

# The Humanist Society of the Suncoast

1

*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 November 6th...



Margaret Djekovich



Tracy Crocker

## Homelessness:

A Tampa Bay  
Response

See page [3](#) for more

## The Unexpected Faces, Unexpected Places Awareness Campaign

is an innovative approach to reaching out to the general public and targeted groups to change their perception of our homeless neighbors and increase their sensitivity to the issues. The innovation of the program is a means to mobilize the community to make systemic changes which will support prevention activities, keeping families in stable housing, and rapidly re-house those already experiencing homelessness. The project's concept is the real face of homelessness is not what people expect. It is the face of a mother, a high-school student, a co-worker, a minister - just to name a few. The project uses "real life" stories to demonstrate "the face of homelessness." These real life stories were communicated to the general public through print ads, billboards, television and radio PSAs, a web site ([www.unexpectedfaces.org](http://www.unexpectedfaces.org)) and the Brown Bag Project, which is a means for visually displaying the faces of these individuals in public places, and conveying the forced mobility and sheer number of homeless in our county.

The Brown Bag Project is a moveable public art installation using between 20 and 300 bags printed with the faces of homeless individuals and families, randomly displayed in strategic locations in the community. The message to the public is - what if everything you owned had to fit in a "brown paper bag." Few of us can relate to the concept of life without a place to house our belongings. Standard grocery paper bags serve as a symbol of homeless individuals' impermanence.

With greater understanding of the real face of homelessness and increased community interest, the Coalition is seeking greater support for its plan to strengthen its internal infrastructure and the organization's capacity to work in collaboration with local stakeholders to develop the resources needed to implement the community's ten year plan to end homelessness.



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. This year's goal: 600 pounds. **It's the Humanist thing to do!**



## Sean Faircloth,

Executive director of the **Secular  
Coalition For America** will be in our area  
Saturday, November 13th at 11 a.m.

**Where:** Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Clearwater  
2470 Nursery Rd. Clearwater, FL 3376  
Presented by CFI, SCA and HSS. Thanks to Mark Brandt.

**RSVP to Mark Brandt at [mwbrandt@mail.usf.edu](mailto:mwbrandt@mail.usf.edu)**  
Sean impressed everyone at the recent Florida Humanist Conference in Sarasota with his eloquent defense of secular pluralistic values. His talk should be a great encouragement to humanists everywhere.

Volume 19 No. 11

November, 2010

**Now, Find the  
Humanist Society  
on [Facebook!](#)**

**Be a Friend!**

Thanks to Bob Byrch!



**HUMANIST  
CHARITIES**

Help Pakistan, Haiti, Chile,  
etc. through secular charity.

**Please join us  
for this  
free and open  
discussion.**

**On Saturday,  
Nov. 6th  
at 2 PM:  
Clearwater East  
Library  
2251 Drew St.  
Clearwater**

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

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

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

## Rumba Island Bay Grill

1800 Gulf-To-Bay Blvd  
Clearwater  
(N.E. Corner of G-T-B & Keene)

Sunday, November 21, @ 5:00 P.M.

This restaurant has a variety of early bird specials.

Reserve by **Thursday, November 18th** Contact  
Carolyn or Ron Frase, 727-533-2279 or by email  
[frasec@aol.com](mailto:frasec@aol.com)

## Laugh Lines Perennial Questions

CAN YOU CRY UNDER WATER?

HOW IMPORTANT DOES A PERSON HAVE TO BE BEFORE THEY  
ARE CONSIDERED ASSASSINATED INSTEAD OF JUST MURDERED?

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO "PUT YOUR TWO CENTS IN" ... BUT IT'S  
ONLY A "PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS"? WHERE'S THAT  
EXTRA PENNY GOING TO?

ONCE YOU'RE IN HEAVEN, DO YOU GET STUCK WEARING THE  
CLOTHES YOU WERE BURIED IN FOR ETERNITY?

WHY DOES A ROUND PIZZA COME IN A SQUARE BOX ?

WHAT DISEASE DID CURED HAM ACTUALLY HAVE?

HOW IS IT THAT WE PUT MAN ON THE MOON BEFORE WE  
FIGURED OUT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO PUT WHEELS ON  
LUGGAGE?

WHY IS IT THAT PEOPLE SAY THEY "SLEPT LIKE A BABY "  
WHEN BABIES WAKE UP EVERY TWO HOURS?

IF A DEAF PERSON HAS TO GO TO COURT, IS IT STILL CALLED A  
HEARING?

WHY ARE YOU IN A MOVIE, BUT YOU'RE ON TV?

WHY DO TOASTERS ALWAYS HAVE A SETTING THAT BURNS THE  
TOAST TO A HORRIBLE CRISP, WHICH NO DECENT HUMAN BEING  
WOULD EAT ?

IF JIMMY CRACKS CORN AND NO ONE CARES, WHY IS THERE A  
STUPID SONG ABOUT HIM?

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**  
**Steve Brown, Secy.**  
**Jim Butler**  
**Robert Byrch**  
**Bob Collette, Vice Pres.**  
**Mark Kligman**  
**Glenn Paul, treasurer**  
**Jim Peterson, President**  
**Mark Winterbottom**

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

**Jim Butler Publisher.**  
**Jim Peterson, Editor**  
Have an Idea, opinion or essay  
you want to share?  
E-Mail us at:

[jim@suncoasthumanist.com](mailto:jim@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**

# Our Speakers are from the Tampa Homeless Coalition

**Margaret Djekovic** is an AmeriCorps\*VISTA working in partnership with the National Coalition for the Homeless and the [Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County](#) (HCHC). Margaret graduated from Northwestern University in 2008 with a B.A. in Social Policy.

She served in numerous community service projects:

Worked on Asset Based Community Development within neighborhood Single Room Occupancies as a summer intern at St. Anthony Foundation in San Francisco

Volunteered for National Student Partnerships; certified to prepare taxes for low-income individuals

Volunteer Coordinator for Northwestern Community Development Corps

Site leader and participant of four student lead Alternative Student Break trips

Co-Chair of the Race, Poverty and Inequality Lecture Series for Northwestern Community Development Corps

Since February 2009, she has been developing and co-coordinating the [Unexpected Faces, Unexpected Places](#) Speakers Bureau at HCHC. She has been a guest speaker on homeless topics for university groups, youth groups, faith-based groups, as well as other community groups.

**Tracey Crocker** is an AmeriCorps\*VISTA Leader working in partnership with the National Coalition for the Homeless and the Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County. She is developing and co-coordinating the Unexpected Faces, Unexpected Places Speakers Bureau at the Homeless Coalition. She holds a Masters of Divinity in Christian Counseling and is working toward her Doctorates in Urban Ministries. She has written several works, and had been quoted on issues concerning the homeless. Tracey is a member of the Everest University Criminal Justice & Criminal Investigation Advisory Board. In 2006 she was awarded for Outstanding Service to the Homeless by the Florida Coalition for the Homeless.

Member: National Coalition for the Homeless; Sulphur Springs Action League; American Association of Christian Counselors  
Tracey has a strong background in operations and social services. Experienced in front line management working with homeless and mental health clients as well as working with Boards of Directors and long range strategic planning, fund raising, and strategic networking. Experienced in development and implementing employment programs.

**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, idea, or organization.

Call Jim at (813) 531-8138 or

E-mail me at:

[jim@suncoasthumanist.com](mailto:jim@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, contact Jim Peterson at:

[jim@suncoasthumanist.com](mailto:jim@suncoasthumanist.com)

**Share your favorite restaurant.**



**Carolyn Frase**

has graciously taken over as chair of the social committee. She welcomes your comments and suggestions for future

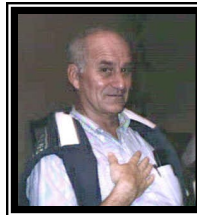
venues for our s mid-month dinner.

[Frasec@aol.com](mailto:Frasec@aol.com)

Many thanks to

**Glenn Paul**

for all of his work.



**Read Humanist Periodicals:**

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

## Humanist Quotes

A key to a wonderful life is exploring the wonders of life.

Without the emotional drive of the clergy, there would be little or no terrorism.

Even a turtle can't go any where until he sticks out his neck.



**Frank Prahl**

Read  
Steve Brown's thoughts  
on [page 5](#)





## HFA E-NEWS

4

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

- **Rules Will End Gerrymandering**

Florida politicians have benefited from one of the least regulated redistricting processes in the country and voters have lost true representation in the process. Gerrymandering – the drawing of voting districts for self-interest and political gain – will be prohibited by the simple guidelines put in place by Amendments 5 and 6.

- **Real Bipartisan Support From Respected Organizations**

All across the political spectrum, Floridians who are tired of politics-as-usual are supporting Amendments 5 and 6. Florida branches of the AARP, NAACP, League of Women Voters and the ACLU of Florida are in favor of the amendments. Members of all political parties are speaking in favor of 5 and 6. Prominent local organizations from across Florida like education associations, SAVE Dade, Democracia Ahora, CAIR and many others are working together to educate voters about the benefits of Amendments 5 and 6.

- **Constitutionally Protected Minority Voting Rights** For the first time, Amendments 5 and 6 would ensure that minority voting rights would be protected by the Florida Constitution. The amendments add to the protections provided by the Voting Rights Act and will create rules so that politicians can never again use gerrymandering to reduce representation of Black and Hispanic Voters.

- **\* Better Candidates** Of the last 420 elections in Florida, only 3 incumbents have lost. This has nothing to do with having quality challengers to incumbent politicians. It has everything to do with career politicians picking their voters so they have the friendliest possible district – they essentially make competitive elections impossible and they like it that way. Voting YES on Amendments 5 and 6 will ensure more competitive elections so new candidates have a chance to win. Career politicians love the status quo because it prevents challengers from having a fighting chance. A yes vote on Amendments 5 and 6 will force politicians to be accountable to their constituents.

**\* Florida Voters Just Like You Put 5 and 6 on the Ballot** 1.7 million voters signed petitions to put Amendments 5 & 6 on the ballot. Make no mistake: these amendments are not the work of politicians or “outside special interests.” Voters are ready for a new era of clean politics. If you are fed up with the status quo of self-serving incumbent politicians, then fix the broken redistricting system and vote yes on Amendments 5 and 6.

Please visit  
[www.FloridaHumanist.org](http://www.FloridaHumanist.org)  
to support HFA with your  
membership & donations



Humanists of Florida  
Association  
*Reason and Compassion in Action*

AH Appignani Humanist  
LC Legal Center



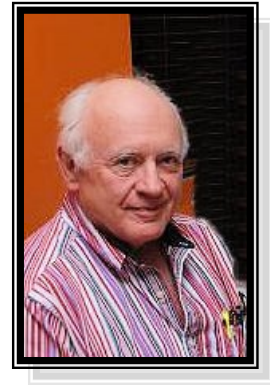
#### **Appignani Humanist Legal Center Launches with a Strong Start**

Despite the Humanist movement's long history of utilizing the courts to stand-up for our rights, no group has ever had more than a handful of lawyers assisting with the process. To address this, and to ensure that our constitutional rights are represented in court, the American Humanist Association (AHA) launched the [Appignani Humanist Legal Center](#) (AHLC) in mid-May 2006. Through amicus activity and litigation, our team of pro-bono lawyers, including Humanist luminaries such as Jim McCollum, Wendy Kaminer, and Michael Newdow, provides legal assistance to defend the constitutional rights of religious and secular minorities by directly challenging clear violations of the law where it relates to First Amendment/Establishment Clause concerns.

## ON THE WAY TO GRAMMAR'S HOUSE

-- *Mystery Loves Company*

By *Steve Brown*



5

What happened to change we can believe in?

For me it ended with the loss of the Indian-head penny and the buffalo nickel.

Does my playing with words contribute to the welfare of our humanist community? Better I should fan dance at meetings.

The title of this column was originally intended to apply only to my first piece. At any rate, standing up like Custer for proper grammar wasn't really my point. I got closer to the point with my last effort, "In Defense of Discrimination," in proposing that precise language likely reflects precise thought and imprecise language, in turn, may reflect sloppy thinking.

But the basic motive for retaining "On the Way to Grammar's House" is neither to promote good grammar nor precision in thought. It's real destination is clear communication among people. And as with Miss Riding Hood, there are threatening forests to get through.

It's extremely difficult, no matter how carefully one chooses words and how they're put together, to have any statement understood exactly as it was intended. We bring to our interpretations possibly as many individual sensibilities, varieties of experience, range of vocabularies and verbal fluency as there are people. At the least there are very large classes of difference.

Misunderstandings may be as simple as varying perceptions of color: what one describes as "blue," another may see as "green" or even brown (I've been sometimes stymied determining whether a sportscoat in my own closet was basically "blue" or "brown").

Or in our own "freethought" stomping ground what one or the other means by "God" or "religion." If I mean the bearded old fart of Christendom, rocking away somewhere in the universe he created, with complete awareness of everything going on everywhere, but you think of "God" as "the ground of being" or "nature," we're not "conversing" but talking past each other ("Nature" as supernature --now there's a clear-thinking puzzler!)

And when I talk about "religion" without specific reference to a particular religion, I will not be broadly understood even in this humanistic community, since I see no necessary connection between "religion" and anything outside the natural universe -- no need for deities, spirits, ghosts, angels or souls as "real" entities rather than as metaphorical descriptions of real phenomena in our natural lives (the "gods" of major league baseball, the "soul" of a nation. "angels" of our better natures, "ghosts" of the Holocaust," etc.

For what it's worth, my working definition of religion is something like "Religion is the organizing of a body of beliefs into a system of governing values that binds people together into a community of shared identity, offers an explanation of life and (probably) suggests a common mission.

Moving on, I'm very sympathetic to the notion that each of us sees the world differently, from slight variations to immense ones.

Vive les differences!

Yet here is another potential impediment to clear understandings. These perceptual differences probably strengthen the need for "precise" thinking and clear communication when it comes to social and political issues. I can argue in some sense against myself if I contrast "poetry" with "prose," not using either term in a strictly conventional way. One of us sees a movie, reads a book: loves it. Another sees it, reads it: hates it. Fiction, non-fiction no matter. Picasso paints "Guernica," Lennon composes "Imagine:" poetical statements that in a moment's observation or three minutes' hearing are the equivalents of essays even longer and more tedious than this one. I put my atheistic body inside a small Roman Catholic church in Heidelberg and weep at the beauty of it; in a moment I "got" the "upside" of at least that segment of the RCC (the French RCC gothic cathedrals I've seen are inside more like gray, grim prisons and no churches I've seen in the U.S. have had any appeal (well, I guess the little brown church my summer camp attended down the road along Pine Creek PA, was kind of pleasantly cozy, but I was 12, 13 and 14 and that's a time when the brain is just beginning to organize itself for adult life).

The comedian *Shelley Berman* may give me a comeuppance. He was hanging around the University of Chicago, which was then soaked in scholarliness if not scholasticism (Thomas Aquinas was a big man on campus) while I was a student there.

He was part of the Compass Players, who originated improvisational comedy, along with Mike Nichols and Elaine May and others later well-known. They first performed in a bar called "The Library," if I recall correctly, "lined with books for the reading, just a block from where I lived in an animal house where almost everybody was a candidate for a Ph. D., M.D., J.D. or M.B.A. Compass later morphed into the relatively famous Second City.

Later, Shelley performed as a solo stand-up comic, usually taking on both sides of a telephone conversation. In one recorded routine he mocks the punctilious scholarly environment at the U. of C. by taking the part of a student there. The exchange goes this way:

Caller: "How are you?"

Shelley (kind of pugnaciously): "In what frame of reference, exactly?"

Actually, I intended to make this column about my take on libertarianism, but it went off in another direction.

Maybe next time.

## 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.

At the most recent Board meeting, the directors present announced several initiatives to enable members to play more significant roles in the life of our community.

*Mark Winterbottom* is leading a section that will enable Humanists to be more of a presence in the science program at the St Petersburg Aquarium.

The board also decided to make the [Tampabay Post Carbon Council](#) an adjunct to the Society.

As always, we will continue to participate in social service programs. Be sure to contribute!  
-- - *Jim P.*

Your published letters:

### Nickens column- re: Sink-needs her moment

*Tim Nickens* states near the end of a recent Sunday column 'Don't underestimate the "sophistication" of Florida voters'. Then goes on to say 'They are still a middle-of-the-road pragmatic bunch.'

If this were to be true why would Alex Sink be in a virtual tie with *Rick Scott* who has been vague, negative and sleazy from the time he started to campaign? Why might voters still put him in the governor's mansion despite having virtually all of Florida's newspapers backing *Alex Sink* and stating Scott would be dangerous for our state? I guess we'll have to wait a few more days to see how sophisticated and intelligent our Florida voters really are?

Glenn Paul



### Top Five Reasons you should vote YES! on Amendments 5 and 6 on November 2:

**5. Rules Will End Gerrymandering** Florida politicians have benefited from one of the least regulated redistricting processes in the country and voters have lost true representation in the process. Gerrymandering – the drawing of voting districts for self-interest and political gain – will be prohibited by the simple guidelines put in place by Amendments 5 and 6.

**4. Real Bipartisan Support From Respected Organizations** All across the political spectrum, Floridians who are tired of politics-as-usual are supporting Amendments 5 and 6. Florida branches of the AARP, NAACP, League of Women Voters and the ACLU of Florida are in favor of the amendments. Members of all political parties are speaking in favor of 5 and 6. Prominent local organizations from across Florida like education associations, SAVE Dade, Democracia Ahora, CAIR and many others are working together to educate voters about the benefits of Amendments 5 and 6.

**3. Constitutionally Protected Minority Voting Rights** For the first time, Amendments 5 and 6 would ensure that minority voting rights would be protected by the Florida Constitution. The amendments add to the protections provided by the Voting Rights Act and will create rules so that politicians can never again use gerrymandering to reduce representation of Black and Hispanic Voters.

**2. Better Candidates** Of the last 420 elections in Florida, only 3 incumbents have lost. This has nothing to do with having quality challengers to incumbent politicians. It has everything to do with career politicians picking their voters so they have the friendliest possible district – they essentially make competitive elections impossible and they like it that way. Voting YES on Amendments 5 and 6 will ensure more competitive elections so new candidates have a chance to win. Career politicians love the status quo because it prevents challengers from having a fighting chance. A yes vote on Amendments 5 and 6 will force politicians to be accountable to their constituents.

**1. Florida Voters Just Like You Put 5 and 6 on the Ballot** 1.7 million voters signed petitions to put Amendments 5 & 6 on the ballot. Make no mistake: these amendments are not the work of politicians or “outside special interests.” Voters are ready for a new era of clean politics. If you are fed up with the status quo of self-serving incumbent politicians, then fix the broken redistricting system and vote yes on Amendments 5 and 6.