

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

FreeThinker



Newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society

May 2012

Volume 11, Issue 5

Inside this issue: **President's Message - May 2012**

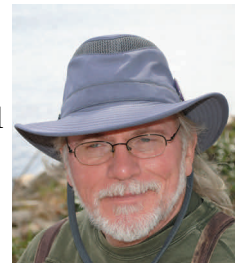
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Earl Coggins

I think a lot. That is what freethinkers are supposed to do, yes? I'm thinking that leaders in the freethought movement need this attribute in considerable abundance. Having said that, my thoughts frequently take the form of questions. Currently, my thoughts have been: What is religion-bashing? Is it a form of

bigotry? Is it rational? What benefit other than personal does it serve? Does it contribute to the growth and respectability of the freethought movement? What do freethinkers want, exactly? If the wants and needs of the nominal

would be the fundamental desire of a free-thinker? What is the fundamental desire of the freethought movement?



"The entire nation got a big glimpse of the ... freethought movement thanks to the Reason Rally. That glimpse included the behavior of the participants ... which lead to subsequent conclusions and assessments of the freethought movement..."

The Reason Rally held in Washington D.C. the weekend of March 24, 2012 was billed as the largest secular gathering—ever. It made the national news.

"The best way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason."
—Benjamin Franklin

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May 2012 Meeting

"The Truth About Crime: It's Not What You Think!"

David R. Simon, Ph.D., Research Fellow (Ret.),
Institute of Public and International Policy, UNF

Monday, May 21, 2012, 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: Books-A-Million, 9400 Atlantic Boulevard, Jacksonville, FL 32225

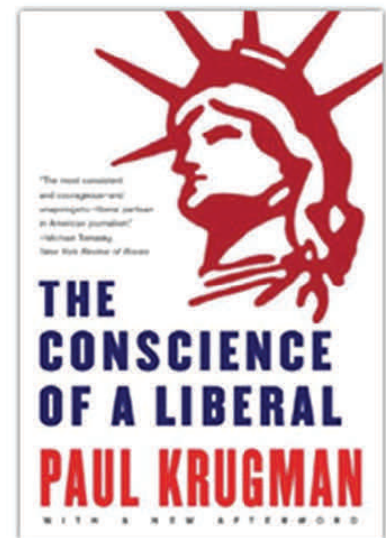
What: Books planned for discussion:

- June 3, 2012 - *The Conscience of a Liberal*, by Paul Krugman
- July 1, 2012 - *Billions & Billions*, by Carl Sagan

Books may be found in the library, 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://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org> and then click the link to Amazon.com for your purchase.

May's book is *The Conscience of a Liberal*. In this "clear, provocative" (*Boston Globe*) *New York Times* bestseller, Paul Krugman, today's most widely read economist, examines the past eighty years of American history, from the reforms that tamed the harsh inequality of the Gilded Age and the 1920s to the unraveling of that achievement and the reemergence of immense economic and political inequality since the 1970s. Seeking to understand both what happened to middle-class America and what it will take to achieve a "new New Deal," Krugman has created his finest book to date, a "stimulating manifesto" that offers "a compelling historical defense of liberalism and a clarion call for Americans to retake control of their economic destiny" (*Publishers Weekly*).

For more information, contact Herb Gerson at 904-363-6446, or herbge@bellsouth.net.



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, **see the website**, <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org>, or **ask a greeter** at the back table, at a meeting.

Second Harvest Second Saturday: On the **2nd Saturday of every month**, 10:00 a.m. to noon, join FCFS members and JAM (Jacksonville Atheist Meetup) group members, to volunteer at the Second Harvest North Florida food bank warehouse, 1502 Jessie Street, to help distribute food to the less fortunate in North Florida. See <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org> for details.

Secular Sunday Morning in the Park: Freethinkers, let's get acquainted and enjoy intelligent conversation the **4th Sunday of every month** (unless inclement weather prevails) at 10 a.m. until ? under the pavilion at Losco Park, 10851 Hood Rd., S., Jacksonville 32257, between Shad and Losco Roads. For directions? Call Beth Perry at 904-733-5489 or Google the address. 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, flowers, or a sympathy card to a member is in order, please contact **Judy Hankins** at 904-724-8188, or e-mail her at info@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org.

(President's Message, continued from page 1)

It's all over YouTube. It was a big topic of interest on many TV and radio stations, both nationally and on local stations around the country. I received two calls regarding the event—one from WJCT 89.9 radio and the other from First Coast News Television. I was interviewed regardless of the fact that I did not attend the rally. That's how powerful the demand was to interview someone about the rally.

The entire nation got a big glimpse of the secular and freethought movement thanks to the Reason Rally. That glimpse included the behavior of the participants of the Reason Rally, which leads to subsequent conclusions and assessments of the freethought movement—both the attitude and agenda of the movement.

The rally has been declared by many as a huge success, and most if not all of those making such a declaration are basing it on the number of attendees. Somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000 people attended. Interesting to think about is the fact that the attendee statistics are being emphasized, not the content of the rally.

The Reason Rally website has the usual suspects on its homepage—goals, mission statement, etc. Of special interest was the disclaimer “Are we just going to use this opportunity to trash religion? No.”

I was thinking about that statement while watching Tim Minchin in a YouTube Reason

Rally video titled *Storm*. After watching that video, I couldn't help thinking that it took the Reason Rally staff a year to put together the event, all in the name of promoting secularism as an intellectually viable alternative to theism. It took Tim Minchin a mere 10 minutes to negate all the hard work with his vitriolic rant that can only be described as a bashing of anyone promoting a nonscientific, non-secular worldview. Albert Einstein didn't refute Isaac Newton and his equations associated with gravitational theory by sim-



Tim Minchin plays piano and rants at the Reason Rally

ply resorting to an ad hominem attack. Einstein backed up his refutation with reason, rationality, and logic in the form of the theory of relativity.

The entire Reason Rally website statement reads as follows:

Are we just going to use this opportunity to trash religion? No. This will be a positive experience, focusing on all that non-theists have achieved in the past several years (and beyond) and motivating those in

attendance to become more active. While speakers have the right to say what they wish, the event is indeed a celebration of secular values.

Any event similar to the Reason Rally is likely to encounter pitfalls and experience setbacks. Many organizers put in place counter measures in order to prevent as much chaos as possible. A logical counter measure for this rally would have been a contingency that all performers agree, in advance, to adhere to the rally goals and mission statement.

Now back to the question I posed at the beginning of this diatribe. What do freethinkers want? I think I know the answer. You know it too. We're not asking for the separation of religion from humanity. We are merely asking for the same thing the framers of the Constitution wanted: We want the separation of religion from government.

Last month I outlined a hypothesis for the stages of development

that occur when people let go of, or lose, their theism. I think about this a lot. Another thought occurred to me: What about the theistic community? Could we substitute the entire theistic community, as a theistic organism, into the hypothesis?

Humor me. If we suppose that one day humans will no longer be theistic, and if we treat the theistic community as an organism, then we can apply the

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Observations on the Reason Rally

Fred W. Hill

Shane Christian and I lit out on the freethought event trail again this spring, attending the Reason Rally held on March 24, 2012, at the National Mall between the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument. There was much to take in that day, too much to recount it all in a relatively brief newsletter article, but here are a few highlights and observations.

The rally commenced with opening remarks by emcee Paul Provenza shortly after 10 a.m., followed by a color guard ceremony by members of the Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers, all in civilian dress, and a reverent rendition of the National Anthem sung by Gregory W. Graffin, Ph.D., who has taught many science courses at Cornell University and UCLA. About seven hours later, Dr. Graffin took the stage again, this time with the hardcore punk band he co-founded in 1979, Bad Religion. Between those performances, a heady mix of genteel and profane speakers, comedians, singers, rappers, and poets rallied an audience of an estimated 20,000 non-theists who persevered in support of secular reason over religious supernaturalism and bigotry, even as heavy rain and chill winds swept through the mall during most of the day.

Introduced by Provenza as “the Joan of Arc of secularism,” 16-year-old Jessica Ahlquist was

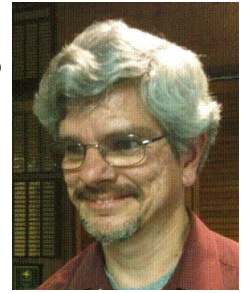
the youngest speaker but already an eloquent and experienced champion of reason. She described herself as, “an evil little thing,” a label bestowed on her by state representative Peter Palumbo (D-RI) for daring to stand up for her constitutional rights by protesting and filing a lawsuit against her public school in Cranston, Rhode Island, for a prayer banner prominently displayed in the auditorium since 1963 in response to the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) that barred government-

“We rallied not out of fear of any god but in the hope and trust that human reason will ultimately prevail over superstitious flim flam.”

initiated prayers in public schools due to their violation of the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Self-described crusaders continue to issue threats against Ahlquist, and she has received police escorts to protect her from Christians who would rather force their prayers on everyone than pray in private as their beloved Jesus advocated in their bible. Supporters of Ahlquist raised \$62,618 towards her college tuition, presented in a check from the American Humanist Association by Hement Mehta, of the Friendly Atheist blog.

Mehta was among several speakers who urged freethinkers to get more involved in their communities, be open about being non-believers, and run for public

office, all to help bring about greater public acceptance of atheists. As David Silverman, President of American Atheists, advised, “make sure nobody who knows you thinks they don’t know any atheists.” Noting his notoriety as “...the highest ranking politician in the country who does not believe in a supreme being,” U.S. Representative, Pete Stark (D-CA), speaking via video,



observed, “When I made this fact known ... people said it would be political suicide. Hardly. I received over 5,000 e-mails and contacts from around

the world, almost all of them were supportive and said it was a courageous act. It wasn’t courageous; I just said what I believe. About 500 of them didn’t agree with me. They felt I needed religion in my life and they offered to pray for me. Never have I been criticized so nicely in my political life.” Herb Silverman, President of the Secular Coalition for America, briefly discussed his failed quixotic run for governor of South Carolina and his subsequent successful challenge to the Palmetto State’s law barring atheists from holding any public office. He called for secularists to learn from and follow the successful tactics of the Christian Coalition of putting aside minor differences, and “work together on im-

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portant political issues and grab media attention.”

Taslima Nasrin risked her very life when she came out as an atheist in her homeland, Bangladesh. She described how she was forced into exile not only from Bangladesh, from where she fled for her life in 1994, but even from its reputedly more tolerant neighbor, India, where she initially took refuge. A doctor in her native country, Nasrin was compelled to speak out after treating many women who had been raped but had no recourse to justice under local Islamic-based laws and were far more likely to be punished than were their assailants. She published poems, prose and non-fiction decrying the maltreatment of women, often justified in the name of religious tradition. Raised a Muslim, she became an outspoken atheist and called for changes to state-enforced religious laws. Rewards for her execution were subsequently offered in both Bangladesh and India. She was attacked by mobs in both nations, including one led by Muslim legislators in Hyderabad, India, in 2007. After spending several months under house arrest in New Delhi, she was banished from India in 2008 and has since lived in Sweden and the U.S.

Nate Phelps delivered one of the most moving speeches at the rally. Members of his family were nearby—part of the Westboro Baptist Church, founded by his father, Fred Phelps, notorious for protesting and issuing hateful

diatribes against nearly everyone who doesn't adhere to their peculiar brand of Calvinism and Primitive Baptist beliefs. Nate split from that poisonous clan over 30 years ago and has worked to counter the damage done by his father. “Seeing my family out there protesting,” he spoke, “standing behind barriers with their garish signs, espousing the ideal of their god, the prevailing emotion for me is sadness. I see the results of a lifetime of controlled indoctrination. I see a sys-

tem and blogger Greta Christina noted that not all atheists are really angry, but many have good reason to be. Her reasons included polls indicating that at least 55 percent of Americans would not vote for an atheist for President; atheists are often denied custody of their children solely due to their atheism; atheist bloggers in Iran must remain anonymous lest they be executed; preachers encourage battered women to submit to abusive husbands; many public school science teachers don't teach evolution out of fear of protests from fundamentalist parents; and people in Africa and South America are dying of AIDS because preachers convince them that “using condoms makes baby Jesus cry.”

Musical comedian Tim Minchin exemplified the “anything” goes punk aesthetic with his Pope Song, loaded with dozens of F-bombs and anger at Pope Benedict XVI for shielding child-molesting priests

from prosecution by secular authorities, and amusement at people who are more upset about the obscenity of his lyrics than about the greater obscenity of the behavior the lyrics describe. Naturally, Minchin's performance aroused controversy (as attested by this month's President's Message), among both theists and atheists who dread it will bolster the stereotype of the irreligious as foul-mouthed religion-bashers, especially given that the song was performed in a huge public



The Friendly Atheist, Hement Mehta (right) presents a big check to Jessica Ahlquist at the Reason Rally

tem [that] vilifies new ideas, shuns new discoveries—clinging rather to ancient notions about the nature of our world. A system deprived of new ideological genes leading to a form of intellectual inbreeding that begets distorted, ill-formed beliefs. I see what happens when individual choices are restricted by false consequences. I think of the young people who paid the price for leaving that place, cut off completely and permanently from all they've known and loved.”

Taking on the topic of “why are atheists so angry,” author

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setting, heard throughout the mall and in the surrounding museums and other attractions by tourists, many with young children. Then again, the whole point of the song was to call attention to the hypocrisy of a papacy that professes a keenness to protect children but puts more effort into protecting pedophile priests. I've heard from freethinkers who were elated and others who were appalled by Minchin's performance. Whether it truly proves a bane to the freethought movement's quest for greater public acceptance remains to be seen.

During the rally, Provenza announced that a Fox News commentator had derided it as "The Rally for Nothing in Particular," apparently under the common theistic delusion that people who don't believe in their god must not believe in anything. Adam Savage, co-host of the Discovery Channel's *Mythbusters* program, countered with an impassioned speech on what he does believe, all based on "reason, the human capacity

to make sense of the world." Taking a positive but nuanced view, he asserted, "I believe that if you tell people the truth and let them make decisions based on that, much of the time they'll make pretty good decisions, but not always. I believe that which is detestable to you, you should not do to another. I believe that while not all people are essentially



Richard Dawkins speaks during the Reason Rally
(Photo by Shane Christian in the midst of thousands, some distance from the stage.)

good, most are trying. I believe that rules do not make us moral, loving each other makes us moral."

Richard Dawkins, perhaps the most famous (or infamous) speaker at the rally, expressed dismay that it remains "necessary to have a rally for rea-

son" and hoped that the rally would prove a tipping point to secularists realizing that there are more of them than they previously realized and result in ever greater of them coming out, so that within a hundred years' time, "we'll have become so civilized that we no longer need [a rally for reason]."

The Amazing James Randi observed that although "a gentleman named Rick Perry" prayed for rain to stop a drought, he didn't get any—but we got a lot without any prayers! It was indeed a wet, cold and windy day. As Provenza reminded the rally's theistic protestors, however, that was no more evidence of a displeased deity than the storms and floods that have wiped out churches so often in the past. We rallied not out of fear

of any god but in the hope and trust that human reason will ultimately prevail over superstitious flim-flam. The full speeches and performances mentioned and many others, as well as other photographs of the rally can be found on many websites.



Monthly Social

Where: OLIVE GARDEN on Philips Highway, near the Avenues Mall.
When: Tuesday May 22, 2012 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!

The Florida Legislature and Its Lack of Appreciation for the First Amendment

Curtis Wolf

In the January 2012 *First Coast FreeThinker*, I listed several bills that were introduced in the 2012 Florida legislative session that would be of interest to freethinkers. Most of these bills died where most bills die in the legislative session—in committee. But there were some exceptions; and while most of them are probably inconsequential, one of them could keep the lawyers on both sides of the separation of church and state issue busy for the next couple of years.

HB 413 and HB 171 were approved by the legislature, but they were mainly changes in licensing/regulatory requirements for chiropractors and osteopathic physicians respectively. It is not clear whether the legislations

will have any effect on the pseudo-scientific aspects of either profession.

Two resolutions, SR 1344 and SR 932 commemorating Osteopathic Medicine Day and Catholic Schools Week respectively, were adopted by the Florida Senate with corresponding resolutions adopted by the Florida House. They are symbolic in nature, without any real effect on government policy, but some freethinkers and skeptics may find them to be annoying. Where is our Atheism Day resolution?

The bill that is of most concern to freethinkers is SB 98 which is the Senate companion bill to HB 317 that was mentioned in my January article. It has passed the Florida Legislature and was signed by Governor Rick Scott. The final version seems innocuous enough. It au-

thorizes school boards to adopt policies allowing an inspirational message delivered by a student representative, without any oversight on the content of that message by school district personnel. There is no reference to prayer in the final bill and this might be enough to get it a pass by the courts (see *Adler v. Duval County School Board*).

Even if the law itself is not successfully challenged, it is pretty much guaranteed that some school district, probably a rural Florida county, will be getting itself in trouble with the implementation of this law. This is the Bible Belt, you know!



(President's Message, Continued from page 3)

stages of development from theism to non-theism to the communal theistic organism. Since the theistic community has yet to shed its theism, then it stands to reason the theistic community is currently in one of the stages I mentioned in my previous message, i.e. confusion and denial, guilt, anger, depression, and acceptance.

Which stage of letting go might the theistic community be in at this very moment in time? Confusion and denial? Guilt? Anger? Depression? Acceptance? I don't think the theistic commu-

nity has gotten very far. I am placing my bets on the beginning level, confusion and denial. My confirmation bias wants me to think they're further along, but the data just don't yield such a conclusion. Please don't be confused about the relationship of the stages of letting go of theism with the timeline of theism. The stages I refer to occur after doubt has crept into the mind of the theistic organism. Although doubt has been around since the beginning of recorded history, it has been a minority entity. Theism as a community has always had its doubters, but doubter numbers didn't begin to increase until around the 14th century,

the period known as the Renaissance. This increase in doubters was probably due to the increased emphasis on education.

I'll cut to the chase and get to my point. What would be the earliest stage of development (of the stages of letting go of theism) most conducive to religion-bashing? Probably not the very first stage—confusion and denial—which I think we are currently witnessing. This begs the question: Why would anyone interested in furthering the freethought movement engage in public religion-bashing?



The Individual Health Insurance Mandate

Joque H. Soskis

There has been released, up to this point, a great deal of heat but virtually no light on the issue of the individual insurance mandate. No surprise there, this being a presidential election year, but perhaps it is time for a bit more analytical assessment.

1. In spite of what some few extreme ideologues might prefer (see e.g. Justice Scalia in oral argument on health care reform at the Supreme Court), we in this country have not yet deteriorated so far morally that we refuse to care for those who come to the emergency room lacking money or insurance. We provide the care required, even though in some cases it may run to several hundreds of thousands of dollars. Hence the dilemma:

A. Hospitals are not allowed to issue currency. To do so would be a federal felony (18 United States Code §471).

B. Hospitals are also not allowed to fail to pay wages (another federal problem: [29 United States Code §201](#)).

C. If a hospital fails to pay its suppliers, it will soon not have any supplies (electricity, for example).

2. Therefore, the hospital being required to achieve a balanced budget, several things happen in response to its caring for those who have neither

money nor insurance:

A. The hospital raises right out of sight the prices it charges everyone who comes in with money or insurance (although the insurance companies negotiate a somewhat reduced rate not available to patients generally). This shifts the financial burden to those who have money or insurance, and who get sick or hurt (but not to anyone else). (Of course, this artificially inflates insurance companies' premiums.)

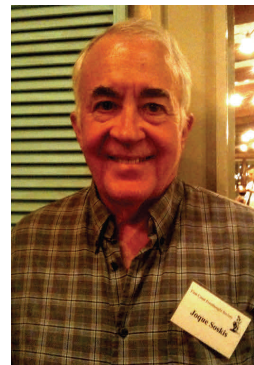
“...[W]e are already paying the entire cost of the care for those without (lots and lots of) money and without insurance, but we are doing so in a totally irrational way that masks most of the impact.”

B. The hospital receives some payment from Medicaid for the care of the truly poor. This shifts the financial burden to everyone who pays federal and state taxes.

C. Municipalities and counties often contribute to these hospitals directly from their budgets, on the grounds that it would not be beneficial to their communities for a hospital to be closed down. This shifts the financial burden to everyone who pays local taxes.

3. The net effect is that virtually everyone in America (including the very poor: they pay local taxes) is paying for the care not only of the very poor,

but also for those who may not be poor at all but who lack insurance. (The average middle class family, even with decent health insurance, can easily be wiped out financially by a major medical misfortune. How many people do you know who could absorb



twenty percent of a few hundred thousand dollars?)

4. Because of the bizarre structure of this system, we don't notice these costs. If the amount involved were totaled and divided by the adult population, and we each received a bill each month for our

share, our awareness would increase dramatically.

5. To summarize: we are already paying the entire cost of the care for those without (lots and lots of) money and without insurance, but we are doing so in a totally irrational way that masks most of the impact.

6. The only sane way to solve this dilemma is to see to it that absolutely everyone is covered by insurance, from birth to death. This would distribute the costs in the same way that other insurance works: everyone pays a modest periodic premium and is protected from catastrophic misfortune.

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7. Probably some (but not all) employers would elect to pay all or part of the premium for their employees (exactly the present situation); some people would need assistance in paying the premium; and for some people the entire premium would have to be paid on their behalf.

8. In practice, though, being certain that everyone is insured would require some form of individual mandate. In the absence

of such a universal requirement, some people who would be able to afford the premium (but unable to afford care for a major illness or injury) will choose to behave irresponsibly, spend the premium money on the good life, and let everyone else step in and foot the bill when the worst happens.

9. Now here's the great irony: There are people in America who are bitterly and implacably opposed to anyone expecting others to shoulder

what should properly be their own responsibilities. There are also those in America who are bitterly and implacably opposed to anyone being forced to buy health care coverage. And THEY ARE THE SAME PEOPLE! They somehow manage to walk around with two totally irreconcilable ideas in their heads at the same time, without causing themselves injury. Surely this is a phenomenon worthy of serious scientific study.



2012 NPR Corporate Sponsorship Fund Drive Is Underway!

Carrie Renwick

The primary message of the 2012 Reason Rally may be summed up as, "We are not religious, we are here among you, we mean you no harm, and we are not going to go away!" One of the most effective ways the First Coast Freethought Society helps spread this message in the northeast Florida region is through our NPR announcements.

Since 2007, the FCFS has been purchasing a very powerful tool to broadcast our freethought message over Florida's First Coast: announcements on NPR (National Public Radio) member station WJCT 89.9 FM, in Jacksonville. Our freethought messages reach 1.5 million people in WJCT's listening area.

In addition to generic messages about the FCFS, in the days preceding our monthly meeting, we have been airing a "special event spot" announcing

the speaker and topic of the meeting that month.

To keep our messages alive, we need your help. Our membership dues fund the first half of the year, but for the second half of the year, we depend on your generosity. For 13 spots a month, at \$52.50 per prime driv-

All it takes is for 100 people to give \$41 each (or 41 people to give \$100)! But of course, any amount helps and is gratefully appreciated.



ing-time slot (mornings during *Morning Edition* and evenings during *All Things Considered*), for six months, the cost is \$4,095.

Our goal for the annual summer fundraising campaign is \$4,095 to renew our contract for July through December, 2012.

Our campaign is underway now, our goal being to raise \$4,095 by June 30, 2012.

To donate via the FCFS website, click [here](#) or visit the website directly and click on "Join, Renew, Donate." You are NOT required to have a PayPal account. Scroll down on the PayPal page, and you will find where you can use any major credit card. If you prefer to send a check, please mail it to the FCFS, Post Office Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591. All donations are TAX DEDUCTIBLE under IRS Code 501(c)(3), and you will receive a letter to that effect for your income tax records. Thank you!



First Coast Freethought Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 550591
Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591
904-419-8826
<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!

FCFS 2012 Board Members

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Treasurer	Stephen Peek	742-5390
At-Large	Fred Hill	358-3610
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At Large	Don DuClose	388-3125

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E-mail Secretary	Carrie Renwick	268-8826

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Fundraising	Carrie Renwick	268-8826
Membership	Judy Hankins	724-8188
Publicity	Carrie Renwick	268-8826
Website	Mark Renwick	616-2896

All FCFS personnel may be reached via e-mail at info@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org

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, 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.

Information for Contributors

We welcome submissions. Articles for consideration should be submitted via e-mail to the e-mail address shown below. Contributors who cannot submit manuscripts electronically may send them to Fred

Hill, 1817 Egner St., Jacksonville, FL 32206. The deadline for time-sensitive submissions is the THIRD SATURDAY of each month for the following month's issue.

We prefer articles no longer than 1,000 words. Longer articles will be evaluated in terms of whether their importance and degree of interest to our readers warrant publication.

All accepted manuscripts are subject to editorial modification. Our style guide is *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Manuscript submissions cannot be returned. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all quotations and for supplying complete references where applicable.

E-mail Address for Submissions
Editor@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org

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

To advertise, contact Fred Hill at 904-3610, or Editor@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org

First Coast Freethought Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591 • (904) 419-8826

2012 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
904-419-8826 • CarrieRen@att.net • <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org>
All inquiries are held in the strictest confidence.

Upcoming Freethought Events of Interest on the First Coast

Monday	May 21	FCFS Monthly Meeting, Jacksonville - 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	May 22	FCFS Monthly Social at Olive Garden, Jacksonville - 6:00 p.m.
Sunday	May 27	FCFS Secular Sunday in the Park, Jacksonville - 10:00 a.m.
Saturday	May 28	FCFS Deadline to submit articles for June 2012 <i>FreeThinker</i>
Sunday	June 3	FCFS Humanist Book Discussion Group, Jacksonville - 2:00 p.m.
Saturday	June 9	JAM/FCFS Volunteer at Second Harvest - 10:00 p.m.
Monday	June 11	JAM Meetup at European Street Café in San Marco - 6:30 p.m.
Monday	June 18	FCFS Monthly Meeting, Jacksonville - 6:30 p.m.

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 May Speaker - David R. Simon, Ph.D.

Our May speaker, Dr. David R. Simon, holds a Ph.D. from Rutgers University in sociology and was a Postdoctoral Fellow in public health at UC Berkeley. He is the author of 9 books, the latest of which is the tenth edition of *Elite Deviance*, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary as the oldest white-collar crime text in the field. Dr. Simon is also the author of some 56 academic articles, review essays, and book reviews. His current research focuses on societal insanity, and is part of tonight's talk.



Dr. Simon has this to say about crime: “An estimated 95% of what the public knows about crime comes from the mass media (TV news, CSI shows, movies, and an occasional book). However, the visual media tend to focus on violent crimes, when, in truth, the types of crime that take the most lives, cost the most money, and traumatize the greatest number of people are rarely given any attention at all. International smuggling is largely blamed on drug cartels, organized criminal syndicates, and terrorists. The truth, however, is that two-thirds of all global trade is completely unregulated, and involves the smuggling of everything from oil, diamonds, and counterfeit pharmaceuticals to knock off designer jeans, Nikes, CDs, DVDs, endangered species, arms, and human beings. Likewise, global money laundering is a \$5.9 trillion dollar a year business, often engaged in by legitimate banks and global corporations able to evade the law.”