



# 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 September 4th...

## Board Meeting

A board meeting is scheduled for September; the date and time has 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*

## CCC

The Civilian Conservation Corps:  
An idea whose time has come  
...Again

"It has been popular group-think of late to say "government programs are never the answer." But after a decade of political momentum on the side of demonizing the government and casting our economic fortunes solely with the private sector, why are so many people now suffering?

Knee-jerk platitudes and ideological clichés do not help build a country or put food on the table. The Civilian Conservation Corps, in fact, did just that.

The American people must to urge our government to reactivate and update the template of the CCC program which can put millions of work boots on the ground over the generations in performing and training in real green jobs as they do actual work on shovel ready public works projects.”\*

**Jay Alexander**, leader of the movement to revive the Corps

will be our guest speaker. He and others in his organization have had some success in getting congress to consider just such a bill. While there is the usual obstructionism, there is a growing level of support. His website is an intriguing mélange of history and useful information about this national movement. There is some effort locally to add more strength to the current effort  
\*To learn more, go to:

<http://www.wecantakeit.org>

**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>

Volume 19 No. 9

September, 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,  
Sept. 4th  
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.

**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!**



*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 September will be at: **Carmelita's Mexican Restaurant**

Sunday September 19th at 5:00PM at 7705 Ulmerton Rd. at its intersection with Belcher Rd. in Largo. This restaurant has many offerings in the \$10 range. It has been named top Mexican restaurant in the area many times.

Please reserve by Saturday September 18th. Hope to see many of you there. Note: Look for coupons in your mail for Carmelita's

Please call Glenn Paul at 727-595-3347 or email him at [kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com) for reservations.

## Laugh Lines Signs of the Times

It's not whether you win or lose, but how you place the blame.

We have enough youth. How about a fountain of 'smart'?

When blondes have more fun, do they know it?

It's not whether you win or lose, but how you place the blame.

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.*  
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*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
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Address -if new: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# **PUBLISHED HUMANIST LETTERS :**

## **In this Country, We have Freedom of Religion**

There were some unfortunate letters published Monday in your paper ( St Pete Times) which spoke fervently against building a mosque near ground zero, and about prejudice suffered by other religions in Muslim countries.

My question to the writers of these letters, and to all the other "patriotic" citizens who feel this way, is: Exactly what does freedom of religion mean to you? This is one of the most basic rights guaranteed to all of us in the Constitution. It does not say, "Except when you're a Muslim." Do not forget that many Muslims lost their lives on 9/11 as well.

My understanding is that the property is owned by the Muslim group that wants to set up the mosque. It is their private property. Should we take that away too? This is a moderate Muslim group that has lived and worshipped here for many years, peacefully, and wants to build a community center. They are Americans. They are the kind of Muslims we should encourage and welcome.

I will not compare our Bill of Rights to freedoms offered to other religions in Dubai, Yemen, Egypt, or Iran. I am an American. I do not want to emulate their culture. I am grateful every day that I was born here, and that I understand my rights and those of other Americans, no matter what their religion (or lack of one) is.

**Lois Fries, Largo**

*[Published in the St. Petersburg Times, Friday August 13th 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](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.**

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**



### **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***

"In my youth, I was told, "One should not talk about religion and politics in public."  
On the contrary, these are the two subjects that should be talked about often in public because they affect our lives the most. This saying must have been started, and supported over time, by clergy and politicians...lest they be found out! "

**Frank Prahl**

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





## HFA E-NEWS

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

### Evolution Institute announces August 27 - 30 workshop at Duke, 'Integrating Behavioral Economics with Evolutionary Theory'

There is widespread agreement that economic theory must become based on a more accurate conception of human nature to successfully guide public policy. That is the objective of behavioral economics, which has become prominent within the larger field of economics. However, behavioral economics needs to become more broadly based in the human behavioral sciences, which in turn must be grounded in evolutionary theory. The purpose of our project is to properly ground behavioral economics in evolutionary science, including the study of proximate mechanisms in a more fully rounded sense. We intend to provide the most accurate conception of human nature possible based on current scientific knowledge, oriented toward the formulation of economic theory and public policy. This objective, in turn, will require an integration of subfields within the human behavioral sciences, including evolutionary psychology, cognitive psychology, applied behavioral analysis, sociology, cultural anthropology, and neurobiology. These subfields need to be brought together before they can be related to an applied science such as behavioral economics.

This working group is one of three that emerged from the recent [National Evolutionary Synthesis Center](#) (NESCent) catalysis meeting titled "[The Nature of Regulation: How Evolutionary Theory Can Inform the Regulation of Large-scale Human Social Interactions](#)" which was organized in collaboration with the Evolution Institute. The EI has provided an organizational structure that includes a large community of interest (COI) in addition to the catalysis meeting participants. The working groups will take advantage of the same organizational structure, allowing the 10-12 people who work intensively on the project to interact with the other working groups and an engaged audience of scientists, economists, and policy makers across disciplines. HFA cofounded EI in 2008, when HFA president Jerry Lieberman and renowned author and scholar David Sloan Wilson planned the first workshop that fall at the University of Miami. For more information related to this upcoming workshop read: [Economics and Evolution as Different Paradigms XII: Behavioral Economics, or will the real Homo sapiens please stand up?](#)

For all of our projects, we intend to create a large community of interest in addition to the participants who attend the workshop. Contact the [directors](#) if you wish to become a member of this community and receive periodic updates.

### Humanists Decry Stem Cell Research Ruling

Washington, DC, Aug. 24, 2010

An injunction by a federal judge has put federally funded stem cell research on hold, compromising the progress of vital medical breakthroughs, the American Humanist Association (AHA) said today. U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth ruled on Monday that funding of stem cell research violates a federal ban on taxpayer dollars going towards the destruction of embryos.

"The ruling is a step backwards for science, a likely disruption to important research, and this will cause real harm to many in need of medical innovation," said David Niose, president of the American Humanist Association, who pointed out that the case was brought by a Christian adoption agency whose executive director is on record as seeking to impose a conservative Christian view on national stem cell policy. "The injunction appeases religious conservatives who seek to have their theological opinions define public policy. Thus, this is just another example of how the obstructionist agenda of the religious right has real social consequences."

Check the AHA [website](#) for more information: [www.americanhumanist.org](http://www.americanhumanist.org)

### It's Time for the FDA to End the Overuse of Antibiotics on Farms

A human health crisis is brewing on our nation's farms. **An estimated 70 percent of antibiotics used in the United States are fed to animals that are not sick, a practice that breeds antibiotic-resistant bacteria and causes costly, painful, and sometimes deadly human diseases.**

Last year, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) acknowledged the scientific consensus on the connection between human health and this nontherapeutic antibiotic use on the farm. Yet the FDA's actions, including a recently released set of principles on this subject, have done nothing to tackle the problem and miss the mark on the full scope of inappropriate antibiotic uses. **The FDA has asked for public feedback on this issue. Write today to tell the agency to get serious about addressing antibiotic overuse in animal agriculture!**

**[Take Action Today!](#)**

**[From the Union of Concerned Scientists](#)**

## ON THE WAY TO GRAMMAR'S HOUSE

-- *Stray Thoughts*

By *Steve Brown*



All of them open for adoption.

The supra-libertarian fantasy, "Atlas Shrugged," is on its way to film some 53 years after its publication (Shakespeare should have had it so good). Low-budget with a beginning director and unknown cast, it may well wind-up going direct to DVD or viral online distribution. At any rate it would be a kind of coitus completus for those still (or anew) under the spell of Ayn Rand and more people will have solved the bumper-sticker mystery of "Who is John Galt."

"Atlas Shrugged" never had me in its thrall, but I did fall prey to "'The Fountainhead" at an impressionable age (17 or 18) and took far too long to rid myself of its imprint, not so much on my political or vocational life, as on my personal one.

Bobby Valentine, the former big league baseball player and manager, now a commentator, is almost the spitting image of Ron Paul, but runs more to handsome than Paul who leans pun intended toward gaunt. Paul named his son "Rand," in case you missed the connection.

In a recent newsletter, Frank Prahl harked back to the days when it wasn't polite to talk about politics or religion in public. but he neglected to mention "'sex," which was also a banned conversational substance. They were kind of an unholy trinity. Well, we Suncoast Humanists have certainly overcome the embargo on talking politics and religion., but we seem to be either inhibited or uninterested in sex outside of reproductive and gay rights.

I've discovered and recommend a 2001 National Geographic picture-and-text book, available in the county library system ([pals.polarislibrary.com](http://pals.polarislibrary.com)), "I Dwell in Possibility: Women Build a Nation 1600-1920." The main title is from a poem by Emily Dickinson. It's lovely; no other word would fit better.

At our last Suncoast meeting I was challenged to define what I mean by "meaningful work," which I'd asserted would be a requirement for a good life in a society that makes a good life available to all. I can better explain after more thought. A basic definition is that it would be primarily work that you would be glad to do if you weren't paid for it, or work that may not be attractive in itself, but in undertaking it you would recognize that it is a necessary element to make life pleasant for all. However, a society organized in such a fashion would permit oversized financial compensation for such jobs [collecting garbage, digging ditches, cleaning toilets, drudge work] as opposed to today's oversized financial compensation for doing magic tricks on Wall Street or amusing us to death (as Neil Postman put it), encourage long or frequent vacations and otherwise ameliorate working conditions.

After the meeting, our topic being "Equality," I was offered in conversation the view that unemployment was far worse in countries, European in particular -- the "social democracies" -- that put more emphasis on equality, and through higher taxation are able to provide wider and more extensive employment benefits than we do in the U.S. In other words, excess unemployment is a penalty they have to pay for their largesse (despite tax rates that are punitive from a typical American point of view). My firm conviction, and retort, was that unemployment is no worse in those countries than it is here and in most cases better, but I had no specific statistics in mind or on hand. I'd like to supply them here, less for the specifics but to make a point about the exceptionalist, nationalistic rhetoric that suffuses our mass media and can brainwash even critical thinkers among us, especially when the foundation has been laid in K-12 education where wishful thinking about the American past is presented as historical fact (and I don't doubt for a minute that the same kind of exceptionalist early childhood indoctrination, adapted to their own particular themes, is the case in other countries).

[We interrupt this narrative for a brief joke. The claim that George Washington was the father of our country was attacked some years ago when it was revealed that the longtime Los Angeles Dodgers first baseman, Steve Garvey, recently traded to the San Diego Padres, was about to produce at the same time children with both his wife and a mistress and, as I best recall, was also being sued in some sexual context by a third woman. The speculation was that this outbreak of paternity would spread to other National League cities (there was as yet no interleague play) and Garvey was considered, prospectively, the new (and real, since Washington was genetically childless) "Father of Our Country."] Now, back to our regular programming.

First, for the month of June 2010 (last available) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show unemployment rates, with foreign numbers converted to conform to U.S. measurement standards (all %s): Netherlands 3.4, Austria 3.9, Japan 4.8, Australia 5.6, Denmark and Greece 6.6, Canada 7.3, U.K. 7.7, Germany 7.8, Italy 7.9, Sweden 8.2, Finland 8.5, Belgium 8.6, France 9.1, UNITED STATES 9.3, European Union (27 countries including Eastern Europe) 9.6, Portugal 10.8, Ireland 13.3 and Spain 20.0. This is the complete list maintained by the BLS.

However, the World Fact Book via Wikipedia provides unemployment rates as of March 2010 for ALL 27 E.U. countries, but unadjusted to conform to U.S. standards, which adjustment seems with few exceptions to lower their rates by a half-point to a full point. Here they are (%s): Netherlands 4.1, Austria 4.9, Luxembourg 5.6, Slovenia 6.2, Cyprus 6.7, Malta 6.9, Germany 7.3, Denmark and Romania 7.6, Czech Republic 7.9, Belgium 8.1, U.K., Sweden and Bulgaria 8.7, Italy 8.8, Finland 9.0, Poland 9.1, European Union 9.6, UNITED STATES 9.7, France 10.1, Greece 10.2, Portugal 10.5, Hungary 11.0, Ireland 13.2, Slovakia 14.1, Estonia 15.5, Lithuania 15.8, Spain 19.1 and Latvia 22.2.

## 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](mailto:kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com) or by phone at 727-595-3347.

## Humanists Praise Passage of Fair Sentencing Act

Washington, DC, August 4, 2010

Leaders of the American Humanist Association (AHA) expressed approval of President Obama's signing the Fair Sentencing Act into law, significantly reducing the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine.

"This corrects a historical injustice within our legal system," said Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association. "The previous laws were racially biased and perpetuated the social and economic hardships already plaguing many disadvantaged members of our community."

The Fair Sentencing Act, which was signed into legislation by President Obama on Tuesday, is expected to diminish disproportionate racial divide within prisons, reduce prison over-population, and save millions in tax-payer dollars. The act will target high-level dealers and traffickers while limiting the excessive penalties for low-level crack offenders. The AHA supported the bill, lobbying members of Congress for their votes.

AHA



## What is the FBI up to in your neighborhood?

**Potentially, the agency is mapping your community by its racial and ethnic makeup and tracking ethnic-oriented businesses, behaviors and cultural traditions.**

We intend to find out what they've been up to, and that's why the ACLU of Florida, along with thirty-two ACLU affiliates across the nation, submitted Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests this week. **We are demanding information from FBI regional offices in Jacksonville, Miami and Tampa about what data they are collecting about communities and what they are doing with this information.**

[Demand accountability from your members of Congress about what the FBI is doing in your neighborhood.](#)

We have real reasons to be concerned about race-based snooping in our communities. Internal FBI guidelines, called the Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide (DIOG), were published in December 2008 and made public a few months ago.

The DIOG claims to authorize FBI field offices to conduct "domain assessment" investigations in which **FBI agents can collect, analyze and map racial and ethnic demographic information – including the location of ethnically-oriented businesses, particular racial and ethnic behaviors, cultural traditions, and lifestyle characteristics – in local communities.**

Although some racial and ethnic data collection by some agencies might be helpful in lessening discrimination, the FBI's attempt to collect and map demographic data using race-based criteria to target entire communities for criminal enforcement and domestic intelligence purposes is inconsistent with American values and raises serious civil liberties concerns.

That's why we need your help. In addition to the ACLU's FOIA requests, we're calling on members of Congress. [Ask your members of Congress to find out what the FBI is doing in your neighborhood.](#)

**The public deserves to know about a race-based law enforcement program with such troubling implications for civil rights and civil liberties. Please [take action](#) today.**