

# 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)

A valentine Double Feature:

## **"SEX AND TIME TRAVEL" And "SEX: FOR OR AGAINST"**

In recognition and possibly celebration of upcoming Valentine's Day, Humanist Society member **Steve Brown** hopes to ignite a "passionate" discussion around two themes: (1) "Sex and Time Travel" and (2) "Sex: For or Against."

His first theme refers to a great, and still ongoing, change in sexual attitudes, behaviors and roles over the lifetimes of most of our members. An "Unbrave New World" has come from "The Pill" and the vigorous feminist activism that followed. Its landscape, as with other things, is not much like that of our childhoods. It may be time, as humanists, to take stock.

Theme No. 2 applies to the question of whether the suppression or social control of sexual behavior is necessary for all the gears and levers of modern society to function -- or whether we might find something more resembling "Eden" to be preferable.

Both themes have obvious links to the other nominal polite society "unmentionables:" politics and religion, particularly "that old-time religion."

Steve says he is an expert on nothing but his own life, and has been questioned even on that score. His tenuous credentials for this afternoon's presentation include growing up beside long skirts and girdles, coming under direct fire as a vulnerable teenager from gun-turret bras and, finally, in maturity experiencing the introduction into the "landscape" of a great deal more of the architecture of the bare female form.

Between gun-turrets and monokinis he escaped into marriage and a sexual companionship that produced five children, divorce, single fatherhood and then full singlehood, both of the latter in the midst of the sexually revolutionary '60s and '70s in especially inflamed Los Angeles and San Francisco. A founding member of "Family Synergy," a still extant Los Angeles-centered group devoted to exploring and promoting alternative family structures, he was part of an informal "Intimate Network." He supported the National Sex Symposium of the '90s and other efforts to make sex respectable, associating with more than a few people prominent in that effort. He has an undergraduate degree from the University of Chicago, where he also studied in the post-graduate Committee on the Analysis of Ideas and Study of Methods. **SB**

## Please support the Humanist Society



**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: 1000 pounds. **It's the Humanist thing to do!**

**Coordinator, Glenn Paul** says that Tampa Bay Harvest food deliveries in the past year - statistics -  
TB Harvest delivered 2,765,517 pounds of food to 220 agencies who feed the hungry in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties last year. That's 5,531,000 meals to feed the hungry by TBH's calculations.

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

**On Saturday,  
Feb. 5th  
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.

Volume 20 No. 2

February, 2011

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



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

**Now, Find the Humanist  
Society on [Facebook!](#)  
Be a Friend!**  
Thanks to Bob Byrch!



*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: **Too Jays Gourmet Deli**

in the Countryside Mall on Sunday February 20th at 5:00PM.

This restaurant is located at 27001 US Hwy 19 in the Mall in north Clearwater.

TooJay's features many fine sandwiches, soups, salads and entrees at reasonable prices.

Please reserve your place at the table by Feb. 21st with **Carolyn Frase**. Use email [frasec@aol.com](mailto:frasec@aol.com) or phone 727-533-2279.

## Laugh Lines Puns for Educated Minds

The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.

I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.

She was only a whiskey maker, but he loved her still.

A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.

Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other, "You stay here; I'll go on a head."

A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab center said: 'Keep off the Grass.'

The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.

A negative poet writes inverse.

If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine.

A vulture boards an airplane, carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at him and says, "I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion per passenger."

A person sent ten puns to his friends with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.

Thanks to *Dorothy Wylie*

## 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)

### Challenges in our future.

As a result of the recent November Elections, the Humanist community in Florida, and its many allies, face a situation of unprecedented deterioration in many aspects of everyday life. Education, environment, business regulation, finance, and politics are all in play in a great contest between the radical right and its reactionary agenda, and an enlightened vision of how the greatest good might be served in the interest of the greatest number within the context of a rapidly growing understanding of the limits of traditional methods of creating everything needed to satisfy the essentials of a good life.

The challenge for everyone is to our imagination, rationality, and the will to engage in public dialog to persuade our fellow citizens to explore new paths. It won't be easy, but it is necessary. **Jim Peterson**



## INTERNATIONAL DARWIN DAY FOUNDATION

*Celebrating Darwin, Science and Humanity*

This February 12, people all over the world will commemorate **Darwin Day**, an international celebration to honor the **discoveries and life of Charles Darwin**—the man who propelled science forward by first describing biological evolution via natural selection.

When I reflect on what Darwin accomplished, I'm also reminded of the challenges that science and evolution face in our nation today. **A recent Gallop poll still found that 40% of Americans believe in creationism.** And stealth creationist organizations like the Discovery Institute are spending millions of dollars to push so-called "intelligent design" into public schools.

The International Darwin Day Foundation, a project of the American Humanist Association and founded by Dr. Robert Stephens, provides resources and publicity for individuals and organizations around the world to celebrate Darwin Day.

Together, let's promote Darwin's legacy and ensure that it lives on in the science classrooms in the United States. Happy Darwin Day. To learn more: [www.darwinday.org](http://www.darwinday.org).

**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

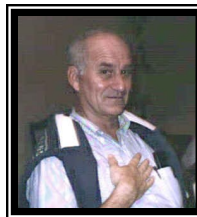
has graciously taken over as chair of the social committee. She welcomes your comments and suggestions for future venues for our s mid-month dinner.

[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

*Thinking must be one of the most difficult tasks known to man; look at the great efforts people will make to avoid it.*



**Frank Prahl**

Read  
The insouciant, vexatious thoughts  
of Steve Brown on [page 5](#)





## HFA E-NEWS

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

HFA and its 27 affiliates are in the process of reviewing a set of recommendations that will go to all of the groups' memberships for consideration. A recommendation to identify areas of common interest with the C-3Table Organization, and to collaborate with it to the extent possible is included. This process is expected to be completed in the spring, when C-3Table's long-term strategic plan is approved. Further, President, Jerry Lieberman is convinced, that strong support exists among key C-3Table members on issues of great importance to HFA and its affiliates. For instance, HFA and the Florida Consumer Action Network (FCAN) began forging strong ties several years ago, and Bill Newton – its executive director and HFA member – was also at the meeting. Former HFA Humanist of the Year, Nadine Smith – who is founder and executive director of the 160,000-member Equality Florida – attended and was highly supportive of issues we deem of utmost importance: the value of the Evolution Institute's work and the separation of church and state.

### Anti-choice protesters coming to FL universities

In February the fundamentalist "Center for Bio-Ethical Reform" (<http://www.abortionno.org/>) will be holding antiabortion protests and training sessions ("Pro-Life Institute," <http://www.cbrmidwest.org/pdf/PLI.pdf>) at Florida university campuses, including Florida State University and University of West Florida on Feb. 12-13, Ave Maria University on Feb. 18, and Florida Atlantic and Florida International University on Feb. 19-20.

Josh Karpf, founder of the NYC Atheists and cofounder of "Equal Time for Freethought" on WBAI-FM, wrote: "I know most of these campuses don't have secular student groups (least of all Ave Maria U., founded in 2003 by Domino's Pizza founder Tom Monaghan as part of a strictly Catholic planned community), but I hope the nearest freethought organizations will be able to travel to them to demonstrate against these fundamentalists. There's great merit in opposing religious control of our lives, and it's a great way for our community to gain activism experience."

### Call for nominations to the HFA Board

Please remember to send your nomination form by February 15 to Jan Kalnbach, Nominating Committee Chair and be sure you're a member in good standing prior to the election this spring so you may participate as a voter and/or candidate. The new board will assume its two-year responsibilities the first of May. The HFA Board consists of six (6) Officers (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, immediate past president, and parliamentarian) and nine (9) Members-at-Large. The Board generally meets twice a year, face-to-face, and has two additional meetings via telephone conference.

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*

### First Annual International Freethought Film Festival May 13 – 15, 2011

The Freethought Film Festival Foundation, is hosting the First Annual International Freethought Film Festival at the historic Tampa Theatre located at 711 Franklin Street in downtown Tampa. The program will consist of independent films selected from film submissions that have been entered for consideration. Ten different screenings of films, which best reflect the mission of promoting reason, critical thinking, and freedom of inquiry, will be scheduled. The film selections are to be announced after the final judging in January, 2011.

Read more at [http://www.freethoughtfilmfest.org/web\\_documents/iffeventannouncementpress.pdf](http://www.freethoughtfilmfest.org/web_documents/iffeventannouncementpress.pdf)

[www.freethoughtfilmfest.org](http://www.freethoughtfilmfest.org)

### International Freethought Film Festival

When: May 13th -15th, 2011

Where: Tampa Theatre, 711 N. Franklin St.

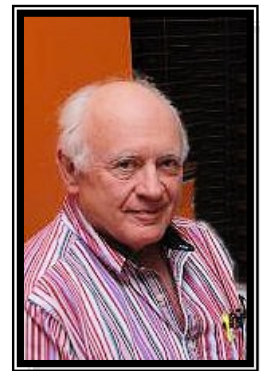
Tampa, FL 33602

# ON THE WAY TO GRAMMAR'S HOUSE

Steve Brown

## -- With a Basket of Goodies

Here's a box of Valentine "candy,;" some films and books that relate to the themes of the Suncoast Humanist Society's February meeting.



The gaiety and sheer playfulness that can be a good part of sexual dynamics captured and captivated my consciousness when I was in my teens, long before I had any experience with the physical act of love, through the comic romances of Thorne Smith, best known for "Topper" and the three movies and television series it inspired, but less through them than his other novels, namely "The Glorious Pool," "The Stray Lamb," "Skin and Bones," "Rain in the Doorway," "Turnabout" (also filmed), "Night Life of the Gods" and, especially, "The Bishop's Jaeger's." Most, if not all, are out of print. Libraries will have a few, frequently as omnibus volumes, and used copies of all can be sought out at [www.bookfinder.com](http://www.bookfinder.com). All but "Topper" were written in a prolific outburst between 1929-34 in the dust of the "Flapper Age."

The same kind of lighthearted but non-superficial attitude in the pursuit and enjoyment of love is the warp and woof of the "love comedies" of the French director, Philippe de Broca, best known in the U.S. for the anti-war comedy, "King of Hearts" (1966). All made in black and white in the space of a year or so (1960-61), they are called in the U.S., "The Love Game" (aka "The Lovers"), "The Joker" and "The Five-Day Lover," all starring the same leading man, the gaminesque Jean-Pierre Cassel, whose every move is dance-like. Unfortunately, DVDs are only available in the UK-Western Europe format and videocassettes nearly impossible to find. "New Republic" critic Stanley Kaufman, in his review compilation, "A World on Film" (1966), calls de Broca "a sexily irrepressible poet" and says, exemplarily of "The Joker:" "[de Broca] has taken the legerete [light-heartedness] that we have all felt...and abstracted it to make a whole world" ... "after the first five minutes we fear that it cannot be sustained; and after the first ten minutes we hope that it will never end."

It has been said that the most serious work in life is the play of a child.

The 1982 "Summer Lovers," directed by Randall Kleiser (of Brooke Shields "Blue Lagoon" notoriety), finds Peter Gallagher and a younger than "Splash" Darryl Hannah ending up still giddily happy in a blissful menage a trois established with a young Frenchwoman on a gorgeous Greek isle. Hitherto characters involved in this kind of normalcy-subversive activity would have had to be doomed to disappointment and grief.

Many films, particularly small "indies," which don't usually get wide release, over the last few decades have dealt with our increasingly relaxed erotic attitudes and behaviors. A couple fairly recent films impressed me with their idiosyncratic and highly entertaining approaches. One, Australian, is called, oddly enough, "Better Than Sex" (2000). It shows a one-night stand between strangers that, over a few intense days, surprising them both, becomes something more. The leads are attractive but don't have movie star looks. They are frequently shot in extreme close-up (you could count every freckle, if there weren't so many). There are flash cutaways to staccato commentary on the main action from gal and guy pals. The only real defect is the unnecessary but not too intrusive device of an angel incorporated as a middle-aged female cabdriver.

A Canadian film, "YPF" (2007), originally "Young People Fucking" has a nifty structure that takes four different kinds of couples, plus a triad, and with them plays a variation on the Masters & Johnson four stages of sexual encounter (put simply: arousal, lovemaking, orgasm/release and recovery). The couples are "The Friends," "The Couple," "The Exes" and "The First Date" and the triad is "The Roommates." The film is sectioned with onscreen titles according to its "stages," in sequence (1) Prelude, (2) Foreplay, (3) Sex, (4) Interlude, (5) Orgasm and (6) Afterglow, with the order of the groupings shifting randomly, to the viewer's eye, from stage to stage. The young people are, uniformly, beautiful, talented veterans of Canadian and U.S. television and cinema.

A 2002 film, "Tadpole" is a blithe pseudo-incest coming of age comedy. The title character, a virgin teenage boy played by Aaron Stanford, falls in love with his stepmother (Sigourney Weaver). It is unrequited, but he does wind up in bed with his stepmother's best friend (Bebe Neuwirth). This all turns out pleasantly and Tadpole (an early childhood nickname) seems at the end of the film ready for an age-appropriate relationship with the other sex.

Speaking of coming of age, one of my favorite films is "Nea" (1976) a French comedy by the Argentine-born Nelly Kaplan, set in Switzerland. It's sexy, and in its own way ferociously feminist. Sybille, a 16-year-old virgin from a filthy rich family, devours erotic novels she steals from a local bookstore and decides to write her own. She takes the completed manuscript to the sensually handsome bookseller she steals from to publish it under anonymous authorship. Her book, "Nea," becomes a runaway bestseller, and the young author develops a very physical yen for the publisher and decides to seduce him; before this is accomplished, she, spying on him in his own home, finds him in bed with her older sister. This sends her into jealous revenge mode and through devious and inelegant means, including exploitation of a young male household servant, fakes evidence that the publisher raped her. Jailed, he escapes and confronts her angrily in her own mountainside cottage on the family estate, and they have the most erotic wrestling match since Alan Bates and Oliver Reed took each other on in "Women in Love," but much more fierce, which morphs into passionate kisses and his agreement to scratch her virginal itch soon at his place, a fast row across the misty lake. She arrives there bundled in cold-weather gear and then, alone in a lavish bathroom, *Next...*

## GRAMMAR'S HOUSE with a basket of goodies... Cont. from page 5

with excited concentration undertakes a painstaking “toilette,” bathing, combing, brushing, tweezing, applying make-up. Then, glowing with excitement, she stands nude, framed (and backlit) in the doorway to the publisher’s boudoir, where, reclining, he awaits. The actress, Ann Zacharias, while not unpleasant-looking, is not a “knockout” by any means, so that it is the force of her character’s personality, her “lust for life,” her supreme comfort in herself (and the lighting!), that bring beauty to her, and overwhelm the publisher. He takes the initiative in the deflowering, as she expects, owing to her inexperience, but soon she takes her turn. In the course of the film she also has time to discover her mother in a hidden lesbian relationship with her aunt, encourage the two to run away together, and, of course amass a fortune in royalties.

I have room only quickly to mention a few more: “Love Actually” (2003), frequently shown (one scene censored) on television, is an interlocking compendium of several widely varying stories set at Christmastime in London that I haven’t yet gotten tired of after several viewings. Its happy endings do warm the heart. An American attempt to pull roughly the same trick with “Valentine’s Day” (2010) was not a success.

There are three that are bleaker, although in one case hysterically funny. That’s “The Ref” (1994) with Dennis Leary, Judy Davis and Kevin Spacey, the latter two as an acid-tongued couple at daggers with each other, reminiscent, perhaps of the dark “War of the Roses” with Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner or the radio “Bickering Bickersons” with Don Ameche and Frances Langford. “The Ref” (Leary) puts them and the rest of their dysfunctional family in their place -- and maybe happily ever after.

The others are “Hard Candy” (2005), in which Ellen Page (from “Juno”) plays a 14-year-old girl who takes revenge on the two adult men who raped and murdered a young friend. Hers is a virtuoso performance, using herself as a lure to bait the murderers and turning the tables on them, and “Le Bonheur” (1965) a lyrical French film by Agnes Varda, in which a loving husband finds a new lover, and seeks to add her to his family. In an upset to all that precedes, it ends tragically. Note: men who have Freudian fears of a certain involuntary surgical procedure, should approach “Hard Candy” with caution.

I must add one other virtuoso performance, Robert Downey Jr.’s in “Two Girls and A Guy” (1998). It’s the undoing of a two-timer by his lovers (Heather Graham and Natasha Gregson Wagner, Natalie Wood’s daughter) who accidentally find him out and entrap him in his own loft apartment. There’s one erotic scene (Downey and Graham) but the appeal of the film is in Downey, who cascades kaleidoscopic wordplay, sings operatically, croons, riffs stand-up shtick, recites Hamlet, whirls back and forth from telephone calls to the prickly situation in front of him, plays a tender piano tune, fakes a bloody suicide, and is shaken to the depths by the death of his mother (and I may have forgotten something).

In the future I may write about a larger number of related films, by category (of which, maybe two dozen!).

**Steve Brown**

## OUR BEST LETTERS

From the January 23rd **St. Petersburg Times**: It's wrong to change 'Huck Finn' | **Jan. 16, Bill Maxwell column**

### **The error of tampering with art**

Bill Maxwell's column should be read by every citizen — of any color or ethnicity — in the land. For he is challenging a well-meant but vigorous attack on something fundamental. He is explaining very clearly the error of tampering with art, which is born in the very heart of a mature society. We are a free society, and hewing to a party line is not for us — and not for any artist who attempts to show us what life is, with all its shining joy and its ugly meanness.

*Huckleberry Finn* is a very great novel — undoubtedly one of the greatest produced so far in America. It is more searing in its depiction of human cowardice and hatred and honor and loyalty and courage than any sociological study. We cannot read it unmoved. We applaud Huck's clear-eyed (albeit fumbling) sense of fairness and his appreciation of love and sacrifice, plus his sheer joy in living.

We cannot forever eliminate any reference to evil, even if we can understand the efforts of those who would erase the bad and the obscene. But we can remind them that they cannot distort reality. The same nature that gave thorns to the stems of roses also produced the exquisite beauty of their blossoms. The life depicted in *Huckleberry Finn* is often squalid and nasty and shortsighted. But it is blessed with the beautiful, life-giving friendship of a black slave and an underprivileged poor white boy. And it is enlivened by touches of the refreshing humor for which Mark Twain is famous.

**Abigail Ann Martin, Brandon**

# HUMANISM AND ITS ASPIRATIONS

## Humanist Manifesto III, a successor to the Humanist Manifesto of 1933\*

Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

The lifestance of Humanism—guided by reason, inspired by compassion, and informed by experience—encourages us to live life well and fully. It evolved through the ages and continues to develop through the efforts of thoughtful people who recognize that values and ideals, however carefully wrought, are subject to change as our knowledge and understandings advance.

This document is part of an ongoing effort to manifest in clear and positive terms the conceptual boundaries of Humanism, not what we must believe but a consensus of what we do believe. It is in this sense that we affirm the following:

**Knowledge of the world is derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis.** Humanists find that science is the best method for determining this knowledge as well as for solving problems and developing beneficial technologies. We also recognize the value of new departures in thought, the arts, and inner experience—each subject to analysis by critical intelligence.

**Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change.** Humanists recognize nature as self-existing. We accept our life as all and enough, distinguishing things as they are from things as we might wish or imagine them to be. We welcome the challenges of the future, and are drawn to and undaunted by the yet to be known.

**Ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience.** Humanists ground values in human welfare shaped by human circumstances, interests, and concerns and extended to the global ecosystem and beyond. We are committed to treating each person as having inherent worth and dignity, and to making informed choices in a context of freedom consonant with responsibility.

**Life's fulfillment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals.** We aim for our fullest possible development and animate our lives with a deep sense of purpose, finding wonder and awe in the joys and beauties of human existence, its challenges and tragedies, and even in the inevitability and finality of death. Humanists rely on the rich heritage of human culture and the lifestance of Humanism to provide comfort in times of want and encouragement in times of plenty.

**Humans are social by nature and find meaning in relationships.** Humanists long for and strive toward a world of mutual care and concern, free of cruelty and its consequences, where differences are resolved cooperatively without resorting to violence. The joining of individuality with interdependence enriches our lives, encourages us to enrich the lives of others, and inspires hope of attaining peace, justice, and opportunity for all.

**Working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness.** Progressive cultures have worked to free humanity from the brutalities of mere survival and to reduce suffering, improve society, and develop global community. We seek to minimize the inequities of circumstance and ability, and we support a just distribution of nature's resources and the fruits of human effort so that as many as possible can enjoy a good life.

Humanists are concerned for the well being of all, are committed to diversity, and respect those of differing yet humane views. We work to uphold the equal enjoyment of human rights and civil liberties in an open, secular society and maintain it is a civic duty to participate in the democratic process and a planetary duty to protect nature's integrity, diversity, and beauty in a secure, sustainable manner.

Thus engaged in the flow of life, we aspire to this vision with the informed conviction that humanity has the ability to progress toward its highest ideals. The responsibility for our lives and the kind of world in which we live is ours and ours alone.

For historical purposes, see preceding Humanist Manifestos: [I](#) and [II](#).



## 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.*

## Our best letters:

Vouchers for everyone?-Sunday Perspective

As a vigilant member of 'Americans United for Separation of Church and State' I strongly oppose any type of school voucher system. First of all, they are not legal per the Florida Constitution - plus many school districts around the country who have tried them have lost their voucher efforts in the various courts.

Also, schools who have tried and used them are generally unaccountable - no testing to prove their value. Furthermore, they have not shown to improve over all education in actuality nationwide, when in use. When they do get to try the voucher system, these schools mostly choose to 'cherry pick' top students to prove their worth. Their goal is to drain money [our taxes] from the public school system - but as yet haven't made a good case they improve education.

Let's get some discipline and good, well paid teachers into our present public school system to obtain a quality education for all students.

*Glenn Paul*



The right of each and every American to practice his or her own religion, or no religion at all, is among the most fundamental of the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. The Constitution's framers understood very well that religious liberty can flourish only if the government leaves religion alone. The free exercise clause of the First Amendment guarantees the right to practice one's religion free of government interference. The establishment clause requires the separation of church and state, which obligates the government to stay neutral in matters of religion -- favoring no religion over another, nor favoring religion over non-religion. Combined, they ensure religious liberty. Yet assaults on the freedom to believe continue, both in Washington and in state legislatures around the country.

The ACLU of Florida works to ensure that religious liberty is protected by keeping government policies from advancing religious principles and by keeping the government out of the business or religion. We were involved in an unprecedented

class action lawsuit that challenged the Boca Raton Municipal Cemetery's ban on vertical monuments and decorations at the gravesites. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of dozens of Jewish and Christian families, set standards for safeguarding religious freedom in Florida. The Florida ACLU also is part of the legal team challenging the state's voucher scheme, arguing that vouchers funnel much-needed tax dollars from neighborhood schools to private, sectarian organizations in violation of the Florida Constitution.

For more information on religious liberty in Florida, see: <http://www.aclufl.org>