takes more faith to not believe in God than it does to believe in him. Jesus Christ died on the cross, and for what? So people like you can claim that they don't believe in him?!

Wow, I will pray for all of you and hope that maybe someday you'll come to your senses and find God. —T.A.

Seems like there are far larger issues plaguing our society these days; lack of morality, values, and a general disregard for our fellow man. Further removing God certainly seems like just another step in the wrong direction.

I wasn't aware there was an epidemic of loneliness among nonreligious persons, and frankly I'm not buying it. To say these billboards are intended to reach nonreligious persons is dishonest, you folks are just one more reason our nation is falling apart. Just another campaign (whether intentional or not) to further divide the citizens, to entice anger, envy and hate.

To say your cause is noble is indeed laughable. But ironically there is nothing funny about a modern-day Antichrist campaign. If you knew any American history whatsoever, you'd know God is the reason for this country's greatness, not the cause of its problems. Your mission will have very negative consequences, but sadly, something tells me this is part of the mission itself.

Happy Easter and may God bless you. —J.F.

Thank you for putting up the billboards! By picking NE Florida you've highlighted one of the most intolerant areas of the country. The sign is a breath of fresh air and still gives us hope that we are NOT alone in questioning the issue of god in our society. —G.J.

All the efforts of the human mind cannot exhaust the essence of a single fly. Faith has to do with things that are not seen and hope with things that are not at hand. Just remember that good can exist without evil, whereas evil cannot exist without good.

It is possible to demonstrate God's existence, although not a priori, yet a posteriori from some work of His more surely known to us.

Hope you find what you're looking for one day! —T.G.

I was quite pleased to see the news coverage over your billboard. I went to Resurrection and then Bishop Kenny and from the curriculum determined that it is a bunch of nonsense.

Most religious zealots have no idea of where their beliefs originated from or when, as you well know. I would love to get into a dissertation over the topic, but not via my iPhone.

Once again, nice job!!! —T.K.

Congratulations on your billboard - Good show!
—Rev. Harry Parrott

—Many thanks to Fred Edwards and the United Coalition of Reason for making our billboards, our Northeast Florida Coalition, and its website possible. See <http://neflorida.unitedcor.org/>



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.

For other activities besides monthly meetings, please see the website, brochure, or newsletter!

Committees and Chairs

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April Social

Where: OLIVE GARDEN on Philips Highway, near the Avenues Mall.
When: **Tuesday April 27, 2010** at 6:00 p.m. Proceed directly to our room.
Drinks at 6:00. Dinner at 7:00. (Order from the menu.)
RSVP: CarrieRen@att.net (or 268-8826) by **Tues. a.m.**, if you plan to go!

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2009 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? Comments? _____			

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) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family (\$45/yr.) | | |

Do you object to your name appearing on our membership list, distributed to other members? Yes No

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

- General member Committee member Officer Financial supporter

- Annual dues cover the period of **January 1 through December 31**.
- The initial dues for new members joining in **July through September** are half the regular rates. Membership extends to the end of the current calendar year.
- The initial dues for new members joining in **October through December** are the full, regular rates. Membership extends to the end of the following calendar year.

***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.

Upcoming Freethought Events of Interest on the First Coast

Monday,	April 12	JAM Meetup at European St. Café, Jacksonville - 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	April 13	ACFH Social at Gypsy Cab Co., St. Augustine Beach - 7:00 p.m.
Monday	April 19	FCFS Monthly Meeting - Ken Hurley - 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	April 24	FCFS Deadline to submit articles for May 2010 <i>FreeThinker</i>
Sunday	April 25	FCFS Secular Sunday in the Park, Jacksonville - 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday	April 27	FCFS Monthly Social at Olive Garden, Jacksonville - 6:00 p.m.
Friday	April 30 to May 2	HFA Annual Conference in Sarasota, FL
Sunday	May 2	JAM Meetup at Sneakers, Jacksonville - 12:00 Noon
Sunday	May 2	FCFS Humanist Book Discussion Group, Jacksonville - 2:00 p.m.
Monday	May 17	FCFS Monthly Meeting - Dr. David Simon - 6:30 p.m.

Ancient City Freethinkers and Humanists (ACFH) • <http://www.meetup.com/A-C-F-H/>
First Coast Freethought Society (FCFS) • <http://www.firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org>
Jacksonville Atheist, Agnostic, Secular Meetup Group (JAM) • <http://www.jaxatheists.com/>

The FCFS is a proud member of the Northeast Florida Coalition of Reason

In the Adobe version of the *FreeThinker*, the links are **LIVE!** Ctrl-Click should take you there. If the multi-line links do not work, copy and paste the link into your browser window.

NPR Corporate Sponsorship Announcements to Increase

Kee an ear out as you listen to National Public Radio (NPR) member-station WJCT, 89.9 FM! You may recall that in January 2010, we opted to reduce our usual number of 12 NPR spots per month to six due to budgetary constraints. To use our six spots most effectively, we used them to announce the monthly meetings and ran the spots twice daily, (mornings during *Morning Edition* and afternoons during *All Things Considered*) on the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday preceding the third Monday meeting day.

Happily, enough 2010 membership renewals and NPR support donations have now come in that we are able to resume our usual number of 12 spots for this quarter, April, May, and June. We will keep the same morning and afternoon scheduling, we will continue to announce our individual meetings, and we will resume a general purpose announcement for the additional six spots per month. In keeping with the message on our billboards and of the FCFS, our general purpose spot will say:

“The First Coast Freethought Society wants you to know: If you don’t believe in God, you are not alone. One out of every six people leads a meaningful and moral life without religion. More information at First Coast Freethought Society Dot Org.”

