

# The HUMANIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HUMANISTS OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA

PO BOX 1143 ORMOND BEACH FL 32175 PUBLISHED MONTHLY March 2007

**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 : 03.10. 12:30 PM**  
Ormond Beach Library  
**Pre- Meeting Lunch : 10:30 AM Riviera C.C.**

**Board Meeting : 03.21. 10:00 AM**  
Ormond Beach Library

**Lunch / Bunch : 03.25. 12:00 Noon**  
Tomoka Oaks Country Club

***The Humanists of NE Florida***

will meet on Saturday

## **March the 10<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:

### **"A Comparison of Judaism, Islam and Christianity."**

The speaker for this very informative meeting will be Mr. Stan Driban. Mr. Driban has spoken in the past to various humanist and freethinker groups on this subject. Stan can be considered to be well-informed and very knowledgeable in this field. He is a retired lawyer and engineer now living in New Smyrna Beach.

Our pre-meeting lunch on March the 10<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.

**A brief coffee/social hour will again take place after this meeting. It will provide you with an opportunity to exchange thoughts with all the other members and guests**

## **February Meeting**

At our second meeting of the year 2007 we were pleased to welcome 33 members and guests. After the well-received introduction by Russ Pizer the

suggested round table discussion concerning "The Status of Humanism Today" went slightly astray. Almost all participants voiced their opinions about their individual take on humanism in regards to their religious or philosophical background. Nevertheless, I had the impression that many if not most attendees who gathered afterwards with a cup of coffee expressed to have participated in a very satisfying meeting.

### **April meeting**

The program and its exact topic for the month of April has at the time of preparing this newsletter not been established yet. The speaker at this meeting though will be our member and well-known radio personality, Big John. Details of the forthcoming meeting will appear in our 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 21<sup>st</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.

### **Lunch with the Bunch**

Lunch with the Bunch will be on the last Sunday of each month; in this case it will be **March the 25<sup>th</sup>** at **12:00 NOON** at the Tomoka Oaks Golf & Country Club, located at 20 Tomoka Oaks Blvd., north of Granada on Nova Rd. 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 Hamilton and let her know of your intention, or just drop in. We are glad to see you.

### **Thoughts of the Editor**

**Social CAPITALISM OR HUMANISM ?**

In the past years I have often enough complained about the inadequacies of our society. I think it is about time to say something positive even if it appears to many of you of no great importance. The story goes like this.

The other day I was visiting the Senior EXPO In the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach.. Since it is only two miles down the road from my place of residence and I did not want spend the extra parking fees I used the local transit system called VOTRAN. To my amazement I discovered, that there is a bus stopping in front of my place every 30 minutes. The fare for seniors was only 60 cents. The bus was very clean, the driver very polite and if necessary took the bus into kneeling position should one have problems getting onto the bus. For people who had a bike there was a provision in front of the bus to store the bike.

It happened that passengers in a wheelchair were trying to get on the bus. The bus driver got up, kneeled the bus, and asked some passengers to vacate some front seats so that the wheelchairs could be secured safely. All this took place without any hoopla and annoyance of any of the passengers or the driver. The way it was handled absolutely amazed me. Being a big city boy coming from a perfect social (?) oriented society and having frequently experienced how inconsiderate the general public and bus drivers can be, it created in my mind true admiration. Later on I stopped at the VOTRAN display booth at the senior EXPO and expressed my heartfelt compliments to a representative of this fine organization. To my utter surprise he thanked me for my kind words and rewarded me with two free bus tickets.

But this was not all! Among many of those exhibitors was also a booth catering to the visually handicapped. Being afflicted with macular degeneration I asked the representative if they could recommend something for my plight, especially since it is very difficult for me to read, small print and therefore books. Without hesitation they recommended to me to become a member of their institute which entitles me to receive free of charge any book cassette from their library which is considered to be the largest in the world. Needless to say I jumped at this offer and low and behold within 6 days I received a free cassette

player as well as the first cassettes and a big catalog containing a choice of a great book selection on cassettes. Would you believe that the shipping charges of book cassettes and player are entirely free. I am certain I could not have received this service and support at the place of my birth, a country which claims to be very socially oriented. So, what label can we affix to this service considering we are living in a profit driven society. It probably is a mix of many things. Or could it be guilt and subsequent action by the super rich, who frequently underwrite and support many of the social tainted generosityes.

## MEMBERS FORUM

### ADVANCING THE HUMANIST AGENDA

**Dan Kennedy**

What might advance the secular humanist agenda? There certainly appears to be a need for this, from locally to globally. But, we do face some obstacles.

Most people seem to want some sort of spiritual searching in their lives. e.g.:

(What is it all about? Is this all there is? How can there be any existence? Etc.),

There is evidence that this may stem from the "cave person" era. This may be the result of biological evolutionary genetic programming; an example of what the eminent biologist E. O. Wilson calls an epigenetic rule, defined as "hereditary biases of mental development." At any rate, the need for religion/spirituality is clearly strong and a direct attack on it may well be counter-productive.

I propose a strategic conceptualization consisting of primary vs. secondary goals. In general, to the degree that the primary goals might be accomplished one would expect less need for attention to the secondary ones. Also, the secondary goals have the disadvantage of often being perceived as caustic and thus may defeat the intended purpose of effecting change in viewpoints. Another advantage of a focus on the primary goals is the possibility of joining forces with other community organizations, including some churches. The idea is to present a positive approach.

Here are a few possible goal areas (projects?) that might be considered. Be an advocate for a broad

based public school educational curriculum (in contrast to FCAT guided educational goals) that would include the humanities and the arts, science, social science, and affective education (e.g. examining and clarifying personal values). A secondary goal here might be directly attacking ignorance per se: superstition, belief in myths, and pseudoscience.

Adherence to the primary goal would involve letting the religions do their "thing" without ridicule. This doesn't mean not to fight ignorance, but to fight it by way of improving education. As you go up the educational ladder, on the average, we find increasingly greater liberal beliefs and attitudes. Well educated people are less likely to be superstitious or to believe in myths and pseudoscience.

Promote the basic concept of separation of state and church, using as important points the intentions of our "founding fathers" and that history has shown theocracies to usually be autocracies. A secondary goal here would be to argue against government support of faith based charities and schools.

Promote peaceful means of resolving conflicts. An example of a secondary goal would be noting the historical role of religion in warfare.

Essentially the suggestion is to attempt a positive approach to promoting secular humanist principles and values. My guess is that more would be accomplished this way than by relatively *more* direct attacks.

### *Humor and Laughter*

#### *the Great Equalizer!*

I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and start exercising. I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour. But, by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.

--- Reporters interviewing a 104-year-old woman: "And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?" the reporter asked. She simply *replied*, "No more peer pressure."

**Dear Members and Friends**

**Something Special**

On March 17, 2007 a very special Humanist will be the speaker at the Association Of Freethinkers and Humanists of Palm Coast. Fred Edwards. He began his Humanist career in 1977 as vice president of the Humanists Association of San Diego. By 1984 he had become the Executive Director of the American Humanist Association. He served as the Editor of the Humanist magazine from 1994 to 2006. Fred now is the Director of Communications for AHA. Fred's talk is titled,

"A Humanist Look at St. Patrick"

"What is the truth about the historic St. Patrick? He is said to have Christianized Ireland, cast out snakes, and performed a host of miracles that trumped the magic of the Druids. Now learn the true and amusing story of who Patrick really was compared to his outrageous legend. And think about what Humanists can use of the St. Patrick's Day traditions, and how." I have known Fred for ten years and I have heard him speak several times. He has a great sense of humor and is most knowledgeable on Humanist subjects.

The meeting in Palm Coast will be at the Peoples 1<sup>st</sup> Community Bank located at the east end of the Palm Harbor Shopping Center east of I-95 exit 289, at 10:00 AM. We will have more information about his talk and transportation to Palm Coast at our March 10th HONEF meeting. **Jim Strayer, president**

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

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

**WISHES**

**TO ALL THE WONDERFUL MEMBERS AND FRIENDS WHO ARRIVED IN THIS WORLD**

**During the months of March and April many years ago !!!**

- Jim STRAYER** 03.01
- Bob FISKE** 03.07
- Marjorie DASH** 04.20
- Gordon WILLIAMSON** 04.21
- Walter KONAK** 04.22.
- Richard SIEGEL** 04.23

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

**THE BOARD OF 2006**

- The President Jim Strayer
- and Treasurer (temp).. (386) 441-7410
- Vice President Dennis Deshaies
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- Secretary Mavis Hamilton
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**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:.....



**Please note**  
**OUR WEB SITE:**  
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**Webmaster : Larry Munding**

