



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

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A video Lecture followed by an open discussion...

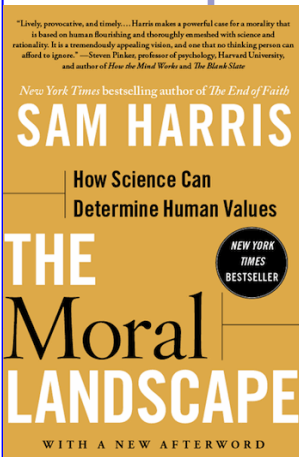
by **Steve Brown**



Sam Harris

CAN SCIENCE DETERMINE HUMAN VALUES?

Sam Harris, the author, speaker and neuroscientist who has become our most famous native-born atheist (but doesn't like the term "atheist"), has written a book that attempts to explode the notion long-held, by scientists, philosophers, ethicists and likely all the rest of us, that **THOUGHT cannot be derived from IS**. That *facts* and *values* are different realms; that *fact* cannot establish or verify *value* (the numbers asserting that *facts* can be derived from *values* seem, fortunately, (almost) equally limited).



Whether he succeeds or fails is something we are going to ask you to discuss, if not determine, today, after showing a 23-minute lecture, on video, that very neatly, and fully, outlines his thesis. In it you will note that Harris, as maybe most of you already know, is not without a sense of humor.

We have asked several persons with backgrounds either in science, philosophy or, specifically ethical concerns to attend and launch the discussion with their brief reactions to the video, the book or Harris' response to critics.

Briefly put, in "The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values," Harris says fact can establish value, or something close to doing that. He demonstrates his "Landscape" in a charted series of "peaks" and "valleys" purporting to show, across time or across the globe, how certain times or societies can be seen as coming closer to or falling shorter of maximizing "well-being,"

(Continued on page 5)

Exciting new Humanist efforts Pgs. 5 & 7



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!**

Glenn needs and deserves more support to make this project the success it ought to be for an organization of our size. If you can help (and I know you can!) please see Glenn to offer your support.

Read more on [Page 5](#).

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

**On Saturday,
November 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

Volume 20 No. 11

November, 2011

Volunteer !

If we are truly to make a difference in an often indifferent world, we will have to constantly renew our efforts. Retirement is not the end of activity, but the beginning of putting your energy and efforts into the things that truly matter.

If you think that the basic philosophical outlook of Humanism can make a major contribution to human well being at all levels, it is time to join us as a volunteer to put your beliefs to work.

At the recent board meeting, we made plans to participate with an **information table** at a major public event in the coming year.

We are putting together a **Speakers Bureau** for outreach. You can help in many ways.

And we need help in setting up our meetings. See a [Board member](#) to offer your help.



An efficient and genuinely humanist way to respond to emergencies worldwide.

**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

The moveable feast for November will be held at The Greek Island Restaurant

5:00PM. Sunday November 20th.

This restaurant is located at 1501 Clearwater-Largo Rd. in Largo just a few miles south of Morton-Plant hospital.

It is reasonably priced, and has a wide variety of Greek and alternative dishes as well.

Hope to see you there!

Please reserve by **November 19th** with Glenn Paul at 727-595-3347, or by email at kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com

Laugh Lines Political luminosities

In my many years I have come to a conclusion that one useless man is a shame, two is a law firm and three or more is a congress. -- John Adams

If you don't read the newspaper you are uninformed, if you do read the newspaper you are misinformed. - Mark Twain

Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But then I repeat myself. -- Mark Twain

I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts. -- Will Rogers

Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you! -- Pericles (430 B.C.)

No man's life, liberty, or property is safe while the legislature is in session. -- Mark Twain (1866)

The only difference between a tax man and a taxidermist is that the taxidermist leaves the skin. -- Mark Twain

There is no distinctly Native American criminal class...save Congress. -- Mark Twain

Thanks to *Connie Purdom*

HUMANIST SOCIETY OF THE SUNCOAST

A chapter of the American Humanist Assoc.
the Association of Secular Humanist Societies

Board of Directors

Meets Sept., December, April

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Jim Butler

Robert Byrch, Secretary

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Lois Fries

Jon Green

Matt Cooper, VP—treasurer

Jim Peterson, President

Emeritus members: Anita Garcia, Mark Kligman, Jerry Moore, Mark Winterbottom, Bob Collette, Glenn Paul, Don Acenbrach

~*~*~*~*~

Jim Butler Publisher.

Jim Peterson, Editor

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

E-Mail us at:

jim@suncoasthumanist.com

Brighten a Day for a member of our family

As we get older, we get better, but sometimes there's just that little hiccup that might dampen our enthusiasm slightly. Then we need each other ...just a little more.

Bob Collette is recovering from surgery while wife, **Dot** is having a little trouble with general memory problems. They can use a little support. dotybob@verizon.net

Marios Psomas recently had a little heart attack. Happily for us, he seems to be recovering nicely.

marios_psomas@hotmail.com

Please let me know of anyone who would like to be contacted.

Jim Peterson

Jamestp@metrodirect.net

See [page 3](#) for more on the Caring committee

Need Help? Want to Help?

It has been observed that "charity begins at home." But there is something more to the notion of charity than merely the socially obligatory motion of making donations and offering support to relatives in times of stress. This is more than just a high falutin intellectual discussion group. We as individuals have long endured the vicissitudes of arrogant criticism for expressing unpopular and unconventional beliefs and ideas.. We come here to seek solace in the company of others with similar experiences. We come to bask in the acceptance we find here and in the unique values we often hear expressed. We find in the lives of others an empathetic resonance with our own lives.

But, as human beings we suffer the same losses, frustrations, setbacks, and triumphs as more conservative people. We have a need to share our collective and individual support to others seeking the refuge, nurturance, warmth, and consolation only we can provide.

A Social Caring Committee has been formed to help with our individual needs in times of distress or discomfort. If you are or know someone who is sick, recovering, hospitalized, going through a life trauma, or just lonely, and who would enjoy talking with other members, please let your editor know so they can be listed in our "Brighten a Day" feature on page 2.

At this point four members have volunteered to participate on the committee:

- ♦ Patricia Walters (813) 988-5977
- ♦ Terri Eckstein (813) 891-9399
- ♦ Jerry Moore (727) 455-4973
- ♦ Nan Owens (813) 662-6612

Contact any of them if you feel you or someone in our group may need help.

Humanism is a philosophy with a long history of advocacy for the well being of the human creature. This organization exists largely to provide for the needs of its members.

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, news, or essay?

This newsletter is your space.

For editorial consideration for the next issue, contact Jim Peterson at:

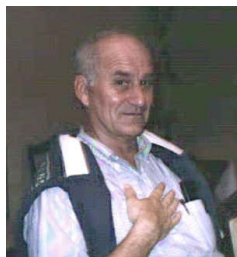
jim@suncoasthumanist.com

Share your favorite restaurant.

Glenn Paul

has graciously resumed the helm as chair of the social committee.

As always, he welcomes your comments and suggestions for future venues for our mid-month dinner. He also serves as assistant treasurer for our group.



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.

Join us in our effort to ignite critical thinking, and embrace reason, & compassion in life.

~ Join or Renew ~

**The Humanist Society
of the Suncoast.
Annual Dues**

- ☐ Trial -3 month- free news
- ☐ **Regular -\$25.** Renewal ☐
- ☐ **Reg. Couple -\$30.** (January)
- ☐ **Life -\$200.**
- ☐ **Life Couple -\$250.**
- ☐ **Associate -\$10.**

If new, please fill out the form; if renewing just indicate your name and any changes from our previous information. Thanks!

Name: _____

Address -if new: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

(Privacy respected)

Send to:

**Glenn Paul, Asst. Treasurer
Humanist Society of the Suncoast
2507 First St. #E
Indian Rocks Beach
33785-3010**

Imagine an elected official with the character to stand up to bigotry and intolerance! Linda Lerner should be commended for her unwavering stand on opposing the Boy Scouts of America's intolerance of gay people. The Boy Scouts also exclude atheists. But wait, isn't the gay intolerance also a religious issue? It is the religious fundamentalist's dogma that also fuels the anti-gay attitude. Perhaps the BSA should change its name to the Christian Scouts of America.

Frank Prahl

fpahl@verizon.net





It's Halloween, and time for...

Top Ten Scary Quotes from the Religious Right

All tricks, no treats.

Here are the top ten scary-but-true quotes made by religious conservatives in America:

10. "It is not possible for there ever, in the United States of America, to be a separation between God and government because God is the source of every single right which government has a sacred duty to protect ... not a single one of our unalienable rights will be safe in the hands of a president who believes that we evolved from slime and we are the descendants of apes and baboons ... look at the nation states in the 20th century which rejected the creator God of the Judeo-Christian tradition – Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, Communist China. The one thing all of these secular states share in common is dead bodies." [Bryan Fischer](#), American Family Association
9. "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren't punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That's war. And this is war." [Ann Coulter](#)
8. "The 'wall of separation between church and state' is a metaphor based on bad history, a metaphor which has proved useless as a guide to judging. It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned." [William Rehnquist](#)
7. "The message of the Declaration of Independence is under attack from the ACLU and atheists because it refuted the lie about a constitutional mandate for 'separation of church and state.' Atheists have filed numerous lawsuits in the courts of activist judges to try to eliminate our right to acknowledge God in public places, in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and in Ten Commandments monuments. The atheists are trying to change American history, expunge all reference to religion from textbooks and make us a completely secular nation. History proves America was founded by religious men who believed that a divine Creator is basic to good government." [Phyllis Schlafly](#), **Eagle Forum**
6. "Go back to what our founders and our founding documents meant — they're quite clear — that we would create law based on the God of the bible and the Ten Commandments." – [Sarah Palin](#)
5. "If you say God scattered Israel, Jews will really be offended. They go, 'Oh, God scattered us?' Uh huh. 'Well, I thought the evil guys did.' Well, you are under the discipline of God because of your perversion and sin." [Mike Bickle](#), International House of Prayer
4. "We took the Bible and prayer out of public schools, and now we're having weekly shootings practically. We had the 60s sexual revolution, and now people are dying of AIDS." [Christine O'Donnell](#)
3. "Atheists are parasites in the sense that they are benefiting from everything that religious culture has built in America, but they are doing nothing to add energy into the system." [Rabbi Daniel Lapin](#), American Alliance of Jews and Christians
2. "AIDS is not just God's punishment for homosexuals; it is God's punishment for the society that tolerates homosexuals." [Jerry Falwell](#)
1. "I don't know that atheists should be considered citizens, nor should they be considered patriots. This is one nation under God." [George H. W. Bush](#)

Please visit
www.FloridaHumanist.org
to support HFA with your
membership & donations



Humanists of Florida
Association
Reason and Compassion in Action



individual and collective, his goal for a fully moral “landscape.”

Defining “well-being” and accepting its over-reaching value and dealing with, for example, *your* well-being minimizing *mine* is a challenge Harris readily accepts. To make it acceptable as *the* primary value, he likens it to health, and any problem of *measuring* well-being much like that of measuring health.

Harris immediately got something far from a warm reception from philosophers and scientists alike. He produced a lengthy “response” to some of his critics, namely five philosophers, a physicist, a science writer, a novelist and Deepak Chopra (!). In his “response” to critics, he says, “there is something arresting about being called a scientific fraud and ‘egotistical’ by Chopra. This is rather like being branded an exhibitionist by Lady Gaga.”

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If you are so inclined here are links (1) to a six-minute “Nightline” roving interview with Harris, (2) the 23-minute lecture you will be viewing again at our meeting and (3) Harris’ response to his critics, which is the length of a printed essay of at least 10 pages.

(1) http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=hrrS8CMU4Q8

(2) http://blog.ted.com/2010/03/22/science_can_ans/

(3) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sam-harris/a-response-to-critics_b_815742.html

The emphasis in this presentation will be on discussion

Steve Brown who wrote the article above, will moderate the discussion.

Review ... A lively, provocative, and timely new look at one of the deepest problems in the world of ideas. Harris makes a powerful case for a morality that is based on human flourishing and thoroughly enmeshed with science and rationality. It is a tremendously appealing vision, and one that no thinking person can afford to ignore.

— **Steven Pinker**, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University.



Tampa Bay Harvest

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. Let's all do our part.

Introducing our new sister Organization...

Tampa Humanist Association

THA is headed up by board member, **Rob Byrch**, who acting with leaders in HSoS, brought this into being just this month. The idea was discussed at board meetings as far back as February, of creating another group centered in the Tampa area. Both groups will be sharing programs at all levels, and will provide twice as many opportunities for all members to hear speakers, participate in social events, and generally share in all the benefits that come from being in the company of people like us.



THA is expected to recruit its own members, and will have a major impact on further development in the Bay area. Along with CFI, headed by Rick O'Keefe, and AoF headed by Ellen Beth Wachs, this will afford yet another convenient opportunity for independently minded people in our area to find each other. Along with these organizations, are more than 10 meet-up groups that have similar advanced adult programs such as Café Philo, and Socrates, and others aimed at stoking serious conversations about traditional and contemporary philosophical dialog.

Read more about THA at:

<http://www.tampahumanist.com>

www.facebook.com/tampahumanist

www.meetup.com/Tampa-Humanist-Association

JP

Governor wants to cut civilization

Recently, Governor Rick Scott called for steep cuts, on top of the 24% already cut across the board, to liberal arts funding at Florida's eleven public colleges and universities, arguing that “psychology, history, and anthropology don't translate into real-world jobs.” Apart from the fact that he is wrong about the practical utility of these disciplines as they are applied in our complex market economy, the prospect of their decline will make us all the poorer.

If these cuts go through, not only will Florida students lack affordable places to learn the critical thinking skills these disciplines offer, but they will remain ignorant of the values over time that have shaped the nature of humanity over the past 3000 years. The self understanding that flows from these disciplines forever shapes us, as does the enduring pleasures of music, art, dance, literature and drama that so attract the knives of conservative budget cutters.

Moreover, the governor's preferences if adopted in policy, will set a dangerous precedent of a politician dictating what young people in his state can and can't study.

JP

As Global Population Surpasses 7 Billion, here are Two Clear Strategies for a Sustainable Future



Greater reproductive choice and measures to reduce resource consumption and waste are critical to reducing humanity's environmental impact

WASHINGTON - October 25 - As the global population surpasses 7 billion people sometime around the end of October, addressing the challenges associated with a still-growing world population will require a two-pronged response, according to experts with the Worldwatch Institute. The combined measures of empowering women to make their own decisions about childbearing and significantly reducing global consumption of energy and natural resources would move humanity toward rather than further away from environmentally sustainable societies that meet human needs.

Roughly 4.5 billion people have been added to the world population in just the last 60 years, according to United Nations estimates, putting increased strain on the world's ecosystems and resources. Because humans interact with their surroundings far more intensely than any other species and use vast amounts of carbon, nitrogen, water, and other resources, we are on track not only to change the global climate and deplete essential energy and other natural resources, but to wipe out thousands of plant and animal species in the coming decades. To some extent, these outcomes are now unavoidable; we'll have to adapt to them. But in order to improve the likelihood they will not be catastrophic, we need to simultaneously work to influence the future path of population and to address the environmental and social impacts that continued population growth will have.

"It is precisely because the human population is so large and is growing so fast that we must care how much we as individuals----and nations----are increasingly out of sync with environmental sustainability," said Worldwatch President Robert Engelman, an expert on global population. "The challenge becomes even more with each generation. Fortunately there are ways to practically and humanely both slow population growth and reduce the impacts associated with the growth that occurs."

Earlier this year, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) launched 7 Billion Actions, a campaign to highlight positive actions by individuals and organizations addressing global development challenges. By sharing these innovations in an open forum, the campaign aims to foster communication and collaboration as the planet becomes more populated and increasingly interdependent.

"Addressing global population growth is not the same thing as 'controlling population'," Engelman said. "The most direct and immediate way to lower birth rates is to make sure that as high a proportion as possible of pregnancies are intended, by assuring that women can make their own choices about whether and when to bear a child. Simultaneously, we need to rapidly transform our energy, water, and materials consumption through greater use of conservation, efficiency, and green technologies. We shouldn't think of these as sequential efforts----dealing with consumption first, then waiting for population dynamics to turn around----but rather as simultaneous tasks on multiple fronts."

Worldwatch recommends two main approaches to mitigate the impacts of a soaring global population:

Empower women to make their own decisions about childbearing. More than two in five pregnancies worldwide are unintended by the women who experience them, and half or more of these pregnancies result in births that spur continued population growth. Engelman has calculated that if all women had the capacity to decide for themselves when to become pregnant, average global childbearing would immediately fall below the "replacement fertility" value of slightly more than two children per woman. Population would then move onto a path leading to a peak followed by a gradual decline, possibly well before 2050. Women must be able to make their own decisions about childbearing free from fear of coercion or pressure from partners, family, and society. And they must have easy access to a range of safe, effective, and affordable contraceptive methods and the information and counseling needed to use them.

Consume fewer resources and waste less food. Humans appropriate anywhere from 24 percent to nearly 40 percent of the photosynthetic output of the planet for food and other purposes, and more than half of the planet's accessible renewable freshwater runoff. In addition to overuse of finite resources, humans waste large quantities of food every year. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, industrialized countries waste 222 million tons of food annually. If fewer resources and less food were wasted, the world would be able to feed more people and use fewer resources. With nearly 1 billion hungry people worldwide, wasting less food would also mean utilizing existing resources----not new ones----to feed them.

###

The [Worldwatch Institute](#) is an independent research organization recognized by opinion leaders around the world for its accessible, fact-based analysis of critical global issues. Its mission is to generate and promote insights and ideas that empower decision makers to build an ecologically sustainable society that meets human needs.

Humanist Books from the AHA

One Planet One People by Carl Coon



By Carl Coon, Former Ambassador to Nepal
In this succinct, highly readable overview of the evolution of human society, the author argues that the 21st century will witness a crucially important and difficult transition for the human race. Blending the disciplines of anthropology and evolutionary psychology with over thirty years of experience in the diplomatic corps, Coon traces the evolution of the human tendency to divide others into two groups, "us versus them." Today, he argues, we have reached a stage where the whole world must be viewed as "us," for only a united world community can cope with today's global challenges.

Everything I Understand about America I Learned in

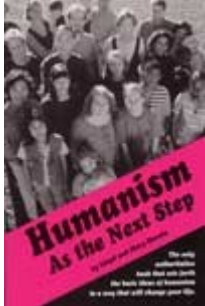


Chinese Proverbs **\$16.95**

Recipient of 2010 Humanist Pioneer Award and a former citizen of China, Wendy Liu presents 39 short essays, using 39 Chinese proverbs/sayings and 39 of her experiences/observations, and shares with you her perceptions of America and her search of an American identity, with a Chinese and nontheist, twist. Half of the proceeds for the

sale of each book will be donated directly to the American Humanist Association! Paperback

Humanism As the Next Step - Mary and Lloyd Morain



\$10.00

By Mary and Lloyd Morain.

While there have been technical studies of humanism in the past, never before has there been such an authoritative, popular treatment of the whole field.

Paperback, 145 pages.

Why Was I Born?



\$5.00

Why Was I Born? book.

What is my purpose for being here?

A Humanistic view of life by Lyle J Simpson.

Order these and other titles from the American Humanist Press [online](http://www.ahp.org).



TBPCC is an autonomous adjunct to the Humanist Society. In February of 2012, council members will be presenting [a course on Post Carbon issues](http://www.tampabaypostcarbon.com) at the University of South Florida. We will show that there are likely to be dramatic changes in the way we live in this century.

Humanist Society members, **Ron Frase**, **Luke Melton**, **Matt Cooper**, and **Jim Peterson** are planning the curriculum for this initial three week course. It will take place at the USF Tampa Campus. Expert guidance, AV technology, and interactive devices will supplement the learning environment.

Our subject matter will encompass the full range of likely social, economic, and natural problems that will engage the attention of people in the rapidly emerging future. At this point, the constraint of time imposed by campus logistics will prevent us from having the more full ranging discussion that is needed by many of these subjects, but we will try to hit the most salient aspects of each area. The next time we do this, we hope to have 6 to 8 weeks to more fully unpack the more significant aspects of how these problems might impact our civilization. These will affect all aspects of our lives including housing, transportation, work, the natural environment, and our relations with each other. See future issues for more.

This is yet another opportunity to bring attention to the problems and opportunities we will have in the future. The philosophical perspective of humanism can make a significant contribution to that transition.

We invite you to become a member of the Council, and make a difference in the quality of our lives. Click below or: www.tampabaypostcarbon.com



Find out more about end of life issues. Everyone has to face this final question. But there are choices not provided by conventional institutions. For more information see: www.compassionandchoices.org



Compassion & Choices
Choice & Care at the End of Life.

Center for Inquiry Calendar

CFI presents a fairly full calendar of opportunities to hear a variety of great speakers on subjects of current and enduring interest. **Check Website updates** <http://www.CenterForInquiry.net/Tampa>.

⇒ Please RSVP if attending, no later than noon of the day before the event to Tampa@CenterForInquiry.net. * a few may require small guest fee to participate. Submitted by *Rick Okeefe*



In an action called **Occupy Wall Street**, hundreds of activists took to the streets of downtown St. Petersburg and Tampa over the last month, as well as Wall street and the capitol.

The protests are continuing, with demonstrators camped out on the Financial District's Liberty Street in support of U.S. democratization and against corporate domination of politics (*Adbusters*, [9/19/11](http://www.adbusters.org/2011/09/19/11)).

The answer to the problem of non-coverage would seem to be simple: If the people occupying Wall Street want more media attention, they should just call themselves Tea Party activists.

Quite a number of free-thought activists could be found milling around the crowd, as the picture above illustrates. -- - *Jim P.*



Atheists. Agnostics. Humanists.
Americans.

ACTI★N ALERT

The new Secular Coalition of Florida is now forming under the leadership of Dr. Richard Golden of Miami. Over 30 groups supporting the fully secular vision of our country's government have lent support to the effort. A new website has been launched at:

<http://www.secularflorida.org> .

According to Dr. Golden, "The Florida Chapter of this group would provide a voice on political issues for our small local non-theist groups. It will allow non-profit organizations to retain their 501 (c) (3) status while giving them a political lobbying force. This organization will function in a manner similar to the moral majority, which thirty years ago united small churches into a powerful national lobby and ultimately elected a president. We, too, believe that by uniting we can become a powerful voice. We clearly have the numbers and just need the organization. In Florida alone there are three million non-theists."

Bob Byrch represents our Humanist Society's interest in the council of the coalition. He will be a conduit of information from the Council and bring our issues to them for consideration.



Dear ACLU Supporters,

Occupy Wall Street is spreading from the streets of New York to cities and towns all across America, and the right to protest and dissent are a key part of this important national conversation.

As they should be, because the First Amendment guarantees what some might consider the most fundamental freedoms that define our nation.

For more than 90 years, the ACLU has passionately defended the right for demonstrators to speak their minds and assemble together. Because we firmly believe that dissent is a form of patriotism. We believe all people have the right to free speech and the freedom (and sometimes even the obligation) to stand up for what they believe in.

It's important in a democracy that there is free and open discourse about the future of our nation. And it's vital that those who choose to be involved in that conversation through protest are given the right to exercise their constitutional freedom.

Thanks to you, ACLU staff is on the ground to make sure that First Amendment rights are protected during moments like Occupy Wall Street — or whenever individuals choose to exercise their right to assemble. We're also providing "Know Your Rights" pocket cards, we have legal teams observing police treatment of protesters, and much more.

Anthony Romero, National chairman

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

People
Over Politics

Our Website All newsletters from the past two years
<http://suncoasthumanist.com>