

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

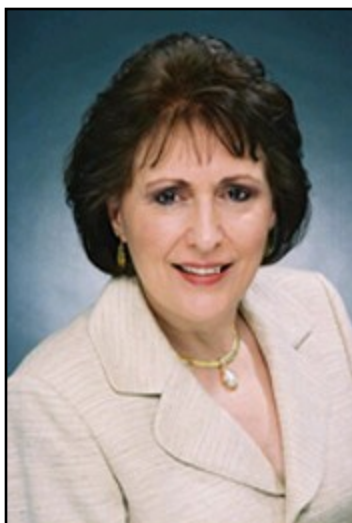
Our program for October 2nd...

Board Meeting

The board meeting scheduled for September has been deferred due to a logistical problem; a new date and time is still to be chosen.

At this meeting, the board will consider the present state and future potential of our organization. In particular, I believe we should focus on methods to expand the Humanist presence in the Tampa Bay area. Our ideas, philosophy, and outlook are on the ascendant, and critical for the survival of our society. We have certain resources at our disposal; we must use them wisely to realize our potential.

Jim Peterson



The future of Democracy and media in America

Candice (Candi) Jovan, a resident of Florida for over 30 years, a community volunteer, featured public service presenter for the Safe Place program. Producer & Host of Access Pinellas free speech station program Democracy For America; featured shows on Sexual Predators, The Homeless, Insurance, Education, 9/11, Religion and Free Speech. Community Organizer and DFA Host during the 2004 Presidential election. Organized town hall meetings featuring Florida Gubernatorial, County and local candidates during 2006.

A former candidate for House District 50, ran in 2006 with approx. 46% of the vote. A career in management including Procurement, General Manager of Import/Export business, President of Sales, Finance and Marketing organization.

Philosophical attributes include; the Golden Rule, bold leadership by example, accountability, empathy, reason and equality.



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
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. 10

October, 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,
Oct. 2nd
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 October will be at:

the Greek Island Restaurant

on Sunday October 17th 5:00PM.
This restaurant is located at 1501 Clearwater-Largo Rd.
in Largo just a few miles south of Morton-Plant hospital.

This restaurant is reasonably priced and has a wide variety of Greek dishes - but alternative food also. Hope to see you there.

Please reserve by Saturday October 16th. Hope to see many of you there.
Please call Glenn Paul at 727-595-3347 or email him at kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com for reservations.

Laugh Lines

The following questions were set in last year's GED examination.
These are genuine answers (from 16 year olds).....and they WILL breed.

Q. Name the four seasons

A. Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar

Q. Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink

A. Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists

Q. What guarantees may a mortgage company insist on

A. If you are buying a house they will insist that you are well endowed

Q. In a democratic society, how important are elections

A. Very important. Sex can only happen when a male gets an election

Q.. What happens to your body as you age

A. When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental

Q. What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty

A. He says goodbye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery (So true)

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.
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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

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.
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- ☞ Limited income -\$10.

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(Privacy respected)

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

PUBLISHED HUMANIST LETTERS :

Through it all, we have survived

Certainly the letter writers are correct as they mourn over the frightful condition in which we find our country. One feels a sick despair at every new revelation of fraud, or hypocrisy or double-dealing. The words of men fighting to win elections ring hollow, somehow. Their aides and friends try valiantly to cover up or smooth over quite serious flaws — a startling breach of ethics, or blatant hypocrisy. And (to my mind) what is the worst of all: an almost defiant effort to buy an exalted position!

In the meantime, the economy teeters on the edge of disaster, men and women are desperate for jobs that seem to have vanished, academics wring their hands at the inadequacies of the education being given our children. Athletes and entertainers are accorded unbelievable salaries, and a growing number of homeless walk the streets of once-proud cities.

In the midst of all this, one must cling to the knowledge that our country has, all through its history, known difficult times. Poverty, war, crime, a divisive Civil War — all these have made large numbers of citizens miserable. And we have survived.

We have shown ourselves greater than the evils that beset us. We'll live through these bad, apparently hopeless years because there are enough men and women who will never give up searching for solutions to the problems they see about them ... and who care enough to eliminate them.

Abigail Ann Martin, Brandon

Published Sunday, August 29, 2010

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

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

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 Florida Humanist Journal, Skeptic, Essays in Humanism, and many others.

Humanist Quotes

“Karl Marx called religion "The opiate of the people." School prayer is the marijuana of the indoctrination process; a starter addictive dose to get children to accept religion without really knowing why. Full addiction is attained when they stop asking why and accept it on blind faith.”

Frank Prahl

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



HFA E-NEWS

An Electronic News Update from
The Humanists of Florida Association

HFA member Art Jackson's letter applauds work of the Evolution Institute

Art, also an active member of the Silicon Valley group, wrote a Letter to the Editor of *The Humanist* that appears in the current issue. In it, he writes: "Science (and freethought organizations) must now break Descartes' contract [to study only material science] and take back meaning as a legitimate area of study for science. This requires following the path Spinoza opened (the importance of a feeling of well being for individuals), and Darwin's theory of evolution gave us the clues necessary for such a study. Meaning comes out of human existence as creatures evolved in this world.

"... It's long past time to move to a deeper level of discussion and recognize that meaning exists in the empirical, evolutionary domain and this must be the focus of our efforts to create a satisfying alternate to traditional, supernatural religions.

"The Evolution Institute in Florida (co-founded by David Sloan Wilson and Jerry Lieberman) is moving productively to do what needs to be done to open up this domain. So hopefully a new day for Humanism is starting to dawn."

(Binghamton University co-hosts a workshop with EI on the benefits of play this weekend, Sept. 17 - 19: "Empowering Neighborhoods and Restoring Outdoor Play." Look for a report next week.)

AHA President David Niose addresses canceled Koran burning in Gainesville

"Terry Jones, the once-obscure Florida preacher, attained celebrity status with his painfully ignorant "International Burn A Koran Day," and during the uproar the American Humanist Association joined the chorus of condemnation. Like countless others, the AHA found the book-burning antics to be bigoted, ignorant and certain to cause emotional pain if not physical harm. In all respects, Jones was wrong, and it was good that in the end he backed down and canceled the event." Read his entire statement at: <http://www.americanhumanist.org/news/details/2010-09-american-humanist-association-president-speaks-out-a>

Florida Appellate Court Strikes Down Law Barring Gay People From Adopting

MIAMI - September 22 - A Florida appeals court today struck down a state law barring gay people from adopting. The decision affirms an earlier family court ruling in the case that would allow Martin Gill to adopt two foster children he is raising with his partner. The American Civil Liberties Union and the ACLU of Florida, which represent Gill in the case, called the decision a victory for the thousands of children waiting to be adopted in Florida.

"This is just the news that we have been waiting so anxiously for here," said Gill, who has been a parent to the two boys for more than five years. "This is a giant step toward being able to give our sons the stability and permanency that they are being denied."

Highly respected children's health, welfare and legal advocacy groups filed friend-of-the-court briefs urging the court to strike down the ban. These groups included the Child Welfare League of America, American Psychological Association, North American Council on Adoptable Children, Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, the National Center for Adoption Law and Policy, the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the national and Florida chapters of the National Association of Social Workers and Florida's Children First.

Brandon Hensler ACLU of FL



**5th Annual
Freethought
Day at Disney**

Epcot

(at Walt Disney

World in Florida)

Saturday, Oct 16th 2010

Join other Freethinkers, atheists, agnostics, Humanists, and rationalists of all kinds for a fun day at Walt Disney World in Orlando Florida.

Freethought Day at Disney is hosted by the Humanist Family Network - Greater Tampa Region. See the [website](#) for more information

ON THE WAY TO GRAMMAR'S HOUSE

-- *Stray Thoughts*

By *Steve Brown*

In Favor of Discrimination

The political scene has been dumbed down. Politics (maybe life) has always been a circus. But now the clowns are in charge. In politics they've displaced the animals like McCarthy, trapeze artists like Clinton, and magic acts like Reagan and Obama. There's no ringmaster like an FDR. That there was any farther down dumbness could go might have seemed impossible at each stage along the way.

I'm not here to offer hope for the future.

But rather to tie precision in language, DISCRIMINATION in language, to the lack of precision and discrimination in thinking -- about politics, or about anything.

It's true that language, no matter which, is always a something in process. That meanings and usages and "proper" grammar shift, so that, for example, the current meaning of a word may have little or no connection to its original meaning, or even oppose it, or "bad form" may become "good" or at least permissible in certain contexts such as "ain't" or employment of a double negative for added emphasis.

But with the advent of mass media, starting with radio in the 1920s, the pace of change, I suggest, has increased immeasurably. If there are now fewer rules, few distinctions, has the foundation of our thinking been seriously eroded?

If our brain's general thought processes rely basically on language, does sloppy language imply sloppy thinking, or at least somewhat degraded ability to apply, say, a fitting action (verb) to a fitting political or social problem or issue (subject)? Does a degraded ability to find the appropriate antecedent to a pronoun, or to determine the appropriate number a verb should take (does it relate to a single antecedent noun or a combination of interrelated nouns) have anything to do with a diminished ability to track the backward trajectory of a current social issue?

Among the eliminated precisions in language that especially aggravate me is the virtual extinction of the words "emigration" or "emigrant" from the American vocabulary. I think I can show that this relates to one-sided thinking. We speakers of American English have become so insulated by our own sense of being exceptional ("No. 1," if you will -- despite a recent global survey that ranks us 11th in desirability as a place to live), we don't conceive of a person who comes to this country as someone who has left his/her home (as an "emigrant") but only as a kind of filing attracted by the magnetic "City on a Hill." Sometimes "immigrant" is appropriate, sometimes "emigrant" (or the related verbs) but "emigrant" with its awareness of what has been left behind, has disappeared.

Also vanishing are distinctions between further and farther (degree versus distance, with sometimes the distinctions very fine and even arguable -- see the first paragraph in this missive) but doesn't the exercise of discrimination help to prepare the brain for more wide-ranging or important distinctions outside language itself? Add to the losses the ability to accurately choose among "who/which/that," "like/as," etc.

I see the dumbness of much of our current political discourse as a gift of the mass media. Less the structural dumbness of specific segments such as Fox News than the 24-hour circus of an entertainment "culture" that radiates from every television screen, movie theatre, concert venue, video game, ballpark and shopping mall. Dumbed down language predominates, and dumbed down entertainment (with some thoughtful or demanding exceptions) relieves the mind of any challenge, while the two-income family's work, home-care and child-care obligations relieve it of opportunity for digestion, examination and reflection of and on what is going on in the world.

Kurt Vonnegut's 1952 "Player Piano" is one of only two books I've come across in a bookstore, picked up and couldn't put down until I'd read it start-to-finish. It saw a society where the workforce had been displaced by automation, the country was run by "planners" and "managers," the president was a figurehead actor elected under a stage name, and the bulk of the population was in the service sector (in the Spartan form it still took before malls and the chainstoreization of almost every facet), the military or something like the WPA. Well, we've had an actor president, even if he didn't require a stage name and was something more than a figurehead, but we've had two presidents who did not serve under their birth names: Leslie Lynch King (Gerald Ford) and William Jefferson Blythe (you know who). We've seen a James Earl Carter elected as "Just Plain Jimmy" W. J. Clinton as "Just Plain Bill" and the prim and proper long-serving U.S. Senator Robert J. Dole become "Bob" in order to lose in a run for the presidency, and the similarly hitherto august Albert A. Gore Jr. become "Just Plain Al" in order to win the vice-presidency and lose the Presidency to a Supreme Court that was indifferent (or antagonistic) to his becoming a "common man." And the country is run by the planners and the managers.

A possibly interesting note is that "Player Piano" had college football become professional, with big-time salaries for the players, competitive bidding and trading (bear in mind this was before the television-based explosion of the NFL and AFL, and the only truly national professional sport was baseball) so as to make it a better diversion for the elite who could afford to attend ("skyboxes," "luxury suites," anyone?). Today it's only the college football coaches who make big salaries, as much as multi-millions annually, and the players remain "students," although now they're prepping for the NFL. What do these coach salaries say about priorities in higher education?

I hope all this ties together. If it doesn't, perhaps it shows that the author is not exactly tied together, although unflagging in his effort to get to Grammar's house.

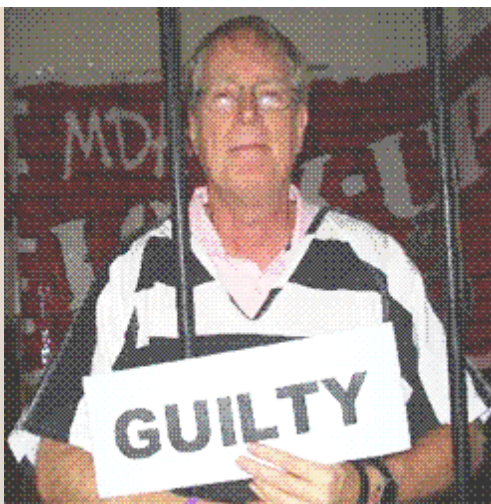


Want to be a more active Humanist?

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 has been a stalwart of social/political activism in behalf a great many causes. He could sure use some help in his capacity as Social planning director, treasurer, 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 or by phone at 727-595-3347.



**Dave's
in jail
again!**

**Click pix at left to
help raise bail**

When I'm not trying to save the world, I'm trying to help our local community.

Here's yet another cause that I believe in. The **Muscular Dystrophy Assoc.** has an excellent record of using donations to fix problems... not generating more donations. Please consider donating towards my bail. They're coming to take me away next week.

“Dangerous Dave” Dockery



It can be offensive and bigoted, but free speech is as American as apple pie!

Free speech is free for everyone. This is not news, but it is an important backdrop to keep in mind when considering the rights of a few people in Gainesville who have some terribly intolerant and ugly things to say about Muslims.

In the shadow of the controversies surrounding the Park51 plans in Manhattan, the Dove World Outreach Center, a Christian church in Gainesville, plans to commemorate the anniversary of the worst terrorist attack on America by burning copies of the Qu'ran on September 11. Acts such as these, while protected by the First Amendment, **underscore the woefully misguided belief that America is at war with the Islamic faith, and tear at the fabric of our communities.**

[We invite you to join the conversation about religious freedom and tolerance of others' faiths on our Facebook page.](#) While you're there, become a “fan” of the ACLU of Florida, share the page with your friends, and keep up with all our latest news.

ACLU staff and volunteers will be on the ground in Gainesville on the days leading up to 9/11, participating in interfaith events and providing Know Your Rights training to those who wish to counter protest the Qu'ran burning. [The ACLU has a long and proud history of defending religious freedom for people of all faiths.](#) Along with the guarantee of religious freedom for all, the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of expression must also be respected. And as the Dove Center grabs the public spotlight with their intolerant gestures over the next two weeks, ACLU members will be participating in community events celebrating the religious diversity of Gainesville and ensuring that both religious freedom and freedom of speech are guaranteed for everyone.

As we use our freedom of speech to condemn the burning of Qu'rans and the distressing intolerance that will be on display on September 11, we must also protect the constitutional right of others to engage in hateful and bigoted speech. If we chip away at that right for those with whom we disagree, then we erode protections for everyone's rights.

[Voice your opinion on our Facebook page and invite others to the conversation.](#)

Our Website All newsletters from the past two years are there, as well as pictures of some of us. (We need more!) <http://suncoasthumanist.com>