

The First Coast

FreeThinker



Newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society

December 2013

Volume 12, Issue 12

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Fred W. Hill

The FCFS Board is pleased to announce a NEW MEETING LOCATION for our regular monthly meetings! Starting on January 20, 2014, we will be meeting at the Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Church (BBUUC), 8447 Manresa Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32244.

From I-295, go north on Roosevelt Blvd. to the first traffic light at Collins Ave. Turn right onto Collins. Go 400 feet. The churches main entrance is on Collins Road, on the right.

Going south on Roosevelt, look for Atlantic Self-Storage on the left. This is the Collins road intersection. Turn left onto Collins. The church will be 400 feet down Collins on the right.

Please note that Google Maps, as well as other maps, are not consistent with the actual street signs. The street shown as "Baracoa St." on maps actually has street signs call-

ing it Collins Rd.

We have thoroughly enjoyed meeting at the beautiful Unitarian Church of Jacksonville, located in Arlington, for the past 8 years and are grateful for their hospitality and cooperation in addressing our needs. However, in light of the absence of on-site custodial support for the past several years, a New Location Committee was appointed and identified the BBUUC as exceeding our criteria for a meeting location. Here are the criteria:

- Location: Convenient to find.
- Seating capacity: At least 100.
- Parking: Adequate.
- Safety.
- Audiovisual equipment.
- Price range: Up to \$100 per month.

(Continued on page 3)



"It is clear that thought is not free if the profession of certain opinions makes it impossible to earn a living. It is clear also that thought is not free if all the arguments on one side of a controversy are perpetually presented as attractively as possible, while the arguments on the other side can only be discovered by diligent search."

—Bertrand Russell

December 16, 2013 Meeting—Party—No Lecture

Tenth Annual Human Light Celebration

Monday, December 16, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

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

Bella Vita Italian Restaurant

3825 Baymeadows Road • Jacksonville, FL 32217

Please RSVP to carrieren@att.net or call 904-268-8826.



Humanist Book Discussion Group - Jacksonville

When: 2:00 - 3:30 p.m., the first Sunday of each month.

Where: Books-A-Million, 9400 Atlantic Boulevard, Jacksonville, FL 32225

What: Books planned for discussion:

- January 5, 2014 - *The Brothers*, by Stephen Kinzer
- February 2, 2014 - *The Wrecking Crew*, by Thomas Frank



Link to Book Review: <http://www.amazon.com/The-Brothers-Foster-Dulles-Secret/dp/0805094970>

During the 1950s, when the Cold War was at its peak, two immensely powerful brothers led the United States into a series of foreign adventures whose effects are still shaking the world. John Foster Dulles was secretary of state while his brother, Allen Dulles, was director of the Central Intelligence Agency. In this book, Stephen Kinzer places their extraordinary lives against the background of American culture and history. He uses the framework of biography to ask: Why does the United States behave as it does in the world?

The Brothers explores hidden forces that shape the national psyche, from religious piety to Western movies—many of which are about a noble gunman who cleans up a lawless town by killing bad guys. This is how the Dulles brothers saw themselves, and how many Americans still see their country's role in the world. (Excerpt from book description on Amazon.com)

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

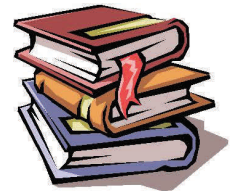
Humanist Book Discussion Group - St. Augustine

When: 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., the second Thursday of each month.

Where: Clubhouse at a private condominium in St. Augustine (Anastasia Island).

What: Book planned for discussion:

- January 9, 2014 — *Moral Minority: Our Skeptical Founding Fathers*, by Brooke Allen
- February 13, 2014 — *God Is Not Great*, by Christopher Hitchens



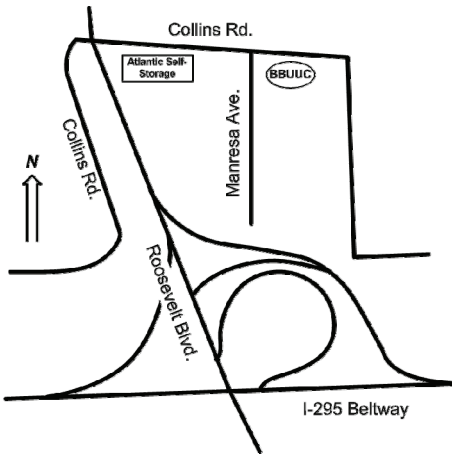
Link to Book Review: <http://www.amazon.com/Moral-Minority-Skeptical-Founding-Fathers/dp/1566637511>

In her lively refutation of modern claims about America's religious origins, Brooke Allen looks back at the late eighteenth century and shows decisively that the United States was founded not on Christian principles at all but on Enlightenment ideas. *Moral Minority* presents a powerful case that the unique legal framework the Founding Fathers created was designed according to the humanist ideals of Enlightenment thinkers: God entered the picture only as a very minor player, and Jesus Christ was conspicuous by his absence. The guiding spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, Ms. Allen explains, was not Jesus Christ but John Locke.

(Excerpt from book description on Amazon.com)

More Info: Contact Bill Stroop at bill@strooplaw.com for address, directions, and gate code.

NOTE TO ALL!: Books may be found in the library, purchased from local book stores or 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.



(New Meeting location, cont'd from pg 1)

Other considerations:

- Custodial support.
- Kitchen facilities: Available, and refresh-

ments are allowed.

- Bridge traffic: The committee feels that traffic to the BBUUC will not be much different than it was going to Arlington.

The FCFS Board is aware that this move will result in a longer commute for several of our members but will be shorter for many others. The route is direct, however, and the location is convenient for our members overall.

Join us at our new home as we continue to serve the needs of nonreligious people in Northeast Florida.



[Editor's note: Part 2 of "The John Birch Society Is Alive and ... Well?" will be in next month's Free-Thinker]



Annual Planning Meeting - Sunday, January 12, 2014

Attention First Coast Freethought Society Members! The Annual Planning Meeting is being held at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 12, 2014, 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 to see, fundraising ideas and strategies, and ideas for special projects., and any other thoughts you may have. Do you like the direction in which the First Coast Freethought Society is going? Come and share your thoughts! Please RSVP to Carrie for address and directions at carrieren@att.net or call 904-268-8826.



Monthly Social

Where: OLIVE GARDEN on Philips Highway, across from the Avenues Mall.
When: **Tuesday December 24, 2013** 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!

President's Message - December 2013

Earl Coggins

I suspect in the minds of a majority of Americans the month of December is primarily all about Christmas. As I pointed out last month, even November has an element of Christmas in it. Roosevelt wanted Thanksgiving moved to the 4th Thursday of the month to give shoppers an extra week to prepare for Christmas. Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, has become (to some) the most important Christmas shopping day of the holiday season.

So here we are again looking at another Christmas holiday. It's difficult for me to ignore thinking about Sisyphus each December. In Greek Mythology, Sisyphus, not unlike a dung beetle, was condemned to pushing a boulder up a hill, only to see it roll back down at night, requiring daily attempts to push it up the hill, thus creating a never ending cycle of repetition — boring repetition.

The boring repetition in December that is Christmas has many elements: Nativity scenes, Christmas carols, Christmas dinner, Christmas cards, Christmas trees, and Jesus, the man who put Christ in Christmas. Those things are irritations for sure, but a bigger irritation for me is the lack of skepticism concerning whether or not Jesus actually existed.

I don't hear a lot of uproar questioning whether or not

Jesus is fact or fiction. Nor do I hear much or any buzz about the similarity between Jesus and a host of other mythological characters. What I do hear is the way in which religious progressives rationalize it the same way in which the six days needed to create the universe (as told in the Bible) are rationalized as a metaphoric depiction of six long periods of time. If we can't take the Bible literally there, why should we take it literally anywhere else? If we don't believe the creation myth, then why

“Jesus was no different than Batman, just not as popular.”

should we believe Jesus is nothing more than the equivalent to Osiris, Zeus, Apollo, Batman, or Superman?

The biggest surprise at Christmas is the number of non-religious people, some die-hard atheists, who believe without a shadow of a doubt (we covered doubt a few months ago) that Jesus was a human being, a part of history, and definitely not a concocted character in the narrative that is Christmas and Christianity.

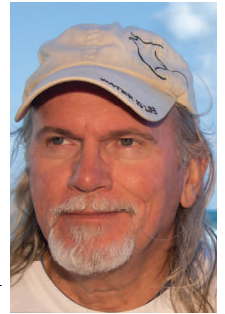
What is going on here? Some of my fellow atheists and agnostics, ultra-skeptics in a sea of never ending religious certainty, are still in-

clined to leave Sir Jesus in the “untouchable” realm of inquiry. Never mind that he is the linchpin of a major religion where most people believe the gods of major religions to be false — well except for the god of their own religion. How funny is that? Never mind that the people who declared Jesus' existence to be authentic also declared the solar system to be geocentric. That's even funnier. This couldn't possibly shed any doubt on his existence. Could it?

Did Jesus, the reason for the season, really exist? The answer to that question is buried (not very deep) in the available evidence. There's the archeological evidence in the form of the Shroud of Turin and a box said to contain the bones of Jesus' brother James, both doubted or shunned (for good reasons) by contemporary scholars. Written documents are all that remain for anyone on a quest to find the historical Jesus. Those documents can be divided into two source categories: Christian and non-Christian.

The Christian documents are the letters of Paul and the first four books of the Bible's New Testament. I would expect the founder of Christianity to be a wealth of informa-

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tion regarding Jesus' existence, but as it turns out, Saul of Tarsus, or St. Paul, said nothing in his writings of Jesus' existence. Why? Because he knew almost nothing about Jesus. Paul's writings focused on Jesus' death and resurrection. Paul didn't consider Jesus to be human. How funny is that? The only other Christian source is the four gospels, the first four books of the Bible's New Testament for you newcomers, and they cannot be relied upon as historical because they often contradict each other and cannot be cross-referenced with historical data. They are a mixture of fiction and fact, not unlike the historical fiction written by Dan Brown, whose book *The Da Vinci Code* was criticized by various Christian leaders for doing exactly what the Bible does — combine fantasy with fact.

Another expectation would be the Biblical stories about Jesus, if true, getting press coverage. There were famous historians in the first century C.E. recording everything of importance in and around Jerusalem and Galilee. Why didn't historians from that time period write down anything about Jesus? Some say they

did, and I will take a brief look at who did and why their writings cannot be trusted. It's all a moot point because the miracles Jesus is said to have performed automatically render the entire story of Jesus' existence allegory. The religious progressives and apologetics call those miracles metaphor.



“Bring me pork chops with sauerkraut or this will be the last supper I host for the Justice League of Judea!”

The non-Christian sources often quoted are the writings of historians dating to the time after Jesus supposedly lived. There are more than a few, including Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Suetonius, Lucian, Tacitus, and others. The list is large enough to look impressive, but a few things stand out. Many of these writers were Church Leaders spinning their writings to support their worldview, but more importantly, the writings from everyone come from the 2nd to 4th centuries, hundreds of years after Jesus' lifetime. These writings are simply too far re-

moved from Jesus' death to be credible. Cautious scrutiny reveals them as non-historical embellished writings and whittles them down to one: Flavius Josephus.

I remember attending a protest rally a decade ago in Orlando, Florida. Six-thousand followers of the Christian Right organization Promise Keepers were there. I, along with five other protesters, set up banners and posters in front of the Orlando Coliseum to give those Promise Keepers a piece of our minds. I

had a banner printed up just for that protest. It said *“There Was A Time When Religion Ruled The World. It Is Known As The Dark Ages.”* That banner got a lot of attention. It almost got us thrown out of Orlando.

During a heated debate with some of the Promise keepers, I found myself arguing whether or not Jesus existed. I told one guy Jesus was no different than Batman, just not as popular. One of the debaters brought up Josephus as the corroborative proof substantiating the Biblical story

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of Jesus. I asked him to tell me how Josephus proved anything. He didn't know much other than he had been told by someone that Josephus was an ancient historian who had written about Jesus.

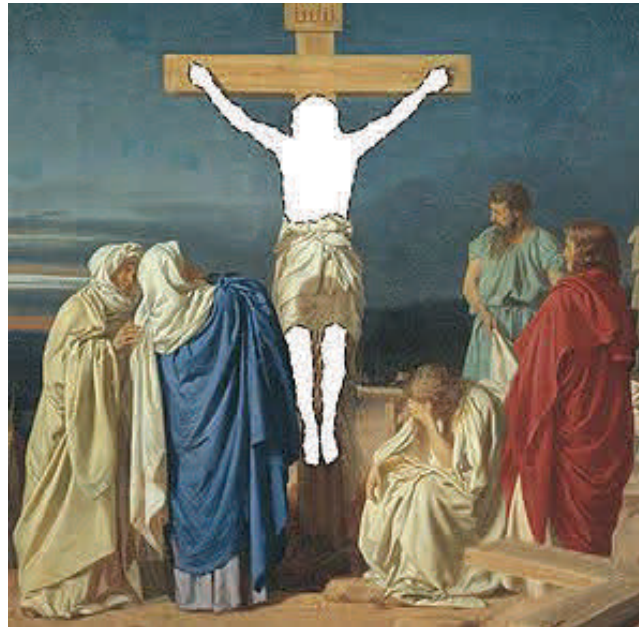
I told him and his buddies the document Josephus wrote containing the Jesus quote was *The Antiquities*, written near the end of the first century — C.E. for the enlightened, A.D. for everyone else. I was a real smart aleck back then.

The Jesus quote isn't in early copies of *The Antiquities*. The Jesus quote doesn't appear until Roman Emperor Constantine's time, early 4th century, C.E., when Constantine was shaping Christianity to suit his needs. He made it the official religion of the Roman Empire. Remember, he had a vision. The Jesus quote appears right around that time and was first used by Bishop Eusebius, a historian and a follower of Constantine — 200 years after *The Antiquities* was written.

That exchange of information between the Promise Keepers and me shut them up, but I doubt it changed their minds. It did have an effect though. One of the Promise Keepers came forward after listening to the debate and said he admired the fact that six people came out to face 6000. He said he wished his Christian friends had that kind of courage. That made

my day.

The Jesus quote in *The Antiquities* is so out of place that only die-hard Christians refuse to recognize it as a fabrication. Josephus was a messianic Jew. Calling Jesus "the Christ" would have been impossible for Josephus. The passage states: "Now, there



"There's no one there."

was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works — a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principle men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and

the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day. "

There were no Christian tribes during the life of Josephus, which means it's plausible that someone added the quote to Josephus' work. Whoever added the passage was not a skeptic. That person

was a Bible thumping believer, or someone motivated to give Christianity what it lacked: independent substantiation. This person was someone from the future.

Many books have been written on the subject. In his book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Albert Schweitzer gathered an immense collection of writings and books dedicated to or mentioning Jesus. His book is considered by many to be the quintessential book of investiga-

tive research regarding the existence of Jesus.

Schweitzer's conclusion was difficult for some and impossible for others: "*The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the kingdom of God, who founded the kingdom of heaven upon earth and died to give his work its final consecration never existed.*" How did Schweitzer come to that conclusion? In the words of Thomas Henry Huxley, "...follow your reason as far as it can carry you without other considerations... It is

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wrong for a man to say he is certain of the objective truth of a proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty.”

So how would one go about ascertaining the truth regarding the existence of Jesus? We might start by describing him to see if anyone knows who we are talking about. If I described a man as being born of a virgin, where a god is his father, at birth an attempt is made on his life and he is secretly taken away to another location for protection, but we are told nothing of his childhood, later in life he becomes a king, his death occurs at the top of a hill, and he has one or more holy sepulchers, who would you say fits the description? If you said Zeus, you’d be correct. If you said Jesus, you’d also be correct.

In his book *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and*

Drama, Lord Raglan gives readers 22 attributes constituting the most prevalent characteristics of a mythical hero. Turns out Robin Hood and Jesus have 8 of those attributes in common. Jesus and Zeus have 10 attributes in common. Jesus has a total of 19 of the 22 hero attributes. Oedipus, a hero in Greek mythology who kills his father and marries his mother, and is the source of Sigmund Freud’s Oedipus complex, has all 22 hero attributes.

The hero attributes are amazing, fascinating, and ignored by religious believers. Raglan said a mythical hero has a majority of the following 22 attributes. The hero is: born of a virgin, fathered by a king or a god, who is a relative of his mother. The circumstances of conception are unusual and an attempt on his life at birth is common. He is spirited away to avoid assassination and reared by foster parents. We are told nothing of his childhood. On

reaching manhood, our hero returns or goes to his future kingdom, usually after a victory over a king and/or a giant, dragon, or wild beast. He marries a princess, becomes a king, reigns uneventfully for a time, prescribes laws, and then later loses favor with the gods or his subjects. He is then driven from the throne, meets a mysterious death, usually at the top of a hill. His children, if any, do not succeed him. His body is not buried, and he has one or more holy sepulchers.

Jesus has more in common with Adonis, Attis, Baal, Horus, Hermes, Dionysis, Mithra, Orpheus, Osiris, Perseus, Zeus, Thor, Zoroaster, Apollo, Bacchus, Oedipus, Romulus, and Robin Hood than he does with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. No one knows who Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were. We know a lot more about Batman. And there’s the rub. Merry Christmas.



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.

Jacksonville City Council Prayers & The First Amendment

Susan Ert-Ker

Amenendment 1: *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

Why did the writers of the Constitution single out religion in the First Amendment? Were they wise in doing so?

A prayer is invoked at the beginning of Jacksonville City Council meetings. Does it bother you? It bothers me when a group representing the nonreligious is not allowed to give the invocation.

The national Americans United for the Separation of Church and State (AU) organization is helping in the *Greece vs Galloway* (2013) case. There is some similarity to what the Town of Greece did and what our City Council does. I am anxious to hear the Supreme Court's ruling.

Our city council has an invocation before their meetings. To be within what I understand as the scope of the first amendment, NO particular religion should dominate. If any particular religious view is mentioned then all religious and nonreligious views should be represented. Can I defend that point of view?

Based on Justice Breyer's questions during the oral arguments of *Greece vs. Galloway*, I think he supports that same point of view. He asked specifically:

JUSTICE BREYER: ... *"Then the fourth approach let's try to be inclusive. so you didn't get the right prayer today, but you -- and even with the nonreligious ... you'll have your chance. And that's the thing I -- I would like you to explore. I mean, is there a way of doing that ..."*

Mr. Laycock, attorney for the respondents, disliked Breyer's suggestion:

"Our city council has an invocation before their meetings. To be within what I understand as the scope of the first amendment, NO particular religion should dominate."

MR. LAYCOCK: *"We think that rotation does not work. First of all, because -- for several reasons, but most citizens come for a single issue to one or two meetings. They get the prayer they get that night. They don't benefit from the rotation scheme."*

Laycock's position seemed to waffle between two options: do away with the invocation completely or have the government prescribe an acceptable invocation. It seemed to me that a few of the justices did not like the second option because of government interference in religion. How can the

government tell a religious leader what kind of prayer to give? Is that too much government interference?



Here is a link to our local Jacksonville AU chapter Meetup discussion board with several links to the case:

<http://www.meetup.com/AU-Americans-United-for-Separation-of-Church-and-State/messages/boards/thread/38940482>

Certainly our city council can do away with the invocation. Diversity does create more work. But what they CANNOT do (and be within the spirit of the first amendment) is to allow CM Don Redman to give the invocation more than one time within a 12 month period.

Please write to your city council representative and demand diversity or ask them to eliminate the invocation. I put the email addresses of the City Council members on the local AU chapter Meetup message board. Ask your priest, rabbi, pastor, or humanist celebrant to apply to be one of the people giving an invocation. We are a diverse community. The city council was elected to represent all of us. Yes?

One of the links I posted on the local AU chapter Meetup message board is the complete transcript of the oral arguments of *Greece vs Galloway*. Here is a snippet from the oral arguments talking about what

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kind of prayer might be acceptable at a City Council meeting:

JUSTICE ALITO: "... we have a very religiously diverse country. There are a lot of Muslims, there are a lot of Hindus, there are Buddhists, there are Baha'is, there are all sorts of other adherents to all sorts of other religions. And they all should be treated equally, and -- but I don't -- I just don't see how it is possible to compose anything that you could call a prayer that is acceptable to all of these groups."

And Justice Kagan sums it up:

JUSTICE KAGAN: "Part of what we are trying to do here is to maintain a multi-religious society in a peaceful and harmonious way. And every time the Court gets involved in things like this, it seems to make the problem worse rather than better. What do you think?"

On the local AU chapter's Meetup discussion board, I also posted a link to all the briefs submitted in the case.

Please keep in mind that my side is the respondents. The Town of Greece lost their appeal so they are the petitioners. The brief filed by the ACLU is very cool.

I realize many will disagree with my position. I realize many will interpret the first amendment to mean religion shouldn't be in government at all. I do not interpret the First Amendment that way. Certainly allowing diversity is

very difficult. It would be a viable option to eliminate all religious comments in government but I don't think the First Amendment requires we do that. It simply requires that one religion can't dominate. Although in the oral arguments (of *Greece vs Galloway*), the Justices seemed to be saying only the predominant views (not all views) need to be represented if ANY are repre-



sented.

Based on the Pew Research Center data, it seems to me the non-religious view would need to be one of the views represented whenever someone wants to present a particular religious view at a government meeting. Here is a quote: "The number of Americans who do not identify with any religion also has grown in recent years; indeed, about one-fifth of the public overall – and a third of adults under age 30 – are religiously unaffiliated as of 2012. Fully a third of U.S. adults say

they do not consider themselves a "religious person."

The quote is from this link: <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/07/02/growth-of-the-nonreligious-many-say-trend-is-bad-for-american-society/>

Does your group start their meetings with prayer? Please consider setting an example that includes diversity. Have at least 4 people (with differing views) offer an invocation.

Why limit it to one? Do away with the prayer all together or include at least four (perhaps a Baptist, a Catholic, a Jew and a Humanist). Please always include a non-religious speaker. According to the above article, fully a third of US adults say they do not consider themselves a "religious person".

If you're wondering what kind of invocation a nonreligious person might give, here is an example:

"As the council gathers here to make laws affecting the people of Wilmington I ask you to lift your heads, to open your eyes and open your hearts. Our most serious duty is to look to the community we share, the examples we make, and the legacies we leave. That should be our greatest, most courageous and noble intention. Let this be our most constant success. Thank you."

The above invocation is from this link:

<http://americanhumanist.org/HN/Details/2013-07-a-non-religious-humanist-invocation-its-possible-her>



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 Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Church, 8447 Manresa Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32244. 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 2013 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	Herb Gerson	363-6446
At-Large	Fred Hill	358-3610
At Large	Richard Keene	386-1121

Other Appointments

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

Committees and Chairs

Editorial	Fred Hill	358-3610
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.

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

2014 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 16	FCFS Human Light Celebration at Bella Vita Restaurant - 6:30 p.m.
Friday	December 20	Secular St. Augustine Meetup at Applebee's - 7:00 p.m.*
Saturday	December 21	Deadline to submit articles for January 2014 <i>FreeThinker</i>
Sunday	December 22	FCFS Secular Sunday in the Park, Jacksonville - 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday	December 24	FCFS Monthly Social at Olive Garden, Jacksonville - 6:00 p.m.
Sunday	January 5	Humanist Book Discussion Group - Jacksonville - 2:00 p.m.
Thursday	January 9	Humanist Book Discussion Group - St. Augustine - 7:00 p.m.
Sunday	January 12	FCFS Annual Planning Meeting, 10:00 a.m. See page 3.
Monday	January 13	JAM Meetup at European Street Café in San Marco - 6:30 p.m.
Monday	January 20	FCFS Monthly Meeting - 6:30 p.m.

* See <http://www.meetup.com/Secular-Saint-Augustine/> to sign up

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

As you know, we are trying something different this year! Instead of a covered dish dinner, we're celebrating at Bella Vita Italian Restaurant. In order for the restaurant to schedule enough staff to accommodate us, they MUST have a head count by this Friday, December 13. RSVP to me, Carrie, at carrieren@att.net or call 904-268-8826! Otherwise, the restaurant cannot provide appropriate service.

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 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.

