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April 2014

Volume 13, Issue 4

Editor's Notes

1. Since the *FreeThinker's* transition to the new e-mail-friendly HTML format, archived newsletters can be found on the FCFS website via a link to the HTML version, as well as via an Adobe icon to the PDF version. (All previous newsletters can still be found via their Adobe icons.)
2. For your convenience, meeting directions and a map to the Buckman Bridge Unitarian Church will appear in every newsletter.

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This Month's Meeting

- **What:** April 2014 FCFS Meeting
- **Who:** Paul Carelli, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of North Florida
- **Title:** "Socrates on the Pious and the Just"
- **When:** Monday, April 21, 2014, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (doors open at 6:00)
- **Where:** Buckman Bridge Unitarian Church, 8447 Manresa Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32244 (Driveway located on Collins Rd., 400 feet east of Roosevelt Blvd.)

Meetings Free and Open to the Public • Plenty of Free Parking

Meet the Speaker

Our April speaker is **Paul M. Carelli, Ph.D.** Dr. Carelli is originally from Tampa, Florida. He currently serves as Assistant Professor of Philosophy, in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, at the University of North Florida.

Dr. Carelli earned his Bachelor of Arts Philosophy, Religious Studies, History, from Northern Arizona University; and in English from the University of Arizona. He has his Master of Arts in Classical Studies and in Philosophy, from the University of Kentucky. He earned his PhD in Philosophy from the University of Kentucky.

His areas of expertise include ancient Greek philosophy, classical Chinese philosophy, ethics, and critical thinking.

Carelli been teaching and writing about Socrates, Plato, and ancient Greek philosophy for over ten years. He currently lives at the Beaches.



Dignity U Wear
136 North Myrtle Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32204

Phone: (904) 636-9455
Toll-Free: (888) 364-1305
Fax: (904) 636-8649
www.DignityUWear.org



New Community Outreach Opportunity - Dignity U Wear

Celia Abbruzzese, Community Outreach Chair

Getting Started

Starting with MAY 17, 2014, one Saturday each month through the end of 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, join FCFS members, together with the North Florida Atheist Meetup and the Jacksonville Atheist Meetup groups to volunteer at Dignity U Wear, 136 North Myrtle Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32204. In air-conditioned comfort, sort and fold new clothes to assist those in need. (Wear closed-toed shoes.) The DATES will be posted in the newsletter calendars, e-mails, and website. You do not need to pre-register, just sign in at the door, with your name and the name of your group.



More Details

We work in an environmentally controlled warehouse, so it's not hot in the summer or cold in the winter. The donated clothing is all brand new, but it must be sorted by gender, size, and color, folded and placed into boxes. That's where we come in! We sit at large tables, sort, fold, and catch up with each other. It really is a gathering of our community. Children as young as 5 may accompany their parents. Because we are working in a warehouse environment, we are required to wear closed-toed shoes. We encourage everyone to find a seat at the table and fold clothing to assist those in need.

About Dignity U Wear

Last year, 282 companies donated \$9,474,005 worth of brand new clothing to people in need via Dignity U Wear. Through September 2013, Dignity U Wear has distributed 8 million pieces of brand new clothing to more than 610,000 children, men and women, throughout the United States. The clothing is distributed to individuals through a network of 300+ nonprofit social service agencies in over 40 states. Their areas of emphasis include:

- School children - providing school clothing for children, thus removing a barrier to education by providing new clothing to school children in need;
- Veterans – providing work-appropriate clothing for veterans seeking employment, and basic clothing necessities for those who have become homeless; and
- Women and girls in crisis - helping women and girls who have suffered domestic violence, emotional and/or sexual abuse, or are at risk to drop out of school.

Dignity U Wear's Motto: NEW CLOTHES. NEW LIFE.

See <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org> or contact Celia Abbruzzese at catrn1957@yahoo.com, or 904-982-8431 for more info.

April Olive Garden Social

- Where: **OLIVE GARDEN** on Philips Highway, across from the Avenues Mall. The hostesses will know where we are seated. Proceed directly to our room.
- When: Tuesday, April 22, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. Social hour at 6:00. Dinner at 7:00. We order from the menu.
- RSVP: E-mail CarrieRen@att.net (or call 904-268-8826) by Tuesday morning, if you plan to attend!

April President's Message - The Truth is Highly Underrated

Earl Coggins

In episode 1 of the new version of the Cosmos television series, *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey*, Neil deGrasse Tyson, its host, on more than one occasion used the expression “for now” when describing what scientists currently know about various aspects of cosmology. I smiled when I heard him because his subtle expression epitomizes the essence of truth and knowledge. From a human perspective, truth is always in a state of flux.



"Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey" Television Series

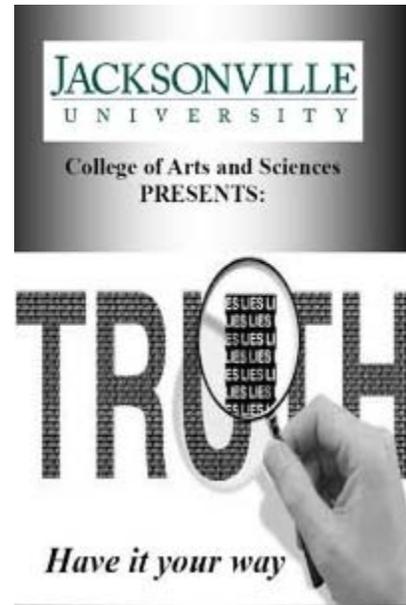
Tyson seemed happy with his qualifier. I detected an inflection in his voice when he said “for now,” as if he were letting the audience know that human truth and knowledge are eternal construction projects. In the spirit of Tyson’s qualifier “for now”, I think my title could also be called “the pursuit of truth is highly underrated.”

In his *Lectures on Ethics*, Immanuel Kant professed that “without truth, social intercourse and conversation become valueless.” What did Kant mean by truth? Does he mean knowledge? Do we need absolute certainty to have truth? How do we deal with such a juxtaposition — a need for truth in order to have value in society while knowing that today’s truth is likely to change in the future?

I attended a panel discussion the evening of February 27 at Jacksonville University titled, “TRUTH: Have It Your Way.” Six experts in their fields of study lectured on the subject, including professors of

philosophy, education, marine science, communication, sociology, and an NROTC Unit Commanding officer. While they had a lot to say about truth, none of them explicitly defined it.

**TRUTH: Have It Your Way"
A Panel Discussion
February 27, 2014
at Jacksonville University**

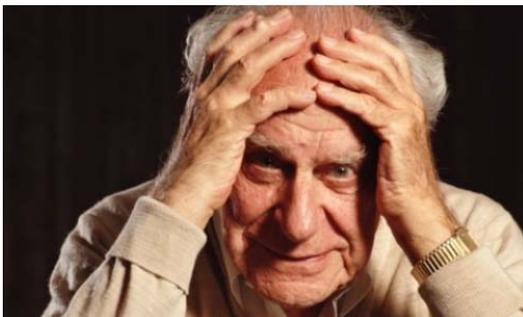


Although I wanted to hear each speaker's take, or spin, on what constitutes truth and how a person concludes that something is true, I was not disappointed with the absence of definitions, nor was I disappointed with the event. It had me talking about truth all the way out of Terry Concert Hall and all the way home, and now I am writing about it.

Harry Frankfurt in his book, *On Truth*, states "being indifferent to truth is an undesirable or even a reprehensible characteristic." I want to convince you of the truth of that statement.

Do I need to define truth in order to convince you truth exists? I'm not sure a definition of truth is necessary for all truths. There are some truths, a priori truths, which require no reasoning: my parents were older than me when I was born.

Truth be told, truth is elusive, slippery, and more often than not, deceptively difficult to pin down. Karl Popper, a twentieth century philosopher most famous for his falsificationism, had this to say about scientific truth: "You can't prove a hypothesis true, or even have evidence that it is true by induction, but you can refute it if it is false."



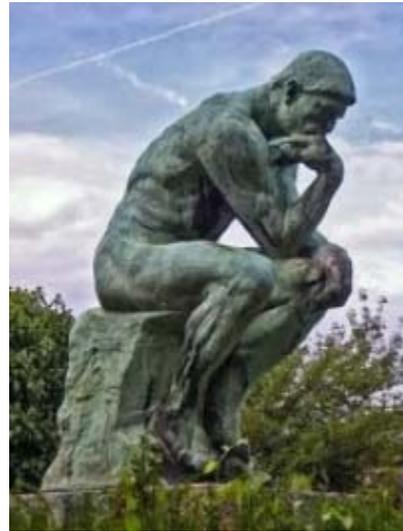
**Sir Karl Popper, Philosopher
(1902 - 1994)
Photograph: David
Levenson/Getty Images**

Socrates was perhaps the crème-de-la-crème of mentors to Popper's falsificationism. The Socratic Method's core element is to question components of a position statement, not only for clarification of ambiguous arguments, but perhaps ultimately to see if it can withstand a grueling falsification process. Our speaker this month, Dr. Paul Carelli, will be speaking to us about Socrates, the philosopher who was the inspiration for the First Coast Freethought Society's motto, *To Question is the Answer*.

Some people believe truth doesn't exist at all, while others say that at best, we can only get close to ascertaining what is and what is not true. Some people dismiss truth as glorified, hyped, and overvalued.

The freethought movement and the First Coast Freethought Society are stake holders in the proverbial quest for truth. I believe freethinkers want to be perceived as persons who have a high regard for truth and high standards for the processes necessary for ascertaining what is and is not considered to be a truth, i.e. phenomena that can be determined through observation, experience, and corroboration to be reality, certainty, and ultimately, factual.

The Thinker
Sculpted in Bronze
by Augusto Rodin



I sympathize with those who say truth is out of reach for humans because of the severity in which humans are infected by fallibility. However, it doesn't mean truth becomes overrated simply because humans have been extremely slow in grasping what precious few facts we know to be as close to the truth as we can get, for now. Nor does it mean truth is non-existent and therefore should be relegated to the trash bin of unworthy pursuits.

While the recent JU truth panel wasn't earth shattering, I enjoyed it. Jeremy Stalker, PhD, Assistant Professor of Marine Science at Jacksonville University, spoke about scientific certainty, a situation where truth is always on the run, moving closer and closer to certainty as the tools for ascertaining it get better with each generation of scientists. Based on the apparent state of flux we find truth to be situated within (if we believe Stalker), it seems to me the pursuit of truth is all that more important.

My friend Ken Hurley asserts in his article that follows the President's Message, "Today's 'truth' tends to be tomorrow's apology." I propose that today's truths are yesterday's course corrections. Humans have a track record for getting things wrong. Let's go with Hurley's position and say yes, today's truths are tomorrow's apologies. So what does that mean? What is the next step? If we slip on the ice or take a wrong turn while in the pursuit of truth, do we put our tail between our legs, apologize, and then give up? I think acting in that regard would be a great example of throwing the baby out with the bath water.



"Don't Throw Out the Baby with the Bath Water"

If we agree the pursuit of truth is an important endeavor, then we are agreeing that truth is important. And if truth is important, then why is it so difficult to define? Lack of a definition at the JU truth panel, in my view, does not constitute an egregious act. To say we know it when we see it is sometimes true, no pun intended.

I don't think truth is a difficult word to define if we let go of the notion that truth has to be static. Truth is exactly what Jeremy Stalker alluded to at the JU truth panel: it's a journey; it's a series of attempts at an explanation, with each step forward being an improvement—if we're talking about truth as a claim to know something is factual *for now*.

The fast-food generation gave us the 30-second meal with no dishes to wash. Cable television and the internet have given us the 30-second sound-bite, fast-truth with no thinking necessary. We now have a thousand daily talking heads all blogging, tweeting, and jockeying for consideration as experts about anything and everything. Their truths—reasoning sold separately—are peddled much the same way as a fake Swiss watch; and we all know you get what you pay for. Truth is now commodified.

Yes, perhaps this message should be called The "Pursuit of" Truth is Underrated. After all, our methods for finding truth are crucial. Without a tested process, how can we trust what we are told? For many, the talking heads of television have become the modern day oracles of truth, and favorite personalities all too often enjoy status that is above reproach. Scrutiny has been handed its hat.

If we don't care about the truth, how will we make good decisions?

When Sarah Palin is your Obi wan Kenobi, the force becomes a farce, and you have purchased the fake Swiss watch while believing you own the real thing. Should you care? I posit that you should.

The Truth is Highly Overrated

Ken Hurley

"Do you solemnly swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?" This is what a witness, who has made a commitment to tell



the 'truth', is asked to state prior to offering evidence in court, aka sworn testimony.

However, it is not permissible to add, "to the best of my ability." One must swear or affirm to tell the 'truth' even if you're mistaken or, worse, willfully lie.

For many reasons, sworn eyewitness testimony isn't reliable, especially when those witnesses get older . . . things get blurry, but surprisingly, confidence in our 'truth' becomes delusionally strengthened.



Trying to tell the 'truth' is fine, noble, and often useful, but I submit, the 'truth' is highly overrated.

That's true.

Today's 'truth' tends to be tomorrow's apology.

That's true.

So what? This writer has an opinion about 'truth'.

Who doesn't?

Understanding that our perceptions are all we have, suggests that any effort at defining 'truth', proclaiming things to be true, are relative to our place in time.



To say, the 'truth' is highly overrated does not also say there is nothing that is true. That's false.

People who claim to know the 'truth' seem to be less troublesome than those who claim to be 'true-believers'. All we can do is offer a perception from what we can glean from our perspective, which includes all the stuff we can cram into our brain and process through our thoughts from where we sit in time.

There is a reason people are reluctant to define 'truth'—they understand any definition is lame, nearly meaningless, and would prefer to rely on the perceived definitions of others.

Watching the struggles of others in their approach to what they 'believe' is the 'truth' offers one some entertaining enjoyment (perverse as it may be). The struggle for 'truth' may provide education, too. Yet, sometimes one may fall into a bluesy feeling while tussling with the 'truth'.

Here's one definition of 'truth': That which resonates as known to be true, correct, and absent of lies.

Here's another truth: Truth is watching Earl play the cajon (at least, entertaining and sometimes bluesy).

There are many who will argue that we should care deeply about the 'truth' and those who fail to show proper deference to the 'truth' are taking us down a path toward societal collapse. . . That's baloney without a first name.



Plato & Aristotle as central figures in Raphael's The School of Athens (1510) Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican Museum

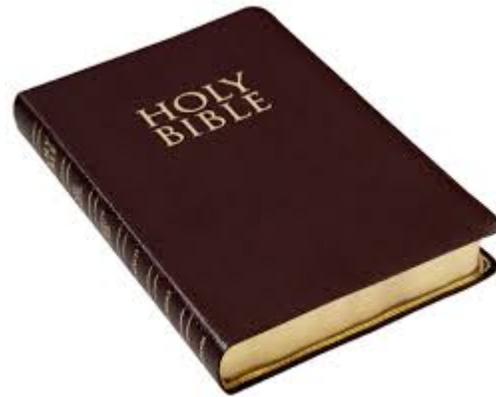
This writer is aware there may be at least dozens of theoretical approaches to 'truth' from a variety of people including: Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Hegel, Aquinas, Schopenhauer, Kripke, Heidegger, Nietzsche, cab drivers, deli owners, and YOU.

There are also dozens, if not millions, of theories relative to the 'truth' that have evolved or devolved through the ages, including: Absolute, Relative, Correspondence, Consensus, Pragmatic, Constructivist, Minimalist, Performative, Coherence, Redundancy, Biblical, and Half.

With a concept of 'truth' so sought, yet so devoid of consensus, the entire notion of the 'truth' becomes suspect. With so many different ideas of how we should approach discerning the 'truth', is it little wonder that the 'truth' has become diluted by the so-called 'thinkers' of the day, rendering examples of 'truths' and attempts at definitions mostly temporal? . . . Therefore, highly overrated.

There are unknown numbers of things once thought to be true that we have later said about, "Oops, my bad," including: The earth is flat, rocks turn into lichen, the sun revolves around the earth, life cannot survive in boiling hot temperatures, a child's sex is solely determined by the mother, smoking is good for asthmatics, no need for a doctor to wash his hands or instruments, Pluto was a planet, Venus was once considered to be cloudy and rainy, the sound barrier was actually a barrier through which we could not pass, tongues have different areas of taste sensors, the Pope is infallible. And one of my favorites—The brain is not a source of thought. "This laxe pithe or marrow in man's head shows no more capacity for thought than a Cake of Sewet or a Bowl of Curds." Henry More, a prominent seventeenth-century British philosopher, uttered this mutter in 1652. I believe his statement is relative to the individual.

Furthermore, there are the supposed "biblical truths..."



Furthermore, there are the supposed "Biblical truths," including: The Bible is the word of God which, in part, instructs its reader as follows: 1 Timothy 2:12 "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet." And, Jeremiah 19:9 "I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters, and they will eat one another's flesh because their enemies will press the siege so hard against them to destroy them." And, 1 Peter 2:18-20 "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." And, Leviticus 18:22 "Thou shalt not lie with a man, as with a woman: it is abomination."

Knowing what we do about what we once thought to be true and factual, why do we tend to believe that what we claim to understand today, as 'truth', won't be subjected to tomorrow's correction with the acquisition of new information? There seems to be a demonstrated pattern that today's truth is tomorrow's apology. The history of human's interpreting 'truth' is a history of repeated corrections of yesterday's misunderstanding. To be an advocate of 'truth' is to often place oneself in the position of having to say you're sorry for the mistakes of your predecessors or peers, just as your successors will probably have to apologize for the mistakes you may be making now when you claim to know the 'truth'.

This writer will offer no apology for all those who believe they possess reason, logic, and a method, scientific or otherwise, to discern the 'truth'. Mostly, what we have here though, is a failure to understand 'rationalization' masquerading as 'truth'.



Neil deGrasse Tyson is one of America's leading spokespersons for science

Moreover, there is the problem of the popular scientists of today, who, with some offhand remark that is occasionally quoted, belie what I posit. Neil deGrasse Tyson has said, "The good thing about science is that it's true whether or not you believe in it." That is a half-truth. Science is also subject to tomorrow's

correction. Ask Pluto.

It may be reasonable to alter our shouts of glee, that instead of proclaiming, "Eureka! I have discovered the 'truth'!" we offer a more honest shout, "Eureka! I have discovered a new deeply held opinion subject to change with or without notice!"

Hungry for more? Read: *Late Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler's Ninth Symphony*, by Lewis Thomas. And, *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, by Bill Bryson. And, the Internet.

What we accept or reject as 'truth' determines the speed at which our civilization evolves.

And that's the truth about 'truth'.

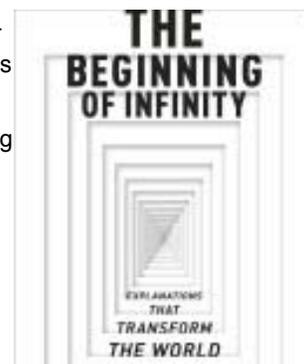


Humanist Book Discussion Group - Jacksonville

- **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:
 - May 4, 2014 - *Beginning of Infinity: Explanations that Transform the World*, by David Deutsch
 - June 1, 2014 - *Pigs at the Trough*, by Ariana Huffington

Link to Book Review: <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/10483171-the-beginning-of-infinity>

Throughout history, mankind has struggled to understand life's mysteries, from the mundane to the seemingly miraculous. In this important new book, David Deutsch, an award-winning pioneer in the field of quantum computation, argues that explanations have a fundamental place in the universe. They have unlimited scope and power to cause change, and the quest to improve them is the basic regulating principle not only of science but of all successful human endeavor. This stream of ever improving explanations has infinite reach, according to Deutsch: we are subject only to the laws of physics, and they impose no upper boundary to what we can eventually understand, control, and achieve.



In his previous book, *The Fabric of Reality*, Deutsch describe the four deepest strands of existing knowledge - the theories of evolution, quantum physics, knowledge, and computation - arguing jointly they reveal a unified fabric of reality. In this new book, he applies that worldview to a wide range of issues and unsolved problems, from creativity and free will to the origin and future of the human species. Filled with startling new conclusions about human choice, optimism, scientific explanation, and the evolution of culture, *The Beginning of Infinity* is a groundbreaking book that will become a classic of its kind. (Goodreads author)



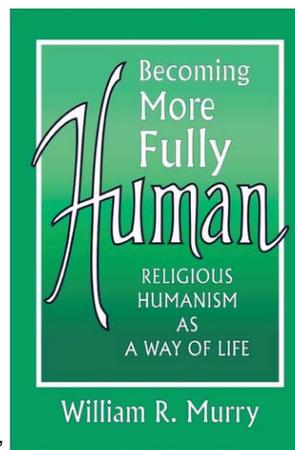
For More Info: Contact Herb Gerson at 904-363-6446 or 12herbert30gerson@bellsouth.net.

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:
 - May 8, 2014 - *Becoming More Fully Human: Religious Humanism as a Way of Life*, by William R. Murry
 - June 12, 2014 - *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*, by Jonathan Haidt

Link to Book Review: <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13584463-becoming-more-fully-human>

Becoming More Fully Human approaches Humanism primarily as a way of life rather than as a philosophical perspective but also includes some discussion of philosophical foundations. Its purpose is to present Humanism as a basis for living in a meaningful and fulfilling way which enables us to become more fully human. Describing Humanism in positive terms, it emphasizes what Humanism affirms rather than what it denies. It presents religious Humanism as a personally satisfying and morally responsible way to live, giving our lives meaning and purpose, hope and joy. Most importantly for many readers, it offers practical advice about the qualities that enable one to live well and explores Humanism's resources for living ethically and dealing constructively with common human problems and personal crises.



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.



Secularity USA

Richard Keene

The FCFS is working with the American Humanist Association (AHA), Americans United for Separation of Church/State (AU), Florida Humanist Association (FHA), Jacksonville Atheist Meetup (JAM), the North Florida Atheist Meetup (NFA), and the National Secularity USA Movement (SUSA), to staff an “invasion of Iowa” between **October 2015 and June 2016**, to bring the existence and ideals of Secularism to the Democratic and Republican Party Caucuses, and to create a national media visibility.



We are looking for **volunteers** to staff that effort for a “Florida Week” sometime during that period. We realize that it may seem far away, but we need to develop planning and travel coordinating committees within the next 12 months.

If you are interested, please fill out the [sign-up sheet on our website](#), or complete the bottom of this form and turn it in to our FCFS Coordinator, Richard Keene, at the end of a monthly meeting, mail it to FCFS at P.O. Box 550591, Jax, FL 32255-0591, or e-mail me at rkeene@juno.com. Such a sign-up is neither mandatory nor binding; details need to be worked out with SUSA.

Details, dates, location(s), costs, funding (if any), etc., will be forthcoming in the FCFS Newsletter, and directly to you by e-mail if you sign up.

Interested Invasion Volunteer

Name: _____ E-Mail: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s) _____ E-Mail: _____

Between October 2015 and June 2016

Date(s) you may be able to participate in any such travel or event:

 Date(s) you may be prohibited from any such travel or event

About our newsletter, the *First Coast FreeThinker* Information for Readers

The First Coast FreeThinker is published for all freethinkers and potential freethinkers. Nonmembers and members 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. Members are entitled to receive hard-copy should they prefer. The e-mail version is encouraged, as the newsletter is optimized for on-screen reading.

Readers are invited and encouraged to share 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 should be submitted to Editor@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org. Contributors who cannot submit manuscripts electronically may send them to Fred Hill, 1817 Egnor 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 submissions subject to editorial modification. Our style guide is *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Printed 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

U.S. Mail Address for Submissions:
Fred Hill, 1817 Egnor St., Jax 32206



Know Your Florida Humanist Association (FHA)

Bridget R. Gaudette, MPA, Executive Director

What does the Florida Humanist Association do?

Formerly known as Humanists of Florida Association (HFA), the FHA promotes organized Humanism and Humanist causes in Florida. It acts as a liaison for Humanist thought and action, providing a sense of community through conferences and correspondence.

The organization promotes the use of reason and rational thinking that is compatible with the modern world. Appreciation for science and volunteerism, while showing compassion for others, is a key part of the FHA's mission and is evidenced by the programs under development:

- Science League for Kids - focuses on developing critical thinking skills and teamwork in girls and boys, while helping them learn about Humanism.
- Humanists Care - an educational program to help mobilize Humanists to get more "hands on" in their community via outreach and charity work.
- Meet a Secular Humanist - works to empower Humanists to share their beliefs with others in their community whether that be with family and friends, in houses of worship, or other group settings.



In addition to the programs mentioned above, the FHA has been arranging speaking tours every 4 to 8 weeks for individuals who promote Humanism. The presenters will include authors, scientists, philosophers, and activists involved in the secular community.

Upcoming event: April - Katherine Stewart, author of "The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children."

Why should my group become an affiliate?

The FHA is building a statewide association of member groups with the shared goal of advancing Humanism. The FHA succeeds as an organization only when our affiliate groups achieve their goals, which in turn leads to a society guided by reason, empathy, and our growing body of knowledge.

In addition to helping the organization further its mission, monies have been set aside for grants to affiliates that have demonstrated their commitment to volunteerism, charity, and education. We also promote our affiliates' achievements and programs via the FHA monthly newsletter, social media sites, and the FHA website. Affiliates are the first to be contacted when a speaking tour is being arranged, and discounts are given for our annual conference.

Organizations that participate as affiliates further the FHA's goal of promoting a worldview that encourages individuals to live informed, meaningful lives and contribute to the greater good, without dogma.

To become an affiliate, click [here](#).

Why should I become a member?

Joining as an individual member gives you and your fellow Humanists a voice in the State of Florida by providing the much-needed financial support and strength in numbers necessary to achieve our goals.

Every year the FHA will be organizing a conference that is both fun and educational and as a bonus to members, tickets are discounted.

To become a member click [here](#).

If you want to help create solidarity across the community of reason, encourage your group to affiliate with the FHA or become an individual member today!

(Ed. Note: The First Coast Freethought Society is a proud affiliate member of the Florida Humanist Association.)

About the First Coast Freethought Society

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. (Driveway located on Collins Rd., 400 ft. east of Roosevelt Blvd.)

Meeting time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. Meetings are free and open to the public.

For other activities besides monthly meetings, please see the "Ongoing FCFS Activities" section in this newsletter, the website, or our brochure.

FCFS 2014 Board Members

President - Earl Coggins: 904-521-5039

Vice President - Carrie Renwick: 904-268-8826

Secretary - Don DuClose: 904-388-3125

Treasurer - Stephen Peek: 904-742-5390

At-Large - Herb Gerson: 904-363-6446

At-Large - Fred Hill: 904-358-3610

At Large - Richard Keene: 904-386-1121

Other Appointments

Parliamentarian - Mark Renwick: 904-616-2896

E-mail Secretary - Carrie Renwick: 904-268-8826

Committees and Chairs

Editorial - Fred Hill: 904-358-3610

Community Outreach - Celia Abbruzzese: 904-982-8431

Finance - Stephen Peek: 904-742-5390

Fundraising - Carrie Renwick: 904-268-8826

Membership - Judy Hankins: 904-724-8188

Publicity - Carrie Renwick: 904-268-8826

Website - Mark Renwick: 904-616-2896

All FCFS personnel may be reached via e-mail at

info@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org

Membership Application



Use this PDF form

or join on our [website](#).

Ongoing FCFS Activities

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!

Olive Garden Social and Two Humanist Book Discussion Groups

For details, please see their own sections in every the newsletter.

Volunteer at Dignity U Wear

One Saturday each month through the end of 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, join FCFS members, together with the North Florida Atheist Meetup and the Jacksonville Atheist Meetup groups to volunteer at Dignity U Wear, 136 North Myrtle Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32204. In air-conditioned comfort, sort and fold new clothes to assist those in need. (Wear closed-toed shoes.) The dates will be posted in the newsletter calendars, e-mails, and website. See <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org> or contact Community Outreach Chair, Celia Abbruzzese, at catrn1957@yahoo.com, or 904-982-8431 for more info.

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.

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.

Bequests

*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 can provide the appropriate wording to you and your attorney,

depending upon your wishes. Or, just talk to your attorney. Our EIN is 20-1462737.

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.

Northeast Florida Coalition of Reason

- First Coast Freethought Society: <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org>
- Jacksonville Atheist, Agnostic, Secular Meetup Group (JAM): <http://jaxatheists.com>
- Northeast Florida Atheists: <http://meetup.com/North-Florida-Atheists>
- Secular Saint Augustine: <http://meetup.com/Secular-Saint-Augustine>

The FCFS is a proud member of the [Florida Humanist Association](#) (formerly the Humanists of Florida Association).

Calendar of Freethought Events on the First Coast

- Saturday, April 19 - Deadline for submissions to the May 2014 *FreeThinker*
- Monday, April 21 - FCFS Monthly Meeting, Jacksonville - 6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 22 - FCFS Monthly Social at Olive Garden, Jacksonville - 6:00 p.m. - Day following the monthly meeting!
- Friday, April 18 - [Secular St. Augustine Meetup](#) - St. Augustine - 7:00 p.m. (Visit website to RSVP and to get details.)
- Sunday, April 27 - FCFS Secular Sunday in the Park, Jacksonville - 10:00 a.m.
- Sunday, May 4 - Humanist Book Discussion Group - Jacksonville - 2:00 p.m.
- Thursday, May 8 - Humanist Book Discussion Group - St. Augustine - 7:00 p.m.
- Monday, May 14 - JAM Session (Meetup), European St. Café, Jacksonville, 6:30 p.m. (See <http://www.meetup.com/jaxatheists/> for details.)
- Saturday, May 17 - FCFS volunteers at Dignity U Wear - Jacksonville - 9:00 a.m. (See article early in this newsletter.)
- Monday, May 19 - FCFS Monthly Meeting, Jacksonville - 6:30 p.m.

Directions to Meeting Location

Our monthly meetings are held at the **Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Church (BBUUC)**, 8447 Manresa Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32244. The address is Manresa, but the main entrance to the church is located on Collins.

- From I-295, take the Roosevelt exit. Go north on Roosevelt Blvd. to the first traffic light which is Collins Rd. Turn right onto Collins. Go 400 feet. The main entrance to the church is located on Collins Rd., on the right.
- Going south on Roosevelt, look for Atlantic Self-Storage on the left. This is the Collins Rd. intersection. Turn left onto Collins. Go 400 feet. The main entrance to the church is on Collins Rd., on the right. (If you come to I-295, you've gone too far, turn around, and you will turn right onto Collins Rd.)

MAP ON FCFS WEBSITE

See accurate map at this link: http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/cms/lib/fcfs_bbuuc_map.gif (Please note, Google Maps, as well as other maps, may not be consistent with the actual street signs.)

FCFS Month-at-a Glance

- Saturday, April 19 - Newsletter deadline
- Monday, April 21 - FCFS Monthly Meeting
- Tuesday, April 22 - FCFS Olive Garden
- Sunday, April 27 - FCFS Secular Sunday
- Sunday, May 4 - FCFS Book Group - Jacksonville.
- Thursday, May 8 - FCFS Book Group - St. Augustine
- Saturday, May 17 - FCFS at Dignity U Wear
- Monday, May 19 - FCFS Monthly Meeting

Details in newsletter, e-mail reminders, and on website.

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