

[View this email in your browser](#)



February 2015

Volume 14, Issue 2

Table of Contents

- [February 2015 Meeting](#)
- [Will the Real Darwin Please Stand Up?](#)
- [February President's Message - Freethinker and Secularist Are Not Synonymous Terms](#)
- [February Olive Garden Social](#)
- [Free Speech and Murder](#)
- [Brief Dues Reminder](#)
- [Local AU Update](#)
- [Humanist Book Discussion Group - Jacksonville](#)
- [Humanist Book Discussion Group - St. Augustine](#)
- [Secular Meditation](#)
- [St. Augustine History and Chalupas](#)
- [Building a Heart from Stem Cells - Short Video](#)
- [NPR Corporate Sponsorship](#)
- [About our newsletter, the First Coast FreeThinker](#)
- [Why I Am an Atheist - Humanist - Freethinker](#)
- [About the First Coast Freethought Society](#)
- [March 2015 Meeting](#)
- [Northeast Florida Coalition of Reason](#)
- [Freethought Events on the First Coast](#)
- [Directions to Monthly Meeting at BBUUC](#)
- [Membership Application](#)

February 2015 Meeting

- **What:** FCFS Monthly Meeting
- **Who:** Jeremy Stalker, Ph.D., Marine Biologist, Jacksonville University

- **Title:** “Learnin’ to Fly, but They Ain’t Got Wings, Runnin’ Around Can Be the Hardest Thing: Dinosaurs, Locomotion, and Dinosaur-to-Avian Evolution”
- **When:** Monday, February 16, 2015, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (doors open at 6:00)
- **Where:** Buckman Bridge Unitarian Church, 8447 Manresa Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32244 (From the I-295 Roosevelt exit, go north to the first traffic light, Collins Rd. Turn right. Go 400 ft. The church driveway will be on your right.)

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

Meeting Description

Celebrate Darwin's birth month with us as we take a trip through time, which will include some dinosaur evolution and locomotion, geology, and dinosaur-to-avian evolution. Dr. Stalker says, “We will take a fun and informative look at what the rock and fossil record, coupled with modern analysis, can tell us about how these ancient animals lived.”

About the Speaker

Dr. Jeremy Stalker currently serves as Assistant Professor of Biology and Marine Science at Jacksonville University. He teaches Marine Geology, Paleontology, Physical Oceanography, and Marine Geochemistry.

He earned his B.S. in Geological Sciences at Michigan State University, his M.S. in Geophysics at the University of Montana, and his Ph.D. in Geological Sciences at Florida International University. His research includes a diverse array of subjects from hydrology and water resources, to animal migration tracking using geochemical elements, and paleoclimatology and paleoorganismal studies using isotopic tracers.

Stalker has had a love for fossils and paleobiology since he was a child staring at dinosaur fossils at the Smithsonian, and he went on to take paleontology and paleoecology courses at the University of Plymouth in the United Kingdom. He has published several papers on using isotopic tracers in the environment, and in migration and diet patterns of modern animals.

Recently, he has become interested in using trace fossils, or evidence of past animal movements, in reconstruction of behavior and environmental dynamics, as well as evolutionary linkages of fossils and modern animals. Stalker currently lives in Fleming Island, FL, unless he is off teaching study-abroad courses in the volcanic fields of Iceland, the cloud forests of Ecuador, or the clear waters in the Bahamas!



Will the Real Darwin Please Stand Up?

How many groups get to celebrate Darwin's enormous contribution to our body of scientific knowledge, whether Darwin Day or Darwin's birth month, with a real live Darwin impersonator? At an FCFS Darwin celebration several years ago, our own president Earl Coggins grew his whiskers out a bit, donned a bowler hat, and assumed a Darwinesque intensity of expression. We think the result was remarkable!



February President's Message - Freethinker and Secularist Are Not Synonymous Terms Earl Coggins

A very good friend of mine, whom I admire a lot, defines freethought as thought akin to principles of The Enlightenment. I like the way he thinks.

The word "freethinker" is defined by the *American Heritage*



Dictionary as, "one who has rejected authority and dogma, especially in religious thinking, in favor of rational inquiry and speculation." The word "freethought" is defined similarly as, "thought that rejects authority and dogma, especially in religion."

Dictionary.com defines a freethinker as "a person who forms opinions on the basis of reason, independent of authority or tradition, especially a person whose religious opinions differ from established belief."

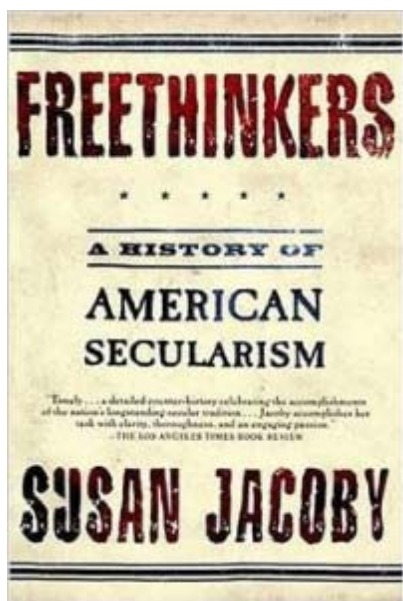


Although these definitions are pointing out that freethinkers are particularly interested in rejecting religious authority and dogma, one cannot ignore the fact that the definition of the word is comprehensive, as opposed to focusing exclusively on the rejection of religious authority and dogma. Can we walk away from the definition concluding that freethought pertains exclusively to matters of religious belief? I say no.

In her book, *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism*, Susan Jacoby defines freethought as, "a phenomenon running the gamut from the truly antireligious—those who regarded all religion as a form of superstition and wished to reduce its influence in every aspect of society—to those who adhered to a private, unconventional faith revering some form of God or Providence but at odds with orthodox religious authority."

Jacoby tells her readers in no uncertain terms that "American freethinkers have included deists who, like many of the founding fathers, believed in a watchmaker God who set the universe in motion but subsequently took no active role in the affairs of men; agnostics; and unabashed atheists."

I truly believe the freethinkers Jacoby defines as those who adhered to a private, unconventional faith at odds with orthodox religious authority, were merely coping with life the best way they could—a life that, according to Thomas Hobbes, "is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." These adherents of unconventional faith Jacoby speaks about embraced fairness and freedom as their core values, attributes still in great demand around the globe, and thus they deserve to be called freethinkers. In my opinion, it is highly likely that some of them eventually became secularists.



***Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism* by Susan Jacoby (2004)**

In the introduction to *Freethinkers*, Jacoby gives us a powerful assessment of the commonalities existing between the religious and nonreligious freethinker: “What the many types of freethinkers shared, regardless of their views on the existence or nonexistence of a divinity, was a rationalist approach to fundamental questions of earthly existence—a conviction that the affairs of human beings should be governed not by faith in the supernatural but by a reliance on reason and evidence adduced from the natural world. It was this conviction, rooted in Enlightenment philosophy, that carried the day when the former revolutionaries gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 to write the Constitution.”

This is why I believe there are many theists in the world who deserve to be called freethinkers. There is a huge difference between a religious fundamentalist and the religious freethinker described in Jacoby’s book. The religious fundamentalist is trying to conquer, while the religious freethinker is merely trying to live and let live. Jacoby’s deists may not have used reason and logic to formulate the religious segment of their lives, but they rely on reason and evidence adduced from the natural world, as Jacoby so elegantly expressed, when contemplating the affairs of human beings.

February 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, **FEBRUARY 24**, 2015, 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!

Free Speech and Murder

Fred W. Hill

Nearly 10 years ago, in March 2005 to be more precise, the editorial board of this newsletter chose to censor itself by removing what was deemed an offensive cartoon that the Managing Editor at the time chose to go with my article for that issue, “Passion Plays: The Real Deal.”

The cartoon, for those who don’t recall the ensuing debate, depicted Arnold Schwarzenegger as the Terminator with a bare-bottomed Jesus Christ over his shoulder, empty cross in the background, running and shouting, “I must save humanity from this bull-droppings.” Well, no, that’s not exactly what Arnie was saying. I just censored myself to avoid using one of George Carlin’s famous big seven dirty words, which any computer savvy seven-year-old can find in about seven seconds on the internet. But we would like to maintain the image of decorum and let parents feel assured that wherever their young children find a list of those dirty words, it won’t be from us!



This choice, whether one agrees with it or not, is our decision and not imposed on us by any government, as it might have been decades ago. If we put Jesus' or Arnie's naked behinds, or Madonna's or Janet Jackson's bare breasts, or all seven of those dirty words in our newsletter, the First Coast Freethought Society, this writer and the editorial board of *The FreeThinker* are highly unlikely to face prosecution for publishing obscenity at either the federal, state, or local level, despite however much Jacksonville City Council president Clay Yarborough might like to do so; but then, it's my guess he'd find the freethought ideas expressed herein as offensive as any naked body part. On the other hand, I also feel reasonably sure that neither Mr. Yarborough nor anyone else in the local community who shares his brand of conservatism are inclined to seek out the non-existent *FreeThinker* editorial offices and shoot everyone in sight.



"Arnie, Arnie, why have you forsaken me? You said you'd be 'right back!'"

Fifty years ago, yes, homegrown, good ol' white-skinned, Jesus-loving American terrorists were murdering people who expressed opinions they sharply disagreed with, even those as seemingly innocuous as that all U.S. citizens should have equal rights regardless of the color of their skin or their ethnic or national ancestry, as granted by our federal constitution. Some of those terrorists were officers of the law who subverted the law while the fine upstanding members of the community sat on juries and found those terrorists not-guilty of all charges, despite mountains of evidence against them. Plenty of social problems still persist half a century later, but things have improved enough that in the City of Jacksonville, Florida, I don't live in dread that someone is plotting to murder me for writing or drawing something he finds offensive.

The cartoonists and other employees of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, on the other hand, had explicit reason to believe people were actively plotting to murder them specifically because of the cartoons and stories they had published. Their offices, after all, had been fire-bombed in 2011 in response to a cover featuring a cartoon of a man in typical Arabic outfit, presumably but not identified as Muhammad, saying, "100 lashes if you don't die of laughter."

A cartoon that made some people so mad they wanted to commit murder and set off bombs—and did.



On January 7, 2015, Islamic fanatics entered the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, murdered 12 people and wounded another 11, supposedly as a means to express their devotion to a man who died nearly 1,400 years ago and in the name of their god, who to my mind deserves less reverence than a comfy chair. Thousands paid tribute to the terrorist victims, identifying with them through the slogan, “Je suis Charlie” (“I am Charlie”), expressing their support for free speech and outrage at those who would try to suppress it through violence. There were also plenty who, essentially, claimed that the cartoonists and other staff of *Charlie Hebdo* had it coming. Many of those are Muslims around the world who fervidly believe that anyone who dares to criticize or ridicule their prophet and the tenets of their religion in any way deserves to be slaughtered. Yes, there are Christians, and even Jews and people of many other faiths, who have similar beliefs and in centuries past committed all manner of atrocities as an expression of their religious madness—all are equally deserving of condemnation. Then there are a few who, in my regard, ignorantly condemn the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists of having been racist, taking certain cartoons entirely out of context based on images alone and claiming that criticism of religious extremism is somehow equal to racism, as if all Muslims are of one race, or even that all Arabs must be Muslim, when neither is the case at all. Certainly, *Charlie Hebdo* mocked religion—all religions, not just Islam—but it was a publication dedicated to satirizing every aspect of culture, including racist politicians who want to send all Muslims packing regardless of how they behaved. As described by Liana Bird in the *Huffington Post*, *Charlie Hebdo* mocked “ALL systems and organizations and individuals of power—from political to religious to everything in-between.” (http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/liana-bird/charlie-hebdo_b_6461030.html). Another take is that *Charlie Hebdo* just went too far, that the publication wallowed in bad taste, and was essentially waving fresh meat in front of ravenous wolves and finally got bit. As if there is any excuse whatsoever for mass murder by zealots (or anyone!) who cannot tolerate anyone criticizing and even mocking everything they hold as holy. As if any cartoon can possibly be more offensive than pre-meditated murder.



Some of the victims of religious insanity on January 7, 2015.

Top: Stéphane Charbonnier, Jean Cabut, Georges Wolinski, Bernard Verlhac, Bernard Maris. Bottom: Philippe Honore, Michael Renaud, Elsa Cayat, Ahmed Merabet.

After the 2011 firebomb attack, *Charlie Hebdo* editor and cartoonist Stéphane Charbonnier, aka Charb, stated in an interview, "I'd prefer to die on my feet than to live on my knees." Charb and his cohorts were avowed absolutists for freedom of expression, and he and many others paid the ultimate price for living up to their ideals. Charb described *Charlie Hebdo* as "a satirical paper produced by left-wingers, and when I say left-wingers that goes all the way from anarchists to communists to Greens, Socialists, and the rest. Above all it is a secular and atheist newspaper." (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/19/film-protests-charlie-idUSL5E8KJE6320120919>) So despite our far more decorous approach, and recognizing that we aren't likely putting our very lives on the line by contributing to our own little newsletter, we are kindred spirits with Charb and his colleagues at *Charlie Hebdo*. Je suis Charlie.

Brief Dues Reminder

Judy Hankins, Membership Chair

As many of you still need to renew, we are including renewal options here for your convenience.

- Renew on the FCFS website by clicking <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/cms/support> and using PayPal or a credit card.
- Mail a check to the First Coast Freethought Society, PO Box 550591, Jacksonville, Florida 32255-0591.
- Renew at a meeting using a check, a credit card, or cash.

If your contact info has changed, please include an application with your check. Here's the link to our application, <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/cms/app>. Remember also, multiple **levels of membership** are available should you choose.

All membership dues and donations are tax-deductible, and you will receive a letter from the treasurer to that effect for IRS purposes.



Local AU Update

In this regular feature, you will be kept apprised of the actions of the local AU chapters

which include the AU of Northeast Florida (Jacksonville) and the Clay County Chapter. If separation of church and state issues are important to you, we encourage you to join Americans United on the local and national levels.

The Northeast Florida Chapter (Jacksonville) of Americans United for Separation of Church and State continues to develop strategies to encourage the Jacksonville City Council to respect the diversity of all Jacksonville citizens and discontinue their divisive practice of offering exclusively Christian prayers at City Council Meetings.

To Join AU

Local: <http://www.meetup.com/AU-Americans-United-for-Separation-of-Church-and-State/>

National: <https://support.au.org/donate>



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:
 - March 1, 2015 - *Tending the Epicurean Garden*, by Hiram Crespo
 - April 5, 2015 - *Six Amendments*, by Justice John Paul Stevens

Gods may exist, but they're too far removed to care about humans. So our best purpose in life is not to please gods, but to be happy. Which is not as easy as it sounds, since short-term pleasures and selfishness create longer-term misery.

Thus taught Epicurus, 2,300 years ago. Hiram Crespo brings the Epicurean passion for maximum happiness into the modern age with this practical guidebook.

Step one in what Crespo calls the "hedonic calculus" is to rein in desires, so they become easier to satisfy—just the opposite of the luxurious indulgence



so often incorrectly associated with Epicureanism. From there, he offers a blizzard of ideas, from healthy recipes that stimulate natural “feel-good” chemicals in the brain to the journaling of positive events, even on a bad day. The highest attainable happiness, though, is communing with friends—it just doesn’t get any better than that.



Being smart about being happy means using the best knowledge and tools available. *Tending the Epicurean Garden* is an excellent place to start.

Link to Book Review:

<http://www.humanistpress.com/tending-the-epicurean-garden.html>

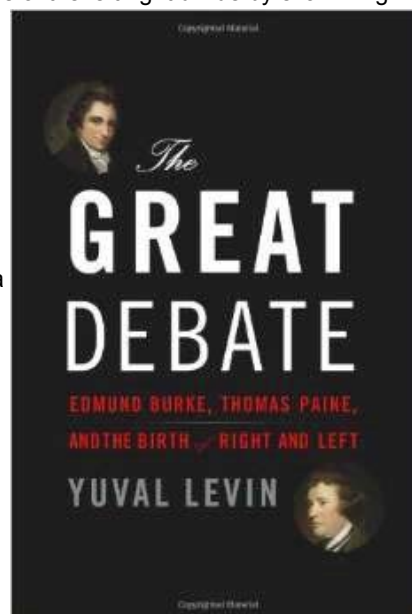
For More Info: Contact Herb Gerson at 12herbert30gerson@bellsouth.net, or call 904-363-6446.

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:** Books planned for discussion:
 - March 12, 2015 - *The Great Debate*, by Yuval Levin
 - April 9, 2015 - (to be determined)

For more than two centuries, our political life has been divided between a party of progress and a party of conservation. In *The Great Debate*, Yuval Levin explores the origins of the left/right divide by examining the views of the men who best represented each side of that debate at its outset: Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine. In a groundbreaking exploration of the roots of our political order, Levin shows that American partisanship originated in the debates over the French Revolution, fueled by the fiery rhetoric of these ideological titans.

Levin masterfully shows how Burke's and Paine's differing views, a reforming conservatism and a restoring progressivism, continue to shape our current political discourse—on issues ranging from abortion to welfare, education, economics, and beyond. Essential reading for anyone seeking to understand Washington's often acrimonious rifts, *The Great Debate* offers a profound examination of what conservatism, liberalism, and the debate between them truly amount to.



Link to Book Review:

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/feb/22/great-debate-yuval-levin-review>

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.

Secular Meditation

John Ruskuski

Meditation need not be thought of as a religious practice. That is, in my humble opinion. To sit quietly doing nothing, thinking about nothing in particular, and avoiding thinking about anything in particular, can be a very relaxing experience. Not even spiritual at all. It probably happens, from time to time, in most people's lives without their even being aware of it. But there are, of course, those who cannot bear the experience of listening to nothing and thinking nothing. There must be in their lives continuous input such as a radio or television. A portable device is always at hand for those who cannot tolerate the world as it is. Plug into the system of music, news or entertainment and keep the world around us at bay. Let the media take us away from all, including ourselves. Am I raising the old debate between modern society and asceticism? A debate that goes back for thousands of years?



Let us skip the debate.

Science, every day, is making more and more discoveries about what goes on inside our brain. The old longing to know the connection between the brain, the mind, and the body is slowly being revealed. Meditation has come to be known as having real benefits to our well-being of body and mind. If a particular source of nutrition or medicine will benefit you, would you not utilize it? And so it can be with meditation. I'm not talking here about anything religious or spiritual.

Let me share with you my own experience in practicing meditation.

Before knowing anything about transcendental meditation or Zen meditation or Christian prayerful mediation or any of the traditional methods, there came upon me at a young age the habit of sitting quietly watching the grass grow or clouds pass overhead. No thoughts of present, past or future, just a quiet feeling of well-being. Sometimes I'd walk alone for hours in nearby fields, woods, and marsh just taking in my surroundings in a form known to some Buddhists as walking meditation. A practice I still continue to this day. As I learned about yoga, Zen, and other ways of the meditating world, my practice became more intentional. When as a young agnostic and later an atheist, my meditating practice became part of my personal tool kit and would come to serve me well.





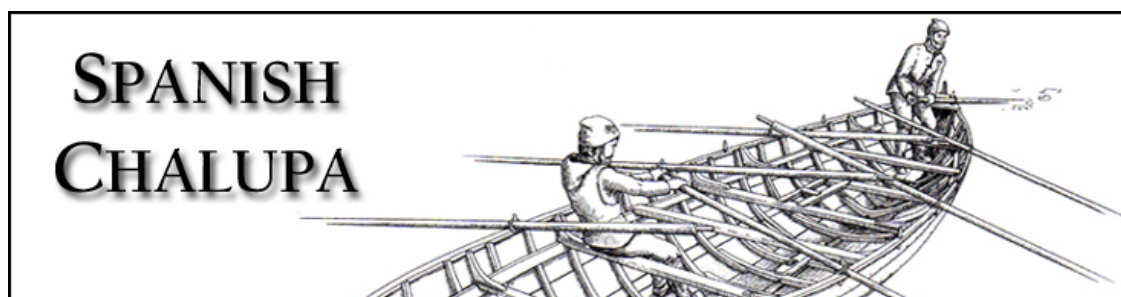
We all go through stressful times in our lives. Personal tragedies, financial loss, love loss, or loved ones lost, and mistakes made, are visited upon us all. Anger, revenge, or violence may overtake some. Self-pity, lack of courage, or moral laziness may overtake others. None are immune. At times some may turn to drink, drugs, or obsessive behavior. There are no angels on this earth, and saints only become so after they are dead. In our western culture, we can look back all the way to the ancient Greek and Roman stoics who warned us about our self-destructive ways and gave us sound advice that still makes sense today if we will stop to listen. Contemplation or meditation was one of the tools passed down through the ages. It wasn't invented with yoga pants and day spas.

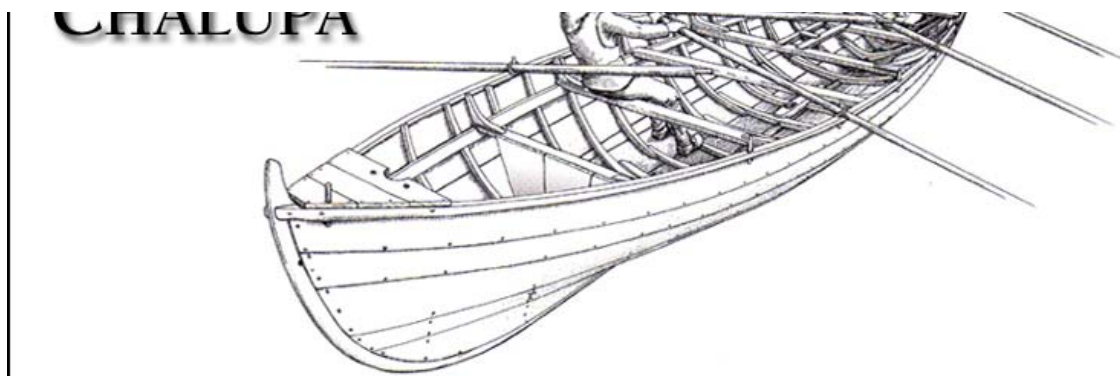
Mindfulness, not escape, is the goal of meditation as I know it. This mindfulness is also referred to, by meditation practitioners, as alertness. To be alert (or mindful) of our everyday activities from an inner-self viewpoint is the beneficial outcome one can expect from meditation. It can help make a positive change in anyone's life. For a dramatic example see the documentary, *The Dhamma Brothers*, about death row inmates and how meditation changed their lives.

Contemplating the warmth of the sun.



Zack was a great friend and Springer Spaniel who shared some wonderful times with me. One of his habits was to lie prone on the little patch of sunlit grass in our backyard. He had an unusually large head and long ears that nearly touched the ground as he sat, sphinx like, absorbing the sun and staring off into the horizon. I often wondered what was going on inside that head. He wasn't sniffing the air or watching birds or listening to sounds but just looking, looking like a dog looks out into the universe. I'd like to look like a dog.





St. Augustine History and Chalupas

Frederick C. Lane

FCFS member Fred Lane is taking part in a historical project that he requested we share with our readers. —Fred W. Hill, Editor



Fred Lane, at left, offers pointers on installing planks.

Four-hundred fifty years ago, the City of Saint Augustine was founded. Its founding was partly due to a small but significant boat called a Chalupa that made getting to and from the large ocean-going sailing ships possible. This low-drafting, thirty-eight foot boat made it possible for the original settlers to ferry supplies from the ships, through the shallows, to the original settlement. The Saint Augustine Maritime Heritage Foundation (SAMHF) is building a near-exact replica of this indomitable vessel right now at the Fountain of Youth Park. The last of the side planks was fitted recently, and the boat is to be launched in early March 2015, with the goal of being featured in Saint Augustine's 450th celebration in October of this year.

You can learn more at [HTTP://STAUGMARITIMEHERITAGE.ORG/](http://staugmaritimeheritage.org/)

Building a Heart from Stem Cells - Short Video

Carrie Renwick

I invite you to watch this fascinating 1-1/2 minute video showing that someday you will be able to receive an organ made from your own stem cells. This would, of course, prevent the risk of autoimmune rejection and the need for immunosuppressant drugs. Wow. Science prevails!

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=10152029229372917&fref=nf>

NPR Corporate Sponsorship

Carrie Renwick, Fundraising Chair

We would love to see NPR contributions come in throughout the year!

To Donate on a Monthly Basis

1. Go to the FCFS website home page, <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org>, where you will find a PayPal button to make an automatic monthly donation to our NPR fund. Automatic monthly donations via PayPal require you to have a PayPal account.
2. Set it up through your online banking system.

To Donate on a One-Time Basis

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 (via PayPal).
2. Mail a check payable to the FCFS to PO Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255.
3. Bring your contribution to a meeting or another FCFS event and give it to a board member.

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

Thank you!

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, poetry, etc., should be e-mailed to Editor@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org. Material may be submitted only ELECTRONICALLY. Submissions may be formatted in MS Word, in a text file, or cut and pasted into an e-mail.

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*. Authors (not the First Coast Freethought Society) are responsible for the accuracy of all quotations and for supplying complete references where applicable.

Why I Am an Atheist - Humanist - Freethinker See Your Name Here!

The Editorial Committee has long observed that stories of previously-religious folks becoming nonreligious and subsequently "coming out of the closet" are always well received and garner positive feedback. The Editorial Committee hereby invites you to tell us YOUR story, and we'll publish it here, in what we'd like to see become a regular feature of our newsletter: "Why I am an atheist, humanist, freethinker... whatever fits you. Submit your story to Editor@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org.

Don't be shy! Each of us has a story to tell. If we are involved with the FCFS, there is a story behind our evolution to freethought. Some stories may be similar, some may have significant differences. But all are interesting! If you don't consider yourself a writer, maybe you should give it a shot, anyway. Someone would be happy to give you a hand with it, if you like, just ask Fred or Carrie. —The Editorial Committee

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.

Membership

If you share our world view and would like to be a part of the FCFS, we encourage you to join. If you are new, or if you are renewing and your contact info has changed, you can pick up an application or a brochure at a meeting, or you can download and print an application on our website: <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/cms/app> and mail it in.

- You can join online: <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/cms/support>
- You can join by mail: Send your application and check, payable to the FCFS, to PO Box 550591, Jacksonville, FL 32255-0591.

Meetings

The FCFS meets the THIRD Monday of each month at the Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Church, 8447 Manresa Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32244.

Directions: From the I-295 Roosevelt exit, go north to the first traffic light, Collins Rd. Turn right. Go 400 feet. The church driveway will be on your right.

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

- Two monthly humanist book discussion groups, one in Jacksonville and one in St. Augustine. Current books are listed in each newsletter. For further details, visit <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/cms/bdg>.
- 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. We meet the fourth Sunday of each month, 10:00 a.m. to noon, at Losco Regional Park,

10851 Hood Road South, Jax, 32257. See Activities section of the FCFS home page:
<http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/cms/>.

- Dinners for Doubtters (when scheduled).
- Volunteer opportunity on a monthly basis at Dignity U Wear. Visit <http://firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org/cms/component/content/article/50/150>, currently scheduled for the third Saturday morning of each month, through December 2015.
- A freethought Yahoo! Group. To subscribe, send a blank message to jaxfreethought-subscribe@yahoogroups.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 2015 Board Members

President - Earl Coggins: 904-521-5039

Vice President - Carrie Renwick: 904-268-8826

Secretary - Liz DuClose: 352-260-2880

Treasurer - Stephen Peek: 904-742-5390

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

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

At Large - John Ruskuski: 904-419-8826

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

March 2015 Meeting

Carrie Renwick, Program Chair

In March, we welcome **David R. Simon, Ph.D.**, sociologist, author, retired sociology professor and research fellow, back to the podium. The title of his March talk is, "The United States of Insanity." This talk is, in fact, a little preview of what's to come in a book by the same name that he is currently writing. Dr.

Simon's talks are always extremely informative, as well as entertaining, and we feel his March talk will be no exception!

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, PO 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>
- 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).

Freethought Events on the First Coast

- Monday, February 9 - JAM Session, 6:30 p.m. (See <http://www.meetup.com/jaxatheists/> for details.)
- Monday, February 16 - FCFS Monthly Meeting at Buckman Bridge Unitarian Church - 6:30

p.m.

- Friday, February 20 - [Secular St. Augustine Meetup](#) - St. Augustine, 7:00 p.m. (Meetups are generally the third Friday, but you need to visit the website to RSVP and for meeting details.)
- Saturday, February 21 - Volunteer at Dignity U Wear, Jacksonville - 9:00 a.m.
- Sunday, February 22 - FCFS Secular Sunday in the Park, Jacksonville, 10:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, February 24 - FCFS Monthly Social at Olive Garden, Jacksonville, 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, February 28 - FCFS January 2015 Newsletter Deadline
- Sunday, March 1 - Humanist Book Discussion Group - Jacksonville, 2:00 p.m.
- Monday, March 9 - JAM Session, 6:30 p.m. (See <http://www.meetup.com/jaxatheists/> for details.)
- Thursday, March 12 - Humanist Book Discussion Group - St. Augustine, Anastasia Island, 7:00 p.m.
- Monday, March 16 - FCFS Monthly Meeting at Buckman Bridge Unitarian Church - 6:30 p.m.

Directions to Monthly Meeting at BBUUC

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 (Please note, Google Maps, as well as other maps, may not be consistent with the actual street signs.)

Membership Application



Use this PDF form [website](#).

to print the application and mail it in with your check, or join on our

Copyright © 2015 First Coast Freethought Society, Inc., All rights reserved.

[unsubscribe from this list](#)