



The Humanist Society of the Suncoast

A Socratic society dedicated to the proposition that the fully examined life is well worth living.
Member organization of the [Humanists of Florida](#), the [AHA](#), and [ASHS](#). Find us at www.metrodirect.net/humanist

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Our Program for Saturday, February 7th.

Science and the Humanistic Outlook in evolutionary perspective.

This February 12th marks the bicentennial of the birth of Charles Darwin, one of the great contributors to the scientific understanding of our world. While most people connect his name with the silly “monkey business” of the last century, the compass of Darwin’s efforts are most fully revealed in the landmark book, the *Origin of Species*. On this survey a great interrelated structure of ideas embrace the full spectrum of biological science, and not only explains the living world but provides a platform for the continuing transformation of humanity itself. Evolution is not a dry exercise in academic abstraction, but is the fertile ground for much of the improvements we have made to our own lives in this past century. Medicine, agriculture, and cosmology are only a few of the areas where evolution has played a pivotal role. Come join with us to examine this important science and find out how we can and will use it in our everyday lives.

JP

Elections for the Board Please consider running for a seat on the society’s board of directors.

The present board will meet before our regular session at 1 o'clock on Saturday. See the next page for a list of present board members.

Any society member who wishes, is invited to attend.

Call Jim Peterson for details (813) 531-8138

Renewal

This is our annual membership renewal period.

The board is happy to announce that for the 2009 period we are **reducing** dues to: **\$25 per individual** and **\$30 per couple**.

This will allow more members to continue, and new members to join in these difficult times.

Don't Forget...



Tampa Bay Harvest

An urgent appeal!

Because of the economic crises we are all experiencing, there are Large numbers of homeless and hungry people in the Tampa bay area who are dependent on socially conscious citizens like us for life sustaining nutrition.

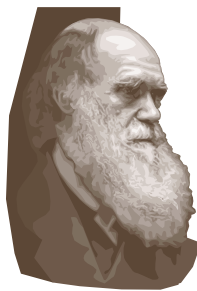
Please...

Bring as many boxed and canned food items as you can to this meeting.

With the important help of Glenn Paul, we can do our part to help relieve significant human suffering.

It's the Humanist thing to do!

The Charles Darwin Bicentennial 1809 to 2009



Project

A steering committee has been formed to develop a program to honor the great scientist, Charles Darwin and to bring attention to the science of evolution and the great scientific project in general. Among the participants are the Center for Inquiry, the Humanist

Society of the Suncoast, and Atheists of Florida. CFI has undertaken a poster project to encourage children in Schools to create original posters showing the importance of Darwin and the scientific method. Other developments are anticipated for the **February 12th** event. A special web site is being created to coordinate our local events. Its address is www.evolvetampa.com . JP

The Philo Café

For those of you living in Tampa, Fridays at 6:30 pm at the [Carrollwood Cultural Center](#) at 4537 Lowell Road, in Tampa is a great way to spend 2 hours on issues of philosophical importance. Group selects topics.

Please join us for this free & open discussion.

**Saturday, February 7th
2:00 PM**

**Clearwater East Library
2251 Drew St.
Clearwater**

Following our meeting, we will dine together at the

Farmer Boy Restaurant
at 2129 Drew St. just 2 blks west of Library.



Humanists work to build a world in which happiness is the enduring criterion of social policy.

What do Humanists Want?

1. To extend a human centered approach to the critical problems of life and society.
2. To encourage attitudes of kindness, compassion, tolerance and a loving generosity in human relationships, and in our treatment of all life. These attitudes help us to see ourselves in the lives of others and encourage appreciation for the remarkable diversity of human culture and experience.
3. To develop and popularize the skills of creative and critical thinking that empower people to challenge prejudice, superstition and irrationality in every area of life. Such empowerment enables the individual to reach the highest levels of achievement.
4. To exalt those artistic and imaginative expressions of life which have been the source of the greatest pleasure and enlightenment, and which reflect compelling human truths. Through music, literature, art, dance, and other expressions, we embrace the essence of the human spirit.
5. To explore the grounds of ethics and morality within the unfolding history of our evolving culture. Such knowledge will enable us to become effective protagonists for the happiness of the individual person. JP

The Moveable Feast...

At the **Pizza Shack**

on Sunday February 22 at 5:00PM. Despite the name, fine Italian cuisine is featured at reasonable prices.

The restaurant is located at 11963 Indian Rocks Rd just a block north of Walsingham Rd in Largo - about 1 1/2 miles east of Gulf Blvd across from a Publix in a small strip center.

Contact Glenn Paul at 727-595-3347 or email at glennkayp@tampabay.rr.com for reservations by Saturday February 21st.

In Memorium

Gerri Eckstein died after a sudden illness on January 10th. A memorial celebration of his life was held at Aston Gardens on Monday the 19th, where over 100 friends and family attended. Let Terry know of your condolences at (813) 891-9399

Call (813) 531-8138 for changes to this list. JP

Laugh Lines Post Febrile Observations

THE MAIN REASON THAT SANTA IS SO JOLLY IS BECAUSE HE KNOWS WHERE ALL THE BAD GIRLS LIVE.

I WENT TO A BOOKSTORE AND ASKED THE SALES WOMAN, 'WHERE'S THE SELF-HELP SECTION?' SHE SAID IF SHE TOLD ME, IT WOULD DEFEAT THE PURPOSE.

WHAT IF THERE WERE NO HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS?

IF A DEAF PERSON SIGNS SWEAR WORDS, DOES HIS MOTHER WASH HIS HANDS WITH SOAP?

IS THERE ANOTHER WORD FOR SYNONYM?

WHERE DO FOREST RANGERS GO TO 'GET AWAY FROM IT ALL?'

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU SEE AN ENDANGERED ANIMAL EATING AN ENDANGERED PLANT?

IF A PARSLEY FARMER IS SUED, CAN HIS WAGES BE GARNISHED? Thanks to *Connie Purdum*

Our Humanist Society is actively looking for interesting speakers with novel and well thought out ideas on just about any subject of interest to a general audience. Let me know if you would like to recommend a person or organization. Call Jim at (813) 531-8138

HUMANIST SOCIETY OF THE SUNCOAST

A chapter of the American Humanist Assoc. the Association of Secular Humanist Societies

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~*~*~*~*~*~*

Glenn Paul Publisher.
Jim Peterson, Editor

Have an Idea, opinion or essay you want to share?

E-Mail us at: sunhum@metrodirect.net

Join us in our effort to ignite critical thinking, and embrace reason, & compassion in life.

~ Join ~

The Humanist Society of the Suncoast.

- ☑ Trial -3 month- free news
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(Privacy respected)

Send to: Glenn Paul, Treasurer
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2507 First St. #E
Indian Rocks Beach
33785-3010

'Global Gag Rule' Lifted

by Barbara Crossette

On Friday evening, a time favored by officials trying to avoid attention, President Barack Obama issued a statement reversing one of the most damaging policies ever visited on developing nations by Republican administrations. This was the "global gag rule," which forbade US government support for any organization that in any way fostered, provided or even advised women about abortion. It was a policy foisted on an unsuspecting world by the Reagan administration at, of all events, a United Nations conference on women and development held in Mexico City in 1984.

What became known as the "Mexico City policy" was always a political football. It was rescinded in 1993 by President Bill Clinton, then reimposed in 2001 by George W. Bush, who also proceeded to deal a second harsh blow to the world's poorest families by cutting off American assistance to the United Nations Population Fund, the largest global provider of family planning assistance. The reason, or excuse--rejected by the administration's own internal report--was that the Population Fund was linked to forced abortion practices in China. The fund has lost about \$250 million in American aid since 2002.

Millions of women and their families were the direct victims of these shortsighted steps, taken in the name of people who called themselves "pro-family," but appeared to be woefully ignorant of the harm they caused in homes around the world. The International Planned Parenthood Federation, based in London, estimates that in the last eight years alone as much as \$100 million in US aid was lost to its affiliates in 100 countries because of their refusal to accept an abortion ban. The federation estimates this lost aid could have prevented 36 million unintended pregnancies and 15 million abortions, often acts of desperation. More than 80,000 women and more than 2.5 million children might not have died.

Not surprisingly, the rate of unsafe abortions is highest in the poorest countries, where at least 200 million women cannot get contraceptives. The World Health Organization, which supports safe abortion as a tool of last resort, estimates that of 45 million abortions globally every year, 19 million take place under unsafe conditions, causing at least 68,000 deaths. Forty percent of those most dangerous abortions involve teens and women between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. A woman in the developing world--primarily in Africa and parts of Asia--is at least 100 times more likely to die of a botched abortion than a woman in the industrial North. Which raises the question why President Obama--and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, once an outspoken champion of women's rights in the developing world--made so little of this policy reversal. Is abortion still too skittish a topic to talk about in public? Even when a presidential order signals a promising new approach to development aid?

President Obama also pledged to work with Congress to restore contributions to the Population Fund, known as UNFPA. "By resuming funding to UNFPA, the US will be joining 180 other donor nations working collaboratively to reduce poverty, improve the health of women and children, prevent HIV/AIDS and provide family planning assistance to women in 154 countries," [his statement said](#). Not lost on Thoraya Obaid, the courageous Saudi woman who is executive director of UNFPA, was President Obama's focus on poverty reduction as a byproduct of family planning, giving millions of the world's poorest women some of the same reproductive choices and life opportunities enjoyed in richer nations.

"President Obama's decision could not have come at a more critical time," [Obaid said in a statement](#) hours after the White House announcement. It was, she added, "an essential step towards creating a world where all women have the opportunity to participate as equal members of society." The rate of death from pregnancy and childbirth--99 per cent of which occur in developing countries--has fallen just one per cent between 1990 and 2005 around the world, the UNFPA statement noted. "Every minute, a woman dies giving life, totaling up to 10 million women during a generation," it said. UNFPA has argued tirelessly at the UN, where population growth is not a fashionable issue, that high fertility (mostly not a woman's choice) lowers per capita income, reduces education levels and consumes resources necessary to sustain healthy, productive lives. It also creates a generation of poorly educated, unemployable young people shorn of hope and open to recruitment by militant organizations of all kinds, threatening the stability of countries trying to make still shaky democracies work.

Secretary of State Clinton, who has said she will focus on democracy and development, now has her mandate.

Steven Sinding, a former director general of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, a Columbia University professor and advisor to the World Bank, was working on family planning in the US government in 1984 when the gag rule was first announced in Mexico City, taking American officials on the scene by surprise.

Sinding has been campaigning ever since against this destructive policy, which for the IPPF alone, he said in an e-mail, "necessitated clinic closures, staff layoffs and, ultimately, curtailment of family planning services to hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions, of women in developing countries. He described President Obama's reversal of the order as something akin to "a glorious sunrise after a long and exceptionally dark night."

"Freedom is not something that anybody can be given. Freedom is something people take, and people are as free as they want to be."

--James Baldwin