

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

Volume 20 No. 12

December, 2011

“The time has come, the walrus said,

To speak of many things

*of shoes and ships and sealing wax, cabbages and kings”**

This meeting we will have an end of the year roundup of all we have seen, felt, heard, and thought. From both a personal perspective and a communal one, we have undergone many changes. Our perceptions and feelings, and the context that informed them has changed as a dynamic world always insists it must.

This coming discussion will give us an opportunity to share the things closest to our heart and brain; the things, people, and events that continue to reshape the totality of who we are.

This will be an open forum in which you are invited to be a participant in any way you wish. From the political to the philosophical, to the deeply personal, you are welcome to form bonds of common experience. Bring poetry, art, or music, or just talk.

Let us understand and accept the differences that will emerge, and forge the enduring connections, that the humanist philosopher Epicurus, who famously defined friendship as the highest social value in his philosophy of the good life, as the best gift anyone could receive.

J.P.

*Lewis Carroll

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.

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, December 3rd**

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



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

In lieu of our regular monthly social dinner, we will have our Humanlight year end Party on Sunday December 18th at Bob Cummins home again. His address is 13062 Gulf Blvd in Madeira Beach. Bob's house is located just behind the All Season's Resort Bldg less than a mile north of the big John's Pass bridge.

This will be a **covered dish/pot luck** affair. Please Rsvp by December 17th to Anita Garcia (727) 381-3933 with the pot luck food selections you plan to bring. The BYOB Party will begin about 2:30 PM and finish about 6:00.

Glenn email at kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com

Laugh Lines

luminosities

A Catholic priest, a Rabbi and an atheist walk into a bar.

The priest sits down and begins praying that God will perform a miracle, and place a drink in front of him.

The rabbi does the same.

The atheist sits at the bar and waves to the bartender.

When no drink appears, the priest exclaims "God must be testing my faith!" and prays harder.

The Rabbi ponders for a moment, and then says "He must be punishing me for something from the past."

The atheist rolls his eyes, orders a drink and when he gets it replies "Well, I guess if this God of yours exists, I'm his favorite!"

~*~

Top 10 Reasons to Enjoy Hell

None of that annoying check-in procedure like with St. Peter. Your "Do you smell something burning?" slays 'em, year after year.

Plenty of legal help available for filing "wrongful death" lawsuit.

Well sure it's hot, but it's a *dry* heat.

Prizes awarded for best crank phone calls to God.

Everywhere you look, there's a smoking section!

Fortune to be made on "Welcome, Dick Cheney." t-shirts.

Satan's confused attempts to torture masochists can be highly entertaining.

Newly passed law: Three strikes and you're back in Tampa.

Everyone reads this Humanist Society Newsletter!

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

Steve Brown

Jim Butler

Robert Byrch, Secretary

Terry Eckstien

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, Jackie Jordan, Brent Yaciw, Mike Hubbard

~*~*~*~*~

Jim Butler Publisher.

Jim Peterson, Editor

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

E-Mail us at:

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 otherjust 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

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

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:

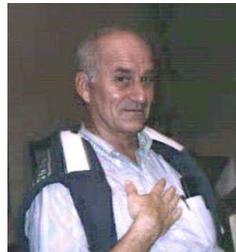
jim@suncoasthumanist.com

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.



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

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.

"Religious freedom should work two ways: we should be free to practice the religion of our choice, but we must also be free from having someone else's religion practiced on us."

John Irving, novelist





GIVING THANKS

Having received two Thanksgiving messages from U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, in the first of which he beseeched all his readers to “ask God to bless all of them,” that is, “the many people around the world who don’t have [our] freedoms and advantages, the folks in Florida who are struggling and those in the U.S. military who will be “missing their families and friends this Thanksgiving Day,” whom he had previously cited, as a secularist I was somewhat disheartened at the appeal to a presumed Master of all that is, or, at least parthogenetic Father (!) of all that is

Well, it was, after all, a warm and friendly letter, noting that he and his wife would be “volunteering at a shelter for the needy” before sitting down for a family feast at his wife’s sister’s home. And followed by the second, similarly warm and friendly, but this time strictly un-Godly message. But I couldn’t help but think the following:

Every day of the year I am thankful for the single great gift of life, no matter the particular circumstances in that life on that day.

It is the gift of nature, a nature which has developed the kind of consciousness and self-awareness in us humans that made the wiring in our brains that can dance with glee at the brush of a breeze, the sniff of a flower, the taste of a new unknown gustatory marvel, the antics of another animal species, that can sizzle with intensity in pursuit of a goal, that can soar in ecstasy from union with another human being, soak in despair at the loss of or harm to a loved one, even throb with hate at serious offense to oneself or to others or to an ideal, that can go to a kind of numbness in stunned, bedazzled awe at the beauty and majesty of a particular sky.

It’s the gift of the ability to ask endless questions, with ever-changing answers, to take pride in our own achievements and those of others, and at the same time take stock of our own ultimate ignorance as well as of the many instances of our own “real time“ ignorance or stupidity.

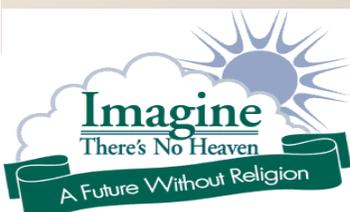
As the general semanticists would have it, “the map is not the territory,” and all we have is “maps.” The “territory” is still utter mystery.

So thanks also, for the mystery. For the awe that the perhaps endless cosmos instills in us.

And thanks, too, for this persistent need to establish “causes” and “patterns” that oft leads to nonsense, such as in the thousands of supernatural, sometimes self-contradictory “maps” we have imposed on the origin of the world, the creation of life, the establishment of our particular species and on the condition of mortality.

And thanks, Darwin and others who have helped provide the best, yet to be disproved “map” of biology, and to the countless scientists and other systematic thinkers who have made ever more complex but potentially simpler “maps” of the greater territory of the cosmos.

- *Steve Brown*, Thanksgiving 2011



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



Humanists of Florida
 Association
 Reason and Compassion in Action

Tampa Bay Harvest report

for the Humanist society of the Suncoast

TBH food donations from Suncoast Humanists - Year 2010

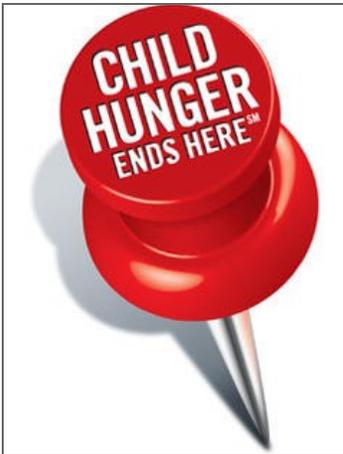
January 2010	30 LBS
February 2010	75 LBS
March 2010	25 LBS
April 2010	50 LBS
May 2010	20 LBS
June 2010	60 LBS
July 2010	55 LBS
Aug 2010	55 LBS
Sept 2010	70 LBS
Oct 2010	110 LBS
Nov 2010	85 LBS
Dec 2010	140 LBS

775 LBS Total

TBH food donations from Humanists for year 2011

January 2011	120 LBS
February 2011	70 LBS
March 2011	85 LBS
April 2011	50 LBS
May 2011	77 LBS
June 2011	80 LBS
July 2011	170 LBS
August 2011	105 LBS
September 2011	55 LBS
October 2011	35+ LBS
November 2011	160+ LBS

So far... 1007 Lbs.



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 it's own members as well, 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 Ed Golly, 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 issues.

Read more about THA at:

<http://www.tampahumanist.com>

www.facebook.com/tampahumanist

www.meetup.com/Tampa-Humanist-Association

JP

Hot Flashes for December...

THA's inaugural meeting is December 17th at the Jimmie B. Keel Library at 2902 Bearrs Ave (east of Dale Mabry).

Meeting starts at 11.00am and runs for 2 hours followed by lunch at Carmels (on Dale Mabry).

Those interested in attending this important first meeting should register on our Meetup page at:

www.meetup.com/Tampa-Humanist-Association

Also, THA is joining with Tampa Bay Thinkers and other Bay area Humanists, Atheists and Freethinkers on Dec. 11th at 12.00 noon for a picnic-in-the-park. Again full details on our Meetup page. Rob



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



Humanism, Our World, and Our Future

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE
WINTER 2012 PROGRAMS

TUESDAY LIBERAL ARTS COURSES

Climate Change and the Future of Tampa Bay

The future holds challenging possibilities. The depletion of petroleum and other industrial commodities, and the pressing problems of climate change and overpopulation, involve science, economics and politics. All will undoubtedly influence Tampa Bay's future. This course will attempt to uncover the reality and dispel the myths concerning each of these aspects of climate change. Current research, relevant news and experts from various disciplines will add to our understanding. All issues will be fully discussed, and class participants are invited to bring their own proposals, thoughts and ideas. (Science & Mathematics)

Matt Cooper, Luke Melton, Ron Frase & Jim Peterson of the Tampa Bay Post Carbon Council and the Humanist Society will present.

Fee: \$30 • 2nd choice option: \$15 (Call 1/24) • parking: \$9

122XOSCSM0261 • Tue • 2/7-2/21 • 10am-12pm • 3 mtgs
Vincent A. Stabile Research Bldg, SRB USF Campus, Tampa



Free parking is by valet.
You may also choose to purchase a USF parking permit, \$9.



TBPCC is an autonomous adjunct to the Humanist Society. In February of 2012, council members will be presenting **a course on Post Carbon issues** 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, Jim Peterson, Matt Cooper,** and **Luke Melton** 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

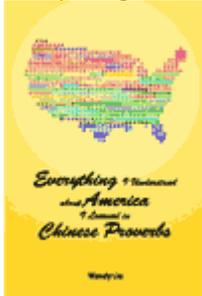
Humanist Books from the AHA

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

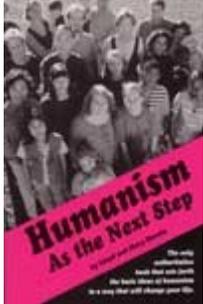


Chinese Proverbs **\$16.95**

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



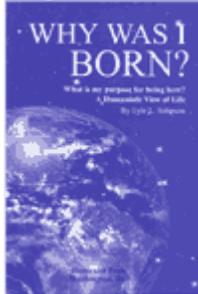
\$10.00

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

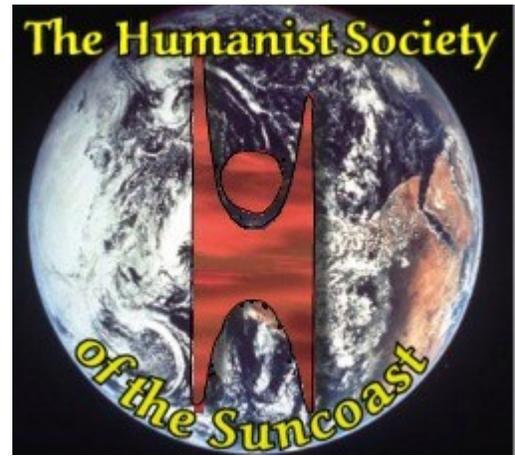
Why Was I Born? book.

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](#).

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



Current news of interest

The Development Committee

The Committee will begin the New year on January 10th at 10 o'clock, according to Chair, Matt Cooper. There is still much to do if the Society is to fulfill its potential.

The Speakers Bureau

People who would like to help the Humanist cause by becoming a speaker on various aspects for public organizations are invited to join the Speakers Group immediately after the meeting.

The Tampa Humanist Association

Rob Byrch is revving up for the first meeting of the Tampa Humanist Association. It will be held at the Jimmy Keel Library on Bears Avenue in Tampa at

ACLU Bill of Rights Awards Banquet

and Annual Board Elections We invite you to join us in celebration of the lives of two great advocates for civil liberty,

Ruth Whitney

The Gardner W. Beckett, Jr. Civil Liberties Award

Kelly McBride

The Irene Miller Vigilance in Journalism Award

Thursday, Dec. 1, 2011

The Holiday Inn, 3535 Ulmerton Road, Clearwater, FL 33762

Dinner and Award Presentations

Menu Entrée Selections (Choose one below per guest.)

Applewood Salmon, Grilled sirloin steak, Chicken Marsala, Vegetarian Mélange.

All with accompaniments, salad, rolls, desserts, and beverages.

Please RSVP* as soon as you can. Hurry, space is limited - Interest is high!

\$40 per person, (\$30 if limited income). Place your reservation by:

· **CHECK:** Send it with this filled-out coupon to: **ACLU Dinner P. O. Box 12372 St. Petersburg, FL 33733**

· **PHONE:** Call (727) 347-4266 (Leave message) **Reservations required for admission.**

· **E-MAIL:** (To reserve and pay at the door*) mbuu@earthlink.net (Sorry, no credit cards.)

Make your check payable to: ACLU Annual Dinner

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*



Jerry Moore Steve Brown Jim Peterson Judy Adkins

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 nation's 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](#)).

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,

Recently, the Supreme Court confronted the profound impact of new location-tracking technologies on Americans' privacy. The case, *U.S. v. Jones*, presents the question of whether law enforcement needs a warrant before planting a GPS tracking device on a person's car.

No matter how the court decides, we all have a right to privacy. You don't need a GPS tracking device attached to your car to have your location and personal information compromised. In fact, we may be unknowingly compromising our privacy just by having a cell phone. When you signed up for that cell phone plan, you probably didn't think it meant the government would have unlimited access to your conversations and location data.

[Find out what information your provider is keeping on you and then tell them you want your privacy back!](#)

In response to a nationwide campaign to learn how our cell phones are being used to monitor us, the ACLU now has hard data on the extent to which cell phone companies record your movements and your conversations. Some of them keep your location data for 1 year — some keep it forever. Some of them keep a list of every person you've called or texted for 1 year — and some keep it for as much as 7 years.

[Tell your cell phone carrier that you want your privacy back!](#)

Many of us rely on our cell phones on a daily basis. But using our phones shouldn't mean giving up control of our personal information. Cell phones reveal location as a side effect of how the technology works, but why are the cell phone carriers keeping our sensitive location data for so long? What business is it of theirs whether you attended a rally last year or who you texted in 2004? If a company wants to keep your personal data, it should tell you why and ask your permission.

People
Over Politics

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