

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
Website: <http://FirstCoastFreethoughtSociety.org>

Telephone: 904-419-8826
E-mail: CarrieRen@att.net




Your Support Promotes Freethought on the First Coast.

Dear E-mail *FreeThinker* Recipient:

To provide support on line, click here: <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/cms/support> to go to the FCFS website and use a credit card or PayPal account.

If you prefer to mail a check, print this page and use the “card” (below) to indicate your choices. To print this page, put your cursor anywhere on this page. Click Print. Then select “Current Page” and click the “OK” button.

Mail your check to the FCFS, P.O. Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591. Thank you!

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The First Coast

FreeThinker



Newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society

December 2012

Volume 11, Issue 12

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Earl Coggins

Our speaker for the November 2012 meeting of the First Coast Freethought Society, Civication co-founder and Director Ken Hurley,

brought up an interesting question I have not been able to get out of my head.

Actually, I like his question rolling around inside my head.

He asked: "What should it mean to be an American?"

Hurley's concentration on the "should" part of his question put me on a journey of thought regarding what "should" it mean to be a freethinker.

The First Coast Freethought Society has for

especially one who doubts or denies religious dogma.



"Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom; and no such thing as public liberty, without freedom of speech."

—Cato the Elder (234-149 BCE)

"Voltaire loved to point out that the greatest advancements in knowledge and civilization took place when there was the greatest freedom of thought."

many years defined a freethinker as someone who forms opinions on the basis of reason, independently of authority;

For me, this means at a minimum a freethinker should be willing to consider any idea and/or any possibility. The standard for ascertaining the truth-value of any idea or possibility should not be relegated to dogma or tradition, nor should it be an appeal to authorities—instead, it must be grounded in reason and logic.

(Continued on page 3)



December 2012 Meeting - Party - No Lecture

Ninth Annual Human Light Celebration

Bring a dish to share • Bring a beverage of choice

Monday, December 17, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Meet & Greet at 6:30 p.m. • Dine at 7 p.m. • Ceremonies to follow

Unitarian Universalist Church • 7405 Arlington Expressway • Jacksonville, FL

(Downstairs in the Social Hall - Doors open at 6:00)

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:

- January 6, 2013 - *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, by Doris Kearns Goodwin
- February 3, 2013 - *Whale Falls: An Exploration of Belief and Its Consequences*, by Cecil Bothwell



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.

Aclaimed historian Doris Kearns Goodwin illuminates Lincoln's political genius in this highly original work, as the one-term congressman and prairie lawyer rises from obscurity to prevail over three gifted rivals of national reputation to become president.

On May 18, 1860, William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, Edward Bates, and Abraham Lincoln waited in their hometowns for the results from the Republican National Convention in Chicago. When Lincoln emerged as the victor, his rivals were dismayed and angry.

Throughout the turbulent 1850s, each had energetically sought the presidency as the conflict over slavery was leading inexorably to secession and civil war. That Lincoln succeeded, Goodwin demonstrates, was the result of a character that had been forged by experiences that raised him above his more privileged and accomplished rivals. He won because he possessed an extraordinary ability to put himself in the place of other men, to experience what they were feeling, to understand their motives and desires.

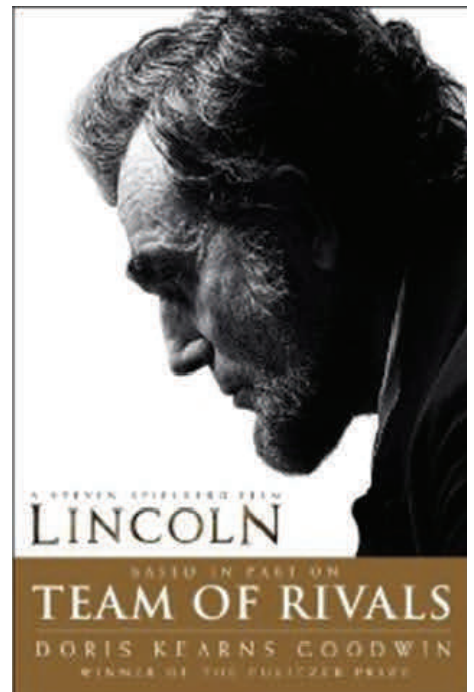
It was this capacity that enabled Lincoln as president to bring his disgruntled opponents together, create the most unusual cabinet in history, and marshal their talents to the task of preserving the Union and winning the war.

We view the long, horrifying struggle from the vantage of the White House as Lincoln copes with incompetent generals, hostile congressmen, and his raucous cabinet. He overcomes these obstacles by winning the respect of his former competitors, and in the case of Seward, finds a loyal and crucial friend to see him through.

This brilliant multiple biography is centered on Lincoln's mastery of men and how it shaped the most significant presidency in the nation's history.

(From the product description, Simon & Schuster, publisher)

For more information, contact Herb Gerson at 904-363-6446, or 12herbert30gerson@bellsouth.net.



(President's Message, cont'd from page 1)

My Hurley-inspired sojourn took me on a quest to find the origin of the term freethinker. But where to start looking?

Thomas Jefferson? Probably not far enough back in time, but what about thinkers who inspired Jefferson? Jefferson considered Francis Bacon, John Locke, and Isaac Newton as "the three greatest men that have ever lived, without any exception."

I headed straight to John Locke, not because Bacon and Newton had no credentials, but because John Locke was steeped in political philosophy and his writings on freedom had an influence on the writing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

Turns out that John Locke had a friend, an esteemed friend by the name of Anthony Collins. Collins lived from 1676 to 1729. It appears he is a great candidate for getting credit as the person most influential in popularizing the term "freethinker" and getting it into the mainstream vernacular. In 1713 he wrote *A Discourse of Freethinking, Occasioned by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Freethinkers*.

In his *Discourse on Freethinking*, he defines the word freethinker as: "the use of the understanding, in endeavoring to find out the meaning of any proposition whatsoever, in considering the nature of the evidence for or against it, and in judging of it according to the seeming force or weakness of the evidence."

Collins was neither an atheist nor agnostic. He was a staunch deist and thoroughly irritated with Christianity. The freethinkers of his time in England were primarily deists. For the most part, the majority of them never could break away from theism and remained deists. Collins was a member of a group calling themselves *The Freethinkers*. This organization published a journal called *The Free-Thinker*.



Francois Marie Arouet, aka Voltaire (1694-1778)

There are a few scholars claiming Collins was an atheist. I find that difficult to believe, given the fact that Collins said, "Ignorance is the foundation for atheism, and freethinking is its cure."

Regardless of Collins' religiosity and the irony of the situation, he used the term freethinker as a way to describe progressively-thinking and evidence-seeking individuals and, of course, to describe anyone opposed to organized religion.

Collins considered being a freethinker a moral obligation for all people.

It would take Francois Marie Arouet to set the freethought movement on a course away from theism. Voltaire not only renounced Christianity, but broke away from organized religion altogether. I have read conflicting accounts about whether or not Voltaire was an atheist.

Voltaire loved to point out that the greatest advancements in knowledge and civilization took place when there was the greatest freedom of thought.

The word freethinker has an interesting history. Volumes have been written about it and I hope our members and readers of this newsletter will crack open a few books and websites in an effort to become more intimately familiar with the evolution of a freethinker and the people responsible for creating and sustaining the movement.

It looks as though the players in this freethought game had one common thread: their aversion to dogma. Dogma is a threat to free inquiry and, as Voltaire said, the greatest advancements in knowledge and civilization took place when there was the greatest freedom of thought.

I am proud to call myself a freethinker and honored that so many people in this city and state, as well as other states around the country, have taken an interest in the First Coast Freethought Society and bestowed upon it their trust and affection.



War on Women's Education in the Swat Valley

Fred W. Hill

Once upon a time, in a beautiful valley far, far away, there lived a young woman who dreamed of becoming a pilot, or maybe a doctor. Perhaps a politician instead, to help make her country a better place. And she thought it would be good if she and every other girl had the same educational opportunities as boys. In fact, she asserted, education is a right that no one should take away. Some men sharply disagreed with the girl. These men claimed to know God's will, and God did not want women to be educated, to learn to think for themselves, or to be independent. This young woman however, insisted on her rights. And so, because they had no rational argument to rebut her claims, they shot her in the head.

The woman, still a girl actually, is Malala Yousafzai, a 15-year-old native of the city of Mingora in Pakistan's Swat Valley. The Movement for Enforcement of Islamic Law, better known as the Taliban, took over the Swat district after a war with the Pakistan army in 2007. The Taliban destroyed hundreds of schools and banned education for women, closing about 400 private schools where 40,000 girls had been enrolled. Women, they hold, should be entirely

submissive to their husbands, fathers or brothers, and religious education is far more important than any potentially dangerous secular form of learning.

Ziauddin Yousafzai, a girl's school principal and Malala's father, defied the Taliban and encouraged his strong-willed daughter, inviting her to speak at a press club in 2008. Only 11 years old at the time, Malala demanded, "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to

"Malala was targeted because she dared to protest against the Taliban's attempt to impose a new dark age of religious dominance on her homeland. For daring to exercise freedom of speech."

education?" At the invitation of the BBC, Malala blogged about life under the Taliban in 2009, taking up the task after other, much older girls declined out of fear of repercussions. That same year, *New York Times* journalist Adam Ellick produced a documentary featuring the Yousafzais and the Taliban's war on female education, "Class Dismissed," which can be viewed at this link:

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/2012/10/09/world/asia/100000001835296/class-dismissed.html#100000001835296>.

After the Second Battle of Swat in 2009, the Pakistan army forced the Taliban to relinquish control of the cities, but they remain prominent in the countryside and continue their campaign of terror. As outspoken critics of the religious extremism of the Taliban, Ziauddin and Malala both became prominent figures in Pakistan and targets of death threats. On October 9, 2012, a Taliban gunman barged into the bus that was taking Malala and other schoolgirls home, demanded to know which of them was Malala, and upon ascertaining her identity, shot her and two classmates.

Malala was targeted because she dared to protest against the Taliban's attempt to impose a new dark age of religious dominance on her homeland. For daring to exercise freedom of speech.

The Taliban justified the attack as in keeping with the teaching of the Koran, "that people propagating against Islam and Islamic forces would be killed," going on to say that "Sharia says that even a child can be killed if he is propagating against Islam," as reported in the October 16, 2012 edition of



The Guardian. Many other Islamic clerics in Pakistan and elsewhere expressed vehement disagreement with the Taliban and condemned the attempted assassination. Yet many Pakistani leaders remain reluctant to criticize the Taliban too harshly – fearful that they may too become targets.

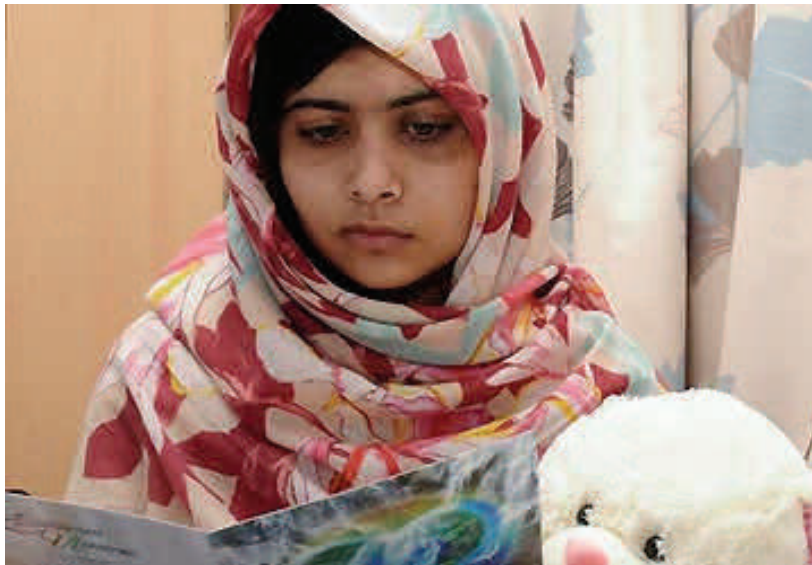
The Taliban are, of course, not the first to impose dogmatic insanity on a mostly unwilling people and, unfortunately, are unlikely to be the last. Advanced nations around the globe have largely, if fitfully, outgrown such theistic mania. Sometimes it's hard to tell in the United States, where fundamentalists routinely try to impose their will on public education and secular law, yet even in the most religiously conservative states, the U.S. Constitution, and not any so-called holy book, remains the law of the land. Fred Phelps, founder and pastor of the Westboro Baptist Church, has the First Amendment right to preach hatred against homosexuals, atheists, feminists, and anyone else he doesn't like, but he has no right to impose his religious beliefs on anyone else nor to order the execution of his estranged son, Nate Phelps, for speaking out against him. A reli-

gious fundamentalist such as Pat Robertson can and has run for President of this nation. On the unlikely chance that Robertson ever won that office, he would still be constitutionally barred from imposing his interpretation of biblical law on the country, or mandating that creationism be taught as fact and evolution as fiction in all schools. Theists' rights are also protected—on the even more unlikely chance that

less belief in God vastly outnumber all stripes of nontheists, the extremists among them who would like to change the federal Constitution to invoke God, require a religious test for public office, and eliminate the First Amendment are relatively few in number.

Still, Malala's story is no fairytale, and her father may have once thought that religious fanatics couldn't possibly take over their city and so drastically change their lives. Currently, Malala is reported to be making a slow but steady recovery at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, England. The Taliban, unsurprisingly, has vowed to finish the job. The Taliban no longer reigns in the Swat Valley, but remains a forceful, fearful presence—among many other atrocities—murdering or throwing acid in the faces of girls

for the “crime” of seeking an education. Religious extremism has made a nightmarish landscape of what was once a beautiful, tranquil valley known to admiring tourists as the “Switzerland of the area.” The region's majestic mountains, however, could not isolate it from the turmoil caused by fanatics who would impose a strict interpretation of their holy book on everyone, certain that God is on their side and smiles as they shoot defenseless girls who dare to disagree with them.



Malala Yousafzai

Sam Harris became President, he couldn't legally order the destruction of every church, mosque, and synagogue in the nation. Of course, if there were some sort of seismic population shift in the U.S. by which religious extremists dominated enough states and were voted into the U.S. House and Senate, we would all be in for some decidedly unpleasant times no matter who held the Presidency. Fortunately that still seems more the province of dystopian fantasies than a cause for genuine concern. While people who pro-



Free Speech, Churches and Tax Exemptions

Susan Ert-Ker

Do you think the benefits and restrictions of a 501(c)(3) organization are beneficial to society?

There are two tax advantages for organizations that agree to meet the criteria for 501(c)(3) organizations:

1. Donations to the organization are tax deductible by the donors as charitable donations.

2. Income (related to their tax exempt status) is not taxable.

In order to get those benefits, certain rules need to be followed. At this IRS link is a summary of the rules:

[http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Exemption-Requirements---Section-501\(c\)\(3\)-Organizations](http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Exemption-Requirements---Section-501(c)(3)-Organizations)

Please note that some non-profits are willingly not compliant with the rules necessary to obtain the benefits mentioned above and therefore do NOT get one or both benefits.

I posit that the restrictions are beneficial to society. The restrictions give us at

“If you want to influence elections, then don’t elect to be a 501(c)(3) organization. It seems an easy option. 501(c)(3) status should be limited to organizations doing charitable work.”

least some confidence that our donations are going for activities for which the organization received its 501(c)(3) status. For example: if the charitable purpose is to feed the poor, the organization will

lose its exempt status if all the money goes to enrich the founder.

Of course, we would have to do our own research to see if we’re happy with the percentage going to overhead vs. to the “good

works.” But at least the rules give us a bit of confidence that our money is going for the “good works” which qualified the organization as a 501(c)(3).

Does the tax deduction encourage people to donate to 501(c)(3) organizations? I posit that it does. Some might argue that issuing tax incentives to encourage good behavior is a misuse of the tax code. I disagree with those people. I

(Continued on page 7)



“Wandering in a vast forest at night, I have only a faint light to guide me. A stranger appears and says to me: ‘My friend, you should blow out your candle in order to find your way more clearly.’ This stranger is a theologian.”

—Denis Diderot, *Addition to Philosophical Thoughts* (c. 1762)



(Continued from page 6)

agree we need to tread carefully when offering tax incentives so that the long-term consequences don't bite us where it hurts.

I know that in these economic hard times, people are screaming "close the loop holes." But if the nonprofits are truly doing good works that benefit our society, then it is a good idea to incentivize people to make donations to help the organization achieve its charitable goal.

In summary, I believe the restrictions and the tax benefits to 501(c)(3) organizations benefit our society. Both (restrictions and benefits) should stay.

The next question is "should organizations that try to influence elections be

granted 501(c)(3) status?" Or stated another way, do we want to incentivize (via tax deductions) people to give to such organizations? I say no. There is already too much money being thrown at elec-

restriction to free speech fair? I say it is. The donations were given preferred tax treatment because of specific charitable goals that qualified the organization.

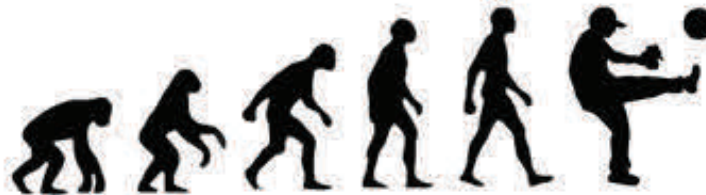
I realize that laws (aimed at trying to prevent elections from being corrupted) create a quandary for free speech. But it doesn't seem to me that the area of the 501(c)(3) is the problem. If you want to influence

elections, then don't elect to be a 501(c)(3) organization. It seems an easy option. 501(c)(3) status should be limited to organizations doing charitable work.

By the way, did you know that the First Coast Freethought Society is a 501(c)(3) organization? Your donations are tax deductible. ☺



The Non-Prophets



tioning. Many people were sick of all the political ads. I don't see any need to incentivize that kind of giving. In my opinion, that would be opening a Pandora's Box.

Then of course, we get to the subject of free speech. 501(c)(3) organizations cannot use donations (that qualified as a tax deduction) to try to get someone elected. Is that

Annual Planning Meeting - Sunday, January 13, 2013

Attention FCFS Members! The Annual Planning Meeting is being held at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 13, at the home of Mark and Carrie Renwick in Mandarin. Here is your chance to give the Board your ideas on monthly meeting programs you'd like, fundraising ideas, and ideas for special projects, and any other thoughts you may have. Please RSVP to Carrie for address and directions at carriren@att.net or call 904-268-8826.



Proof

Joe Varon

It's tricky being an atheist. We're a small (but growing) part of a minority who are usually considered by the large (yet decreasing) majority of entrenched theists as people without a moral compass, without a logical philosophy—as just plain wrong. A lot of non-theists are more comfortable

using softer words such as agnostic, secular humanist, or (simply) unaffiliated. Some of them believe the unambiguous word “atheist” is too specific, too hard to defend—because it clearly means “without god.” We have all heard the old adage that “you can't prove a negative.” Well, in matters of faith, I contend you can't prove a positive either.

Where a theist might argue that the fantastic complexity of life signifies the mark of “intelligent design,” the atheist would counter that contradictions apparent in life speak more strongly to imperfect, ongoing evolution.

Where a theist explains war, greed, and violence as part of god's contrivance of “free will,” the atheist sees

ists believe that science holds the key to learning how to deal with these natural phenomena.

Where the theist believes that earth's humans are God's most magnificent creation, we atheists see God as human's most convenient creation.

Theists will never be able to prove the “positive” of their belief to our satisfaction; and I guess we'll have to live with them

thinking that, since we'll never prove our “negative,” we're probably the spawn of Satan. In my opinion, it's a small price to pay for the freedom of thought and the comfort of logic that atheism offers.



them as human frailties (ironically, sometimes exacerbated by religious divisiveness and intolerance).

Where the theist explains the death and destruction caused by nature's fury as god's mysterious “tests,” athe-



“The problem with the evangelical homeschool movement was not their desire to educate their children at home, or in private religious schools, but the evangelical impulse to “protect” children from ideas that might lead them to “question” and to keep them cloistered in what amounted to a series of one-family gated communities.”

— Frank Schaeffer, Author, film director, public speaker



December Social is on Christmas Day This Year!

Something different this month. The usual day for our social, the fourth Tuesday of the month, falls on December 25 this year, and the Olive Garden will be closed. In light of past years, when many FCFSers have enjoyed freethought fellowship at a totally nonreligious holiday meal, we will gather at the restaurant in the Jacksonville Marriott which is open on Christmas. The Marriott is located at 4670 Salisbury Rd., Jacksonville 32256. We will meet at 2:00 p.m. We will order from the menu as usual.

Please make your reservations SOON, as we don't know how fast the restaurant will fill up. You need to:

- CALL THE MARRIOTT, local number (904) 296-2222, and they will connect you to the restaurant, the Bistro.
- Tell the restaurant you are with the First Coast Freethought Society.
- Make your reservation for 2:00 p.m.

Feel free to bring guests with you, the more the merrier. We hope you can join the festivities!



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 FL. See <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org> or call Fed Hill, 904-358-3610.

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.

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

President	Earl Coggins	521-5039
Vice President	Carrie Renwick	268-8826
Secretary	Don DuClose	388-3125
Treasurer	Stephen Peek	742-5390
At-Large	Fred Hill	358-3610
At-Large	Richard Keene	386-1121
At Large	Vacant	

Other Appointments

Parliamentarian	Mark Renwick	616-2896
E-mail Secretary	Carrie Renwick	268-8826

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Community Outreach	Richard Keene	386-1121
Finance	Stephen Peek	742-5390
Fundraising	Carrie Renwick	268-8826
Membership	Judy Hankins	724-8188
Publicity	Carrie Renwick	268-8826
Website	Mark Renwick	616-2896

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.

Subject matter must tie in with freethought or with the Affirmations of Humanism (found on our website). 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.

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2013 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	December 17	FCFS Monthly Meeting, Jacksonville - 6:30 p.m.
Sunday	December 23	FCFS Secular Sunday in the Park, Jacksonville - 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday	December 25	FCFS Monthly Social - see Special Announcement on page 8
Sunday	January 6	FCFS Humanist Book Discussion Group, Jacksonville - 2:00 p.m.
Saturday	January 12	FCFS/JAM Volunteer at Second Harvest - 10 a.m.
Sunday	January 13	FCFS Annual Planning Meeting - 10:00 a.m., see page 7
Monday	January 14	JAM Meetup at European Street Café in San Marco - 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	January 19	FCFS Deadline to submit articles for Feb. 2013 <i>FreeThinker</i>
Monday	January 21	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.**

Human Light - A Holiday for Humanists

The “Human Light Celebration” was conceived as an alternative seasonal celebration which nonreligious persons could enjoy. It allows humanists and nonreligious persons of all varieties to celebrate this holiday season and express their good wishes to others in a spirit of hope, love, and understanding, unencumbered by religious dogma.

Human Light was created by leaders of the New Jersey Humanist Network in the period of 2000-2001. The first celebration was held in 2001, and word has been spreading around since then. In 2010, there were at least 30 cities in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. where public celebrations were held, but it is likely there were more. In addition, many families and individuals celebrate privately at home. The First Coast Freethought Society has been holding an “Annual Human Light Celebration” since 2003.

Human Light is designed to celebrate and express the positive, secular human values of reason, compassion, humanity, and hope. Human Light illuminates a positive, secular vision of a happy, just, and peaceful future for our world, a future which humanity can build by working together, drawing on the best of our capacities. For more information, see the Human Light website at www.humanlight.org.

