

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

May 2010

Volume 8, Issue 5

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Earl Coggins

Tolerance is a word familiar to most people. I hear the word and my mind generates a mental understanding of it. How simple is that? Well, it depends on whom you ask. I happen to like the word. I have a bumper sticker (imagine that) on my car that says succinctly: *Tolerance*. It's a one-word message, with a variety

of symbols below it depicting various world views. At the time of this writing, there were 39 million plus entries for my Google search of tolerance.

“Are religious liberals such as Barry Lynn, or the Interfaith Council, contributing to the terror propagated by religious extremism?”

The analogies that come to my mind when contemplating the nature of tolerance are things like “live and let live” or perhaps

“whatever gets you through the night.” Of course, there are



utilitarian caveats to both notions. Should we tolerate the intolerable? If not, who gets to decide what is intolerable?

There are some people who feel that tolerance is bordering on unacceptable. Sam Harris

(Continued on page 3)

May 2010 Meeting

David R. Simon, Ph.D., Research Fellow

Institute of Public and International Policy

University of North Florida

“Crime and Religion”

Monday, May 17, 2010, 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:

- June 6, 2010 - *Where Was God: Evil, Theodicy and Modern Science* by Dr. Gary Stilwell
- July 4, 2010 - *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* by Thomas L. Friedman



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.

Note: Author Gary Stilwell will be the FCFS guest speaker at our monthly meeting on June 21, 2010.

Dr. Stilwell says: author: "I feel that the traditional theodicies are fit only for the childhood of the human species and as we enter our spiritual adolescence, we must turn to more reasonable ideas such as those found in the modern sciences (primarily quantum physics, relativity, and chaos theory). Here we may have a new place to look in order to develop new justifications for the Problem of Evil. In this work, I examine and refute many historical attempts to justify evil in a good God's world and, using insights provided by some of those modern sciences, propose a solution to this theological puzzle with a rational, albeit unorthodox, theodicy that might withstand objective critical scrutiny."

Dr. Stilwell will also have some books available for sale at the June monthly meeting.

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.

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*(President's Message
Continued from page 1)*

(poster child for the nonreligious) wastes no time in his book, *The End of Faith*, in pointing that out:

“Respect for other faiths, or for the views of unbelievers, is not an attitude that God endorses. While all faiths have been touched, here and there, by the spirit of ecumenicalism, the central tenet of every religious tradition is that all others are mere repositories of error or, at best, dangerously incomplete. Intolerance is thus intrinsic to every creed.”

One of my impressions of Harris' book is that he seems to be advocating intolerance for all religious faiths on the premise that even progressive, liberal theology is somehow a hiding place for the radical and dangerous varieties of theism. Is he throwing the baby out with the bath water? Are religious liberals such as Barry Lynn, or the Interfaith Council, contributing to the terror propagated by religious extremism? Religious liberals ignore the acerbic texts that can be found in the sacred documents of most religions. Does that make them a complicit component of terror, bigotry, and intolerance?

In his book, *The New Tolerance: How a cultural movement threatens to destroy you, your faith, and your children*, Christian apologist Josh McDowell

attempts to analyze the evolution of tolerance. He points out that the traditional definition of tolerance meant that one had to endure, or “put up with something” that we might not have been in total agreement with. Sounds okay to me. He goes on to define “the new tolerance” as a respect for behaviors, beliefs, or attitudes and that any criticism of behaviors, beliefs, or attitudes is seen as a personal attack; and the person involved in such criticism is seen as intolerant or a bigot. I am not so sure about McDowell's hypothesis.

“What exactly is tolerance? Should we tolerate all world views? Does tolerance mean everything is equal? Okay? Pleasing? Tolerable?”

I have childhood memories of having to tolerate troublesome relatives at family reunions. My mother would say that we don't have to agree with them, but we have to give them a minimum amount of respect. Even as a child I found myself wondering why my mother would want to respect someone who was misbehaving. I think I have an answer. My mother had many qualities—one was manners. She was confusing having respect with being polite.

McDowell has some moments of reason but quickly fades to black when he gets to the thesis of his book: Christians are being persecuted for their view that Christianity is

superior to all other faiths. I truly believe Christianity and, for that matter, any world view (including my own) claiming to be superior to all others, should be rigorously scrutinized for supporting evidence to back up such a claim.

Over the summer of 2010 I want to pursue the meaning of tolerance. What exactly is tolerance? Should we tolerate all world views? Does tolerance mean everything is equal? Okay? Pleasing? Tolerable? How can we truly know something is intolerable? How interrelated are tolerance and perception?

In his book *The Doors of Perception*, Aldous Huxley, grandson of biologist Thomas Henry Huxley, famous for being Charles Darwin's bulldog as well as the person who coined the term agnostic, had the following to say about perception:

“To see ourselves as others see us is a most salutary gift. Hardly less important is the capacity to see others as they see themselves. But what if these others belong to a different species and inhabit a radically alien universe? For example, how can the sane get to know what it actually feels like to be mad?”

My summer writings will be an attempt to explore the world of tolerance and perception. I think a fundamental precept of tolerance is exploration. Wish me luck!



Signs of Religious Mania and Intolerance

Fred W. Hill

Exactly what caused the damage to the billboard near St. Augustine with the daring couplet, "Don't believe in God? You are not alone." remains unknown as of this writing. Evidence indicates it was most probably not an "act of God" but rather a deliberate act by at least one person who didn't trust in God to act on His own behalf. We may never know who did it or why, but intolerance of differences, religious or otherwise, has fostered much violence throughout human history, all too often with consequences far more horrible than a dented billboard.

The offending words did no more than reach out to atheists and agnostics in Northeast Florida who feel isolated amidst a forest of churches and a preponderance of Christians who assume their neighbors all worship God and Jesus, except for that smattering of Jews and Muslims who just haven't seen the light of the true faith. Certainly, only a minority of Christians are truly bigoted against those who don't share their particular faith. Still, that intolerant strain of Christianity repeatedly strives to impose its will on entire communities throughout the nation. They are frustrated by legal restraints on their power, determined to change laws to favor their reli-

gious agenda and angered at the efforts of secularists who continually defy their efforts to transform the U.S. into the "Christian nation" they insist this country has always been, regardless of how the genuine historical record and the Constitution refute them. The religious extremists want atheists and other secularists to be isolated, fearful pariahs, rather than united to actively resist their efforts to transform our country into a theocracy.

"Religious or irreligious, those who are intolerant of worldviews contrary to their own, or simply bigoted against anyone they perceive as 'different', have too often used violence to intimidate or eradicate their enemies, real and imagined."

Convinced that their deity demands they promote His agenda as they interpret it, the ultra-religious right has organized to place their members in school and city councils, legislatures, courts, governors' mansions and even the White House. All certainly within their rights, however their actions to undermine, challenge, and ultimately change the Constitutional provisions keeping church and state separate, are insidious and often illegal. Not content with all the tax-free territory they already own, they have placed massive religious icons in government-owned lands and buildings, as in

the case of Judge Roy Moore and his Ten Commandments monument, forcibly removed from the Alabama Supreme Court by order of a federal judge. Then there was the large cross placed atop the municipal water tower in Starke, FL, ordered taken down by Senior U.S. District Judge John H. Moore II in 2007 (see <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/147795>).



And in more recent overbearing cross news, the case regarding one erected in a federal park in California's Mojave Desert in 1934 to honor U.S. casualties of World War I (neglecting non-Christian Americans who died in that conflagration); the case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which in a 5 to 4 decision overturned a lower court order to remove the cross (see *New York Times* editorial, "Cross in the Desert," April 29, 2010).

More concerned over the welfare of potential humans than that of actual humans, the religious right has legislated to ban all abortions, as well as any information about abortion or birth control, even in pregnancies resulting from rape or incest, or in which the woman's life is endangered by the pregnancy,

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or if the fetus suffers from such severe defects that it could never truly enjoy life. But all this is irrelevant to the more extreme right-to-lifers who believe sex must always result in the birth of yet another human life on our overpopulated planet, to be tested for worthiness of joining the hosts of Heaven or eternal damnation in Hell. To inoculate children with their religious mania at taxpayer expense, they have sought government handouts for their private religious schools and homeschooling and to have their Biblical lore taught as history and science in public schools while watering down or entirely omitting the facts of evolution from biology texts and classrooms.

Further, they have agitated to influence appointments to government agencies at all levels, as just this past April when members of the Jacksonville City Council attempted to block the nomination of Parvez Ahmed, a respected University of North Florida professor and Fulbright scholar, to the city Human Rights Council. Allegedly they were concerned about statements he had made while serving as national and state board chairman of the Council for American-Islamic Relations, from which Ahmed resigned in 2008 due to “a fallout over the group’s mission and direction,” as reported in a *Florida Times-Union* editorial (“Parvez Ahmed: The Right Decision,” [http://](http://jacksonville.com/opinion/editorials/2010-04-28/story/right-decision)

jacksonville.com/opinion/editorials/2010-04-28/story/right-decision). Based on Ahmed’s detractors’ questions, however, they appeared more opposed to



Cross in the Mojave National Preserve

his appointment because he is a Muslim, and a pro-secularist one at that, who might even support gay rights! City Council member Clay Yarborough, who has gained some local renown for his conservative Baptist fervor, asked Ahmed and another nominee if they “supported retaining



Parvez Ahmed and Clay Yarborough

the ‘In God We Trust’ motto in public places, how they felt about gay marriage, and if they thought prayer in public build-

ings is appropriate.” (See “Confederacy of Dunces,” Editor’s Note, *Folio Weekly*, 4/20/10.) At a later meeting, City Council member Don Redman requested Ahmed recite a prayer to his god and asked if public prayers to Jesus offended him.

As exemplified by a vicious attack the same month by militant Muslims on an environmental science professor at the University of Punjab in Pakistan, as reported by Sabrina Tavernise (*At Top University, a Fight for Pakistan’s Future*, *NY-Times* 4/21/10), this intolerance is hardly solely an American or Christian phenomenon. Possibly every religious group that has ever held dominance over a large, diverse community, and been unrestrained by laws and traditions supporting human rights and tolerance, has resorted to unjustified violence to impose its will. Even supposedly pacifist Buddhists have displayed a nasty bloodlust when they felt their status was threatened. Moreover, radical, inhumane atheists in the Soviet Union, China and Cambodia engaged in mass murder to assert their control. Religious or irreligious, those who are intolerant of worldviews contrary to their own, or are simply bigoted against anyone they perceive as “different,” have too often used violence to intimidate or eradicate their enemies, real and imagined.

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St. Augustine's Godless Billboard Mysteriously Damaged

From the Coalition of Reason Press Release of April 13, 2010

A billboard on the West side of US Hwy. 1 bearing the message, "Don't Believe in God? You Are Not Alone," has suffered major damage. Located 5.7 miles North of SR-16 and visible to southbound traffic, the message raised controversy when it first appeared March 29. Now those behind that message believe vandalism may have been involved.

"We can't say for sure, but it looks like somebody with a truck could have pulled at the bill-

board structure from behind in an effort to bring it down," said Stephen Peek, coordinator of the Northeast Florida Coalition of Reason, the sponsor of the billboard. "Then again, perhaps some heavy object flying off a passing train could have struck it in front, although we don't see any such object nearby and the billboard vinyl isn't torn."

The owner of the billboard structure, CBS Outdoor, was notified of the damage this morning by the United Coalition of Reason, which is the national organization, headquartered in Washington, D.C., that contracted for the billboard on the

local coalition's behalf.

"We wanted to first get photo verification of the situation before making our report," said Fred Edwards, national director of the United Coalition of Reason. "And from the photos, the damage appears significant, too great to be weather related, especially given recent good weather and the good condition of the surrounding trees. On the other hand, the remote location of this billboard adds to the probability of vandalism. But only an on-site investigation by the billboard owner has any chance of solving the mystery."



More Community Responses to the Billboards

First, I would like to say that I am not an Atheist, but a Pagan. I read the news today that your sign in St. Augustine was damaged and I was horrified. It is absolutely ridiculous that some (probably "Good Christian") person decided to do this to your billboard when I feel you have all the right in the world to express your thoughts and advertise your organization.

My husband is Atheist and it absolutely infuriates me that we have at least 2 different church groups every week stop by our house and try to recruit us into their faith, but posting a non-threatening billboard and not knocking door-to-door gets this

kind of response. Of course, this is my opinion, but someone who would actually take the time and effort to attempt such a stupid act as pulling down a billboard would have deserved everything that came to them had it fallen on them and injured them or had you chosen to press charges against them.

Another thing is, in my opinion, this is just another typical example of a Christian's actions against something that threatens their logic. "If it doesn't jive with what that fictional book (the bible) says, then we've got to cover it up and maybe it'll go away." Every day I see Christian propaganda in stores, on TV, and even in the mail, but no

one seems to complain about their lousy attempt at recruitment, and believe me, if I had it my way, Christians wouldn't be allowed to proselytize AT ALL because if Christianity were based on logic, it wouldn't exist. I'm sure Christians wouldn't appreciate my bringing my Book of Shadows with a pentacle and my athame to their house and try to recruit them, they'd probably call the police on me.

I applaud you for offering those of us who are non-Christian an alternative to the bible-thumping, hellfire-and-damnation screaming sermons with reasonable, thought-provoking, and perhaps science-

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based alternatives in this bible-belt area. It's about time we have something else in this area offered to us that ISN'T associated with Christianity or Jesus Christ. After hearing the news about the attempt to defile your billboard, it just makes me more curious about your organization.

Too bad their attempt backfired on them. Good luck and I hope to see more of your billboards around.

Best regards,
—K.H., Jacksonville, FL, Mom, Wife, and Free-thinker

Dear Northeast Florida Coalition of Reason,

Nice signs, good job! Sorry that the St.

Augustine sign was damaged, keep getting the message out. The signs have power. I recently met a freethinker neighbor by virtue of her bumper sticker—it was wonderful to meet a fellow atheist in my rather religious Indiana town.

By the way, my neighbor has a funny (and perhaps profound) way of stating her views, “just because I don't know the origin of the universe or how life began on earth or how a plasma TV works doesn't mean God is behind it.” —J.J.

This is a long overdue movement. With this, I feel I can explore facts about human existence, rather than the unrealistic ideas the bible offers and brain washes us with. This is a wonderful opportunity to break away from the extreme pressure I've been under to be a Christian, and finally think for myself and pursue self reliance. —C.C.



Comments: As a 48-year-old that was raised in Orange Park, moved away and now have returned years later I would like to thank you so much for the billboard.

I know I'm not alone, but in Clay you do feel that way. I live on Fleming Island now and I swear, if they build one more church here this island will sink.

I'm on the door-to-door black list, now, with the Baptists and Mormons, but I still have trouble with some Church of God people. It's easy: Baptists you

tell them you're Catholic, Mormons that you're gay. The holy rollers are tough; guess I have to tell them we worship Satan as step 1 and 2 have not worked.

Thank you again as I live with a theist and really should join up as I do feel alone sometimes. —John

Even though I don't believe in your message, I do believe you have the right to express it. I'm sorry someone damaged your sign. I'm sure ignorance was to blame.

The question is never the answer. Only a flawed mind would assume that. I would like you to tell me one thing you own that does-

n't have a creator, cell phone, pants, shirt, car, and so on. To believe dead matter created itself is totally foolish as well as you saying you don't believe in God.

Your belief is in yourself and your so called free thought. You, in your own mind, become God, full of iniquity, believing you are above God and His laws. Yes, Satan is a humanist as well. Misery loves company and he strives to bring as many down to the pit as he can. Even the movies reflect what's coming for a

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world that has chosen to abandon God and His principles. More and more movies like 2012 will appear because people know in their hearts, a world without God cannot survive.

What you don't consider is, many like me, now have a two-sided view. We've seen the world not believing, and as the song says, "We once were blind but now we see." I pray that God will reveal Himself to you before it's too late. May God bless you and keep you. —Unsigned

(Editorial aside: We freethinkers appreciate the sentiments, as well as the support, for free speech, but we can see reality far more clearly without the biblical blinders. — fwh)

Sorry to see recently on the news about the billboard in St. Augustine (I think) being vandalized. Kind of backfired because it seems to me that it only brings more discussion.

—L.T.

(Editor's note: this final entry was written by FCFS Board Member Richard C. Keene to the Ponte Vedra Recorder in response to a previous letter to that paper criticizing an article about the signs being published the same week as Easter, which the writer considered an "affront to Jews and Christians alike." —fwh)

In reference to Ruth Conley's letter (4/9/10 edition), it should be noted that these billboard campaigns of the United Coalition of Reason run year-round, all over the country; and the timing of placement

and/or display is governed solely by local commercial availability of the billboard space and cost. So, having one or another overlap with any specific religious holiday is simply unintentional. It is also unavoidable since there are so many religions with so many holidays. Further, the campaign is not an attack on anyone's religion or any religious organization(s).

However, the billboard campaign is a call out to those who are not religious, whether they are missionary in that thought or merely passive nonbelievers. Such individuals often are not part of traditional religious holidays; so helping them find like-minded people at such times of year is entirely appropriate and worthy of noting.

The *Recorder's* reporting of the signage, also, is both timely and coincident.

—Richard C. Keene



A Collection of Atheist T-Shirt and Bumper Sticker Aphorisms from the *Living the Scientific Life* blog

[\(http://scienceblogs.com/grrlscientist/2008/01/top_fifty_atheist_tshirt_and_b.php/\)](http://scienceblogs.com/grrlscientist/2008/01/top_fifty_atheist_tshirt_and_b.php/):

1. Too Stupid to Understand Science? Try Religion.
2. "Worship Me or I Will Torture You Forever. Have a Nice Day."- God.
3. He's Dead. It's Been 2,000 years. He's Not Coming Back. Get OVER It Already!
4. Actually, If You Look It Up, The Winter Solstice Is The Reason For The Season
5. I Wouldn't Trust Your God Even If He Did Exist
6. My Flying Monkey Can Beat Up Your Guardian Angel
7. Threatening Children With Hell Is FUN!
8. God Doesn't Kill People. People Who Believe in God Kill People.
9. When the Rapture Comes, We'll Get Our Country Back!
10. People Who Don't Want Their Beliefs Laughed at Shouldn't Have Such Funny Beliefs



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Yet, despite the omen of the damaged billboard, reason for hope remains. After all, Professor Ahmed's nomination was ultimately approved by a majority of the City Council based on his qualifications and character, rather than rejected due to the unjustified fears of a minority of council members. Hatred of the *other* sometimes prevails in our nation, but advocates for reason have had victories, too. The rule of law has been imperfectly implemented, run as it is by actual and fallible humans rather than

perfect but imaginary angels. However, the law of this land protects our right to openly disbelieve in all supernatural entities, even God, despite being surrounded by fervid theists who equally have the right to believe in whatever being human imagination can conjure. That the men who wrote our Constitution recognized free speech and religious freedom as basic rights was one of the greatest victories for reason in history. That was just the beginning, for as American society changed over the next two hundred plus years and

reason expanded over fear, the Constitution was amended to further expand and protect human rights. Outspoken free-thinkers advocate for reason and, whatever the provocations of those who fear or hate us for even inadvertently challenging their deeply held superstitions, we should be neither intimidated nor respond in rage, but rather, continue to respect and speak out for rights of all citizens peacefully to believe whatever they desire, as long as they don't tread on the rights of others.



“Two hands working can do more than a thousand clasped together.” — Anonymous

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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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!

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May Social

Where: OLIVE GARDEN on Philips Highway, near the Avenues Mall.
When: Tuesday May 25, 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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2010 Membership Application



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| 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 | May 10 | JAM Meetup at European St. Café, Jacksonville - 6:30 p.m. |
| Tuesday | May 11 | ACFH Social at Gypsy Cab Co., St. Augustine Beach - 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday | May 17 | FCFS Monthly Meeting - Dr. David R. Simon - 6:30 p.m. |
| Sunday | May 23 | FCFS Secular Sunday in the Park, Jacksonville - 10:00 a.m. |
| Tuesday | May 25 | FCFS Monthly Social at Olive Garden, Jacksonville - 6:00 p.m. |
| Saturday | May 29 | FCFS Deadline to submit articles for June 2010 <i>FreeThinker</i> |
| Sunday | June 6 | JAM Meetup at Sneakers, Jacksonville - 12:00 Noon |
| Sunday | June 6 | FCFS Humanist Book Discussion Group, Jacksonville - 2:00 p.m. |
| Monday | June 21 | FCFS Monthly Meeting - Dr. Gary A. Stilwell - 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/>
Northeast Florida Coalition of Reason (NeFCoR) • <http://NorthEastFloridaCoR.org/>

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

Humanists of Florida Annual Conference - A Tremendous Success!

The Humanists of Florida Association Annual Conference, titled “Forging a Humanist and Secular Coalition,” held in Sarasota, April 30 to May 2, 2010, was sold out! A total of 167 humanists, secularists, atheists, agnostics, and freethinkers attended the conference. An overflow hotel was required for some of the registrants! The main convention hotel, Holiday Inn Sarasota Bradenton Airport, is new and beautiful, with a festive and colorful décor, delicious food, and superb staff.

Several of the illustrious presenters included Dr. David Sloan Wilson, author of *Evolution for Everybody*, and cofounder of the Evolution Institute; Sean Faircloth, executive director of the Secular Coalition of America; Dr. Ronald A. Lindsay, attorney, and executive director of Center for Inquiry; and August Brunsman, executive director of the Secular Student Alliance. Attendees included David Niose, president of American Humanist Association; representatives of many Florida groups, as well as a group in California, Michigan, and Portland, Oregon; and 14 students from FSU and USF.

At the interactive audience session on Sunday, participants unanimously voiced support for a state-wide group that would explore options for secular humanist progressives to influence public policy. After an open discussion to help local groups retain current members and attract new ones, participants completed a survey assessing needs for continued growth. Based on the survey results, HFA will announce a small grants program. Florida has never before seen such a collaborative effort with so many different humanist groups working together to impact public policy.

