

Fellowship of Reason, Inc.

November 2004 Newsletter "Advocating Heroic Engagement With Life"

Volume 6, Number 11

International Section (Received by all local chapters)

Mission Statement

The Fellowship of Reason® is an open, benevolent, and vital rational moral community in which we celebrate our lives, our freedoms, and our philosophy of reason We study ethics.

Congratulations to the newly elected Board of Trustees: Dan Barber, Martin Cowen, Vera Norman, Chris Snider, and David Ziebell.

Congratulations to the newly elected officers:

- **Chris Snider: President**
- **Scott Carper: Vice President**
- **David Ziebell: Treasurer**
- **Vera Norman: Secretary**

The Secret Book

By Dan Barber

(Charter and Lifetime Member Dan Barber is the outgoing President of the Fellowship of Reason, Inc.)

I was once involved with a *democratically* run organization before F.O.R., specifically a local Unitarian Church, that had a "secret book", of which the out-going President ceremoniously passed to the in-coming one. Since I was none of the above, I never got to behold the secrets held within. However, just simply knowing that this book existed was fodder enough to inspire my warped imagination...

For what dastardly truths or tips would have to be kept secret? And why?

I imagined that there were installments among the pages like:

Rule #1 It is enough to let the people within the organization think they are in control (a real democracy never works) so they won't notice that you are really running a false dictatorship.

And **Rule #2** When folks are in disagreement over a highly passionate issue in board meeting, systematically let everyone be heard one at a time, the individual attention is all they really needed anyway. At that point you may hit them with the usually apparent sound reasonable solution and move forward. Other wise, rationality will certainly get lost over the loud shrieking going on inside their own heads.

As you can see, the fact that it was specifically kept a "secret" lowered the expectations of what I pondered might be contained within. I guess they should have made rule #1 the same as in the movie "Fight Club" Keep the very existence of the secret book a secret! I also felt like I was being conned as a fellow board member not good for the camaraderie.

Since I am currently the outgoing President of F.O.R., I'd like to offer the first seeds of a "not-so-secret" book to pass on to the next generation of our leaders. You are; of course, free and encouraged to modify it as your experience allows.

Rule #1 The Presidents primary and most important job is to keep the main objectives of the organization in clear focus at all times. This will serve to maintain your integrity and your leadership effectiveness.

Rule #2 It is not the job of the leaders of this organization to *preach* anything. But to maintain a *place* that helps facilitate individual flourishing as each participant requires.

Rule #3 A president or leader is most effective when placing the responsibility to solve a problem or issue on the shoulders of those individuals that cause the problem or issues. Hear them and help them succeed.

Rule #4 The flourishing of the individual participants takes priority over the flourishing of the group. If the participants don't grow personally the

group will collapse upon itself. A building is only as strong as its weakest individual building block. The group will grow naturally as our participants grow personally. If the group stops growing, that means the leadership has also stopped.

Rule #5 People will step up to the plate to something they care deeply about. Maintain the value of the organization and people will always help it flourish. One of the best tools for personal growth is experiencing success at leadership positions. This group is designed to allow safe opportunities to challenge one.

Rules #6 Don't be afraid to ask for help. In fact, be more afraid not to! Your own personal flourishing depends on it!

Rule #7 Always maintain your composure, leadership is about trust. Allowing emotion to trump reason will incite division and loss of passionate participation amongst the members.

All in all, the experience of leading this new group has been a very extraordinary one. The people involved are unique in that each person has decided that ideas and questions are very important in their lives. This is refreshing and sometimes frustrating I'll admit. But within the frustration there is always at least one kernel of truth that enlightens a particular corner of my mind that has grown useless due to some archaic emotional protective device. Hence, the experience of frustration.

I enjoy and benefit directly from having such honest people that I trust to help me along this path called "life". Sometimes stepping into the unknown requires that kind of spiritual support.

Thanks to each and every one of you for your valuable participation and making this group as great as it is. I look forward to serving in other areas that challenge me, and adding my unique qualities to the balance of our uniquely diverse leadership team.

Dan Barber

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the columns appearing in this newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the organization. The Fellowship of Reason, Inc speaks only through its Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, and the actions taken by the Board of Trustees as a board and recorded in the minutes of the corporation.

Letters to the Editor

(Please comment for publication upon matters of interest to you, including the essay in this newsletter.)

Reflections on Last Month in the Fellowship of Reason®

(Please submit matters of interest for this section.)

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Local Section: Atlanta Chapter Calendar and Contact Information

November Birthdays

November 3 John Grover
November 12 Randy Sekeres
November 25 Bernice Bass Sossenko

December Birthdays

December 5 Carolyn Hadaway
December 21 Bill Greene
December 22 George Sossenko
December 22 Frank Jenkins
December 25 Marianna Long
December 27 Leanna Ampola
December 29 Andrew Stallard
December 30 Mike Brady

FORum Schedule

- **Sunday, December 5, 2004**
- Sunday, January 2, 2005
- Sunday, February 6, 2005
- Sunday, March 6, 2005
- Sunday, April 3, 2005
- Sunday, May 1, 2005
- Sunday, June 5, 2005
- Sunday, July 3, 2005
- Sunday, August 7, 2005
- Sunday, September 4, 2005
- Sunday, October 2, 2005
- Sunday, November 6, 2005

Adult Education

1st Sunday at High Noon

Begins at noon before FORum David Ziebell facilitator.

FORUM, December 5, 2004: 1st Sunday

Begins at 1 p.m. SHARP!

Remember: Time limits will be vigorously enforced!

Hospitality—
Historian/Timekeeper
Welcome—
Celebration of Freedom—
Celebration of Visitors—
Celebration of Each Other—
Celebratory Announcements—
Celebration of Science—
Celebration of Storytelling
Celebration of Literature—**Dan Barber**
Celebration of Heroes—
Celebration of Personal Mission—
Celebration of Talent—
Oratory—**Chris Snider**
FORum—
Announcements—
Closing Quotation—

FOR Toastmasters

2nd, 4th, and 5th Tuesdays at 8 p.m. Martin Cowen coordinator: 770-471-9800.

Reason Runners

Every Sunday morning at 8 a.m., except FORum Sundays, at the southwestern corner of Piedmont Park. Breakfast at Flying Biscuit follows at 9 a.m. non-runners (cheerleaders) welcome! Martin Cowen coordinator: 770-471-9800.

Invisible College

Invisible College is planning a special event at Vera's house on Thursday, January 20, 2005 at 7:30 p.m.

Philosophy Tapes: 1st/3rd Tuesdays

Philosophy tapes are played to a small private audience in the living room of a volunteer on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month Free.

Fiction Book Club: 2nd Tuesday

Members and friends of FOR, Inc meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at John and Beth's house to discuss a marvelous book. Beth Holley is the coordinator of the book club 404-754-7519.

Non-Fiction Book Club: 2nd Saturday

Members and friends of FOR, Inc meet 11 a.m. on the 2nd Saturday of every month at Chris and Allison's house to discuss a marvelous non-fiction. Allison is the coordinator of the non-fiction book club

Potluck: 3rd Saturday: Not in November

See Movie Night instead.

Film Night: 3rd Saturday in November

Members and friends of FOR, Inc enjoy a monthly movie night at John's studio using his extraordinary equipment. FOR's next movie night is Saturday, November 20, 2004. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. Doors will be locked for safety! Movie starts at 7:15 p.m. Free.

Pub Night: 4th or 5th Wednesday

Members and friends of FOR, Inc meet on the 4th Wednesday of every month at Manuel's Tavern at 8 p.m. for adult beverages and adult conversation. FOR's next pub night is Wednesday, November 30, 2004, at 8 p.m.

FOR Symphony: Six Thursday nights in the 2004-5 ASO Concert Season

Our third concert is at 7 p.m. in Symphony Hall on Thursday, January 27, 2005. Martin Cowen is the coordinator of FOR Symphony 770-471-9800.

Membership Information:

- Regular membership: \$35 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2004
- Contributing membership: \$70 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2004
- Lifetime membership: \$700 if paid prior to October 31, 2004

Contact information:

Visit us on the web at www.fellowshipofreason.com

To talk to somebody about FOR call Vera at 404-577-7968 or Martin at 770-471-9800 or Dan at 770-831-3010.

A subscription for 12 monthly issues of this newsletter is \$15 per year.

Fellowship of Reason, Inc. is a Georgia nonprofit corporation and a tax-exempt 501(c) (3) corporation.
