

Freethought News

Vol. 9 No. 11, November 2020

Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

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Our people

What kind of people are we, the inhabitants of these United States? Why did so many of us fall prey to so many corruptions of logical thought, civic values and personal integrity?

The next years will provoke us to study these deficiencies and the deep running flaws in our national character that gave rise to them.

It is especially imperative that the free thought community quickly adopt this task as a way to not only restore the civic character of the nation, but to accelerate the role which we must fill to restore the pathways to human happiness that the rise of science, and the application of technology have provided.

The task we face seems enormous, and we are so few; yet there is no avoiding the heavy burden of responsibility that hundreds of years of social evolution has imposed upon us.

Let us begin...

JP

Please Don't Delay – Get Your Shingle and Flu Shots Now!

The Food and Drug administration in 2017 approved the much more effective, **Shingrix** as the preferred alternative to Zostavax, which was approved in 2006.

Both vaccines are approved for adults age 50 and older for the prevention of shingles and related complications, whether they've already had shingles or not. If you have already had the first vaccine, get the second. According to the CDC, It may help with some Covid-19 effects as well.

Also, don't forget your current **Flu & Pneumonia shots** available now.

Ron Frase

Another of our wonderful Humanist Society members has died.

After a long illness, Ron Frase succumbed Oct. 29th at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. He was 84.



His life will reverberate through us as much for his sharp sense of humor as for his ardent advocacy of humanism and his fierce defense of socialism. Indeed, he could be found at the front lines in every great cause or movement that advanced the liberation of the human mind and body, and resisted the cruelties of tyranny in every venue. As a member of the Tampa Bay Post Carbon Council, he was a great teacher.

He was born in Talmadge, Ohio, and graduated from the University of Akron with a physics degree. He and his wife, Carolyn, retired to Largo as snowbirds 23 years ago, but recently moved back to Ohio for family and health reasons.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/ohio/obituary.aspx?n=ronald-frase&pid=197007933>



James "The Amazing" Randi

Oct 20th 2020

See Pages [19](#) and [20](#) for more.

NB. Until further notice, following best-practices and official medical recommendations, **all group gatherings are postponed** due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We will let you know here when we're go for "Normal."

Tampa Bay
Coalition of Reason
Web site—Jim Peterson
Editors—**Jim Peterson &
Rick O'Keefe**

Back & current issues online at:

<http://www.tampabaycor.net>

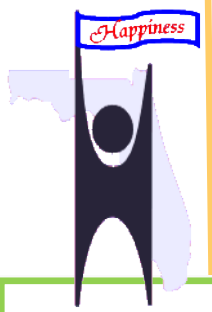
Special Projects—Mark Brandt
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event websites at:

<http://bit.ly/2vUJoE1>

Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the editors, TBCoR, or its member organizations.

Anywhere in this newsletter, **CLICK** on an image or **blue text** for a link.



The Humanist Society of the Suncoast

An Epicurean society dedicated to the proposition that only the fully examined life is worth living.
Associate organization of the the [AHA](#), [COR](#), & [ASHS](#). Find us at www.suncoasthumanist.com

Vol. XXXIII No. 10 October, 2020

Meetup Zooms of Humanist interest

Date and Time	Event	Link
11/5/2020 7pm	John Petrocelli - Persuasive Bullshitters & the Insidious Bullshit Hypothesis	https://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason/events/273842227/
11/8/2020 5pm	Fake News	https://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason/events/274342149/
11/12/2020 10:30pm	xpost: The Debate About Dark Matter: Is the Matter Settled?	https://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason/events/274140660/
11/17/2020 1:00pm	Online: Tampa Bay Technology Center (TBTC) Monthly Meeting	https://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason/events/prxlrvybcpbwb/
11/19/2020 7pm	Bob Nygaard - Combating Fortunetelling Fraud (aka Psychic Fraud)	https://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason/events/273842368/
11/21/2020 11am	November On Line - Center for Inquiry's SHARE Book Club	https://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason/events/274172053/
11/22/2020 5pm	Intellectual Humility	https://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason/events/274342825/

In cooperation with Atheists of Florida, TB Tech Ctr., CFI, and others

Humanism
is a progressive philosophy of life that, without theism or other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good.

The Humanist Society is a 501c3 organization. As such we can take no position, and does not endorse any candidacy or political party. We will discuss issues and ideas, however. We recommend that you use available resources on the web and media to learn more about your local candidates.

Our Local Board Meeting

The Humanist Society of the Suncoast will have another board meeting soon. Under consideration are ideas and directions for future programs. Members are invited to contribute ideas: contact jim@suncoasthumanist.com to let us know what you think. Members are also invited to contribute dues, the all important resource that allows us to exist. See the column to the right...



The Humanist Society has maintained an enlightened presence on the Florida Suncoast sine 1987.

Please Join or renew
Humanist Society of the Suncoast

Annual Dues

- Regular -\$25
- Reg. Couple -\$30.
- Supporter -\$35/40 (With pin above)
- Life -\$200. (Inc. Pin)
- Life Couple -\$250 (Pins)
- Associate -\$10



Your membership helps keep Humanism alive & growing in the Tampa Bay area. A small part of your dues allows us to participate fully as a member organization of the Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason & enables us to support larger & more exciting programs.

If you have questions concerning your dues or status, contact our treasurer,
Scott Wilson scott33761@yahoo.com

If new, please give info below; if renewing just indicate your name & any changes from our previous information. Thanks!

Name: Address –if new : City, State, Zip
Phone, E-mail: (Privacy respected)

Send check made out to:
"Scott Wilson"

Memo line: "Humanist Society Dues"
(501c3, tax deductible)

Humanist Society of the Suncoast, AHA
6814 Charlotte Harbor Way
Tampa FL 33625



Humanists work to build a world in which happiness is the enduring criterion of all policy.

What is the Humanist Way?

- ♦ **To extend** a human centered approach to the critical problems of life & society.
- ♦ **To encourage** attitudes of kindness, compassion, tolerance & a loving generosity in human relationships, & in our treatment of all life. These attitudes help us to see ourselves in the lives of others, & encourage appreciation for the remarkable diversity of human culture & experience.
- ♦ **To develop** & popularize the skills of creative & critical thinking that empower people to challenge prejudice, superstition & irrationality in every area of life. Such empowerment enables the individual to reach the highest levels of achievement.
- ♦ **To exalt** those artistic & imaginative expressions of life which have been the source of the greatest pleasure & enlightenment, & which reflect compelling human truths. Through music, literature, art, dance, & other expressions, we embrace the essence of what it means to be human.
- ♦ **To explore** the grounds of ethics & 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 Sly Philosopher's Glossary

- A fortiori:** There are at least 40 papers on this already
A posteriori: He is talking out of his arse
A priori: Someone already said that
Abstraction: Stretching stomach muscles
Accidental property: Windfall
Aesthetic: Pain-inducing
Argumentum ad baculum: Back-stabbing
B-theory of time: Time is honey
Bad company objection: 'That's what *they* say'
Canonical form: Clergyman's track record
Chinese Room: Restaurant with effective but uncomprehending waiters
Chinese Room Argument: Dispute in a Chinese Room (q.v.)
Contingent proposition: Unnecessary remark
Converse: Prisoners' poetry
Copula: Small policewoman
Demiurge: Weak inclination
Determinist: Ambitious colleague
Disposition: Here (see also 'dat-position')
Dualist: Disputatious
Endurantist: Patient listener
Entailment: What Manx cats envy
Error theory: Your theory
Ex post facto: The proof is in the mail
Existential import: Cheap foreign philosophy
Extensional operator: Masseur
Extensionally adequate: Stinks but otherwise OK
External relation: Foreign family member
Fallacy: Male-dominated
Fictionalist: Liar
Formal ontology: Black tie metaphysics
Framework: Conceptual zimmer frame
Genidentity: Jennifer's essence
Goedel's Theorem: 'Every system of truths contains at least one misrepresented by popularisers'
Heterological: Preferring the other truth-value
Idealist: String of suggestions
Internal relation: Embryo
Intuition: Under instruction
Material conditional: A device for drawing material conclusions from immaterial premises
Mentalese: Dualist painkiller
Metaphysics: Just encountered a branch of science
Monist: Philosophical whinger
Naturalist: Bare particular
One over many: Head of Department

Thx to *D. Chalmers*

Humanist Society of the Suncoast

A chapter of the American Humanist Assoc., Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason, & The Association of Secular Humanist Societies

Board of Directors.

Meets Sept., December, April

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~*~*~*~*~*

Jim Peterson, Editor
 E-Mail us at:
jim@suncoasthumanist.com

Need Psychological Counseling?

For a secular therapist, **click:**

[Secular Therapy Org.](http://fampsy.org/member/lynda-gurvitz/)
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Or call:

Lynda Gurvitz,
<http://fampsy.org/member/lynda-gurvitz/>
 (727) 725-8820

Or, Joel Schmidt
www.floatoncounseling.com
 321-604-7637





A Little French Wine Perhaps...?

Kuwait's retail sector has pulled French products in a boycott triggered by the display of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad in a French class on freedom of expression, whose teacher was then beheaded by a Chechen teenager. France's foreign affairs ministry stated there had been mass campaigns to boycott French products, particularly food products, in numerous Middle Eastern countries and calls for demonstrations against France over the cartoons. "These calls for boycott are baseless and should stop immediately, as well as all attacks against our country, which are being pushed by a radical minority," the ministry said. The non-governmental Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies of Kuwait, which groups more than 70 establishments, issued the boycott directive on Oct. 23rd. The head of the union, Fahd Al-Kishti, told Reuters that the products had been removed in response to "repeated insults" against the Prophet. Thanks to Atheist Republic

<http://www.patreon.com/atheistrepublic>



In 2014, the American Humanist Association and Foundation Beyond Belief announced the merger of their respective charitable programs Humanist Charities and Humanist Crisis Response to encourage humanist giving. [Humanist Disaster Recovery](#), this new joint project of the AHA and FBB, exists to provide financial support to secular organizations working locally to meet the needs of recovering survivors.

Recent recovery giving campaigns have helped relief efforts with Hurricanes Harvey & Irma, famine in East Africa, flooding in Louisiana, earthquakes in Ecuador & Nepal, and much more.

Learn more at: foundationbeyondbelief.org/disaster-recovery

Humanist Quotes

"Humanism believes that the individual attains the good life by harmoniously combining personal satisfactions and continuous self-development with significant work and other activities that contribute to the welfare of the community.

Corliss Lamont

"A humanist is someone who does the right thing even though she knows that no one is watching.

Dick McMahan

"Our humanist attitude should therefore throughout be to stress what we all have in common with each other and relegate quarrelsome religion to the private domain where it can do [less] harm.

Hermann Bondi

"A humanist is anyone who rejects the attempt to describe or account for man wholly on the basis of physics, chemistry or animal behavior.

Joseph Wood Krutch

"Humanists hold that ethical values are relative to human experience and need not be derived from theological or metaphysical foundations.

Paul Kurtz

"A wise man proportions his belief to the evidence .

David Hume

"The four characteristics of humanism are curiosity, a free mind, belief in good taste, and belief in the human race.

E.M. Forster

"Life has no meaning a priori. It is up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing but the meaning that you choose.

Jean-Paul Sartre

"Ignorance more frequently begets confidence than does knowledge.

Charles Darwin

Johnny paid his way through college by waitering in a restaurant.

"What's the usual tip?" asked a customer.

"Well," said Johnny, "this is my first day, but the other guys said that, if I got five dollars out of you, I'd be doing great."

"Is that so?" growled the customer. "In that case, here's twenty dollars."

"Thanks. I'll put it in my college fund," Johnny replied.

"By the way, what are you studying?" asked the customer.

"Applied psychology."

"Doctor," said the receptionist over the phone, "there's a patient here who thinks he's invisible."

"Well, tell him I can't see him right now."

Click here



An autonomous project of the Humanist Society.
Affiliate of the [Post Carbon Institute](#)

Introducing “*The Great Unraveling?*”

a series of interviews with some of the world’s foremost experts on a broad range of environmental and societal challenges, culminating with a powerful discussion on what these converging and accelerating crises mean, and how we can respond.

What if we don’t look back on 2020 as the year from hell, a painful and surreal slip on the otherwise generally smooth path of progress? What if, instead, we look back in five or ten or twenty years to 2020 as the moment when everything started to really and truly unravel?

Of course, what I’ve presented is a false choice. The truth is that for billions of people (and other species!) the unraveling has been occurring for a long time, assuming they had anything that could be unravelled to begin with. People who have been left behind or churned up by the relentless machine of exploitative capitalism. People and natural ecosystems already on the frontline of the climate crisis. Communities that have lost their social cohesion and ability to confront problems collectively.

2020 has exposed and supercharged the fragility, unsustainability, and injustice of so many of our global systems:

- untenable economic and racial inequality;
- brittle, globalized supply chains controlled by a relatively small number of corporations;
- a global climate system that’s already fevered at 1.2°C warming;
- growing political instability and distrust, and the spread of authoritarian governments;

- the collapse of biodiversity and the crossing of other planetary boundaries;
- an economic system dependent on growth in consumption, debt, energy, and human population;
- the failure of governmental institutions to respond to, let alone anticipate, crises; and
- the likely peak in the amount of energy available to power modern society.

These crises were already here or looming long before the coronavirus pandemic hit us broadside this year. In fact, my colleagues at Post Carbon Institute, the many writers who we have featured here at [resilience.org](#), and allies across the globe have been sounding the alarm for decades that the [Great Acceleration](#) would inevitably lead to a [Great Unraveling](#) or even collapse. That forewarning may now be moot.

To begin considering how to navigate the “Great Unraveling,” we must first try to understand how various environmental and social systems may interact. So a few months ago, Post Carbon Institute and Anthropocene Actions [asked some of the world’s foremost experts](#) to share their views of where things stand with some of our most pressing environmental and societal challenges, particularly in the wake of the pandemic.

We then hosted a powerful discussion with an esteemed, diverse panel on what these converging and accelerating crises mean, and how we can respond.

Facing up to these interconnected crises requires unprecedented cooperation and coordination, if we have any hope of creating a sustainable, equitable, and resilient world. To this end, campaigners, politicians, companies, governments, and communities all across the world are pushing for and enacting change. But these efforts will have to remain robust, flexible, and resilient in the face of growing destabilization. And they must be grounded in an understanding of the systemic nature of the predicament we face.

The wrenching disruption of the pandemic presents barriers to change, as shown by those seeking to reinforce the pre-pandemic status quo. But this historic moment also presents opportunities to move toward a sustainable society that benefits all. The key to a better future is to learn how to manage the compounding crises of a more destabilized future – how to navigate the Great Unraveling.

I hope you’ll take the time to [watch these interviews and the panel discussion](#), and to share them with others in your life.





Silence

“Only by going alone in silence, without baggage, can one truly get into the heart of the wilderness.” John Muir wrote this in 1924, in a letter to his wife Louie.

Nearly a century later, it’s easy to quibble with the sentiment, steeped as it is in a particular lone-man conception of outdoor recreation. Maybe you prefer bringing someone special into the heart of the wilderness with you, rather than sending them mail about it later.

Maybe you do your best nature-communing with a pack full of water and snacks. According to a new study in *People and Nature*, though, there is still something to be said for human silence. Researchers seeking to improve the soundscape of Muir Woods National Monument in California found that reducing anthropogenic noise made visitors happier and more tuned into the wildlife around them. And it was easy to quiet people down—they simply put up signs that asked nicely.

Quiet time in nature is good for everyone. For humans, natural sounds can be part of what the authors call a “psychologically restorative environment,” credited with everything from facilitating relaxation to bolstering support for conservation. Animals and plants, of course, don’t experience natural sounds as quiet, but as the sonic fabric of everyday life, comprised of vital signals about conspecifics, weather, danger, and opportunity. Too much man-made noise can cause health problems in people and blast apart the communicative networks wildlife rely on.

Muir Woods has been the site of a number of sonic improvement projects over the years, ranging from cell phone bans to changes in maintenance strategies that eliminated the revving of engines and the clanking of garbage bins. For this study, researchers sought to further reduce human-caused noise in Muir Woods, and figure out how and whether this affected visitor experience.

To convince hikers to hush up, the researchers installed extra signs with messages like “Enter Quietly” along a main trailhead during particular week-long periods in the spring of 2016, and took them down the rest of the time. They then compared the overall sound level during weeks where quiet was and was not encouraged. They also counted birds during both segments, and surveyed visitors about how things had gone.

The researchers found that simply encouraging visitors to hush up reduced the overall sound level in the woods by about 1.2 decibels, from around 40.8 dB to 39.6. (Decibels work on a logarithmic scale, so what looks like a slight difference written out is much more noticeable in practice. The researchers write that this decrease in sound was equivalent to a 24% increase in an individual’s “listening area”—essentially, how far into the woods they could hear.)

As sound levels went down, the number of birds the researchers were able to count increased, as did overall visitor satisfaction. And visitors were generally in favor of sound mitigation techniques like signs. The researchers write that reducing the noise level in this way essentially expands the carrying capacity of the park—“the park was able to acoustically support more visitors behaving quietly compared to fewer visitors behaving normally,” they wrote.

The study is a nice demonstration of how people, when encouraged, can make things a little better for themselves, their fellow hikers, and the nonhumans they’re visiting—although its lessons don’t necessarily scale directly. As the authors point out, much of the noise that truly harms people and animals comes not from hikers, but from “increased home densities, road networks and energy infrastructure,” and from the encroachment of human settlements on nonhuman ones.

Polite signs alone will probably not decrease this trend. But peaceful time outside might give us all the wherewithal to think of better ways to make room for everyone. Hush up in the woods, sure, but be loud in the streets too.

Source: Levenhagen, Mitchell et. al. “Ecosystem services enhanced through soundscape management link people and wildlife.” *People and Nature*, 2020.

Atheists of Florida

Inc.



For our Atheists helping the Homeless project -

For all meetings: bring, if you can, small bars of unused soap, small bottles of shampoo, heavy duty socks, any kind of personal care items, or money (for bulk purchase of these items).

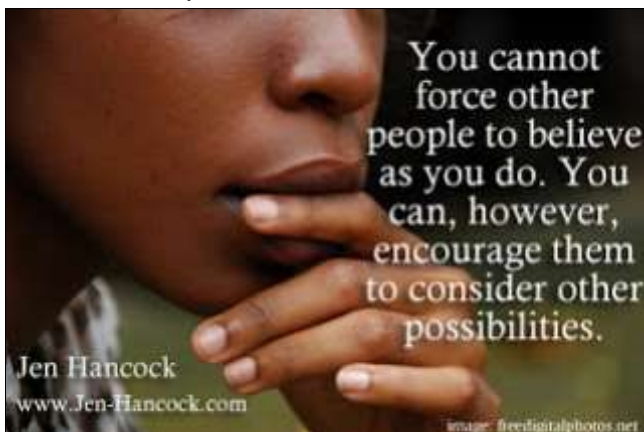
Ed Golly, Chair - Judy Adkins, Exec. Dir.
See AoF Meetup for details Website: <http://aof.ngo>

AoF is a comfortable & safe place in which to; find rewarding new friendships, discover hidden potentials, & make a positive contribution to your own humanity as well as that of others. We are pleased to offer legal assistance with church state separation issues as an important focus. For many people, atheism represents the most focused & powerful criticism of the philosophical world-view with which most of us were raised. It is liberating for the same reason it attracts the enmity of those who are committed to the closed & changeless narrative of unexamined traditional beliefs. JP



Strategies for Dealing with Racism in the Workplace

Today's blog post on humanistic leadership is actually just a link to an article I think you all should read.



It's titled: Confronting the Uncomfortable Reality of Workplace Discrimination by Derek R. Avery and Enrica N. Ruggs at MIT Sloan.

<https://sloanreview-mit-edu.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/sloanreview.mit.edu/article/confronting-the-uncomfortable-reality-of-workplace-discrimination/amp>

Jennifer Hancock

Do you know what your legislature Is up to?

AoF submitted a short survey on **religious freedom** to candidates for the Florida House of Representatives, the Florida Senate, and the US House of Representatives. We are posting the responses on our website as they are received. You can visit the information at <https://www.atheistsofflorida.org/2020-candidates>. (NOTA BENE: We did this through email, so only those candidates for whom we could find an email address are included.) JMA



Reasons you should join our **new online real-time meeting**: Stay tuned for more details. Register at: <https://www.free2think.org/>

Always Vigilant

Public school prayer events are generally billed as being student-organized in order to *appear* constitutional.

But in reality, school staff are often actively involved, even to the extent that they're the ones organizing the event.

To stop this unconstitutional Christian proselytizing, someone needs to expose the adult organizers. That's where we come in!

Let us know of any church-state violation you may run across - restrictions, prayers, bible readings, etc. We'll take it from there. Thanks, www.aof.ngo

Be sure to come on in for AoF's regular Sunday evening Zoom sessions starting at 5:00 PM. See our listings on the TB-CoR Meetup for topics, guest speakers, etc. and many more Zoom-meets.

For linking information, see our notices on the Coalition of Reason Meetup page, or go to our website; www.aof.ngo.

For over 27 years, Atheists of Florida Inc. has attempted to provide much needed information about religion and the alternatives to religion which have proved to be so liberating for so many of us.

We invite you to explore the many written and audio video presentations from our library.

The radio/TV broadcasts are on extended hiatus for now. However, previous programs, most with discussions of timeless interest, are available **on the internet at:**

www.youtube.com/atheistforum .



For now, tune in to **the Voice of Reason, Thursday at 10am on WTAN radio** See [page 13](#)! The voice is a private effort led by Ed Golly, who along with Joe Rhinehardt and guests supply fresh insights on the world we face.

Contact us: info@atheistsoffloridainc.org



Atheist COMMUNITY of Polk County



Street Warriors in Winter Haven

Sunday is the one day of the week that the religion-based soup kitchens in Winter Haven are closed, and people who are homeless are pretty much on their own.

Building upon a very successful partnership with [Street Warriors of Central Florida](#), the Atheist Community of Polk County is launching **Street Warriors: Winter Haven!**

“We will be feeding the homeless population of Winter Haven on Sunday mornings from 10 am to 11:30 am,” said ACPC Director Alec Kosmensky. “We will need volunteers, food, supplies, and of course, funds.”

Kosmensky made an initial distribution on Sunday. He and his wife prepared 18 lunches and were able to find about a dozen folks who will now be helping spread the word. “It was a great success! Turnout may be quite large next week,” he said. “We will see!”

Donations Needed

We need your support to sustain this program! Please consider [making a recurring donation](#) of \$10 or more. \$10/mo will feed one person. Click the button to make a donation and make sure to check the box to “Make this payment recurring.” One-time donations are welcome, too.

Food/Supply Donations needed:

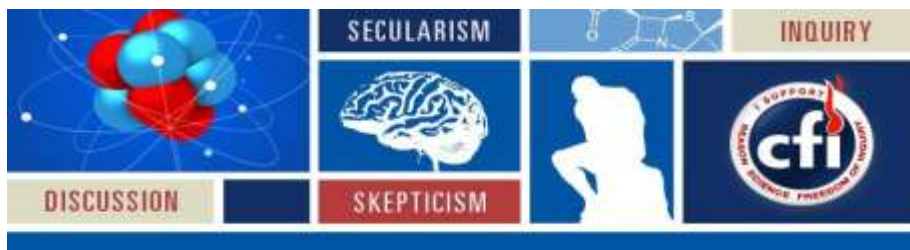
- Juice Boxes/Juice Pouches
- Bottled Water
- Cracker Sandwiches/Individually Wrapped Snacks
- Applesauce Cups/Fruit Cups
- Plastic Spoons
- Large Paper Lunch Bags
- 12 oz. Styrofoam Bowls with lids

Disposable Masks

Volunteers Needed

Each Sunday morning a small group of volunteers will meet to pack up the food and then head out into the community. If you would like to prepare a hot entree, we have a Space is limited due to coronavirus safety and masks are required.

CRAZY PHENOMENON		IF IT WORKED, COMPANIES WOULD BE USING IT TO MAKE A KILLING IN...	ARE THEY?
REMOTE VIEWING	OIL PROSPECTING		
DOWSING			
AURAS	HEALTH CARE COST REDUCTION		
HOMEOPATHY			
REMOTE PRAYER			
ASTROLOGY	FINANCIAL/BUSINESS PLANNING		
TAROT			
CRYSTAL ENERGY	REGULAR ENERGY		
CURSES, HEXES	THE MILITARY		
RELATIVITY	GPS DEVICES		✓
QUANTUM ELECTRODYNAMICS	SEMICONDUCTOR CIRCUIT DESIGN		✓
EVENTUALLY, ARGUING THAT THESE THINGS WORK MEANS ARGUING THAT MODERN CAPITALISM ISN'T THAT RUTHLESSLY PROFIT-FOCUSED.			



Incorporated in Florida on October 3, 2002. Only with *your support* can we succeed.

I, Too, Sing America

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—
I, too, am America.

From *The Morning Heresy*

Why isn't this the ONLY STORY anyone's talking about??? FOLKS! The White House science office says that in Trump's first term, he can be credited with **ENDING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC!** Whew! Well let's all get back to our very normal lives, I guess. I wonder what we should do with our now-totally-irrelevant **Coronavirus Resource Center**. Maybe turn it into a snarky Tumblr.

A study by the YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project shows **false beliefs about COVID-19 rampant in many parts of the world**, not just here. In Nigeria, a majority of folks say the death toll has been exaggerated, and a majority in South Africa express anti-vaccination sentiments.

Dr. Reeteka Sud at *The Times of India* warns readers about claims about "traditional" medicine's efficacy. "A term frequently tossed around on Ayurveda products and herbal supplements is 'natural'. Just because something is natural does not mean it's good for you. **Arsenic is natural, as is death.**"



SUPPORT CFI Tampa Bay, your secular humanist home

We are Powered Only By Your Passion

The "post-truth" era indisputably proves that there is a great need for an organization like the Center for Inquiry, which champions facts, reason, truth, science, and secularism. During a time where ideas are under threat by the changing tides of national and global events, everyone who shares these core values will be needed. CFI needs your help to be part of the solution, to join the good guys. Become a member, renew your membership, donate—we need your support now. Without it, we may not be here next year.

<http://bit.ly/2pTDfEj> or <https://bit.ly/3jxTYEW>

The home office recorded that almost all donations from our area were made **to the general fund**, NOT to us! Contact Rick if this wasn't your intent!

Tampa@CenterForInquiry.net

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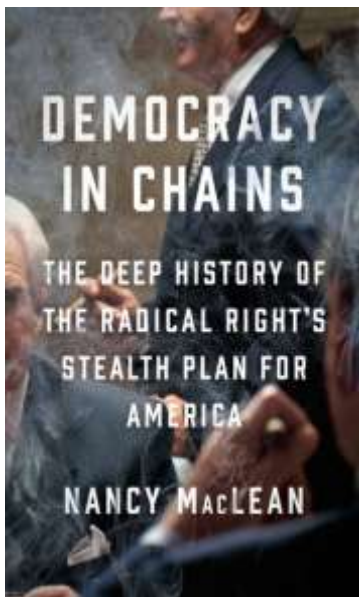
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The **Center for Inquiry** (CFI) leads the charge on promoting science, reason, critical thinking, and humanist values.

CFI's vision is a world in which evidence, science, and compassion—rather than superstition, pseudoscience, or prejudice—guide **public policy**.



CFI Tampa Bay has a **monthly (online) book club**, named S.H.A.R.E. (Secular Humanists, Atheists, ???) by former admin David Vangsness. Ellen now conducts the discussions at www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason/events/273537738/

You must RSVP & have read the current book to participate; this is an informed in-depth discussion.

shows how Buchanan forged his ideas about government in a last gasp attempt to preserve the white elite's power in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education*. In response to the widening of American democracy, he developed a brilliant, if diabolical, plan to undermine the ability of the majority to use its numbers to level the playing field between the rich and powerful and the rest of us.

Corporate donors and their right-wing foundations were only too eager to support Buchanan's work in teaching others how to divide America into "makers" and "takers." And when a multibillionaire on a messianic mission to rewrite the social contract of the modern world, Charles Koch, discovered Buchanan, he created a vast, relentless, and multi-armed machine to carry out Buchanan's strategy.

Without Buchanan's ideas and Koch's money, the libertarian right would not have succeeded in its stealth takeover of the Republican Party as a delivery mechanism. Now, with Mike Pence as Vice President, the cause has a longtime loyalist in the White House, not to mention a phalanx of Republicans in the House, the Senate, a majority of state governments, and the courts, all carrying out the plan. That plan includes harsher laws to undermine unions, privatizing everything from schools to health care and Social Security, and keeping as many of us as possible from voting. Based on ten years of unique research, *Democracy in Chains* tells a chilling story of right-wing academics and big money run amok. This revelatory work of scholarship is also a call to arms to protect the achievements of twentieth-century American self-government.

10/24/2020

Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America, by Nancy MacLean
<https://bit.ly/3lqbGKs>

11/21/2020 @ 11 AM (date and time change due to Thanksgiving)

White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America, by Nancy Isenberg

Behind today's headlines of billionaires taking over our government is a secretive political establishment with long, deep, and troubling roots. The capitalist radical right has been working not simply to change who rules, but to fundamentally alter the rules of democratic governance. But billionaires did not launch this movement; a white intellectual in the embattled Jim Crow South did. *Democracy in Chains* names its true architect—the Nobel Prize-winning political economist James McGill Buchanan—and dissects the operation he and his colleagues designed over six decades to alter every branch of government to disempower the majority.

In a brilliant and engrossing narrative, Nancy MacLean

Upcoming events: RSVP for admission links! Many regional freethought events are listed in detail with registration instructions on Meetup. Go here: <http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke>

*"This is my doctrine:
Give every other human being
every right you claim for
yourself."
- Robert Green Ingersoll*

Teacher Institute for Evolutionary Science

Calling all teachers of **English Language Learners!!** We are thrilled to offer the TIES student-guided units, along with the student response sheets, rubrics, and exams **in Spanish!!!** We have both middle and high school versions available. Check it out:
<https://tieseducation.org/teacher-materials/#spanish>
Email if need anything - bvazquez@centerforinquiry.org



Founded in 1988 by [Gary P. Posner, M.D.](#), [Tampa Bay Skeptics](#) is a nonprofit educational & scientific organization devoted to the critical examination of paranormal & fringe-science claims, & the dissemination of factual information about such claims. [Read More!](#)



How Astrology Escaped the Pull of Science

By [Jonathan Jarry M.Sc.](#), McGill Office for Science and Society
Separating Sense from Nonsense

Despite incredible scientific progress since its creation millennia ago, astrology hasn't lost its attraction. Its claims have been refuted over and over again, but in times of anxiety, many find the practice useful.

Astrology is a funny thing. After having put up with decades of scientific probing, it has retreated to the one area that shields it from a rational critique: mysticism. It may surprise us to learn that in an age of genetic sequencing and powerful telescopes, a system of divination conjured up in the Levant thousands of years ago is still alive and well. In the midst of our pandemic, astrologers are [reporting better business than usual](#). Whether or not that's true, it certainly is useful, and that's also the stance of many modern users of astrology. They claim not to care if it's scientific or not, and many even say they don't believe in it. They just find it useful.

It is a complicated universe to wrap your head around, this astrology. I know I've only caught a glimpse of it in my research. Astrology rests on a simple foundation: as above, so below. The position of various celestial bodies (planets, moons, asteroids) at the time of our birth reflects deep truths about who we are and what will happen to us, astrologers claim. Some believe these heavenly bodies directly cause events on Earth through some unknown mechanism; many more, especially in our modern age, reject this idea and rather see the sky as a mirror. By learning the language of astrology, they say, we can see a reflection of who we are and what our future might be.

Before we move on to the sort of irrefutable “secular theology” that astrology has become, it's important to shine a light on the scientific wringer it has been put through since the 1950s. Indeed, a slew of studies looking at specific event predictions, Zodiac sign compatibilities and their professional inclinations, and astrologers' abilities to match astrological profiles to individuals have resulted in devastating results for the profession's credibility. (A partial summary can be found in [this review article](#) and [on this website](#).) And if the heavenly spheres cause things on Earth, as early proponents of astrology claimed, none of the known forces could explain this effect due to the distances involved.

Honest scientists facing a towering pile of evidence against their theory would, after getting over their bruised egos, work to improve it, study it further, and perhaps come to replace it with a better one. But astrologists have dealt with this evidence by ignoring or rejecting it. They have resorted to hand-waving: they do not yet know what this all means, but astrology works and one day we will figure it all out. Their response to [a study published in 1990](#) encapsulates their close-mindedness to course corrections. The researchers designed their study with the full collaboration of the Indiana Federation of Astrologers. In fact, the lead researcher's birth chart, which indicates where each celestial body was in the sky at the time of his birth, was inspected by the Federation to make sure he was an upstanding guy.

The study was simple: six astrologers were given 23 birth charts and had to match them to 23 people, for whom

they had photos and answers to a long questionnaire the Federation had itself generated. The result?

To satisfy your curiosity, read the article [here](#):

<https://bitly.co/3soH>



“Skeptic,” in fact, comes from the Greek *skeptikos*, for “thoughtful” — Michael Shermer

Humanism and the Black Lives Matter Movement

By **Norm R. Allen Jr.**

Paul Kurtz Institute for Science and Human Values



Christians assert that the Bible is the Word of God. Yet many of them try their best to distance themselves from the First, or “Old” Testament. They seem to believe that the Old Testament was overruled by the Second or “New” Testament, even though they still claim that Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament teachings. Blatant contradictions are not unusual for theists. However, this one is especially problematic and irrational.

The main reason that so many Christians try to avoid the Old Testament is because many of its ideas are especially barbaric. Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, Gideon and other biblical “heroes” reportedly carry out campaigns of extermination against their enemies. Women are not just expected to obey men, as in the New Testament, but they are clearly considered to be the property of men. In the Old Testament, the owning of slaves is not softened a little by the Sermon on the Mount. The Old Testament God is angry, jealous, petty, vengeful, and so on.

However, Christians can only run so far from the Old Testament. Not only is it a part of the so-called Good Book, but the New Testament would not make “sense” without it.

In the Old Testament, we have the story of Adam and Eve, and Original Sin. Not only does this myth tell us how evil came to be, but it is what makes our salvation through Christ absolutely necessary. Jesus was not just a religious leader, he was the supposed Son of God who mysteriously washed away our alleged sins.

The Old Testament also tells us about the creation of the universe. The Bible starts out with a (since) falsified hypothesis: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” While the supposed creation of heaven probably cannot be falsified, it is clear that the earth was not “created” in the beginning. The universe is about 13.8 billion years old, but the earth is only about 4.543 billion years old. Moreover, we now know that stars (including the sun) come first, and then planets. And though the Bible says that God created “the lesser light to rule the night” (i.e., the moon, Genesis 1:16), the moon is not a light. It merely reflects the sun’s light. These kinds of obvious errors also make many Christians avoid the Old Testament like COVID-19.

Noah’s Ark is a pretty important myth to Christians. However, that myth is in the Old Testament. Christians that value science and common sense might be embarrassed by

this outlandish tale. It is obvious that it is physically impossible for so many animals to fit on a boat that, if it existed, was smaller than the Queen Mary. Furthermore, there is no scientific evidence that a worldwide flood ever occurred.

The story of Moses and the exodus is of great importance to Christians. That is where we get the Ten Commandments that conservative Christians are always trying to post in government buildings. It is also where we learn about the Passover.

Christians also highly value the stories of Job, David, Solomon, Jonah and other Old Testament figures. If the Old Testament is irrelevant, then so must be the stories of these figures.

One of the most important aspects of the Old Testament is prophecy. Old Testament prophecies supposedly predicted the coming of Christ, divine intervention on behalf of God’s Chosen people, and so forth.

The New Testament is obviously dependent upon the Old Testament. To claim that the God of the New Testament is somehow different than the God of the Old Testament is to contradict the claim that God is immutable. We just as well separate the books. Indeed, many people only have copies of the New Testament.

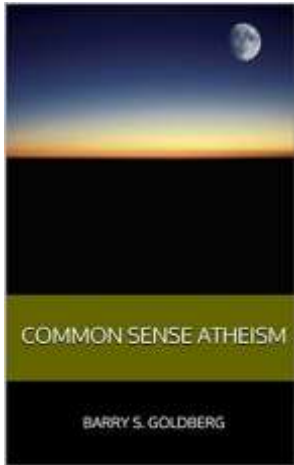
Religious apologists like William Lane Craig and John Lennox claim that Christians have an objective foundation (rooted in God’s nature) for morality. Yet the biblical God condones genocide, slavery, patriarchy, homophobia, xenophobia, and so on. That is to say, he condones the worst crimes against humanity that we know of. The New Testament God even condones anti-Semitism (I Thessalonians, 2: 14-16!) This all raises the question, if God is truly the objective foundation for morality, should we not get rid of this foundation? Would all of this not make God’s objective foundation a moral *liability*? And is it even necessary or possible to even have an objective foundation for morality?

Christians can run from the Old Testament, but they cannot hide. Moreover, cherry-picking biblical passages will only get them so far. The Bible is one book consisting of two parts supposedly inspired by the same omniscient God. We must examine it as such. The God-sanctioned genocide is every bit as important as the Sermon on the Mount.

Norm R. Allen Jr. is the editor of two ground-breaking books: *African-American Humanism: An Anthology*, and *The Black Humanist Experience: An Alternative to Religion*. He is currently writing a third book, *Secular, Successful, and Black: 25 Profiles*. For 21 years, Allen had been the first and only full-time African American secular humanist to travel the world promoting secular humanism. He has spoken on numerous radio and television shows including National Public Radio and to 72 humanist groups in 30 African nations. His writings have appeared in numerous books and encyclopedias, including *Voices for Evolution*, published by the National Center for Science Education.

Recommended Reading

Click on the book's **image** for more info



For some atheists, it's enough to simply not believe in God. Some people believe, but you don't. And that's OK.

Other atheists, however, find themselves constantly being asked to justify why they don't believe in God, to explain how they can possibly have morals without believing in God, to respond to various arguments that supposedly prove the existence of God, to acknowledge that America was founded as a "Christian" nation, etc. And if you don't have a background in philosophy, formal logic, comparative religions, ancient history, and various scientific fields, it can be a bit daunting to attempt to respond.

Well, fear not! *Common Sense Atheism* is a collection of original essays that address these issues and many others in clear and easy to understand language, with just a dollop of humor to make it all go down smoothly. These essays will help you understand and explain to others why a lack of belief in God really is the only rational choice.

What is DNA and where did it come from? Did DNA start life on Earth? What are mutations? Why has life evolved? How did DNA produce humanity. What does DNA have to do with spirituality?

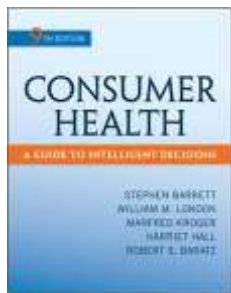
DNA is our connection with the cosmos. The book begins with the big bang, outlines the sequence of events that creates DNA from the elements on water planets, explains the purpose of evolution and identifies the mutations in DNA that turned the hominids into humans on Earth. It covers a 20 billion year time period, ending when our galaxy, the Milky Way, collides with the Andromeda galaxy. This concisely written history will give you the big picture of DNA's place in the cosmos and your place in DNA's library of life.

Available as a PDF download only - from
hasselljra@icloud.com



This new edition of the most comprehensive text available in the field continues to provide a vast amount of information to enable consumers to make wise choices regarding health products and services. It offers a panoramic view of the health marketplace, while explaining the scientific methods that are essential for validating claims about how products and services affect health. Read it on Kindle as it's out of print:

<https://amz.run/3dFS>

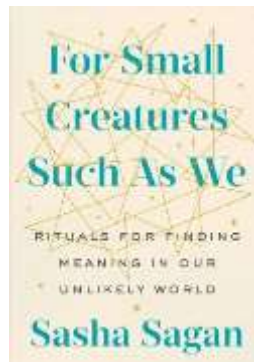


"Welcoming and tender. . . Charming and appealing, this thoughtful work serves as an uplifting, life-honoring celebration of human existence." —*Publishers Weekly*

"She's Carl Sagan's daughter, and it shows. . . Her style seems to inherit something from that grand master of scientific prose poetry. While never for a moment departing from secular physicalism, she makes a lyrical case for *ritual*, marking out the rhythms of life from birth to death. A charming book, ringing with the joy of existence."

— **Richard Dawkins**

For we small creatures, Sagan provides a welcome balm in bad times.



The Matt Cooper

Humanist Lending Library

Humanist Society members can select the number of the book you wish to borrow, at any meeting. Then pick it up at the next meeting. **Be sure to return it!** Donations appreciated. **Brad Perryman** is our new librarian.

TITLE AUTHOR

1. The Expanding Circle Peter Singer
2. In Gods we Trust Scott Atran
3. Why Evolution is True Jerry Coyne
4. The Second World Panag Khanna
5. Denialism Michael Specter
6. The Selfish Gene Richard Dawkins
7. Democracy Incorporated Sheldon Wolin
8. The Upside Irrationality Dan Ariely
9. The End of Growth Richard Heinberg
10. The God Delusion Richard Dawkins
11. All That We Share Jay Wallgasper
12. Sex, Time, and Power Leonard Shlain
13. Sex at Dawn C. Ryan, & C. Jetha
14. What liberal Media Eric Alderman
15. The End of Faith Sam Harris
16. Plan B Lester Brown
17. The Portable Atheist Christopher Hitchens
18. Open Society George Soros
19. Non Believer Nation David Niose
20. God on Trial Peter Irons
21. Natural Experiments of History Diamond-Robinson
22. The Missionary Position Christopher Hitchens
23. Life Inc Douglas Rushkoff
24. A brief History of Time Stephen Hawking
25. Breaking the Spell Daniel Dennett
26. The Philosophy of Humanism Corliss Lamont
27. The Quotable Atheist Jack Huberman
28. 50 Reasons People Believe In G.G. Harrison
29. Mathematics and Politics Alan Taylor
30. Stealing Elections John Fund
31. The God Virus Darrel Ray
32. What Every American Should Know About World Rossi
33. Imagine There's no Heaven Editors of Free Inquiry
34. Hidden Order David Friedman
35. What the Dog Saw Malcolm Gladwell
36. Sway Ori, Rom Brafman
37. The Better Angels of our Nature Steven Pinker
38. Letter to a Young Contrarian Christopher Hitchens
39. Hot, Flat, and Crowded Thomas Friedman
40. Gaming the Vote William Poundstone
41. Subversion Fable Alexa McKeating
43. Evolution and the Big Question David Stamos
44. Why People Believe Weird Things Michael Shermer
45. The World is Curved David Snick
46. The Snow Ball Warren Buffett
47. The Moral Landscape Sam Harris
48. How We Believe Michael Shermer
49. Full House Steven Jay Gould
50. The Origins of Political Order Francis Fukuyama
51. Asimov's Guide to the Bible Isaac Asimov
52. Autobiography of Mark Twain Ed. Harriet Smith, Editor
53. Science Friction Michael Shermer
54. Genius James Gleick
55. Inevitable Illusions Piatrelli & Palmarini
56. Demon Haunted World Carl Sagan
57. Being Right Is Not Enough Paul Waldman
58. Loser Takes All Mark Crispin Miller
59. Taking Back Politics Cathy Allen
60. Spiritual Common Sense Mark Lindquist (Gift by author)
61. Autobiography of Mark Twain Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith
62. The Skeptics Annotated Bible Various
63. 12 Vol Complete Works Robert Ingersoll
64. On Religious Liberty Roger Williams & Davis
65. The God Makers Baker & Hunt
66. Inevitable Illusions M. Piatrelli-Palmarini
67. Ain't Nobody's business If You Do Peter McWilliams
69. Bonk Mary Roach
70. What Money Can't Buy Michael J. Sandel
71. Financial Shenanigans Howard Shilit
72. Sex & God Darrel Ray, ED.D
73. Best American Non required Reading Dave Eggers
74. Reporting at Wit's End St. Clair McKelway
75. Corporations are not People Clements
76. Could I Vote Mormon for president? Cragun - Phillips
77. Culture of Honor Nisbett - Cohen
78. Rot on the Vine Stenes
79. Thoughts of a Freethinker New Kaye * Essential works
80. An Atheist Stranger by Herb Silverman
81. Candidate without a prayer - Herb Silverman



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Humanist Families of Greater Tampa

Jennifer Hancock started this organization several years ago. It uniquely serves Humanist families with a variety of wonderful programs throughout the year. We strongly emphasize creative childrearing. You can connect with other families dealing with the same problems of living in a society that is still hostile to an explicitly humanist way of life.

Jennifer wrote three books: *The Humanist Handbook*, *The Humanist Approach to Happiness*, & *The Bully Vaccine*.

Humanist Families organizes social outings every month. Come and do something fun, socialize, enjoy each other's company. Sometimes we go to a park, a museum, go swimming, & sometimes we leave the kids at home. We organize Tampa & Manatee/Sarasota area outings every month.

Throughout the year we host parties like *Darwin Day* in February, *World Humanist Day* in June, *Freethought Day at Disney* in October, & *Carl Sagan Day* in November. Among our spin off groups is a *Parenting Beyond Belief* group which gets together to discuss the challenges of raising children without religion. Please join us on [Facebook](#).

Thanks, Jennifer Hancock

The Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers (MAAF)

The **MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH)** community was created for atheist & secular humanist military personnel stationed at MacDill Air Force Base, their families, & retired military residing in the Tampa Bay area.

MASH provides a valuable & much needed resource in which you will find common ground to socialize, discuss issues, & draw emotional support from like-minded freethinking members.

Tampa Bay Thinkers

Be part of the conversation on Monday November 9th online at 7 PM **Topic: Jeremy Rifkin, etc**



See our Meetup page for meeting [link](#). We meet monthly to escape shallow, petty talk and to ponder broad, complex yet practical subjects. We expect members to proffer evidence and use logic in conclusions, but expect all present to keep the meeting FUN for all. We teach, and don't scold. We expect the conversation to move without getting stuck so sometimes, we are forced to "agree to disagree" and move on.

We arrive and part as friends. There are no personal attacks, but each IDEA goes under the microscope. Members agree, others disagree, often with enthusiasm! We have no gates, and no gatekeepers. All are welcome and we tolerate no personal attacks, sarcasm, or even indirect denigration. IDEAS RULE and stand on their own. Finally, we are "thinkers", not "doers". Come, join us, participate, learn, exercise your brain, but mostly HAVE FUN. Learn more [here](#).
Karen Assel, Leader

The Socrates Cafe

A monthly discussion since 2008.

Hosted by **Brent Hardaway**

Facebook: <http://bit.ly/38mveZH>

Join us to discuss

Do We Have Free Will?



Saturday Afternoon 3 PM, November 14th on Zoom.

Go to our Meetup page to register your [RSVP](#)

Humanistic Jews of Tampa Bay welcomes all who are interested in Jewish history, culture, and tradition independent of supernatural explanations. We believe human beings are responsible for their own choices and making the world a better place through science and reason. Join us for discussions, lectures, cultural events,

Ethical Humanism, also called Ethical Culture, is an evolving body of ideas that inspires Ethical Societies. Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity (*Humanist Manifesto III*). For Ethical Humanists, the ultimate religious questions are not about the existence of gods or an afterlife, but rather, "How can we create meaningfulness in this life?" and "How should we treat each other?"

The American Ethical Union was founded in 1877 by Felix Adler in New York, and currently has over 30 member societies.

UU St. Pete Thursday Citizens' Café

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

100 Mirror Lake Dr. N., St. Petersburg

UU Humanists of Clearwater

Usually every 3rd Sunday 12:30 to 1:30 pm, after UU services,

UU Humanists of Tampa

Public Discussion, 2nd Thursday eve from 7-9 PM.
11400 Morris Bridge Rd. Tampa



Humanists of Sarasota Bay, Inc.
Sarasota, Florida

HUSBAY is only holding meetings on Wednesdays via Zoom. We don't plan the topics much in advance. People interested in joining us can contact dbhelgager@comcast.net or text to 941-350-0927.

Tampa Bay CoR

TAMPA BAY COALITION OF REASON

Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

Join the Freethought Organizations of the Tampa Bay Area: groups that promote serious secular discussion & activity about important issues in our area & beyond.

Substantive & exciting new activities are now offered to the Tampa Bay area that were not possible for most organizations before.

Every year we sponsor events such as Darwin Day in February, Solstice day in December, and other activities all year long.

You may recall that UCoR was the major impetus to getting a large number of billboards erected in Tampa Bay & across the nation with such messages as "You can be good without God. Millions are!"

TBCoR is an alliance of West Central Florida groups identified with the secular, freethought, Humanist, Atheist

Hear a secular
point of view on
local radio.

Listen to:

**The Voice
of Reason**

on WTAN Radio
Network from
Clearwater.
Thursdays at 10 AM



The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, Inc.

(SPAC), has been meeting continuously since 1927. It was incorporated in 1979 as a nonprofit, tax deductible organization.

For almost 50 years SPAC has provided free educational programs for its members & the public. Questions? send an email to: spaceaminer@gmail.com.

Meetings are normally held on the fourth Friday of each month (except November & December when it is on the third Friday) at the St. Petersburg College/Gibbs Campus, 6605 5th Ave N, St. Petersburg, FL 33710, at 8:00 P.M. Meetings are open to the public. [Calendar](#)

M.A.R.S. – Tampa Astronomy Club at MOSI

Come to the [Museum Astronomical Resource Society](#), also known as the M.A.R.S. astronomy club. M.A.R.S. is sponsored by the [Museum of Science & Industry \(MOSI\)](#), in Tampa, Florida. We are also members of both the [Astronomical League & Night Sky Network](#). This site provides club news & astronomical information to our membership & to the public. Whether you are new to astronomy & curious about how to experience it, or a seasoned veteran looking for an active club to spend observation time with. We invite you to attend a meetings as our honored guest. **Monthly meetings** are normally held on the 3rd floor of MOSI in the Science Works Theater, & take place on the 2nd Friday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Meetings are free & open to the public. **Details & RSVP:** <https://www.meetup.com/MARS-astronomy-club-at-MOSI/>

University of South Florida [Humanities Institute](#)



Spring 2020 Newsletter
Now Available!
Complete Schedule of Events

Get all the details of our many activities such as the Book Group, Books & Caffeine, lectures. Poetry, Humanities & Hops. *Always something to involve active minds!*

Dec. 3 • 7pm • Book Group: Citizen

TBA • 7pm • Humanities & Hops: Finding Your Calling



USF Freethinkers

Freethinkers@USF is a cosmopolitan collective of USF students promoting critical thinking & pluralism through dialogue & reasonable inquiry. Join the official group and vote on upcoming discussions: Contact: <https://orgsync.com/87429/chapter>



TBCoR Leadership Team 2020

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AoF

Bill Norsworthy,
UUCH

Mark Brandt,
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Chris Brown,
MASH

Jenn Hancock,
GTBHF

Rick O'Keefe,
CFI

David Vangsness,
TBS

Jim Peterson,
HSS, TBPCC,
CoR Facilitator

News of Interest on this and the following page...

September Beyond Belief Network Roundup!	https://foundationbeyondbelief.org/sept-2020-bbn-roundup/
Barrett's Appointment To Supreme Court Could Make It Harder To Fight The Coronavirus Pandemic	https://www.au.org/blogs/barrett-better-organize
We Have Some Questions For Amy Coney Barrett	https://www.au.org/blogs/questions-for-Barrett
The Problem With Amy Coney Barrett Is Her Record, Not Her Religion	https://www.au.org/blogs/mcconnell-barrett-faith
Scaling A New Summit: AU's Advocacy Meeting Was A Big Success	https://www.au.org/blogs/NAS-Big-Success
Marriage Equality May Be At Stake At The Supreme Court	https://www.au.org/blogs/marriage-equality-at-risk
Today's Supreme Court Case Threatens to Turn Nonreligious Americans into Second-Class Citizens	https://www.atheists.org/2020/10/tanzin-v-tanvir-oral-arguments/
Sukkot — Why We Celebrate	https://shj.org/sukkot-why-we-celebrate/
Sukkot — Symbol of Peace	https://shj.org/sukkot-symbol-of-peace/
Christian Nationalists' Rejection Of Science Is Exactly What We Don't Need Right Now	https://www.au.org/blogs/rejection-of-science
Announcing new Executive Director Tif Ho	https://foundationbeyondbelief.org/news/new-ED
High School Football, Religious Freedom And A U.S. Supreme Court Vacancy	https://www.au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/Bremerton-Football-Barrett
Tennessee Public School System Agrees To Stop Promoting Religion	https://www.au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/Tennessee-Religion-Schools
Major Provider of Virtual Learning Services to Public Schools Removes Unconstitutional Religious Content	https://www.atheists.org/2020/09/edgenuity-removes-religious-content-online-public-school-classes/
EXMNA unveils novel tool 'Persecution Tracker', cataloging hate against atheists and other religious minorities	https://exmuslims.org/persecution-tracker/
Seeking Program and Communications Coordinator	https://aeu.org/2020/09/seeking-program-and-communications-coordinator/
9 Rabbis Under 90 Minutes! High Holiday Insights and Inspiration	https://shj.org/9-rabbis-under-90-minutes-high-holiday-insights-and-inspiration/
Is Trump's Christian Nationalist 'History' Coming To A School Near You?	https://www.au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/Trump-Rewrite-History

Title	URL
End constitutional infringements, FFRF warns Ala. district	https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/38069-end-constitutional-infringements-ffrf-warns-ala-district
People In Need Should Get Help – Not Discrimination Or Pressure To Pray	https://www.au.org/blogs/faith-based-changes
FFRF puts a stop to Missouri coaching staff prayers	https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/38066-ffrf-puts-a-stop-to-missouri-coaching-staff-prayers
The Parable of the Mustard Seed Means Something to Me	https://foundationbeyondbelief.org/mustard-seed/
FFRF condemns Senate confirmation of zealot Amy Barrett to SCOTUS	https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/38064-ffrf-condemns-senate-confirmation-of-zealot-amy-barrett-to-scotus
Stop proselytizers from meeting student-athletes, FFRF insists to Fla. district	https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/38063-stop-proselytizers-from-meeting-student-athletes-ffrf-insists-to-fla-district
Barrett And Senate Republicans Prioritize Her Religious Freedom Over Mine	https://www.au.org/blogs/barrett-repro-rights
American Atheists' Statement on Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett	https://www.atheists.org/2020/10/amy-coney-barrett-supreme-court-confirmation/
AU's Youth Fellows: Barrett's Views On Religious Freedom, Health Care Will Harm Our Communities	https://www.au.org/blogs/Youth-Fellows-Oppose-Barrett
Check Your B.S. Detector with John Petrocelli on the next Skeptical Inquirer Presents, Nov. 5	https://centerforinquiry.org/news/check-your-b-s-detector-with-john-petrocelli-on-the-next-skeptical-inquirer-presents-nov-5/
We May Be Stuck At Home, But We're Still Out and About!	https://blacknonbelievers.com/2020/10/26/we-may-be-stuck-at-home-but-were-still-out-and-about/
Amy Coney Barrett Is The Wrong Choice For The Supreme Court	https://www.au.org/blogs/barrett-committee-vote
Welcome 4th Quarter Grantees!	https://foundationbeyondbelief.org/4th-quarter-grantees/
New Poll Gauges Americans' Belief In The 'Christian Nation' Myth	https://www.au.org/blogs/christian-nation-poll
Finding Humanistic Judaism	https://shj.org/finding-humanistic-judaism/
Texas 'Cowboy' Pastor Rustles Up A Blatant Violation Of Johnson Amendment	https://www.au.org/blogs/texas-church-johnson
Thank You, Kim	http://www.secularwoman.org/thank-you-kim/
Honoring The Legacy Of Bernard Cohen	https://www.au.org/blogs/remembering-Bernard-Cohen
September Beyond Belief Network Winners!	https://foundationbeyondbelief.org/septemer-bbn-winners-2020/
Coming In As A Humanistic Jew: A Christian Minister's Son's Story	https://shj.org/coming-in-as-a-humanistic-jew/
Machar Student's B Mitzvah Project Reported in Washington Jewish Week	https://shj.org/machar-students-b-mitzvah-project-report-in-washington-jewish-week/
Join AU Tomorrow For A National Call-In Day To Support Church-State Separation And Oppose Barrett	https://www.au.org/blogs/call-in-day
Trump Administration Creates Special Rules for Churches to Access Public Funds, Yet Again	https://www.atheists.org/2020/10/paycheck-protection-program-church-affiliates/
SCA Member Organizations Send Letter to Senate Demanding, "No Action be Taken on Replacement for Justice Ginsburg Until After Inauguration"	"Oh well..."



Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – **November, 2020** Calendar
 Because of CV-19, all gatherings in-person are cancelled pending further notice.

See our Meetup site for more/ONLINE: www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason



Various Sundays, 2 PM; & Friday nights	BRANDON–CFI Sunday Freethought Social & Godless Friday Nights	Skeptical interests with critical thinkers. Click to RSVP : http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l
TBA – various activities	TRI-COUNTY – Atheists of Florida, Inc.	Details & RSVP : http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA– Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc..	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l
2nd Saturday, 2 PM 3rd Sunday -Dinner see Pg. 3.	DUNEDIN– Humanist Soc. of the Suncoast see Pg. 2	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists On the 2nd Saturday at 2 PM! All face to face meetings suspended for the duration of the pandemic.
3rd Sunday, 12:30 PM	E. CLEARWATER– UU Clearwater Humanists	Details: http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists
TBA – various astronomy activities at MOSI	E. TAMPA– Museum Astronomical Resource	Details & RSVP : http://bit.ly/1Psc2Pi Other events: http://bit.ly/MARS-home
TBA - numerous events—this semester	E. TAMPA– Humanities Institute at USF	See Web site for full listing of many events & calendar. http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities Locations vary! Page 12 .
4th Monday, 6 PM	N. PINELLAS AREA– CFI Freethought Supper	RSVP is required. Seating is limited to 25! <i>For CFI & TBS paid members.</i> http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l
3rd Saturday, 11 AM	N TAMPA – Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & RSVP : No program this month! http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists
Various Saturdays	NE CLEARWATER – CFI Readers Book Discussion	Limited to <i>10 paid-up CFI members.</i> RSVP is required. <i>Must have read the book under discussion to attend.</i> http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l
3rd Monday, 7 PM	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. RSVP here: http://bit.ly/2DVtwCd
4 th Friday, 8 PM general meeting. Many more events monthly.	ST. PETERSBURG– Astronomy Club	For several dates, locations, & details: http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Home http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Calendar
Various Saturdays/Sundays plus various other times/venues	TAMPA BAY REGION– Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay venues	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l
TBA – various activities	TAMPA BAY REGION– Humanist Families	RSVP here: Family outings & other activities. Details & RSVP : http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN



Read more on the web at: www.tampabaycor.net

Evolve Fish is a source for freethought paraphernalia: <http://evolvefish.com/>



TBS Remembers James Randi

By Gary Posner

A decade before there was a TBS, founder Gary Posner had met and befriended James Randi at CSICOP's 1979 annual meeting (one of its first) in New York City. So during the course of Randi's research for what would turn out to be his influential 1987 exposé, *The Faith Healers*, he called upon Posner as one of his two medical consultants. The following year, [the Tampa Tribune's coverage](#) of TBS's birth also featured Randi prominently, and a year later TBS proudly hosted a meeting in Tampa of many of CSICOP's luminaries, at which (of course) [Randi's presentation was a highlight](#).

Our fourth year began with an invitation, by Ch. 10 news director Mel Martin, for TBS to be the presenters at a meeting of the Tampa Bay Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Though Posner, TBS chair Terry Smiljanich, and vice-chair Miles Hardy certainly held their own during colorful discussions about the news media's coverage of the paranormal, The "Amazing" Randi (a TBS consultant) provided the main entertainment, and was certainly a prime reason why Martin would later "thank [us] again for the best SPJ program in many years." And when TBS heard that Randi would be speaking at the 2003 Atheist Alliance International convention in Tampa, we arranged for him to be booked that week on Ch. 13's *Your Turn with Kathy Fountain*.

Some of us periodically attended national conferences at which we had additional opportunities to commune with the "Amazing" one, but by 2016 we knew he was slowing down due to the ravages of illness and age. Posner and Smiljanich, along with Rick O'Keefe and fellow TBSer Michael Kleineschay, thus made a [pilgrimage to Randi's home](#) that year for several priceless hours with Randi in his library. He then invited us to dinner at what turned out to be a not-quite-swanky restaurant, but the food for thought was, like Randi's legacy, simply "Amazing." RIP.



*James Randi at the Center for Inquiry's CSICon 2018 conference.
Photo by Brian Engler.*

CFI STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF JAMES RANDI

We at the Center for Inquiry are heartbroken over the death of James Randi, who died on October 20 at the age of 92.

Randi helped found the Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), the organization that would one day become the Center for Inquiry, in 1976, alongside legends such as Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, B.F. Skinner, and Paul Kurtz. Together, this group of luminaries from the fields of science, literature, philosophy, and entertainment dedicated themselves to a project that has only grown in its necessity and urgency: the promotion of scientific inquiry, critical investigation, and the use of reason in examining controversial and extraordinary claims.

In other words, these were the founding fathers of the reality-based community.

"James Randi was a founder of CFI's forerunner organization. To the skeptical movement, he was a hero. To us, he was family," said Robyn Blumner, president and CEO of the Center for Inquiry. "Damn! And when the world needs him now as never before."

"He had tremendous courage and skill, almost unparalleled, in fighting for science and reason and against frauds and charlatans and pretenders," said Kendrick Frazier, editor of *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine. "Despite his ferocity in challenging all forms of nonsense, in person he was a kind and gentle man. It is a sad day indeed!"

Well before his association with CSICOP, Randi was the public face of skeptical inquiry, bringing a sense of fun and mischievousness to a serious mission. Whether exposing fraudulent psychics and faith-healers or revealing the false promises of alternative medicine, his showmanship and expertise in illusion made him an extraordinarily effective

Continued on page 20

messenger for the promotion of critical thinking over magical thinking.

Beyond his own groundbreaking work, James Randi is responsible for inspiring several generations of skeptics and science communicators who are pushing back against the false claims of pseudoscience, the paranormal, and the supernatural, as well as those who profit from them. What began as a committee of intellectuals and a magazine has now expanded into a universe of activists, scholars, entertainers, media platforms, and institutions, like CFI, who share Randi's mission and his passion.

The Center for Inquiry is a proud part of the legacy of James Randi. He truly was amazing.



From <https://bitly.co/462M>

The James Randi Educational Foundation [announced his death in a brief post](#) today, saying simply, "We are very sad to say that James Randi passed away yesterday, due to age-related causes. He had an *Amazing* life. We will miss him."

We are very sad to say that James Randi passed away yesterday, due to age-related causes. He had an amazing life. We will miss him. Please respect Deyvi Peña's privacy during this difficult time.

— Randi Foundation (@jref) [October 21, 2020](#)

Magician Penn Jillette added:

Goodbye to the truly Amazing James Randi, our inspiration, mentor and dear friend. We will love you forever. [@jref pic.twitter.com/bwgvWnvcoD](#)

— Penn Jillette (@pennjillette) [October 21, 2020](#)

The last picture of me and Randi. I can't type through the tears. This will be a hard day of making tv. I love you Randi. You invented us. [pic.twitter.com/z2SKY59Jtb](#)

Penn Jillette (@pennjillette) [October 21, 2020](#)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

James Randi (born **Randall James Hamilton Zwing**; August 7, 1928 – October 20, 2020) was a Canadian-American [stage magician](#) and a [scientific skeptic](#) who extensively challenged [paranormal](#) and [pseudoscientific](#) claims. He was the co-founder of the [Committee for Skeptical Inquiry](#) (CSI), and founder of the [James Randi](#)



A picture from The Amazing Meeting 8 in 2010.

[Educational Foundation](#) (JREF). He began his career as a magician under the stage name **The Amazing Randi** and later chose to devote most of his time to investigating paranormal, [occult](#), and [supernatural](#) claims, which he collectively called "woo-woo". Randi retired from practicing magic at age 60, and from his foundation at 87.

Although often referred to as a "[debunker](#)", Randi said he disliked the term's connotations and preferred to describe himself as an "investigator". He wrote about paranormal phenomena, skepticism, and the history of magic. He was a frequent guest on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, famously exposing fraudulent [faith healer Peter Popoff](#), and was occasionally featured on the television program *Penn & Teller: Bullshit!*

Before Randi's retirement, JREF sponsored the [One Million Dollar Paranormal Challenge](#), which offered a prize of one million US dollars to eligible applicants who could demonstrate evidence of any paranormal, supernatural, or occult power or event under test conditions agreed to by both parties. In 2015, the James Randi Educational Foundation said they will no longer accept applications directly from people claiming to have a paranormal power, but will offer the challenge to anyone who has passed a [preliminary test](#) that meets with their approval. The foundation continues to make grants to non-profit groups that encourage critical thinking and a fact-based world view.

For two fine articles on James Randi from *Skeptic*, go here: <https://bitly.co/488Z>

James Randi

