

# The HUMANIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HUMANISTS OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA

PO BOX 1143 ORMOND BEACH FL 32175 PUBLISHED MONTHLY March 2006

**OUR GOAL IS THE APPLICATION OF REASON AND SCIENCE TO UNDERSTAND  
NATURE AND TO EXERCISE HUMAN COMPASSION TO SOLVE HUMAN PROBLEMS**

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## MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

### CALENDAR

**General Meeting : 03.11. 12:30 PM**  
Ormond Beach Library

**Board Meeting : 03.15. 10:00 AM**  
Ormond Beach Library

**Brunch / Bunch : 03.26. 10:30 AM**  
Riviera Country Club

**The Humanists of NE Florida**

will meet on Saturday

**MARCH the 11<sup>TH</sup>**

at **12:30 PM** at the Ormond Beach Library, located at 30 S. Beach St. in Ormond Beach. The topic will be

### **Executive Power:**

#### **Spies, Lies, and Taps**

Are Warrant-less Wiretaps . . .

a Terrorist Surveillance Program?

Is Domestic Spying,

a violation of our Constitution?

or Is it none or all of the above?

**AND** . . . as a bonus discussion. . .

#### **What is War?**

Why should we be concerned? Why does our President say the program is legal and others, including the ACLU say otherwise?

Ken Hurley is in his sixth term as President of the American Civil Liberties Union of Greater Jacksonville, which includes the counties of Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. John's. He speaks frequently at events, schools, businesses, clubs, and organizations about our Constitution, the Bill of Rights, civil rights, civil liberties, and the work of the ACLU. He is a member of the ACLU State Board of Directors and a former National Delegate to the ACLU Biennial Convention. The seriousness and diversity of the issues and questions surrounding the Constitution and Bill of Rights make for a stimulating challenge. Some of the issues that confront Ken and the ACLU of Greater Jacksonville are: The Death Penalty, Homelessness, USA PATRIOT Act, Religious Liberty, Drug Policies, Free Speech, Lesbian and

Gay Rights, Police Practices, Racial Justice, Women's Rights, Civil Rights Restoration, Fair Voting Practices and Illegal Wiretapping. Ken hosts a community access television show titled, civil discourse, which airs each Thursday evening in Jacksonville on Cable Channel 29.

Our pre-meeting lunch on March the 11<sup>th</sup> will take place at 10:30 AM at the Riviera Country Club, located at Calle Grande Ave. in Ormond Beach. If you wish to attend the pre-meeting lunch, please give Mavis a call at (386) 677-3655

### **February Meeting**

In January we welcomed 70 guests who apparently wanted to listen to Mark Lane the well known columnist from "The Daytona Beach News Journal". He took us in a very entertaining and convincing way through the reasons why print journalism has still solid justification to be an important informative tool in the arena of mass media. Many of our guests took the opportunity at our after meeting refreshment hour to corner Mark for additional exchanges of various viewpoints. We will be honored to welcome him at a later date to listen to this very engaging and knowledgeable speaker.

### **April meeting**

At the time of this writing we have not finalized the program for the month of April. Therefore details will be announced in the April Newsletter.

### **March Board Meeting**

The board meeting for the month of March will be as usual on the third Wednesday of the month, which will be

**March the 15<sup>th</sup>**

at 10:00 AM. It will take place in the Ormond Beach Library and is, if agreed upon by the participants, followed by a luncheon at 12:30 PM in a suitable restaurant.

### **Brunch with the Bunch**

*Brunch with the Bunch will be on the last Sunday of each month; in this case it will be March the 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM at the Riviera Country Club, located at Calle Grande Ave. in Ormond Beach. As usual it is always a casual, friendly get-*

together, which provides the opportunity to exchange those special and sometimes even trivial thoughts. Everybody is welcome – we love your company!! If you plan to join us, please call Mavis and let her know of your intention, or just drop in. We are glad to see you.

### **Thoughts of the Editor**

#### ***The Evil World of Immorality and Indecency***

The other day I witnessed on C-Span an endless long discussion in the Senate about the evil of displaying pornography and nudity on our TV channels. While I am personally not a friend of those displayed Erotic Acrobatics, I have to admit to having seen during the course of my life one or the other of those "erotic art forms", I find it embarrassing to witness people in the most private activity of their life. Apparently there are many people who are entertained or stimulated by this display. What I can not understand is, that those activities seen on TV have to be declared immoral and should subsequently be outlawed. After all, they might appear distasteful or even obscene but do they really threaten people's lives or even lead to the downfall of our society?" If this is a consideration, then mankind or our society should definitely do away with all those methods which really destroy human life. What comes to my mind here is the unbelievable amount of usage of firearms by private citizens. The last available statistics from the year 2003 mentions, there were at least 30,000 people killed by the illegal use of firearms in the United States. How come there is no public outcry about the sale and usage of such a devastating tool? The majority of our political representatives do not seem to want to touch this topic with a ten foot pole. In spite of the fact that there is literally each year the equivalent of a small community wiped out in this country. How can anybody in their right mind justify the sale and subsequent usage of those murderous instruments? But apparently to watch two consenting adults in the heights of erotic ecstasy presents the beginning of the downfall of our society! Can anybody explain this? This display of **acrobatic emotions** might not be to everybody's taste, but it is human and after all the driving force for the existence of our race,

while the availability and use of those powder kegs are nothing but tools for killing and destruction leading for many people in our society to endless sorrow.

## MEMBERS FORUM

This is the third of a series of monthly articles by Jim Strayer.

### Luther Burbank

March 7, 1849, – April 11, 1926

was an American botanist, horticulturist, and pioneer of agricultural science. He developed more than 800 strains and varieties of plants over his 55-year career. Burbank's varied creations included fruits, flowers, grains, grasses, and vegetables.

What was not widely known, until just before his death in 1926 at the age of 77, was that Luther Burbank was a freethinker. Those who had read his writings and attended his lectures on evolution knew that he was a "naturalist," in both scientific and philosophical thinking; but the general public, loving him for his work as a gentle horticulturist, knew nothing of his opinions.

Burbank decided to speak out after the famous Scopes trial of 1925, the "monkey trial" that thrust evolution into the national spotlight. The fact that a high school teacher had been put on trial for teaching the "heresy" of Darwinism (which Burbank had been teaching, and practicing, for many years) aroused him to a conviction that he ought to speak out, without mincing words, and declare for truth. Burbank said, "Science unlike religion does not lead to insanity." But the phrase that caused the most consternation among believers was, "I am an infidel today."

This story was a bombshell, creating shock waves around the world. A whirlwind of hatred engulfed him within twenty-four hours. It was tempered by admiring congratulations from thousands and thousands of the thoughtful. Most of the Christians, and many clergy, had hoped that Burbank had either been misquoted or that he had been thoughtless in choosing the word "infidel." But in a follow-up interview, Burbank indicated that he had checked with the dictionary. "I am an infidel," he insisted. "I know what an

infidel is, and that's what I am." **Burbank** In His Own Words, "And to think of this great country in danger of being dominated by people ignorant enough to take a few ancient Babylonian legends as the canons of modern culture. Our scientific men are paying for their failure to speak out earlier. There is no use now talking evolution to these people. Their ears are stuffed with Genesis."

Here are some interesting and wise quotes from Dan Kennedy's treasure chest:

"Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith. Banish me from Eden when you will, but first let me eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge."

Robert G. Ingersoll

"Happiness is the only good; reason the only torch, justice the only worship, humanity the only religion, and love the only priest."

"The place to be happy is here. The time to be happy is now. The way to be happy is to make others so."

Ingersoll's Creed\_\_R.G.I.

"...death seems natural enough. Life is the mysterious thing."

Rolbert Ingersoll

"One thing I have learned in a long life: that all our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike and yet it is the most precious thing we have."

Albert Einstein

"The important thing is not to stop questioning."

Albert Einstein

*"Science is not only compatible with spirituality; it is a profound source of spirituality. When we recognize our place in an immensity of light-years and in the passage of ages, when we grasp the intricacy, beauty, and subtlety of life, then that soaring feeling, that sense of elation and humility combined, is surely spiritual."*

**Carl Sagan**

**Dear Members and Friends**

We regret to let you know that our Vice President Dennis Deshaies had to vacate the recently occupied position of the treasurer. Extensive responsibility in other areas made it difficult to take care of our finances. Therefore we are asking if anybody out there is willing and able to oversee the "immense wealth" of our organization.

**THE BOARD OF 2006**

- The President** Jim Strayer  
and Treasurer (temp).. (386) 441-7410
- Vice President** Dennis Deshaies  
(904) 794-2706
- Secretary** Mavis Hamilton  
(386) 677-3655
- Editor** Harald Podgora  
(386) 257-5628
- Publication Coordinator** Marti King  
(386) 672-2138
- Board Member at Large** Dan Kennedy  
(386) 672-2556



**Whatever you do**

**Wherever you go**

**Please**

**Take good care of yourself !!!**

**Please note**

**OUR WEB SITE:**

**<http://northeastflorida.humanists.net/>**

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

**WISHES**

**TO ALL THE WONDERFUL MEMBERS AND FRIENDS**

**WHO ARRIVED IN THIS WORLD**

**During the months of March and April**

- Jim STRAYER** 03.01
- Marjorie DASH** 04.20
- Walter KONAK** 04.22
- Richard SIEGEL** 04.23

**SOMEBODY MISSING ???  
Please let us know !!!**

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

*We wish to welcome our new members:*

**ANDY BONTEMPO  
PAULA WERBOFF**

We hope you will find the same companionship and intellectual stimulation as many of our current members have learned to appreciate. We are looking forward to seeing you in our midst.

**Membership Application –and Renewal  
Humanists of Northeast Florida**  
**Dues per calendar year: Regular \$25.00. Family \$35.00, Patron \$100.00.**  
*Optional*

**Name:**.....**Birth date:**.....

**Address:**.....  
 ....  
 .....

**Phone :**.....**e-mail:**.....

*To be paid by check or money order to the Humanists of Northeast Florida  
PO Box 1143, Ormond Beach, FL 32175*

