



# 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](http://www.suncoasthumanist.com)

*Our Program for March 6th...*

## Tis the Season

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.

## Hyde Park Saturday

Get on the soapbox and let loose. Hyde park Saturday is our turn to bring out all the repressed orator, agitator, and poets among us. We'll supply the soapbox, you supply the oratory. Got an issue? A critique? High praise? Low down gossip? We don't care as long as it's legal, and you can do it in three minutes or less.

For some reason, lots of folks seem a little upset with how our political system is functioning. They believe there may some better ways to do things and better solutions for the problems that beset our nation, state, and towns, than what seems to be currently on offer. Whether tea or something a bit stronger is your preferred ideological energy booster, your ideas and comments will be given a respectful hearing, and likely a thorough critique by the assembled mass of critical thinkers.

Alternatively, you may choose to embarrass, mortify, and/or humiliate the author of this crazy idea who will nevertheless securely wrap himself in the first amendment and bask serenely in the inevitable outcome of people given carte blanche to express themselves.

Don't forget poetry, mini-dramas, and reader's theatre are also possibilities. But in all cases, no more than 3 minutes.

See you there! Jim P.



Volume 19 No. 3

March, 2010

Reserve now for  
the 2010  
Florida  
Humanist  
conference in  
Sarasota.



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](mailto:info@FloridaHumanist.org)

Please join us  
for a free and  
open  
discussion.

Saturday,  
Mar. 6th  
2:00 PM

Clearwater East  
Library  
2251 Drew St.  
Clearwater

Following our meet-  
ing, many of us will  
dine together at the

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

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!**

Sign up Now for this year's

### Florida State Humanist Conference

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. Join with others who think as you do. See **page 5** for form.

### 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 Brown's new column** [page 4](#)



*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 March will be at:

## Jorge's Seafood Grille

on Sunday March 21st at 5:00PM.  
This fine restaurant is located at 800 Clearwater-Largo Rd. in Largo about one mile north of W. Bay [Rt 686]. Sunset special dinners are in the \$12-13 range and include chicken, and beef as well as seafood.  
Cheesecake dessert is included with sunset specials.

Contact Glenn Paul [kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com)  
or by phone at 727-595-3347 for reservations by Saturday March 20th.

## Laugh Lines

### EVER WONDER.....

Why the sun lightens our hair, but darkens our skin?  
Why can't women put on mascara with their mouth closed?  
Why don't you ever see the headline 'Psychic Wins Lottery'?  
Why is 'abbreviated' such a long word?  
Why is it that doctors call what they do 'practice'?  
Why is lemon juice made with artificial flavor, and dishwashing liquid made with real lemons?  
Why is the person who invests all your money called a broker?  
Why is the time of day with the slowest traffic called rush hour?  
Why isn't there mouse-flavored cat food?  
Why didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?  
Why do they sterilize the needle for lethal injections?

## Only in America

.....do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.  
.....do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a diet coke.  
.....do banks leave vault doors open and then chain the pens to the counters.  
.....do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.  
.....do we buy hot dogs in packages of ten and buns in packages of eight.  
.....do they have drive-up ATM machines with Braille lettering.

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

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~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

**Glenn Paul Publisher.**  
**Jim Peterson, Editor**

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

E-Mail us at: [jamestp@suncoasthumanist.COM](mailto: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**
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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**





People united in the notion that the guidance of religious institutions is not necessary to have a decent society, gathered on Saturday, February 20th to demonstrate publicly their support.

They stood beneath the billboard that they had sponsored under the auspices of the Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason, an organization that brings together more than a dozen local groups who wish to bring this liberating idea to larger numbers of people.

**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](mailto: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](mailto:kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com)  
or call 727-595-3347



**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](mailto:jamestp@suncoasthumanist.com)

### 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*



If those committed to the quest fail, they will be forgiven. When lost, they will find another way. The moral imperative of humanism is the endeavor alone, whether successful or not, provided the effort is honorable and failure memorable.

***E. O. Wilson***

See Steve Brown on  
**American Identity**  
on [page 4](#)

# THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Who are we, anyway? That is, who's thrown into that possibly useful social construct, "The American People?" Could it actually be all of us?

Unfortunately, if you listen to the politically wistful Wall Street Journal columnist, Reagan-woozy Peggy Noonan, "The American People" seem somehow to be merely those particular Americans who think along her lines -- a Pollyannaish texturing of rightwing delusion.

Amazingly, for the megaphonic Ed Schultz of the MSNBC "Ed Show," "The American People" just coincidentally have a train of thought that runs on the same tracks as his own runaway train of do-gooder, anti-plutocrat programs from wild-eyed liberals.

If you listen to (or read) such mumbly-minded cud regurgitators as David Broder, radiating a vague content with the status quo or the conventional wisdom (not always the same), whatever shape-shift either may take on a given date, it's those people, like him who can't envision what isn't placed directly in front of them.

Well, I'm one of those American people of a mind with Ed Schultz most of the time. My liberalism is sometimes wild-eyed, other times only reasonable but resolute. Nevertheless, in no way would I contend that my views necessarily reflect those of "The American People." They reflect only the attitudes of a chunk of us, sometimes large, sometimes not so much.

Now Ed, on each program, takes a poll of his viewers. He asks them to text-message him in favor of one of two opposing attitudes toward some issue or program in the current political discussion. One position is nominally "progressive" and the other nominally "conservative" (essentially this vies Noonan's "American People" against Ed's "American People." Since Ed's viewers are overwhelmingly in the liberal/progressive fold it should be no surprise that the results are usually something between 85% to 95% in favor of Ed's own position (a similar poll of a Fox News audience would produce a contradictory "voice of the people").

Yet Ed takes the results of these polls as the voice of... (you guessed it) "The American People."

Certainly the results express the political sympathies of some American people, but those of the American people (that is to say a substantial majority)? The latter I consider so unlikely as an across-the-board result applied to any and every issue that Ed presents that the man himself lives, in this fragment of his life, in delusion.

Likewise, Noonan and Broder (and many others) are equally selective in their sources of information and "facts."

Akin to this politically/culturally narcissistic view of "The American People," is the slightly more modest but similarly self-serving claim that "the mainstream" or "mainstream thinking" is or reflects the particular "stream" the speaker swims in.

As an afterthought, we may still be holding on to something like "We the People" as a concept, although we may be swimming upstream against the tide of "folks." Conceive "We the Folks do hereby .....", "Folks for the American Way," "Folks to Folks" diplomatic outreach, "in this election the folks have spoken," or "the folks have the last voice in our American system." Obama is popularizing the substitution of "folks" for who knows whom in a flood of references in speeches and informal comments. I hope he doesn't chase "people" away. "Folks" has its appropriate uses, but as the representation of a political or social entity it has a dreadful implication: that of the fascist organic state, for instance that of the "Deutschevolk."

In other words, "people" implies a collection of individuals, "folk" an organic mass.

*Steve "I wish this column were more amusing" Brown*



## HFA E-NEWS

### An Electronic News Update from The Humanists of Florida Association

#### Two months remaining for reduced conference hotel rates!

Please remember to register for the conference and be sure to make your hotel reservation by April 9 to take advantage of the special \$89 room rate when you mention the Humanists of Florida Association conference:

<http://floridahumanist.org/forms/reg2010.html>

#### Needed: Volunteer illustrator for cover art of this year's *Florida Humanist Journal*

Interested? Please contact Gin Kohl Lieberman at [info@FloridaHumanist.org](mailto:info@FloridaHumanist.org) if you can creatively depict "Forging a Humanist & Secular Coalition."

#### Links of Possible Interest

Here's Barry Lynn's recent article published in the *Huffington Post*, "Faith, Hope and Charity: Why President Obama's 'Faith-Based' Agenda Must Change":

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/barry-w-lynn/faith-hope-and-charity-wh\\_b\\_450099.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/barry-w-lynn/faith-hope-and-charity-wh_b_450099.html)

If you haven't yet signed the National Darwin Day Petition, here's an opportunity before Darwin Day on Friday:

[http://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/318/t/10503/petition.jsp?petition\\_KEY=2221](http://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/318/t/10503/petition.jsp?petition_KEY=2221)

HFA member Arthur Jackson from Silicon Valley wrote: "If you have an hour for a Humanist Sermon regarding Darwin, here is an opportunity brought to you from the Humanist Community in Silicon Valley's weekly Humanist Forum. Dr. John van Wyhe discusses the topic, Why did Darwin Really Give up Christianity." <http://vimeo.com/9289445>



**Humanists of Florida  
Association**  
*Reason and Compassion in Action*

## Want to be a more active Humanist?

Being an active agent of social change in many ways defines the practical meaning of Humanism. Despite the vast numbers of us on this planet, all too few actually are involved in making life better for all of us. Especially if you are retired, or have leisure, you should consider expanding the range of your positive involvement in the lives of others.

**Glenn Paul** could sure use some help in his capacity as Social planning director, publisher, and all around doer of good deeds. If you have the time, interest, and a small amount of energy to devote to any of the forgoing, please contact Glenn and offer your help. He wants to continue as treasurer, but even here he could use a little help. Contact Glenn at: [kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com) or by phone at 727-595-3347.

