

# The HUMANIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HUMANISTS OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA

PO BOX 1143 ORMOND BEACH FL 32175 PUBLISHED MONTHLY May 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 : 05.12. 12:30 PM**  
**Ormond Beach Library**  
**Pre- Meeting Lunch : 10:30 AM Riviera C.C.**

**Board Meeting : 05.16. 10:00 AM**  
**Ormond Beach Library**

**Lunch / Bunch : 05.27. 12:00 Noon**  
**Tomoka Oaks Country Club**

***The Humanists of NE Florida***

will meet on Saturday

## May the 12<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:

**"The Culture wars"  
Where Humanism fits in  
and how we can win in the end.**

The speaker of this fascinating and timely topic will be:

### **Heather Wellman**

The discussion led by Heather Wellman, who is the Executive Director of the Humanists of Florida Association, features real life solutions to the culture war while being tolerant, reasonable and compassionate. She also explores how the Humanists of Florida can help lead a movement that will get the Humanist viewpoint heard by our leaders and by the public at large.

Our pre-meeting lunch on May the 12<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**

**April Meeting**

At our April Meeting we had again the pleasure to welcome 45 members and guests. This meeting was another successful discussion group. It was successful to a large extent due to the enormous help of Big John, known to most of us for his time on the Volusia County Council and his present daily radio show on AM 1380. The subject matter for the discussion was based on problems in our own Volusia and Flagler counties. John presented a number of areas of concern and filled us in on details as only he can. Members had a chance to ask questions and present their opinions, but it was evident that we probably need more time to discuss ideas on what solutions might be possible for the evident problems. One reason for that conclusion was the fact that one of our members said, as he was leaving, "This was one of the best meetings we have ever had!"

*Comments by* **Marti King**

### **June meeting**

In The month of June we have the pleasure to listen to our Biology Guru Jim Strayer who will speak about the impact the microscope had on two of the greatest microbiologists " Pasteur and Robert Koch. As usual it will be not only very informative but also entertaining..

### **May Board Meeting**

The Board meeting for the month of May will be as usual on the third Wednesday of the month, which will be

**May the 16<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.

### **Lunch with the Bunch**

Lunch with the Bunch will be on the last Sunday of each month; in this case it will be May the 27<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**

#### **The Price of Freedom**

Recently we are again confronted and made aware of some very horrible, devastating events. One is the expected disastrous results of global warming in the not too distant future and the other is the horrendous results of the indiscriminate availability of fire arms. The first shortcoming is of national as well as of global dimension and can in its totality only be successfully resolved with the corporation of the international community. The second one is purely a national problem. It is a function of federal laws which stem from the constitutional guaranty that every citizen has the right to carry fire arms. Those laws were created at a time literally hundred of years ago when the survival of each citizen depended upon his skill to use and employ fire arms. To my mind it appears to be in contradiction to any current civil and ethical standard of a modern society. By the wildest stretch of my imagination it is inconceivable that grown people outside law enforcement and the military infrastructure have to arm themselves in order to survive in this country. What is the purpose? To play soldiers or even cowboys and Indians? Oh, I forgot, there is the sporting activity to go in the woods and hunt for other life forms to supplement the daily diet or is the justification to thin out wild life so that fewer of them can survive? . Certainly there are some who will argue it is a manly tradition stemming from colonial times. Applying those standards we might as well recommend to those driven by the need to satisfy their hunting instinct to go all the way and return back to nature and live in huts or even caves. As people and therefore nations evolve revised laws should meet the needs of the evolving society. The easy availability of fire arms which leads frequently to violent events of slaughter and murder in a country which claims to be on the forefront of culture and civilization is unfathomable. Anybody who is paying attention to our news media should recognize the devastating effect fire arms have in our society. What does it take to make our country a truly civilized society?

## MEMBERS FORUM

This is the fifteenth of a series of monthly articles under the heading: "Humanists and Freethinkers." Contributed and created by Jim Strayer. The recent passing of Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007) caused many Humanists to remember this talented man.

Vonnegut was a fourth generation German-American, and said, "For at least four generations my family has been proudly skeptical of organized religion."

Once described by Graham Green as, "one of the best living American writers. Vonnegut writes wry, whimsical and satirical works about organized religion and the horrors of contemporary life."

He wrote *Player Piano* in 1951, *Cat's Cradle* in 1963, *Slaughterhouse Five* in 1969, and much more.

Vonnegut wrote, "The German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, who had syphilis, said that only a person of deep faith could afford the luxury of religious skepticism. Humanists by and large educated, comfortable middle-class persons with rewarding lives like mine, find rapture enough in secular knowledge and hope. Most people can't.

In *Slaughterhouse Five* he wrote, "During World War II, while I was serving with the Third Army in Germany, I removed a belt buckle from the uniform of a dead German soldier. The lettering on the buckle read, "Gott Mit Uns" (God Is With us)." "So it goes." he often commented about the human condition in which we find ourselves.

In 1997 Vonnegut said, "I am Honorary President of the American Humanists Association, whose headquarters in Amherst, New York, I have never seen. I succeeded the late author and biochemist Dr. Isaac Asimov in that functionless capacity. That we have an organization, a boring business, is to let others know we are numerous. We would prefer to live our lives as humanists and not talk about it or think anymore about it than we think about breathing."

Kurt Vonnegut, "I spoke at a Humanist Association memorial service for Dr. Asimov a few years back. I said, 'Isaac is up in Heaven now.' That was the funniest thing I could have said to an audience of humanists. I rolled them in the aisles...When I myself am dead, God forbid, I hope some wag will say about me, 'He's up in Heaven now.'

There were some who objected to some of his works. It riled some when he said, "Say what you will about the sweet miracle of unquestioning faith, I consider a capacity for it terrifying and absolutely vile."

## HE'S UP IN HEAVEN NOW

## QUOTES FROM FAMOUS PEOPLE

### Probably Never More Appropriate

"When a stupid man is doing something he is ashamed of, he always declares that it is his duty."  
*George Bernard Shaw*

"Liberty means responsibility, that is why most men dread it."  
*George Bernard Shaw*

"We cannot defend freedom abroad by deserting it at home."  
*Thomas Jefferson*

"A society whose citizens refuse to see and investigate the facts, who refuse to believe that their government and their media will routinely lie to them and fabricate a reality contrary to verifiable facts, is a society that chooses and deserves the police state dictatorship it's going to get."  
*Ian Williams Goddard*

"The evils of government are directly proportional to the tolerance of the people."  
*Frank Ke t*  
"A nation of sheep will beget a government of wolves."  
*Edward R. Murrow*

"If ever time should come when vain and aspiring men shall possess the highest seats in government, our country will stand in need of its experienced patriots to prevent its ruin."  
*Samuel Adams*

"To announce that there must be no criticism of the president, or that we are to stand by the president right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public."

*Theodore Roosevelt*  
"When tyranny and oppression come to this land, it will be in the guise of fighting a foreign foe."  
*Madison*

## Dear Members and Friends

While it is still early in the year I like to point out to you, that we are going to elect a new board at the end of this year. Since our current vice-president Dennis Deshaies has serious health problems and some others might resign from their position it is imperative to find some other members who are willing to step forward and put some new life in our organization. I urge all of you to consider volunteering for one or the other function, otherwise the survival of this group will be in question.

During the last six and a half years I have been writing with more or less success our monthly newsletter. As many of you can imagine in due time the writer gets repetitious and stale. I believe it would be good for our organization to have new blood, new ideas percolating through our group. If anybody has any ideas or suggestions to improve our informative monthly, please speak up or submit your thoughts to Jim Strayer, the editor or any other member of our board. Maybe one or the other member would be interested in taking over as our new editor. Our support and assistance will be always available.



**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

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
WISHES  
TO ALL THE WONDERFUL  
MEMBERS AND FRIENDS  
WHO ARRIVED IN THIS WORLD  
During the months of May  
many years ago !!!**

Gabriele BOKELOH	05.10
Maria LINDSAY	05.12
Sandy MUNDINGER	05.18
John KING	05.17
James DASH	05.20
Harald PODGORA	05.29
Mavis HAMILTON	05.30

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

### THE BOARD OF 2007

The President and Treasurer (temp).	Jim Strayer (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
Board Member at Large	Russ Pizer (386) 447-1045



**Please note**

**OUR WEB SITE:**

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

