



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](#), [COR](#), and [CSH](#). Find us at www.suncoasthumanist.com

Our Program for February 6th...

The Evolving Strength of Humanism



On February 6, **Gin** and **Jerry Lieberman** will discuss the upcoming statewide conference in Sarasota April 30 - May 2 and its significance for The Humanist Society of the Suncoast and like-minded people and organizations around the state. The conference will appeal to both the broad interests of our members and offer numerous choices based on select topics that will be offered concurrently.

By working together, Humanists and their allies can Collaborate on a National, State & Local Level to Impact Public Policy. In lifting up science, rationality, Humanist Ethics and Empathy, we can remake the world. We can Free the mind of man from the ancient tyrannies in whose icy grasp we are still entangled. The Evolution institute will be here to trace the course of our evolving culture.

Jerry's remarks will include the rationale for the conference theme and how it relates to achieving tangible objectives, which is an integral part of the Saturday morning program. He will also explain how an action plan is designed to materialize in the Sunday morning interactive roundtable sessions. Gin will describe the program's development, the role of HFA and others in this regard and the array of highly pertinent and interesting topics that make up the afternoon sessions:

Learn how to raise children to think freely using the disciplines of science and reason. Critical thinking is and should be a family affair. Schools are natural centers for exciting curiosity and wonder and are naturally a center for the creation of humanist values. Social Networking is becoming a force that may bind together the people of the future as nothing else ever has. We must be part of it. The importance of Humanist celebrants will be discussed.

To **Renew** those dues!

Dear Friends,
Whether we make humanism our preferred lifestyle, our enduring advocacy, or our vehicle for learning and social life, it cannot exist without your help. Many are the social and political forces that stand in the way of human freedom and happiness, religion chiefly among them. We are few organizations, though many in individual strength. Feel obliged therefore, to do your part to keep our cause alive.

Thanks, *Jim Peterson*
See page 2 to send dues.

Don't Forget...

**Tampa
Bay
Harvest
Please...**



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

With the important help of Glenn Paul and Tampa Bay Harvest, we can do our part to help relieve significant human suffering in our area. **It's the Humanist thing to do!**

This year's conference is an unprecedented event for Florida Humanists, naturalists, rationalists, skeptics, atheists, freethinkers and activists in its scale and variety of organizational participation. Twenty-one organizations are participating – Including local unaffiliated groups as well as those that are with the AHA, CFI, SSA, UUA, CHJ and AA.

Our New Website

All newsletters from the past two years are there, as well as pictures of some of us. (We need more!) See the calendars and maps. We can be found at:

<http://suncoasthumanist.com>

See **Steve Browns** new column on [page 5](#)

Volume 19 No. 2

February, 2010

At our last board meeting, we agreed to co-sponsor to 2010 Annual conference.



The Humanists
of
Florida
Association

in collaboration with
AHA & CFI

announces

the first-ever, all-inclusive
Humanist & Freethought
Conference

April 30 - May 2, 2010
Sarasota, FL

info@FloridaHumanist.org

Please join us
for a free and
open
discussion.

**Saturday,
Feb. 6th
2:00 PM**

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

Following our meeting, many of us will dine together at the

**Farmer Boy
Restaurant**
at 2129 Drew St. just 2
blocks west of



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

Our monthly social dinner,
The Moveable Feast for February will be at:

PIZZA SHACK

on Sunday, February 21 at 5:00PM. 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 kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com or by phone at 727-595-3347 for reservations by Saturday February 20th.

Laugh Lines

A Little Verbal Pun-ishment...

1. Two antennas met on a roof, fell in love and got married. The ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was excellent.
2. A jumper cable walks into a bar. The bartender says, 'I'll serve you, but don't start anything.'
3. Two peanuts walk into a bar and one was a salted.
4. A dyslexic man walks into a bra.
5. A man walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm, and says 'A beer please, and one for the road.'
6. Two cannibals are eating a clown. One says to the other: 'Does this taste funny to you?'
7. 'Doc, I can't stop singing 'The Green, Green Grass of Home.' 'That sounds like Tom Jones Syndrome.' 'Is it common?' Well, 'It's Not Unusual.'
8. Two cows are standing next to each other in a field. Daisy says to Dolly, 'I was artificially inseminated this morning.' 'I don't believe you,' says Dolly. 'It's true; no bull!' exclaims Daisy.
9. An invisible man marries an invisible woman. The kids were nothing to look at either.
10. Deja Moo: The feeling that you've heard this bull before.

Thanks to Connie Purdum

HUMANIST SOCIETY OF THE SUNCOAST

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

Board of Directors

Meets Sept., December, April

Don (Ace) Acenbrack
Jim Butler
Robert Collette
Terry Eckstein
Anita Garcia
Steve Brown, Secy.
Jerry Moore, Vice Pres.
Lucille Odeneal (Emeritus)
Glenn Paul Treasurer
Jim Peterson, President

~*~*~*~*~*

Glenn Paul Publisher.
Jim Peterson, Editor

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

E-Mail us at: jamestp@suncoasthumanist.COM

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

~ **Join or Renew** ~

The Humanist Society of the Suncoast.

- ☞ Trial -3 month- free news
- ☞ Regular -\$25. **New! 2010 only**
- ☞ Reg. Couple -\$30.
- ☞ Life -\$200.
- ☞ Life Couple -\$250.
- ☞ Limited income -\$10.

Name: _____

Address -if new: _____

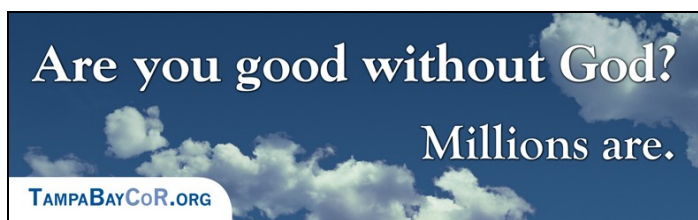
City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

(Privacy respected)

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



As a participant in the United Coalition of Reason, the Humanist Society is very pleased to announce that two billboards with the message you see above, are now up. One is on Fowler avenue in Tampa, close to the entrance of the University of South Florida, and the other is on Ulmerton Rd in Pinellas County, just east of the intersection with US-19.

<http://TampaBayCoR.org> informs secular people in the Tampa Bay area that there are groups to join, activities in which to participate, events to attend and like-minded people with which to socialize. In short, we want to help those who have grown beyond religious belief to find their philosophical home.

Those nonbelievers who are not ready, or who are unable, to "come out" can take comfort in knowing that they are not the only ones who accept the reality of a 100% natural world.

For the religious community, we want them to realize that, although nontheists reject the supernatural, we share with them compassionate human values that most religious believers embrace. In most ways, we are like them; hard working, taxpaying, moral citizens who care deeply about our families, our communities, our state and our country.

Many thanks to our representative on the CoR board, **Steve Brown**, who with our colleagues from CFI, Atheists of Florida, USF Freethinkers, and many other groups who have participated. Nationally, UCoR headed by Fred Edwords, has made it financially possible to conduct this outreach campaign with the help of many benefactors. As a participant organization, we expect that many more people will become aware of the non-theistic, and particularly the Humanistic alternative.

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 - even if not from a distinctly Humanist perspective.

Let me know if you would like to recommend a person or organization.

Call Jim at (813) 531-8138 or E-mail me at: jamestp@suncoasthumanist.com

Have an opinion, idea, or essay that needs to get vented? This newsletter is your space.

For editorial consideration for the next issue, see Jim Peterson at: jamestp@suncoasthumanist.com

Share your favorite restaurant.

Glenn Paul wants to improve the selection of restaurants in which we have our monthly social dinners. Our main criteria for selection is:

1. Location—center county preferred
2. Cost—low to moderate accommodates everybody.
3. Room—to accommodate up to 25
4. Ambience—not too noisy at 5PM.
5. Food—good.

Contact Glenn at:

kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com
or call 727-595-3347



Read Humanist Periodicals:

The Humanist, Free Inquiry, Free Mind, Humanist Perspectives, Skeptical Inquirer, Secular Humanist Bulletin, The Skeptic, Essays in Humanism, and many others.

Humanist Quotes



"As long as people believe in absurdities, they will continue to commit atrocities." — [Voltaire](#)



"The split in America, rather than simply economic, is between those who embrace reason, who function in the real world of cause and effect, and those who, numbed by isolation and despair, now seek meaning in a mythical world of intuition, a world that is no longer reality-based, a world of magic."

— [Chris Hedges](#)

See special report on end of life issues from

Compassion and Choices
on [page 4](#)



compassion & choices

Support. Educate. Advocate. Choice & Care at the End of Life.

Catholic Bishops Lay Down the Law on Feeding Tubes

On November 17, 2009, with little fanfare, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a directive for Catholic health care that could bring distress and grief to hundreds of thousands of American families each year. Compassion & Choices wants you to know how this [limits your healthcare choices](#).

“This won’t affect my family,” you may say to yourself. “We aren’t even Catholic.”

That doesn’t matter. Approximately 30% of Americans receive healthcare or reside in Catholic institutions, and this edict could affect any of them.

A little known but far reaching aspect of the Church’s organizational structure requires every hospital, nursing home, assisted living center, etc., with a Catholic charter to abide by a set of rules called [“Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services.”](#) The 72 directives itemize exactly how the services you receive will conform to Catholic doctrine, as promulgated by the Holy See and enforced by its Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly known as the [Holy Office of the Inquisition](#).)

The Bishops’ latest change to [Directive #58](#) says everyone who needs a feeding tube to stay alive must have one surgically implanted, and must keep it indefinitely. This will apply to anyone in a permanent coma from stroke or trauma, in persistent vegetative state or with advanced dementia, having lost the ability to eat along with other sentient activity. It will apply irrespective of your religious faith, your stated wishes in an advance directive, or the instructions of your family.

The Catholic Healthcare Association was quick to point out the new Directive does not apply to patients who are actively dying. But those are not the usual recipients of feeding tubes anyway. Rest assured, it applies in all situations where we most cherish our own authority to make healthcare decisions.

Catholic hospitals probably hoped this day would never come. The Bishops put them in a real bind. Ever since Pope Benedict XVI (Formerly Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) articulated this rule during the Terri Schiavo fiasco, hospital spokespeople have held tenaciously to a balancing rationale that allowed them to honor a person’s stated wishes in these matters. Last month the Bishops pointedly dismissed the “untenable positions” of “some Catholic ethicists” and made Benedict’s strict rule official and binding. Now hospitals and nursing homes have no choice but to enforce Catholic doctrine universally over patient wishes.

What had been Directive #58’s “presumption” in favor of feeding tubes is now an “obligation” and the language about balancing is gone. Pity the poor hospital administrators. As much as they may wish to honor the advance directives of patients and the heartfelt decisions of grieving families, the Church just won’t let them do that anymore.

I know a lot of readers are incredulous. “Surely,” you think, “no sane church would force hundreds of hospitals to systematically trump established principles of patient autonomy and force disruption, adversity and grief on families.” It seems unfeeling, unethical, and hardly good for business.

Well, think again, for when it comes to settled dogma, this church does not compromise.

Let me describe a precedent, and a clue to what lies ahead for families: For decades Catholic hospitals have subjected new mothers to unnecessary inconvenience, pain and surgical risk to enforce [Directive #53](#), which forbids sterilization. Every doctor knows the safest, most convenient time to perform an elective tubal ligation is immediately following delivery of a baby. The uterus is high and fallopian tubes readily accessible. Yet women delivering in Catholic centers who request this simple operation must recover from delivery, then submit to a second hospitalization, a second anesthetic and surgical risk and the pain of a second procedure, **at a non-Catholic institution**. Not to mention the cost of the second operation, routinely borne either by insurers or tax payers — that is to say, all of us.

From the Bishops’ perspective, this is a small price to pay to maintain what they call “the distinctive Catholic identity of the Church’s ...health care ministry.” Central to that ministry is imposition of the Church’s “moral teaching” on all its patients. Many of us view Catholic hierarchy as having long ago squandered any moral authority they might once have had. Church officials cannot engage in conspiracies to [hide crimes of sexual molestation](#) and [protect child abusers](#) on one hand, and on the other, presume to dictate legitimate healthcare decisions. Certainly they have no authority over decisions as central to [personal dignity](#) as whether I will accept or reject medical feeding to keep my comatose body alive. The sanctimonious audacity of these Bishops simply takes my breath away. **Toni Van Pelt**, Vice President and Director of Public Policy CFI

Over the river and through the woods...

ON THE WAY TO GRAMMAR'S HOUSE

Somebody asks me, "How are you?" If truly it's the case, I answer, "I'm very well, thank you," and for every year I add it makes me all the more happy that I can respond that way. Or "Not too well," or "Not as well as I'd like."

But more and more as time goes on, the more common answer seems to be, "I'm good." Now, I may indeed be "good," in many particulars if not in every aspect of my life, and, besides, have to live aware of the high abstract value I place on being "good" (in other words, have a self-hypocrisy alarm).

Nevertheless, I don't think "How are you?" is really an attempt to find out how I currently feel about my own moral/ethical standing, or to have me measure the balance of the "good" things I've done lately against the "bad" things.

But that's how the question's answered these all too often perplexing days.

Also sometimes I have "problems" -- devices I own don't work, or people or processes plant obstructions in the path of services or compensation I'm seeking. After all, it's a technologically complex world we now live in, and a world of complex social interactions.

However, it seems to be in the interest of many to do away with "problems" not by solving them but just by calling them something else, namely "issues." Certainly "issue" has many meanings (I'm an "issue" of my parents, for example), but "problem" is not one of them. The closest, most pertinent meaning would be that an issue is "a matter subject to debate" (between or among two or more points of view) and requires only discussion with an attendant (perhaps) striving for a resolution (a winning out of one point of view or a compromise conciliation of various elements in the debate). An "issue" can contain a "problem" (or several problems) and frequently does. For that matter, I would be willing to debate the "issue" whether healthcare is an issue or a problem or an unusual example of a "conjoined twin," that is both issue and problem.

But, not to get too wooly, it should be clear that when I call my computer manufacturer for help with something about it that doesn't work, that I'm calling with a problem that directs me toward a solution (a correction) -- and not toward debate. I have had several exhausting verbal wrestling matches with customer service people and "techies," who refuse to concede that their company or product could indeed put "problems" in front of me. It doesn't drive me quite as crazy as anything Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh or any other loud voice among their sadly proliferating ilk might say, but it does make my brain matter rattle and roll.

Another thing that seems to be going on is a disinclination to discriminate between animate and inanimate objects: things, and (much in particular) people. That is, quite frequently I hear references (they seem to be increasing) to a person or persons "which is" or "which are" something or other. I was taught at age six or so to make the animate/inanimate distinction. I long ago learned that I don't have to accept as true everything I've been taught, but that distinction makes a lot of sense to me and I prefer to retain it. The only point of origin for this usage that I can think of (apart from a general trend toward loss of ability to make any kind of linguistic and intellectual distinctions) is religious. There's a prominent prayer to "Our Lord, which art in heaven," and since we are ostensibly made in that entity's image, presumably that entity is animate.

Even Abbott and Costello couldn't find a place in their infield ("Who's on first," etc.) for "which."

Th, th, th, that's all folks

Steve Brown

Contributions to this newsletter are highly appreciated. Send them to: sunhum@metrodirect.net

More on Haitian Assistance NEW: Non-Believers Giving Aid: a religion-free way to help disaster victims

You can give consideration to a notable endeavor arranged by The Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science (RDFRS)

RDFRS has joined forces with 14 other freethought groups or associates to collect donations to non-religious relief organizations. It has set up a dedicated bank account and PayPal facility in the new name of [Non-Believers Giving Aid](http://givingaid.richarddawkins.net). <http://givingaid.richarddawkins.net>

All of the money donated will be distributed to disaster relief, and in the face of the immediate need in Haiti, all money raised by its current appeal will go to that cause (although the new account will remain available for future emergencies too). Giving through this method ensures 100% of a donation goes to aid, since not even the PayPal fees will be deducted (Dr. Dawkins is personally donating a sum to cover the cost of these, capped at \$10,000).