

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."

Post Office Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591
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The First Coast Freethought Society, Inc.

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FreeThinker



The Newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society

September 2010

Volume 8, Issue 9

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President's Message - September 2010

Earl Coggins

Our September meeting marks the return of the Building Bridges Campaign, an initiative I started in January of this year to promote interfaith dialogues, work being carried out in Jackson-

ville and other cities throughout Florida and the rest of this country.

“...[I]t is important and imperative that freethought organizations around the state get involved in inter-faith dialogue. We have to find a way to live together—people of all world views.”

It was a struggle making the decision to bring to fruition the Building Bridges Cam-

paigned as an interfaith initiative,

because a non-religious world view is not exactly what one would call a faith, unless you are inclined to believe that non-religious people do have faith in something—perhaps nature, science, or hu-

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“A man is accepted into a church for what he believes and turned out for what he knows.”

—Mark Twain

September 2010 Meeting

“Building Bridges Beyond Belief: Dialogue with a Muslim”

Earl Coggins, President, First Coast Freethought Society; Freethinker welcomes

Parvez Ahmed, Ph.D., Member, Jacksonville Human Rights Commission; Board Member, OneJax; Associate Professor of Finance, University of North Florida; Fulbright Scholar; Muslim

Monday, September 20, 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:

- October 3, 2010 - *Good Without God* by Greg Epstein
- November 7, 2010 - *The Diaries of Adam & Eve* by Mark Twain

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.

Harvard's humanist chaplain believes one can find purpose, compassion, and community without the existence of God. Defining humanism as, simply, "goodness without God," Epstein discusses why and how to attain it. Such humanism has, he says, roots in the ancient world and in regions as different as Asia and the Middle East. He traces it from the Epicureans to Spinoza to the Enlightenment and Jefferson's pursuit-of-happiness doctrine. Humanists don't deny the significance of God, but rather consider God to be the most influential literary character ever created. Throughout, he persuasively claims that the humanist approach to life can provide the nonreligious with purpose and dignity. A thoughtful account of an often contentious topic. —June Sawyers, *Booklist*

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 Fred Hill, 1817 Egner St.,

Jacksonville, FL 32206.

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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*(President's Message—September, 2010
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manity. Regardless of my feelings on faith, I felt it necessary to take a step in the direction of interfaith dialogue.

There are already organizations in Jacksonville whose mission is to carry out interfaith work. I feel it is important and imperative that free-thought organizations around the state get involved in interfaith dialogue. We have to find a way to live together, people of all world views.

This month's guest was invited to speak as a result of a culmination of events. It started of course with our January meeting, where I engaged in a dialogue with Harry Parrott, a retired Baptist minister. My vision for this campaign was to invite people from many different world views to the Building Bridges meetings to participate in dialogues focused on building respect and unity among people of differing world views.

The dialogue in January with retired Baptist minister Harry Parrott couldn't have gone any better. I felt as if our consciousnesses had merged. We were focusing on mutual respect and building a unity between two people of very radically differing world views. Harry believes in a god. I don't have that belief,

yet we were contemplating the universe together, laughing together, and having what for me was a very meaningful conversation.

The recent resurgence of hate and discontent aimed at Islam in many regions of the country compelled me to seek out a member of the Muslim community to participate in a Building Bridges dialogue.



Carl Paladino pontificating against an Islamic community center being built near ground zero in New York.

The planned Islamic community center and mosque project in New York City a few blocks from ground zero, the location of the World Trade Center attacks, has been in the news, with 50% of New York citizens against it. New York City's mayor, Michael Bloomberg, has gone on record supporting the project. Carl Paladino, candidate for Governor of New York, has publicly stated that if he wins, he will use eminent domain to stop

the project from breaking ground.

Florida is not immune to the hate and discontent.

We have a church in Gainesville, Florida intent on burning Korans, the Islamic holy book. This can't possibly be a way of honoring the victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York City, given the fact that those victims were from 80 different nationalities and a half a dozen different world views, including Islam. I am not sure at this writing whether or not the church went through with their intent to burn Korans.

In Jacksonville, Florida a few members of the Jacksonville City Council brought up the religious beliefs of Dr. Parvez Ahmed, a Muslim, as a concern during his confirmation hearings for a position on the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission, even though, according to the U.S. Constitution, there is no religious test for a public office.

We are fortunate to have as a guest this month Dr. Parvez Ahmed, UNF Professor and recent appointee to the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission. Dr. Ahmed has agreed to participate in a dialogue on interfaith relationships. I want to encourage you to attend this meeting. It has the potential to be great dialogue.



How to Handle the Home Invasion of the Bible Thumper

Curtis Wolf

Imagine that you are sitting down to eat dinner and suddenly there is a knock at the door. You open the door and there is a smiling face with the word of God on his lips. Look out, you have just been home invaded by a Bible Thumper looking to turn you away from your heathen ways.

So how do you respond? a) You could berate the Bible Thumper on how rude it is to disturb you at dinner time and slam the door in his face. b) Before the Bible Thumper says a word, you could declare, "You have convinced me! I want to commit my life to Jesus!" When the astonished Bible Thumper says, "Really!" You respond with, "Psych!" and laugh hysterically as you close the door. c) You could do your best possessed Linda Blair from the Exorcist voice and spew out fake green vomit while your friend creates the illusion of levitation by hoisting you up in the air with a rope attached to a harness hidden under your clothes. OK, that would require a lot of preparation, but it would be worth it to see the Bible Thumper drop everything and run for his life.

OK, these options could come across as a bit anti-social. So let's consider another possibility. If you are up for a little conversation, you could invite the Bible

Thumper in and have a little fun with him. With the right strategy, the Bible Thumper could come away with some food for thought that he never heard before in his church.

The first thing that you need to realize is that every Bible Thumper worth his salt has a script to follow the second that you open the door. The Bible Thumper is a salesman who is no different from some kid trying to sell you a magazine subscription so that his Little League baseball team can go to regionals in the summer. You have all heard this script. You can sing along with me as I repeat it.

"...[D]on't groan when a Bible Thumper shows up at your doorstep! This could be a great opportunity to introduce him to the verses of the Bible that the preachers rarely discuss."

We are all sinners who have fallen away from God. The punishment for my sins is death. God sent Jesus to die in my place so that I can be forgiven for my sins. I must accept Jesus into my heart to receive this forgiveness and become a new person. Everyone who does this lives happily ever after with God and Jesus and let's not forget the Holy Ghost.

If you allow the Bible Thumper to stick to this script, you have just wasted your valuable

time listening to a silly fable and you will kick yourself for not trying options A, B or C as noted above. So how do you get him off his script?

Tell him that you could not possibly become a fellow Bible Thumper unless he can answer the following questions to your satisfaction. The beauty of this approach is that it is based on the Bible, and most Christians have only a vague idea of what it says, beyond what the preachers tell them it says.



So let's start the questions off with a bang. Here is a problem in the gospels that I could not get around when I was a Christian a long, long time ago. If you want to know how the stories of Jesus went from non-miraculous sto-

ries about an ordinary man to stories about miracles performed by the incarnation of God in human form, this is a good glimpse into how it happened, as the author of the gospel of Matthew took an ambiguous story and transformed it into an unambiguous miraculous tale of God's power. (Remember that the gospel of Mark came before the gospel of Matthew.)

In Mark 11:12-26, Jesus cursed a fig tree for not bearing

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fruit. Then on the next day, the disciples discovered that the plant withered away at its roots. OK, it had the potential for being a miracle, but maybe the disciples made a mistake and pointed out the wrong fig tree, in this case a fig tree that did not get enough Miracle Gro when it needed it!

Contrast that with Matthew 21:18-22. We read the same story, but with a major difference. The fig tree withered immediately! Not overnight as in Mark's version of the story, but immediately. So look the Bible Thumper in his eyes and ask him how he would reconcile this discrepancy.

So once he is reeling from that question, move on to the next question. In Galatians 2:11-14, Paul had a public dispute with Peter over the observation of Jewish food regulations. Peter stuck to Jewish law on this question, while Paul stuck to his law-free gospel. The problem is that Jesus would have agreed with Paul at least as far as Mark 7:17-23 tells us. In this passage, Jesus argued that it did not matter what you put in your mouth, since the food did not defile you. In Mark 7:19, the author pointed to the clear implications of this statement – all foods are clean which contradicts Jewish law that prohibits the eating of certain foods. So the question is why were Paul and Peter even having this dispute if Jesus had already settled

the matter in Paul's favor when Jesus was alive?

Let's switch to the Old Testament. In 2 Kings 2:23-24, the prophet Elisha was mocked by children because of his bald head. He cursed the kids in the name of the Lord. Forty-two of them were immediately killed by bears. Ask the Bible Thumper why God would do something so morally depraved as this.



After the Israelite conquerors of Canaan miraculously brought down the walls of Jericho with nothing more than a loud shout and several hikes around the city, they committed an act of cruelty that would have subjected an army today to charges of genocide. As Joshua 6:21 describes the aftermath of the Israelites' unique siege strategy, "And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword." So Bible Thumper, what kind of God would kill so many innocent people?

Now we end with the coup de grace as you send him on his

way with a homework assignment. In the four gospels, there are four very different versions of the arrest, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. They disagree in so many details that it is impossible to reconcile them into one historical account of Jesus' last hours on the earth. So your Bible Thumper's task will be to merge all of these accounts into one sequence of events that

reconciles all of the contradictions found in these accounts. Add to that an extra credit assignment of reconciling the tales in the gospels of Matthew and Luke concerning Jesus' birth—another irreconcilable mess of contradictions. Most likely, you will never hear from the Bible Thumper again as the reconciling of the contradictions of the Bible has been an ongoing dispute between proponents and critics of Christianity for centuries and will likely never be resolved to either side's satisfaction.

So don't groan when a Bible Thumper shows up at your doorstep! This could be a great opportunity to introduce him to the verses of the Bible that the preachers rarely discuss. It was studying the Bible that led me to abandon Christianity. So hopefully, educating the Bible Thumper about the difficult and sometimes morally repulsive verses of the Bible will lead to a new perspective on the Bible that the Bible Thumper never expected when he knocked on your door.



Remembering Johnny Cole

Fred W. Hill

Johnny Cole, a member of the First Coast Freethought Society since 2008, was found dead in his home in the Spring Park neighborhood of Jacksonville on the evening of August 1, 2010. A news release by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office states that his death is being investigated as a murder but currently no other information is available.

Although I cannot say I knew Johnny very well, we were good acquaintances, often meeting and conversing as regulars at the Olive Garden socials, the Secular Sunday Morning at Losco Park gatherings, as well as the regular FCFS meetings. As typical for a member of our group, Johnny had strong opinions on a variety of topics, but he was also very pleasant and enjoyable to talk with. He was also generous in

supporting causes he believed in, including the First Coast Freethought Society as well as the Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG).



Johnny Cole

Further, from the glowing tributes to him by his friends at his memorial service, it became clear that Johnny was a very kind and loyal person who willingly went out of his way to help friends in need.

As with so much else, we may never know the details as to how

Johnny died.

However, through the tributes it was evident that Johnny lived his life as he saw fit, breaking away from the deeply religious, small southern farming community where he was born and raised to obtain a college degree, and embark on a professional career—and to think for himself rather than adhere to any beliefs based on nothing more than fabulous stories that could not be substantiated by any evidence. In brief, he

was a freethinker.

Following you will find a brief description of Johnny's memorial service and a tribute submitted by Jeff Jones, an FCFS member and close friend of Johnny's.



Memorial Service for Johnny Lester Cole 1943 - 2010

Johnny Cole was born and raised in Nicholls, Georgia. He graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in Chemical Engineering. Johnny served on the board of PFLAG and was active in many organizations through the years. Johnny also served in the U. S.

Army and retired from the State of Florida. Johnny is survived by his brother Royce, sisters-in-law Tony and Nina, nephews Gregory, Jonathan, and Jamey, nieces Amy and Tammy; his aunt Georgia Jordan, and many loving and caring friends.

A totally nonreligious and very beautiful memorial service was held at the Unitarian Church of Jacksonville, in Arlington, on Sunday, August 8, 2010.. The church was totally full. Attendees were invited to stand and share their memories

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of Johnny. A lovely “musical remembrance” was played by Michael Murphy on piano, of music that Johnny loved and had requested to be played at his passing. At the close of the

service, the lay leader observed that the world needs more folks like Johnny and suggested that each of us go forth and do kind and good things for other people, thus keeping Johnny’s spirit of kindness alive. The service was very moving.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations in Johnny’s memory to the PFLAG Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 2971 Jacksonville, FL 32203.. Website: <http://www.pflagjax.org/>

E-mail: pflagjax@aol.com



Tribute to Johnny Cole

Jeffrey K. Jones

My friend Johnny L. Cole, 67, passed from existence on Sunday, August 1, 2010. I introduced Johnny to FCFS in 2008 and he became an active member and financial supporter of the society as well as a friend to many of its members.

Johnny was born on a farm in rural Georgia. His family was very poor but self-sufficient and never went hungry. Education was Johnny’s route out of poverty. He graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in chemical engineering and worked for Monsanto Chemical before moving to Jacksonville circa 1977. The remainder of his professional career was spent as an air pollution engineer for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, from which he retired in the late 1990s. But what we do to earn a living does not define who we are. So, as I knew

him, here’s Johnny!

Johnny hated movies. Movies require at least some suspension of belief, and even realistic films are often excessively violent or romantic. A true phlegmatic and pragmatist, Johnny had no desire to waste his time and money to indulge some director’s slant on reality.

On the other hand, Johnny loved data. A news junkie, he gleaned bits of information from MSNBC, CNN, C-SPAN, ABC, CBS and Headline News—pretty much every network but Fox News. Yet Johnny didn’t read books. He had no interest in fiction—even less in “literature,” and he regarded information books as too weighted with the authors’ own opinions. However, he pored through magazines, trade journals and the internet, in addition to his desultory cable TV habit. Johnny’s eclectic intellect was well-suited to this Age of Information.

Johnny was not a man of contrasts. He lived in strict obedience to several, mostly utilitarian, core beliefs:



I. Love Your Mother. Planet Earth, that is. Johnny’s home ran on solar power and had solar water heaters. Johnny was also a strong advocate of birth control: “Do we really need another point-source of CO₂ emissions wandering around this planet?” And for more than two decades he sent semi-annual letters or emails to Ford, General Motors and Chrysler encouraging them to develop an electric hybrid car. His quixotic quest has finally come of age.

II. Live within Your Means. Johnny never forgot his impoverished childhood in

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rural Georgia. He never bought on credit beyond his capacity to promptly repay. In 1992, he resisted the allure of the housing bubble. After being approved for credit on an expensive new home in an upscale subdivision, he decided to remain in his relatively modest house, which he eventually paid off.

III. Be Self-Responsible.

Johnny did not smoke, drink alcohol, or use illicit drugs, but he defended any person's right to kill themselves accordingly.

IV. Stand By Your Brand. Johnny believed in voting with his spending dollars and regularly supported his favorite local restaurants as well as Ace Hardware stores. He also purchased

every manner of peanut (and peanut butter and pine straw to support his home state industries.

V. Society Needs a Living Wage. Johnny lamented the plight of the inner-city youth trying to break the grip of poverty without resorting to

crime. He calculated that a minimum wage of no less than \$15.00 per hour in this market would be necessary for single persons to support themselves. So that was the minimum he paid for work

was one of the few foods he always stocked in his fridge.

VII. Seek the Engineering Solution. Johnny believed in gadgets and was willing to try new products advertized on TV. He bought and gave

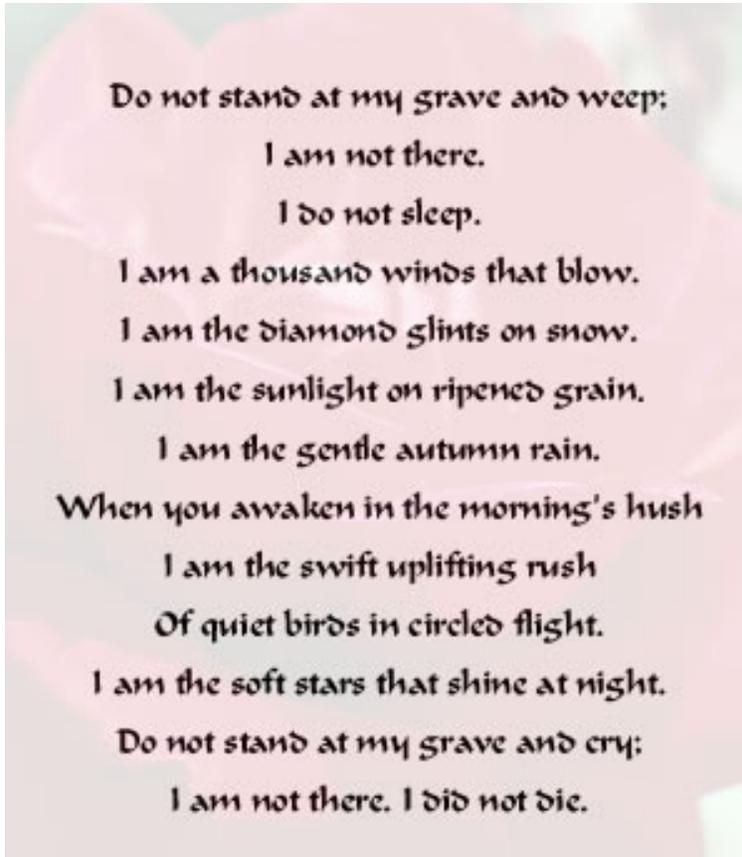
away many exercise machines and vacuum cleaners before finding models that he liked. Johnny even cut his own hair with that mother of TV inventions, The Flo-Bee®!

VIII. The Death Penalty Is Not the Answer. In recent years, in light of efforts by such groups as The Innocence Project which has helped to exonerate many wrongfully convicted death row inmates through DNA testing,

Johnny reversed his lifelong support of the death penalty — regardless of the

crime.

In conclusion, Johnny was a socially conscientious, eco-friendly, self-responsible realist who loved cabbage. And I shall certainly miss him.



“Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep,” a favorite poem of Johnny’s, by Mary Elizabeth Frye, 1932, read at his memorial service.

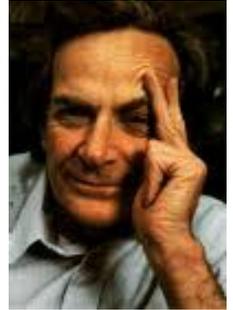
around his house. Johnny was also a very generous tipper wherever he went.

VI. Cabbage Is Good. Johnny took pride that his family name (derived from “Kohl”) meant “cabbage.” Cole slaw was his favorite side dish with any meal, and

Freethought Quote & Humor

Richard Feynman: “I can live with doubt and uncertainty and not knowing. I think it’s much more interesting to live not knowing than to have answers which might be wrong. I have approximate answers and possible beliefs and different degrees of certainty about different things, but I’m not absolutely sure of anything and there are many things I don’t know anything about, such as whether it means anything to ask why we’re here....

“I don’t have to know the answer. I don’t feel frightened by not knowing things, by being lost in a mysterious universe without any purpose, which is the way it really is as far as I can tell. It doesn’t frighten me.”



(interview with Christopher Sykes, in “The Pleasure of Finding Things Out,” BBC-TV, 1981, recorded in the book, [Genius, the life and science of Richard Feynman](#))



During these serious and trying times, people of all faiths, and no faith, should remember these four great religious truths:

1. Muslims do not recognize Jews as God’s chosen people.
2. Jews do not recognize Christ as the Messiah.
3. Protestants do not recognize the Pope as the leader of the Christian world.
4. Baptists do not recognize each other at Hooters or the liquor store.



Ongoing FCFS Activities

Dinners for Doubters

Sign up to attend or to host a dinner yourself. If a dinner is scheduled, sign-up sheets will be found at the back table at the monthly meetings. For details on how this works, **see page 7 of the July 2008 *FreeThinker***, available on the 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 or two**. Note, if it’s too hot under the pavilion, we take our chairs to some trees with a nice breeze. Mark your calendar. We hope to see you there!

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.

First Coast Freethought Society, Inc.
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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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September Social

Where: OLIVE GARDEN on Philips Highway, near the Avenues Mall.
When: Tuesday September 28, 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!

First Coast Freethought Society, Inc.

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

2010 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
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All inquiries are held in the strictest confidence.

2010 Freethought Events of Interest on the First Coast

Monday	Sept. 13	JAM Meetup at European St. Café, Jacksonville - 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	Sept. 14	ACFH Social at Gypsy Cab Co., St. Augustine Beach - 7:00 p.m.
Monday	Sept. 20	FCFS Monthly Meeting - Parvez Ahmed, Ph.D. - 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	Sept. 25	FCFS Deadline to submit articles for August 2010 <i>FreeThinker</i>
Sunday	Sept. 26	FCFS Secular Sunday in the Park, Jacksonville - 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday	Sept. 28	FCFS Monthly Social at Olive Garden, Jacksonville - 6:00 p.m.
Sunday	Oct. 3	FCFS Humanist Book Discussion Group, Jacksonville - 2:00 p.m.
Saturday	Oct. 9	Clay County AU hosts Dr. P. Ahmed, Fleming Island - 10:00 a.m.
Monday	Oct. 18	FCFS Monthly Meeting - 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 Humanists of Florida Association
and the Northeast Florida Coalition of Reason**

Meet Our September Guest, Dr. Parvez Ahmed

Carrie Renwick

Our September guest, Dr. Parvez Ahmed, is Associate Professor of Finance at the Coggin College of Business, University of North Florida. He is also a Fulbright Scholar. His research work has appeared in several major finance journals. He recently co-authored a book titled, *Mutual Funds—Fifty Years of Research Findings*.

After some controversy, Dr. Ahmed was recently appointed to the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission. He is a board member of OneJax and has served as an at-large board member for the ACLU of Florida.

In addition, Dr. Ahmed writes articles about Islam and the American Muslim experience. He has written articles concerning the mosque controversy in New York City. To read his articles, visit his blog: <http://drparvezahmed.blogspot.com/>

We are honored to have him with us! Earl and Parvez will be discussing the Muslim and atheist world views, in “Building Bridges Beyond Belief: Dialogue with a Muslim.”

