

First Coast

FreeThinker



The newsletter of the First Coast Freethought Society

June 2006

Volume 4, Issue 6

President's Message For June 2006

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Carrie Renwick

Hard as it is to believe, we are approaching the halfway mark of the year! I therefore feel that an update is appropriate, at least to provide highlights from the board meetings thus far, and a general assessment of where we are and where we're going. Interestingly, as I review our accomplishments in 2006, it appears we are remarkably on target.

The internal workings of the group are percolating along nicely. The committees established at the beginning of the year are all functioning well. The Mem-

bership Committee is contacting every past member and everyone who has ever expressed interest in the FCFS since its inception in 1998, a noble and necessary undertaking. They are also managing the sign-in and refreshments tables skillfully,

lar meetings (a first for the FCFS) and is planning advertisements for our upcoming special projects. Publicity has enabled another first for the FCFS: We have had a letter to the editor published in the *Times-Union*, over the name of the FCFS. We anticipate more to come.



I believe that the FCFS continues to head in the right direction!

"What then is, or can be called, a moral guide? The shortest possible answer is one word: Intelligence."

From the book, *What Would You Substitute for the Bible as a Moral Guide?*

by Robert G. Ingersoll

and they have started a "caring tree" coordinated by Nita Pitts.

The newsletter team continues producing a top-notch publication which earns praise from its readers. Publicity has instituted paid advertising for some regu-

The Program Committee is right on track providing outstanding monthly programs largely as outlined at the January planning meeting.

(Continued on page 7)

June 2006 Meeting

**Ellen Wagner, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy, University of North Florida**

"Alternative Ethical Systems for Freethinkers"

Monday, June 19, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

(Upstairs in the Sanctuary - Doors open at 6:00)

Unitarian Universalist Church • 7405 Arlington Expressway • Jacksonville, FL

HUMANIST BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

When: 2:00 p.m., the third Sunday of each month.

Where: Borders Books, 8801 Southside Blvd., 519-6500, books are usually in stock.

What: Books/magazines planned for discussion:

- June 18, 2006 - *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi
- July 16, 2006 - *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* by John Perkins



Economic hit men are highly paid professionals who cheat countries around the globe out of trillions of dollars. They funnel money from the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other foreign “aid” organizations into the coffers of huge corporations and the pockets of a few wealthy families who control the planet's natural resources. Their tools included fraudulent financial reports, rigged elections, payoffs, extortion, sex, and murder. They play a game as old as empire, but one that has taken on new and terrifying dimensions during this time of globalization.

Confessions of an Economic Hit Man is Perkins' account of his career with consulting firm Chas. T. Main. His duties were to convince the leadership of underdeveloped countries to accept enormous development loans. Saddled with huge debts they could not hope to pay, these countries were forced to acquiesce to political pressure from the United States on a variety of issues. Perkins describes how developing nations were effectively neutralized politically, had their wealth gaps driven wider, and economies crippled in the long run.

For more information, contact moderator Jewell Kross at JKross@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org or 904-996-1553.



First Coast FreeThinker

The *First Coast FreeThinker* is published for members of the First Coast Freethought Society, other freethinkers, and potential freethinkers. We exchange newsletters with other freethought groups and obtain information from many diverse sources.

Readers are invited and encouraged to reprint our original materials provided they give credit to this publication.

The officials of the FCFS are not responsible for opinions or other statements expressed in this newsletter. It is intended to convey ideas to stimulate discussion on a variety of subjects.

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We welcome submissions. Deadlines are the end of the **THIRD** week of the month for the following month. Submit contributions by e-mail to Hugo (see above), or mail to Hugo Borresen, 8831 Taurus Circle South, Jacksonville, FL 32222. Submit web site contributions by e-mail to Carrie Renwick at the address above.

My Thoughts on SOS

Jay Mooney

Last year, before I became a member of the First Coast Freethought Society, I did something that isn't recommended in the 12-step recovery movement: I broke my addiction/recovery anonymity in a speaking appearance before the group (Sept. 19, 2005: "Losing god saved my life: How an ex-congressional aide overcame addiction through free thought"). With that in mind, I feel compelled to share my thoughts about last month's presentation by representatives of Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS).

The SOS officials that visited us made some good points, ideas that aren't often heard openly in 12-step meetings. SOS seems to be more open to investigation into the phenomenon of addiction and to new ideas regarding recovery methods. There is an anti-intellectual strain that runs through the 12-step movement, a view that all any addict needs to recover is to attend meetings all the time and study the 12-step literature, work the steps, etc., and all will be well. Indeed, I know people who have done that and have found their way out of addiction. However, I have also seen many people, myself included, struggle to overcome addiction, attending scores of meetings, filling reams of paper with step work, calling addict after addict after addict for help, and who still find recovery elusive.

Of course, for such hard core cases, 12-step "old timers" will say things like, "They never fully

surrendered to the program," or "they are constitutionally incapable" of reaching a level of honesty that will allow themselves to recover (whatever that means). Basically, they take all the credit for whatever good happens in the 12-step movement but blame any failure on the individual. That's sort of like the concept of god that many people have. When something good happens, it is because of god. If something bad happens, it is because of the person (or the devil).

I have a love-hate relationship with the 12-step movement. Every time I attend a meeting, I hear things I can't accept, but I also hear good, positive, rational

After all, that which addicted people have in common is greater than that which divides us – or at least it should be.

things, too, and see people who have come from the pits of active addiction and now have wonderful, productive and happy lives.

My difficulty with SOS and other secular programs is that they don't provide a real blueprint for how a person can recover. In spite of all their flaws, the 12-steps do provide a model for recovery, and, when altered to dovetail with a more tolerant, free thought perspective, they are even more effective (see accompanying free thought version of the 12 steps). At least that's what I've found.

One indisputable fact is that

the 12-step fellowships are widely available for people with addiction problems. Alcoholics

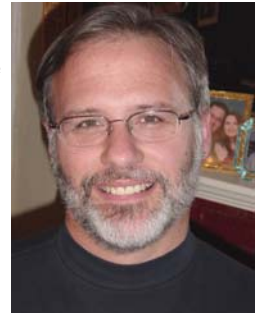
Anonymous

(AA) has hundreds of meetings a month in Jacksonville, and while its first spin off, Narcotics Anonymous (NA) has a lesser presence, it is still well organized and very accessible on the First Coast.

So, anyone wanting to begin an SOS group here in Jacksonville would have to start from scratch, and that's a lot to ask any recovering person to do. The most energized people to do

something along these lines are people who are new to recovery, but that's dicey because the person would probably be best served by becoming involved in an existing, well-entrenched program. That leaves us with experienced, long-term recovering people; and, frankly, my experience has been that when someone reaches such a status he or she usually isn't vigorous enough to start a new recovery initiative from scratch. As they say in AA and NA, "Life shows up!"

As such, it is pretty much a circular situation in that many folks could undoubtedly benefit from a local SOS group, but good old fashioned inertia makes creating one difficult, at least one that is sufficiently able to sustain itself and provide a core of people with solid, durable recovery to help newcomers or chronic relapsers.



Frankly, I would be more interested in developing and/or helping grow any existing 12-step groups in the area geared toward freethinkers, agnostics, or atheists. I believe the local recovery movement could benefit from the development or expansion

of such groups in Jacksonville, maintaining the principles that undergird the steps while jettisoning supernaturalism and intellectually useless god talk. And working within the existing 12-step framework would help unite recovering people, whether

they are theistic or non-theistic. After all, that which addicted people have in common is greater than that which divides us – or at least it should be.



A Freethought Path Through the 12 Steps

1) We admitted we had a problem with addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.

Original AA 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.)

2) Came to believe that we could recover and lead happy and productive lives.

Original AA: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3) Made a decision to entrust our will and our lives to the care of the collective wisdom and resources of those who have searched before us.

Original AA: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to God as we understood Him.

4) Made a thorough and balanced personal inventory of ourselves.

Original AA: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5) Acknowledged to ourselves without reservation, and to another human being, the exact nature of our challenges – our strengths as well as our

weaknesses.

Original AA: We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6) Became determined to build upon our strengths and to transform our weaknesses into strengths.

Original AA: Were entirely ready to have God remove these defects of character.

7) With humility and openness, we learned to ask for help with our efforts at self-improvement without embarrassment or shame.

Original AA: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8) Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Original AA: Same.

9) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Original AA: Same.

10) Continued to take

personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Original AA: Same.

11) Sought to quiet our minds and ground ourselves through meditation and other appropriate practices, seeking only knowledge and power to live happy and productive lives.

Original AA: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12) Having become physically and emotionally healthier, we carried our experience, strength and hope to others and continued to follow a path toward living happy and productive lives.

Original AA: Have had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



The Fundamentalist Stealth War Against Public Education

Fred W. Hill

Florida students are failing at science. As reported in a *Florida Times-Union* article, "FCAT science scores disappointing" (in the May 25, 2005, Metro section on p. 1), a majority of students "scored below their grade levels on the science portion of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test" based on 2005 results. Duval County was ranked below the state average.

While the report is alarming, to anyone who has taken notice of the interplay of cultural, religious and political trends over the last three decades, it should not be surprising. After all, while the religious fundamentalists decry what they perceive as the growing hedonism and licentiousness of society (which they blame on the inclusion of evolution and exclusion of biblical teaching in public schools) and despite recent legal and political setbacks – such as *Kitzmilller et al vs. Dover Area School District*, December 20, 2005 (which found the teaching of intelligent design unconstitutional) and the recent fall of former top Republican Congressman and staunch biblical literalist Tom DeLay – their influence has nevertheless been growing. Not to the extent that an overt extremist like Pat Robertson could easily be elected President, but their political clout certainly helped put "compassionate conservative" George W. Bush into that office.

On the campaign trail and as

President, Bush claimed that education is one of his top priorities. As a contender for the White House, Governor Bush boasted of the success of his reforms of the Texas educational system, reputedly significantly improving test scores throughout the Lone Star State. Since taking office, the President visited Jacksonville schools twice to speak about the importance of education – at Hyde Park Elementary School on September 9, 2003, and at Florida Community College at Jacksonville on January 14, 2005.

And, of course, a key goal of Bush's first term was passage of

And if students across the nation, not just in Florida, are failing to keep up with science education standards, well, that would hardly cause fundamentalists to shed any tears ...

his national education reform package, the No Child Left Behind Act (NLCB), achieved in January 2002 with support from "notorious" liberal Senator Edward Kennedy. Never mind that regardless of bipartisan support, NLCB remains controversial for a variety of reasons and has been inadequately supported financially and that the Texas educational "miracle" was apparently based more on fraud than

on fact (see <http://www.madkane.com/education/president.html> for a report on the controversies).



Of course, politicians throughout history have routinely fudged the truth and promised far more than they actually deliver. However, the reported failure of Florida students to learn science and the erosion of funding for public schools across the nation may exemplify not standard political failure to keep promises but rather mounting success of the stated goals of a particular faction of the national electorate – the religious fundamentalists.

The more extreme among them have made no secret of their loathing of public education. The Reverend Jerry Falwell, for example, announced, "I hope I live to see the day when, as in the early days of our country, we won't have any public schools. The churches will have taken them over again and Christians will be running them. What a happy day that will be!" (*America Can Be Saved*, 1979 pp. 52-53, from Albert J. Sword of the Lord Publishers, Murphreesboro, TN). Robert Thoburn of the Fairfax Christian School in Virginia, declared that public schools need to be abolished to save them from humanism. As originally discussed by David C. Berliner of Arizona State University in a 1996 lecture, (see <http://courses>.

ed.asu.edu/berliner/readings/differingh.htm), Thoburn recommended that Christians should get themselves elected to school boards and then “vote against all taxes, promote larger class sizes, reduce the salaries of teachers, harass teachers and administrators by demanding tighter accounting practices whenever they request reimbursement for anything, keep the board from making any decisions that might improve instruction, keep textbook adoption committees in turmoil, and so forth. Other committed Christians are urged to take all legitimate actions to hamper and discourage public schools, such as arguing against them in public debates and voting no in all school-bond elections.”

Similarly, Robert Simonds, founder of the Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE), a name carefully chosen to avoid controversy and/or any hint of its true purpose, recommended in his *How to Elect Christians to Public Office* (1986), “We need strong board members who know right from wrong. The Bible, being the only true source on right and wrong, should be the guide of board members. Only godly Christians can truly qualify for this critically important position.”

In short, the fundamentalists have ulterior motives in their support for reducing taxes, a campaign promise President George W. Bush managed to keep, in stark contrast to his father who infamously raised taxes after vowing during his campaign, “Read my lips: no new taxes.” And if students

across the nation, not just in Florida, are failing to keep up with science education standards, well, that would hardly cause fundamentalists to shed any tears as they are so adamantly opposed to children learning anything that contradicts their Bibles or that might enable children to think for themselves, to question authority, to actually learn to reason. If this means that eventually our entire educational system will



falter as Europeans, Chinese and Indians outperform Americans in all fields of science, including technological innovations, and that as a result the American economy steeply declines, well, what does that matter to Christians who *know* that they are *saved* and that their lord will take care of them?? It matters as little as fear of dying matters to an extremist Muslim flying a plane into a building for the greater glory of Allah and imagined heavenly reward!

Whether or not President Bush is intentionally cohering to

the tactics of Thoburn and Simonds, the results of his actions seem to be supporting their long-range goals. Our public school systems are hardly dying, yet many are doing far worse than they should be, in large part because they lack adequate resources and are expected to do too much under difficult conditions which would exist even without the machinations of conniving fundamentalists. However, funding and administration of public education is controlled by one means or another by the voting public and our elected politicians, including school board members. Of course, improving the public school system and thwarting the designs of the extreme religious right puts a greater burden of responsibility on rational citizens who care about the genuine future of this nation and of this Earth and do not expect to be raptured to heaven, to take part in the political process and make informed decisions when voting.

If the fundamentalists continue to get away with their political shenanigans and are wrong about the supposed benevolence of their imaginary lord, and I have no doubt that they are, the entire American public will pay a heavy price for the hubris of those who are so certain they are doing the work of their lord by doing their damndest to ensure that students fail at science and that our public schools and the public itself fails this nation's children.



President's Message for June 2006

(Continued from page 1)

A Long-Range Planning, has been created and has identified a three-year goal of increasing our visibility and continuing to build membership. Action is currently underway to achieve these goals.

Our special projects are thriving, as well. Coordinated by Wilhelmina Walton and Earl Coggins, the science panel discussion scheduled for the Fall is coming along nicely. The adult literacy program participants are teaching students regularly. Under the leadership of Joque Soskis, the Student Essay Contest Committee is hard at work.

They plan to have the contest underway for the 2006-2007 academic year.

The FCFS is soon to get additional media exposure on TV. The Center for Inquiry has produced excellent half-hour videotapes about freethought, secular humanism, etc., which they loan to groups, free of charge, to be aired on public access TV channels. The FCFS will be denoted as the sponsoring group. We are most grateful to Mike Cross for making this project happen.

One special project we had in mind presented a dilemma. Deciding whether or not to participate in the Beaches Holiday Display (on public property), by entering a secular display as a pro-

test against the religious nature of the Beaches Holiday Display, turned out to be a difficult decision, indeed. Ultimately, it was decided that entering a secular humanist display would be legitimizing the religious displays in the first place. We concluded "two wrongs don't make a right" and decided instead to write to the powers that be to voice our concern about the display.

Thank you all for the many thoughtful and articulate replies you sent in response to our opinion poll concerning this quandary. Your input was valuable in helping the board make its decision. I believe that the FCFS continues to head in the right direction!



Ongoing FCFS Activities

Dinners For Atheists (and Freethinkers, Humanists, Agnostics, etc.)

Sign up to attend or host a dinner yourself. Sign-up sheets will be at the back table at the monthly meetings. For further details on how this works, see page 9 of the February 2006 *Freethinker*, or ask the hospitality ladies at the back table.

Atheist Sunday Morning (or Sunday Morning in the Park)

For those of us seeking more freethought fellowship, conversation and camaraderie, here is an opportunity to get together on Sunday mornings. Contact **John Ruskuski** at ruskuski@ilnk.com or call 904-260-0071.

No Atheist Left Behind (or Are You Going My Way?)

If you are seeking a ride to an FCFS event, contact **Hugo Borresen** at HBorresen@firstcoastfreethoughtsociety.org or call 904-779-6883.

Caring Tree

If a telephone call to any member or anyone interested in our group might serve a purpose--such as a ride to our meeting or some other personal need, please contact **Nita Pitts** at 904-996-0879 or e-mail her at pitrymnd@comcast.net. Otherwise, leave a notation on the sign-in sheet at the front table during one of our meetings.

Challenge the Biology Teacher

Jim Strayer

The Discovery Institute, a creationist think tank which is critical of evolution, is supplying students with prepared questions on such topics as the origins of life and the theory of evolution. Some of these questions are based on incorrect information. Attacking evolution does not prove any other theory to be correct. Students should know that any scientific theory must be based on verifiable evidence. We should encourage students to search for information from scientific journals or college biology text books that support any other theory, such as creationism or intelligent design.

The following are the Discovery Institute's questions and my scientifically accurate responses to these questions .

Why do textbooks claim that the 1953 Miller-Urey experiment shows how life's building blocks may have formed on Earth - when conditions on the early Earth were probably nothing like those used in the experiment, and the origin of life remains a mystery?

Stanley Miller did have a good idea of what the early environment on Earth might have been like by studying the gaseous clouds in outer space. The experiment has been repeated several times by other scientists using other probable gasses.

These experiments have yielded interesting results about how life may have started, but they have little to do with the scientific theory of evolution which is based on evidence from DNA, cells and organisms. The Miller-Urey experiment is in text books to show that scientists are continually studying the early stages of life. The Miller-Urey experiments also show how science is done and verified.

(*BIOLOGY Today and Tomorrow*, Cecie Starr, 2005, p. 221-2)

Why don't textbooks discuss the Cambrian explosion in which all major animal groups appear together in the fossil record fully formed instead of branching from a common ancestor -thus contradicting the evolutionary tree of life?

Text books do present information about the Cambrian period. The fact is that all major groups do not appear in the same strata. The claim that the major groups of animals appeared suddenly in the fossil record is wrong and misleading. It can be easily demonstrated by checking the early animal evolution that stretches back ten to forty million years earlier than Chengjiang fossil beds. There is a complete response to the creationist spin on the Cambrian Explosion in the National Center for Science Education, *REPORTS*, Sept/Oct 2000, pages 16-22.

Why do textbooks use

drawings of similarities in vertebrate embryos as evidence for common ancestry - even though biologists have known for over a century that vertebrate embryos are not most similar in their early stages, and the drawings are faked?

The reason that text books use comparison of early embryo development is because they show so many similarities. In the very early stages, sometimes photographs are used to show the formation of tissues which will develop into organs. Human embryos, for example, have pharyngeal pouches, a tail, and six aortic arches - all features found in embryonic fish. The statement that these drawings are faked probably refers to Haeckel who did his work in the middle 1800's. We now have very good photographs of the tissue and organ development to show the similarities as well as the differences of embryology development. (*BIOLOGY Today and Tomorrow*, Cecie Starr, 2005, p. 471)

Why do textbooks portray this fossil as the missing link between dinosaurs and modern birds - even though modern birds are probably not descended from it, and its supposed ancestors do not appear until millions of years after it?

There is much new evidence to connect dinosaurs and birds. Recent fossils found in China

leave no doubt about birds evolving from dinosaurs. Most paleontologists now consider birds to be dinosaurs because of the evolution of feathers and skeletal structure. There is an excellent documentary on this subject, "The Dinosaur Feather Mystery," produced by Discovery Communications. The June 2005, *DISCOVER* magazine has excellent photographs showing dinosaur fossils with feathers.

Why do textbooks use pictures of peppered moths camouflaged on tree trunks as evidence for natural selection - when biologists have known since the 1980s that the moths don't normally rest on tree trunks, and all the pictures have been staged?

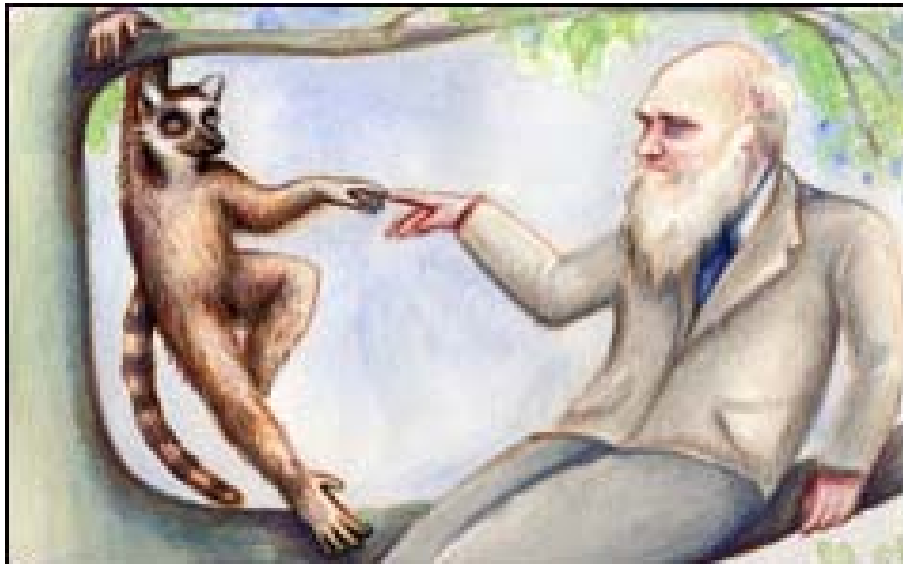
The peppered moth is a good example of directional selection in a population. It is only one of many examples. Some text book authors use butterflies, insects, mice and even plants. The principle is still the same. It shows a change in the population because of a change in the environment. (*BIOLOGY Today and Tomorrow*, Cecie Starr, 2005. p. 187-188)

Why do textbooks claim that beak changes in Galapagos finches during a severe drought can explain the ori-

gin of species by natural selection - even though the changes were reversed after the drought ended, and no net evolution occurred?

This is a strange question because the example shows how evolution occurs because of a change in environment. There is no such thing as "net evolution." Evolution is not headed in any direction.

Why do textbooks use fruit flies with an extra pair



of wings as evidence that DNA mutations can supply raw materials for evolution - even though the extra wings have no muscles and these disabled mutants cannot survive outside the laboratory?

Most mutations are not beneficial to the organism. Most offspring do not survive to reproduce. The example is evidence for evolution by natural selection.

Why are artists' drawings of apelike humans used to justify materialistic claims

that we are just animals and our existence is a mere accident - when fossil experts cannot even agree on who our supposed ancestors were or what they looked like?

Fossil experts do agree on the basics of human evolution. As with every field of evolutionary study new discoveries are being made each year. That is the way science works. New discoveries mean that scientists can evaluate the evidence and im-

prove upon theories. Human fossil history is changing and will change even more as scientists learn more from new discoveries.

Why are students told that Darwin's theory of evolution is a scientific fact - even though many of its claims

are based on misrepresentations of the facts?

Students are taught that evolution is a fact because there is so much evidence to support it and as yet there is no other scientific theory that explains the diversity of life on earth. Attacking evolution is meaningless unless there is another theory based on evidence to challenge it. As teachers, we have an obligation to show our sources of information. Students have the same obligation if they are speaking in a classroom.



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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the First Coast Freethought Society is to serve the needs of the nonreligious of Northeast Florida, to promote freethought and secular humanism, and to provide an opportunity for agnostics, atheists, skeptics and other free-thinkers to exchange ideas.

Meetings

The FCFS meets the third Monday of each month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, 7405 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, Florida. 32211. (904) 725-8133. Doors open 6:00. Meeting time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

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JUNE SOCIAL - ALL WELCOME!

WHERE: STEAK & ALE at Baymeadows and I-95 South

WHEN: Tues., June 27, 2006. Gather in Lounge at 6:00 p.m., Dinner at 7:00 p.m.

RSVP: CarrieRen@att.net (or 268-8826) by **June 26**, if you plan to attend!

First Coast Freethought Society, Inc.

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2006 Membership Application



Name		Date	
Home address	City	State	Zip Code
E-mail address	Home phone	Business phone	
Occupation	Areas of interest and/or expertise		

How did you hear about us? _____

Membership level (please select one):

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular (\$30/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Carl Sagan (\$50/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Charles Darwin (\$200/yr.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (\$15/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bertrand Russell (\$75/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Robert Ingersoll (\$500/yr.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior - 65+ (\$15/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas Paine (\$100/yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime (\$1,000) |

I'm interested in getting involved in the FCFS as a(n):

- General member Committee member Officer Financial supporter

Do you object to your name appearing on our membership list, which is only distributed to other members? YES

Comments: _____

How Did Freethought Fare In The 2006 Florida Legislative Session?

Curtis Wolf

The 2006 Florida legislative session is now a part of history. How did freethought fare in this latest meeting of the powers that be? As you remember, in the March issue of the *First Coast Freethinker* I listed the legislative bills that I believed would be of interest to freethink-

ers. I used the following criteria to determine which bills to include in the March article:

Does the bill advance religion or religious ideas?

Does the bill cover an issue in which religious arguments are presented on one side of the issue?

Does the bill advance or discourage pseudoscience?

So how did freethought fare?

Not too badly. The only bills that passed and were signed by the governor that were of any consequence were HB 599

and its Senate companion SB 1232. These bills create the Florida Faith-based and Com-



munity-based Advisory Board which is a codification of Governor Bush's faith-based programs. It appears that faith-based programs will survive in some form or other after Governor Bush leaves office.

SR 1642 and its House companion HR 9055 also were approved. This resolution recognizes April 19, 2006, as Osteopathic Medicine Day. Osteopathic medicine often promotes questionable treatments of medi-

cal problems. Fortunately, resolutions like these really don't have much practical effect.

Finally, HB 1145 and its Senate companion SB 1494 which were not listed in the March article but will surely irritate nonbelievers passed the legislature. The bill designates "In God We Trust" as our official state motto. Can you feel the love?!

Unfortunately, we are not any closer to having a fulltime

freethinking lobbyist in Tallahassee as we do in Washington. We may have CFI's Toni Van Pelt who spends a day or two in Tallahassee every year to promote the secular humanist perspective to legislators, but that does not seem to me to be enough considering the harm that a fundamentalist legislator could do if he could get others in the legislature to go along with him.



First Coast Freethought Society 2006 Events

June	19 - Monthly meeting	18 - Book discussion group	27- Social at Steak and Ale
July	17 - Monthly meeting	16 - Book discussion group	25- Social at Steak and Ale
August	21 - Monthly meeting	20 - Book discussion group	22- Social at Steak and Ale

Return service requested

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