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June 2014

Volume 13, Issue 6

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## This Month's Meeting

- **What:** June FCFS Meeting
- **Who:** Rabbi Merrill Shapiro, President, National Board of Trustees, Americans United for Separation of Church and State
- **Title:** "Operation Inclusion: There's a Role for Each of Us"
- **When:** Monday, June 16, 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

Rabbi Merrill Shapiro grew up in Bloomfield, northern New Jersey, and studied Electrical Engineering at both Cornell University and Newark College of Engineering (now New Jersey Institute of Technology). He became a student at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and was identified as an educational leader by the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education and sent to lead its pilot school in Columbus, Ohio. Recognized as a Senior Educator in North America, Shapiro was awarded a Pincus Fellowship to study and serve as a graduate research assistant at Jerusalem's Hebrew University. While in Jerusalem, he completed his Rabbinic studies. He returned to this country where he has continued to educate and lead for many years. Rabbi Shapiro currently serves as the spiritual leader of Temple Shalom of Deltona, in Volusia County. He is also the President of the National Board of Trustees of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.



It is in this capacity that nationally-known activist Rabbi Shapiro will be speaking to us tonight about Americans United's newest project, "Operation Inclusion."

## Meeting Description

In light of the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision (in the case of *Town of Greece v. Galloway*) approving official prayers before meetings of local government bodies, the Americans United for Separation of Church and State is launching a multi-pronged strategy to protect the rights of ALL Americans.

The plan, titled "Operation Inclusion," is necessary to ensure that the rights of ALL Americans are protected and to respond to misleading claims by Religious Right groups who believe that America is a "Christian nation." The plan is designed to educate citizens and legislators about what the Supreme Court decision really says.

At our June 16 meeting, Rabbi Shapiro will explain "Operation Inclusion" and discuss how we can be a part of it.

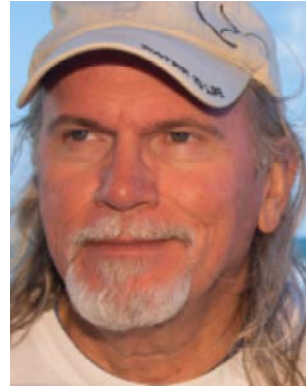
# June President's Message - The Sky is Falling

## Earl Coggins

The history of humanity is a story about the people in control, the people under their control, and rebellion.



There's a good reason why the Declaration of Independence states that all "men" are created equal as opposed to all citizens. That was the consensus of the people in control. Men ruled, women were subservient. And if you wanted any part of a good life, adequate liberty, or the ability to pursue happiness, you had to be a man; but more specifically, a certain variety of man. Your worldview had to conform with the status quo, unless you were very wealthy. Men of color were excluded regardless of their worldview. Their wealth was not an issue because they had no wealth. They had no means for generating income and didn't own anything because THEY were owned by other human beings. It was a pathetic situation. How else could you describe it?



The Chicken Little story is familiar to a lot of people. An acorn fell on Chicken Little's head, and he was sure the sky was falling. Although I always fear sounding similar to Chicken Little, I have to say I believe the sky fell, a little, on May 5, 2014 when the Supreme Court ruled 5 to 4 in favor of prayer before local government meetings. This should be proof that for the foreseeable future, the U.S. government has not yet given up on officially endorsing superstition, and the men in control, Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas, Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, Samuel Alito, and Chief Justice John Roberts, appear to have little or no respect for the plurality of the American landscape. Oh, and did I mention the religion clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution? It's not getting much respect either.



**Susan Galloway and Linda Stephens, Plaintiffs, in *Town of Greece v. Galloway* (Photo courtesy of AU)**

The 5-4 *Town of Greece v. Galloway* decision, according to Justice Anthony Kennedy, was not a violation of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution because prayer is ceremonial and reflects "values long part of the nation's heritage." I suppose Kennedy forgot that slavery was long part of our nation's heritage, going back to approximately 1619, when a Dutch ship brought African "settlers" to Jamestown, VA. Twenty-two years later Massachusetts became the first colony to legalize slavery. It would be 224 years (and a lot of rebellion) before the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolished slavery. That is what most people would call "values long part of the nation's heritage."

On July 4, 1776 the U.S. Declaration of Independence alluded to unalienable rights and equality, but as I pointed out above, unalienable rights and equality came with a qualifier: men. It would take women 144 years of relentless pressure (and a lot of rebellion) before men gave in and gave them the right to vote in 1920. Think about that. In the 238 years this country has officially existed, women have been allowed to vote for only 94 years.

It took the men in power 89 years after the Declaration of Independence to outlaw slavery in the United States with the creation of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It took 99 more years (and a lot of rebellion), culminating with the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for the men in power to accept the fact that many southern states created black codes, pig laws, vagrancy statutes, and the Jim Crow era of "separate but equal"—all to circumvent the prohibition of slavery.

**Roger Williams**  
**Theologian, Renegade**  
**(circa 1603 - 1683)**



Secularism has had a similar history of progress at a glacial pace. The separation of state and church idea in North America wasn't born with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. A century and a half prior to the adoption of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the famous Jefferson Letter to the Danbury Baptists, Roger Williams, theologian to some, outlaw rebel to others, spoke about freedom of religion and the separation of church and state. He was technically a Christian preacher, but "renegade" fits better. Williams firmly believed that separation from the Church of England was a necessary right of any citizen in the new land and spoke fervently for freedom of religion and separation of state and church, comparing the separation of state and church as a "hedge of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world."

Williams' outspokenness (and a lot of rebellion) regarding freedom of religion and separation of state and church ultimately led to his conviction for sedition and heresy due to his diverse, new, and dangerous opinions. And we thought George Orwell's "Thought Police" were fictitious. Williams was to be banished from Massachusetts but fled instead. Williams purchased some land and formed his own colony, Providence Plantations, and helped other religious outcasts found Rhode Island.

I believe Williams was a freethinker, but I have been told by many present-day freethinkers that a person can't be religious and a freethinker simultaneously. Perhaps that argument will be a topic to address in a future President's Message.



**Rob Boston, Director of  
Communications for AU  
Editor of *Church & State*  
magazine**

Robert Boston is the director of communications for Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the editor of *Church & State* magazine. He is the author of one of my favorite books, *Why the Religious Right Is Wrong About Separation of Church and State*. In his most recent book, *Taking Liberties: Why Religious Freedom Doesn't Give You The Right To Tell Other People What To Do*, Boston states: "Did this policy of separation [between state and church], which had never been implemented anywhere in the world previously, go off perfectly well without a hitch? Of course not."

Although Boston's statement is the understatement of all understatements, it's one of the most important things he says in his book, because we have never had truly secular governments in the U.S. Boston goes on to say: "The history of religious freedom in America is not as smooth as some would think today. The adoption of the First Amendment was a significant milestone, but it did little to thwart cultural assumptions that the United States was, unofficially, at least, a Protestant nation. Indeed, Christian practices (and by Christian, I mean here generically Protestant) infiltrated many laws well into the twentieth century."

I feel strongly that in her dissenting opinion, Supreme Court Justice Elana Kagan must have had Roger Williams looking over her shoulder as she wrote: "I respectfully dissent from the Court's opinion because I think the Town of Greece's prayer practices violate that norm of religious equality—the breathtakingly generous constitutional idea that our public institutions belong no less to the Buddhist or Hindu than to the Methodist or Episcopalian."

**Rev. Barry W. Lynn**  
**Executive Director**  
**Americans United since 1992**  
**(Photo courtesy of AU)**



In the June 2014 issue of *Church & State* magazine, there is a four-page article, "Greece's Slippery Slope," on the Supreme Court Decision. At the end of the article Barry Lynn, Executive Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, states: "Greece is a poorly reasoned decision, but it doesn't leave us without options. This isn't over yet."

I believe Lynn is correct, and I want to urge all of our membership, readers, and friends to stay active in the fight to support the First Amendment. One way we can all do that is to support the First Coast Freethought Society's public radio announcements. Those announcements send a strong message throughout our community that not only are we a diverse community, but a nation where no worldview should be held above any other. Our radio spots have now taken on a greater level of importance. I ask you today to give generously to our NPR ad fund raising campaign.

Barry Lynn said this isn't over yet. I agree. Oh, but not without a lot of rebellion.



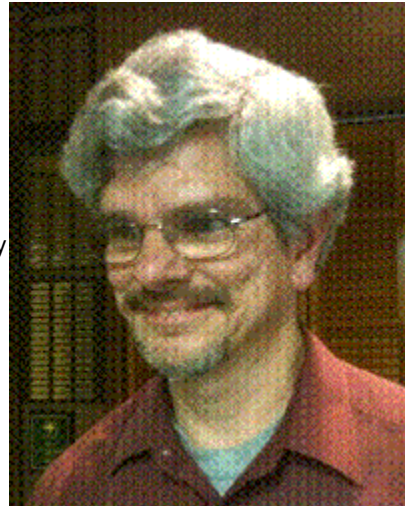
# June Olive Garden Social

- 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, JUNE 24, 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](mailto:CarrieRen@att.net) (or call 904-268-8826) by Tuesday morning, if you plan to attend!

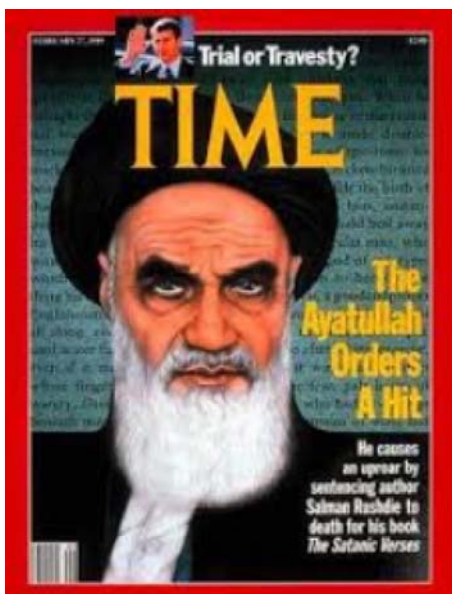
## Salman Rushdie vs. Religious Fanaticism

**Fred W. Hill**

Twenty-five years ago Salman Rushdie was sentenced to death for writing something. Ayatollah Khomeini, who reigned as the political and religious Supreme Leader of Iran, was offended by Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*, and so issued a *fatwa*, broadcast on Iranian radio on February 14, 1989, that read, "[We are from Allah and to Allah we shall return](#)". I am informing all brave Muslims of the world that the author of *The Satanic Verses*, a text written, edited, and published against Islam, the Prophet of Islam, and the Qur'an, along with all the editors and publishers aware of its contents, are condemned to death. I call on all valiant Muslims wherever they may be in the world to kill them without delay, so that no one will dare insult the sacred beliefs of Muslims henceforth. And whoever is killed in this cause will be a martyr, Allah Willing. Meanwhile if someone has access to the author of the book but is incapable of carrying out the execution, he should inform the people so that [Rushdie] is punished for his actions. Rouhollah al-Mousavi al-Khomeini." Not quite as violent as Al Capone's Valentine's Day message to his rival Bugs Malone in 1927, but just as damaging to civil society. And although like Malone, Rushdie himself was not slain, many others died in his stead, victims of religious extremism.



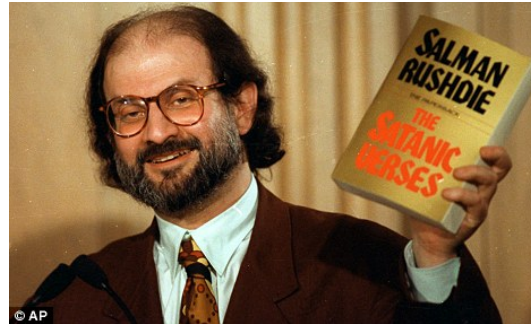
**Ayatollah Khomeini  
on the cover of *Time* after  
issuing his fatwa in 1989**



Salman Rushdie was born into a Muslim family, in Bombay, India, in 1947, just before that former British colony obtained its independence and split into a predominantly Hindu India and an even more predominantly Muslim Pakistan, amidst a war and ethnic and religious clashes that resulted in several hundred thousand deaths and forced migrations of over 10 million people. Although Rushdie spent considerable time in both India and Pakistan, he was educated in England, becoming a British citizen as well as an atheist and, hence, an apostate—someone who has renounced former religious beliefs, a capital offense for anyone who ever was a Muslim in several Islamic nations, including Iran and Pakistan. Rushdie had initially supported the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, believing the new government would be less oppressive than that of the former Shah; he had also spoken out against the foreign policy of both the United States and the United Kingdom that he believed was harmful and unjust. His third novel, *Shame*, published in 1983, a fictionalized portrayal of Prime Minister Bhutto of Pakistan, on the theme that violence is borne out of shame, actually received an award by a jury appointed by a minister of the Iranian government. That government wasn't so pleased with Rushdie's next novel.

Rushdie admitted that before *The Satanic Verses* was published in 1988, he thought it might arouse the ire of a few religious extremists, but he didn't expect that so many would react with violence and murder. Before the year was out, the novel had been banned in India, Bangladesh, Sudan, South Africa, and Sri Lanka, with more to come; Muslim immigrants in English cities held public burnings of the book; and book stores that displayed the book were bombed in the U.S. and U.K. Obviously, Rushdie, who prided himself on being a freethinking gadfly, had touched a nerve among those who felt that freethinkers should keep their blasphemous thoughts to themselves. The very title was offensive to many Muslims, referring to a legend that there were certain refrains that Muhammad had included in the Koran that allowed for intercession by three pagan female deities, thus contradicting the Muslim tenet that there is only one god, most likely equipped with a penis. Upon realizing his error, Muhammad had the verses stricken from the Koran and asserted that they had been whispered to him by Satan pretending to be God. Whether such verses had ever been part of the Koran cannot be confirmed. Muslim and non-Muslim scholars still argue over the issue. A written version of the Koran itself was not compiled until after Muhammad died, and the earliest known reference to the legend dates to about 200 years later, in a biography of Muhammad edited by Ibn Hisham circa 830. If the verses truly originated with Muhammad, it may have been his attempt to attract the many still-pagan Arabs to his new religion before he adopted a more adamantly monotheistic stance. The phrase Satanic Verses, by the way, is a relatively recent non-Islamic sobriquet of what had been known as the *gharaniq*—which translates as of cranes or, more generically, birds—verses, apparently meaning they were for the birds.

## Salman Rushdie holding *The Satanic Verses*



Whoever the verses were for, Rushdie made much of them in his novel, and included scenes of his fictional prophet dreaming of being visited by one of the pagan goddesses, and other scenes that were taken to mock Mohammad, his wives, and Islamic beliefs. There was also a scene that has been interpreted as making fun of the angry Ayatollah and is unlikely to have amused him. In that large chunk of Europe once known as Christendom, in many quarters it had been highly perilous to question the local standard beliefs about God, Christ, and the cosmos they supposedly created about 6,000 years ago. Hundreds of thousands died over religious arguments before most of the industrialized nations stopped attempting to enforce any particular religious belief and even stopped throwing people in jail for making fun of god, Jesus and their Holy spook and insisting that all religions are a bunch of bunk. Admittedly, it took England until 2008 to abolish the last remaining laws against blasphemy. The last time that had been enforced was in 1977, against Gay News Ltd and Denis Lemon as publishers of James Kirkup's poem, *The Love That Dares to Speak Its Name*, wherein a Roman centurion describes sexual encounters with Jesus Christ, and the good lord's gay affairs with his disciples, guards and Pontius Pilate (maybe it wasn't blood he was washing his hands of). Lemon was found guilty and sentenced to pay £500 and serve nine months in jail, suspended. A travesty to be sure, but not nearly as horrid as being bound to a stake and set on fire. During the height of *The Satanic Verses* controversy, several prominent Muslims in the U.K. tried to convince the government to charge Rushdie with blasphemy. Upon being informed that the law only applied to those who made light of the doctrines of the merry Church of England, an effort was made to expand the law to apply to anyone who mocked any religion, which fortunately didn't pass muster with Parliament. In 2006, however, the Racial and Religious Hatred Act was passed, making it illegal to intentionally incite hatred against a person based on their religion. Thus far, criticizing or mocking particular religious beliefs has not been legally defined as "inciting hatred," so it's still legal to make fun of the contents of the Koran, the Old and New Testaments, the Book of Mormon, and Dianetics in the U.K.



**A Muslim riot in India over Rushdie visiting there in 2000. It shows Rushdie being burned in effigy.**

It can still be deadly, however, to upset religious fanatics who feel they must, with righteous fury, slaughter anyone who besmirches the honor of their supposedly all-powerful deity and His prophet. As detailed in "The Rushdie Affair—Lest We Forget" by Russell Blackford in *Free Inquiry*, Vol. 34, No. 4, June/July 2014, several dozen people were murdered or died in riots sparked by anger over Rushdie's novel. Khomeini's fatwa was condemned by advocates of free speech around the world, as well as by Islamic scholars who found fault with Khomeini's methods in issuing a death sentence outside of an Islamic court and that did



not limit its jurisdiction to countries under Islamic law. It didn't matter. Plenty of fanatics attempted to carry out Khomeini's directive, killing in outrage over a work of fiction. Two works of fiction actually, as while the Koran is certainly historically important it hardly qualifies as work of accurate history.

Rushdie spent a decade in hiding, protected by agents of the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police. Although in 1998, Iranian President Khatami, attempting to rebuild bridges with the west, announced the death threat against Rushdie was over, the fatwa itself continues to be renewed every Valentine's Day by the Iranian government and the possibility remains that a disgruntled fanatic may yet kill him. And although I'm hardly as talented or famous as Rushdie, a religious fanatic, Muslim, Christian or other, may well take offense at what I've written and may want to silence me permanently, too. Life is dangerous enough even without homicidal fanatics, but they no longer dominate as large a part of the world as they once did. Enough people took the risk to speak out, to promote reason and the right of people to make up their own minds about religion and to freely express themselves. Enough people finally decided it is better to try to live in peace and respect one another's rights than to live in a climate of perpetual fear and hatred. Thus, while never entirely out of danger, Rushdie was able to come out of hiding and has been living a more normal life, yet still writing and speaking, still saying things that irritate many people because they counter their particular political or religious beliefs. I trust, however, there are more people now who will find nothing objectionable at all in what Rushdie says and even if they do, might take up the adage attributed to Voltaire, "I disapprove of what you say but I will defend to the death your right to say it."



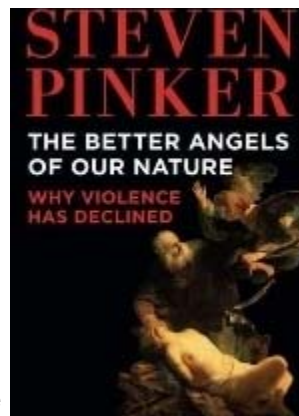
## Humanist Book Discussion Group - Jacksonville

- 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:
  - July 6, 2014 - *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, by Stephen Pinker
  - August 3, 2014 - *This Land Is Their Land: Reports from a Divided Nation*, by Barbara Ehrenreich

Link to Book Review: <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/11107244-the-better-angels-of-our-nature>

Faced with the ceaseless stream of news about war, crime, and terrorism, one could easily think we live in the most violent age ever seen. Yet as New York Times bestselling author

Steven Pinker shows in this startling and engaging new work, just the opposite is true: violence has been diminishing for millennia, and we may be living in the most peaceful time in our species' existence. For most of history, war, slavery, infanticide, child abuse, assassinations, pogroms, gruesome punishments, deadly quarrels, and genocide were ordinary features of life. But today, Pinker shows (with the help of more than a hundred graphs and maps), all these forms of violence have dwindled and are widely condemned. How has this happened?



This groundbreaking book continues Pinker's exploration of the essence of human nature, mixing psychology and history to provide a remarkable picture of an increasingly nonviolent world. The key, he explains, is to understand our intrinsic motives--the inner demons that incline us toward violence and the better angels that steer us away--and how changing circumstances have allowed our better angels to prevail. Exploding fatalist myths about humankind's inherent violence and the curse of modernity, this ambitious and provocative book is sure to be hotly debated in living rooms and the Pentagon alike and will challenge and change the way we think about our society.

For More Info: Contact Herb Gerson at [12herbert30gerson@bellsouth.net](mailto:12herbert30gerson@bellsouth.net), or call 904-363-6446.

## Humanist Book Discussion Group - St. Augustine

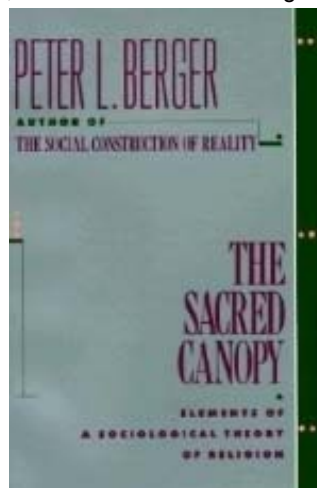
- **When:** 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., the second Thursday of each month.
- **Where:** Clubhouse at a private condominium in St. Augustine (Anastasia Island).
- **What:** Book planned for discussion:
  - July 10, 2014 - *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, by Peter Bergere
  - August 14, 2014 - To Be Announced

**Link to Book Review:** [http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/149025.The\\_Sacred\\_Canopy](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/149025.The_Sacred_Canopy)

"[Berger] writes in a concise and lucid style, a rare talent among sociologists, but does so without losing any of the cogency of his material. More impressively, he is almost unparalleled in his creativity. *The Sacred Canopy* brings together all of these virtues and is easily his most important book. Indeed, I think it's the most important contribution to the sociology of religion since Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*." —Jeffery K. Hadden, *Commonweal*

"This is a brilliant analysis that gives evidence of a sociology of religion that is able to clarify the often ironic interaction of religion and society." —A. Theodore Kachel, *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*

This important contribution to the sociology of religion provides an analysis that clarifies the often ironic interaction between religion and society. Berger is noted for his concise and lucid style.



**More Info:** Contact Bill Stroop at [bill@strooplaw.com](mailto: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.

# An Audience for the Religious Leaders

## Ken Hurley

I'd like to offer a few things to consider when providing an audience for a religious leader:

1. Their life centers around claiming a belief in the supernatural;
2. They enjoy unprecedented tax benefits based on their "belief;"
3. When challenged, they may quickly become dismissive or even hostile;
4. By giving religious leaders an audience, their confidence is bolstered in their religious delusion;
5. The status quo is no longer a desirable achievement, and tolerance of antiquated harmful religion is perpetuated when entertaining the religious leaders;
6. The so-called do-good organizations who champion "separation of church and state" have succeeded in getting donors to believe they can "win!" But, win what? Ask the leaders of organizations such as AU or the ACLU, what would it look like if they got their way regarding separation of church and state? Don't let them squirm out of the question. If they answer honestly then ask yourself, is their vision probable? Or even possible? Then take enough time to realize they may not want the overarching 'win' because that would put an end to the donations and court battles on which their business is built.
7. The religious leaders will tell you their tax benefits are fair. They are not.
8. Further, consider, what level of lie does one need to embrace to become a religious leader? What level of self-delusion?
9. Let's remember that it is deeds and actions that benefit society, not religious belief.
10. Is the goal for providing an audience for smiling, cordial, and affable religious leaders an effort to show that the non-religious are nice people too? Are you building a bridge? If so, to where? And, why?
11. If the good people in FCFS don't speak out against the shameful sham that is religion, then who will? Who is better positioned to expose the unfair tax advantages religion gets? Who better to lead the charge against taxpayer subsidies for someone's "belief?" Who better to say no to the status quo?
12. The status quo must go.



13. A successful challenge of a religious leader's charlatan ways depends on the approach. Be prepared with good pithy questions designed to reveal that taxpayers should no longer subsidize anyone's religious beliefs. That's the centuries old sham. That's the status quo.
14. Time for a stand.
15. In the words of the most fortunate former member of The Beatles, Ringo Starr, on the occasion of his announcement when he said he would no longer sign autographs or accept fan mail, "Peace and love, peace and love."

## 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](mailto:Editor@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org). Contributors who cannot submit manuscripts electronically may send them to Fred Hill, Editor, 1817 Egner St., Jacksonville, FL 32206.

The deadline for time-sensitive material is the THIRD SATURDAY of each month for the following month's issue, but submissions are welcome anytime.

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: A Statement of Principles](#) (found on our website). All accepted submissions are 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.

# 2014 NPR Corporate Sponsorship Fund Drive

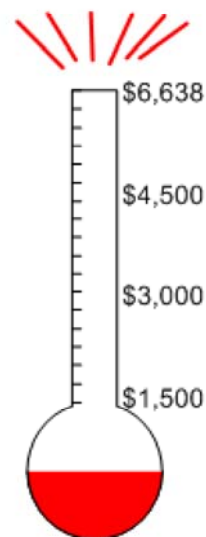
## Carrie Renwick

Each summer the First Coast Freethought Society conducts a fundraising campaign to keep our National Public Radio announcements about the FCFS and our monthly meetings going strong on NPR member radio station WJCT, 89.9 FM. As usual, we will be sending out fundraising e-mails, and we will follow up with a U.S. Postal Mail letter. It would be wonderful if you could respond to the e-mail and thus help us save trees and postage incurred with the snail-mail letters, but by all means, choose what is most convenient for you.

You can contribute in several ways:

1. Visit the website, <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org>, where you will find the opportunity to contribute on our homepage. You can pay via PayPal or with any major credit card;
2. Mail a check payable to the FCFS to P.O. Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255;
3. Bring your contribution to a meeting or another FCFS event and give it to a board member.

NPR-o-Meter



Whichever method you prefer, you will receive a letter from the treasurer, suitable for your IRS records, acknowledging your tax-deductible contribution.

Thank you in advance for your support!

## 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.z)

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

## Other Activities

In addition to regular monthly meetings, we offer:

- two monthly humanist book discussion groups (one in Jacksonville and one in St. Augustine);
- a monthly social and dinner at the Olive Garden (see details in each newsletter);
- coffee and conversation in the fresh air on a monthly basis at Secular Sunday in the Park;
- Dinners for Doubters (when scheduled);
- volunteer opportunity on a monthly basis, currently at Dignity U Wear; and
- a freethought Yahoo! Group (to subscribe, send a blank message to: [jaxfreethought-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:jaxfreethought-subscribe@yahogroups.com)).

For information on all these activities, please visit <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org>, or see the calendar of events at the end of each newsletter and on the website. You need not be a member to attend these activities!

## 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](mailto:info@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org)

# Announcing the FCFS July Meeting

## Carrie Renwick, Program Chair

On July 21, our speaker will be David Campbell, a founding member and Board member of Florida Citizens for Science. David is an award-winning teacher and has taught science at Ridgeview Junior High and Ridgeview High School in Orange Park for twenty years. In his talk titled, "How Do We Know?" David will be exploring the different ways of learning and knowing in the domains of science and religion. He will examine how both science and religion ask and answer questions, the types of questions they ask, and how they arrive at conclusions.

David was profiled in a Sunday *New York Times* article about how he teaches biological evolution "in a hostile setting." However, you need a NYT account to access that. To learn more about David, here is a link to an article in the *Cornell Chronicles* which you should be able to access with no problem.

<http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/2008/10/david-campbell-77-teaches-evolution-florida> .

## 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](mailto: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>
- North Florida Atheists (NFA): <http://meetup.com/North-Florida-Atheists>

- Secular Saint Augustine (SSA): <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, June 14 - Second Cosmos and Atheist Movie Meetup, 6:00 p.m. (See <http://www.meetup.com/jaxatheists/> for details.)
- Monday, June 16 - FCFS Monthly Meeting, Jacksonville, 6:30 p.m. (Operation Inclusion: There's a Role for Each of Us)
- Friday, June 20 - [Secular St. Augustine Meetup](#) - St. Augustine, 7:00 p.m. (Meetups are generally the third Friday, but you need to visit website to RSVP and for meeting details.)
- Saturday, June 21 - July Newsletter Deadline
- Sunday, June 22 - Secular Sunday in the Park, Jacksonville, 10:00 a.m.
- Sunday, June 22 - JAM Summer Solstice Party, 1:00 p.m. (See <http://www.meetup.com/jaxatheists/> for details.)
- Tuesday June 24 - FCFS Monthly Social at Olive Garden, Jacksonville, 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, June 28 - FCFS volunteers at Dignity U Wear, Jacksonville, 9:00 a.m. - Noon (See Ongoing Activities for more info.)
- Sunday, July 6 - Humanist Book Discussion Group - Jacksonville, 2:00 p.m.
- Thursday, July 10 - Humanist Book Discussion Group - St. Augustine, Anastasia Island, 7:00 p.m.
- Monday, July 21 - FCFS Monthly Meeting, Jacksonville - 6:30 p.m.

## Directions to Monthly 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 Rd..

- 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](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 June-at-a Glance

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- Sunday, July 6 - Book Discussion Group - Jacksonville, 2:00 p.m.
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**Details in newsletter, e-mail reminders, and on website.**

## Membership Application



Use this PDF form

or join on our [website](#).

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