

The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Freethought News



Vol. 9 No. 1, January, 2020

Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

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* TBCoR member

Coming up for February's Darwin Day 2020...

Why are we Moral?

As never before, our society is apparently in the grip of an epistemological crises.

In all the universe we are the only known life form that has a culture and civilization built upon a system of morally defined relationships. Because morality is an artifact of human culture, it seems to be continuously modified by the internal and external experiences of the society that shaped it. Did it arise on anything other than human history, such as divine intervention as the religions would have it? Can it ever be said to be endowed with any purpose not wholly defined by the particular culture that created it? Can there ever be such a thing as a scientifically described, completely objective basis for morality?

Dr. Douglas Mann says that when discussing ethics or morality, we need to refer to the body of Our Evolved Moral Wisdom which describes how evolutionary pressures created our concepts of morality. Morality touches everything that matters about our lives, as a people, and as individuals. He will offer insights into the evolutionary basis of his proposition.

Ms. Amanda Poppei will present another side of the issue from her perspective as a leader of the Washington DC area chapter of the American Ethical Cultural Society.



Doug Mann, PhD, is an experimental psychologist and former medical school professor. Research on empathy in the doctor-patient relationship led to his post-retirement interest in moral psychology and the evolution of morality.



Amanda Poppei, chaplain at the Washington Hospital Center, where she completed a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education. Amanda is a Unitarian Universalist minister as well as a certified Ethical Culture Leader, Amanda also serves as President of the Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association.

We are very honored to present **Dr. Doug Mann** and **Amanda Poppei** in a consideration of this most important issue.

The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason is presenting Dr Mann as part of its continuing program in bringing distinguished thinkers such as Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins, Herb Silverman, and many others to our Tampa Bay area.

Saturday, February 8th at 10 AM is the time and the UUC Octagon is the place. Now is the time to get your seat.

Saturday, February 8th at 10 AM is the time and the UUC Octagon 2470 Nursery Rd. in Clearwater is the place.. Tickets are available for \$25. Head to

www.tampabaycor.net or go direct to

our ticket vendor [Here](#) to get more information and buy a ticket online.

Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Calendar

Judy Adkins

Web site

Jim Peterson

Newsletter

Jim Peterson & Rick O'Keefe

Back & current issues online at:

www.tampabaycor.net

Special Projects

Mark Brandt

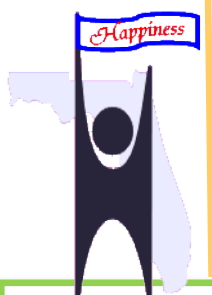
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event websites at:

www.tampabaycor.net &

www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason

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

Science

The Summit of Human Achievement.

(We were all greatly disappointed when the library decided to close at the very hour of our last meeting. We have every reason to believe this one should go off without a hitch. See you there!)

These are perplexing times. Facts are conflated with ideas and opinions or mere feelings. In a world where religious, political, and a variety of other "controversial" matters are essentially unresolvable in ordinary terms, we are left to flounder in a sea of uncertainty.

But we have tools. They do involve some effort of course, but with them humanity has been able to construct a body of reliable information about the universe, the world, and ourselves.

This trove of information and the methods used to acquire it are a public resource we call **science**.

Unlike some other forms of knowledge, it is continuously changing to reflect the addition (and occasionally the deletion or modification of some concepts or data) to sharpen our insight as to what the nature of reality is.

This Saturday's discussion will be led by some of our leading science member - advocates. Among them are:

Jordan Williams, Brad Perryman, and Mike Kahn.

We will look at some of the recent discoveries and examine the threats posed by the faux epistemological doubts raised by our present political -social tumult.

We invite you to come and learn more, ask questions and offer your ideas and insights.



Please
Join us in:



The Dunedin Public Library
At 223 Douglas Ave. in Dunedin. ([map](#))

**Saturday, January 11th
at 2:00 PM**

Many of our members meet afterward for more conversation and refreshment not far from the library.

One of the main goals of the Humanist Society is to help create a community where members can come together and share our thoughts and feelings, ideas and experiences with somewhat like-minded individuals. We are here to learn of the world, and to give and receive in some small measure, the human kindness and compassion we need.



Tampa Bay Harvest



Bring food: the first kindness & the measure of our Hospitality.

Humanists aspire to true friendship with our fellow human beings. Money is more effective than cans and boxes to get the most benefit to the greatest number of people. But we can also use personal care toiletries.

Many thanks to **Jordan Williams**. **We need volunteers!** See jim@suncoasthumanist.com

Vol. XXXIII No. 1 January, 2020

**Please Join or renew
Now!**

Humanist Society of the Suncoast

Annual Dues

- Regular -\$25
- Reg. Couple -\$30.
- Supporter -\$35/40 (With pin above)
- Life -\$200. (Pin)
- Life Couple -\$250.(Pin)
- 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 new treasurer, Scott Wilson scott33761@yahoo.com

If new, please fill out the form; 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:
"Jim Peterson"

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

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

Piteous jocularly #739: Helvetica and Times New Roman walk into a bar.

"Get out of here!" shouts the bartender.
"We don't serve your type."



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 Movable Feast

the Humanist Society's monthly social Dinner

Join us Jan. 19th at Applebee's at 5 O'clock for American style cuisine, and decidedly the best company:

Applebees

For [map](#) [Menu](#)

5110 E Bay Dr Clearwater, FL 33764

Kindly **RSVP** to: (727) 581-2146
Great Conversation and good food, reasonably priced.

The Humorous Humanist

1. Descartes takes his date, Jeanne, to a Michelin-starred restaurant for her birthday. The sommelier hands them the wine list, and Jeanne asks to order the most expensive Burgundy on the list. "I think not!" exclaims an indignant Descartes, and *POOF* he disappears.
2. Upon waking, a woman said to her husband, "I just dreamt that you gave me a necklace of pearls. What do you think it means?" The man smiled and kissed his wife. "You'll know tonight," he softly whispered. That evening, the man came home with a small package which he gave to his wife. She jumped up and embraced him, and then settled on the couch to slowly and delicately unwrap the package. It contained a book entitled, 'The Meaning of Dreams'.
3. A renowned philosopher was held in high regard by his driver, who listened in awe as his boss lectured and answered difficult questions about the nature of things and the meaning of life. Then, one day, the driver approached the philosopher and asked if he was willing to switch roles for just one evening. The philosopher agreed, and, for a while, the driver handled himself remarkably well. However, when the time came for questions, someone at the back of the room asked him, "Is the epistemological meta-narrative that you seem to espouse compatible with a teleological account of the universe?" "That's an extremely simple question," he replied. "So simple, in fact, that even my driver could answer it."
4. How many Marxists does it take to change a lightbulb?

None. The lightbulb contains the seeds of its own revolutionary transformation.

Thanx P. T.

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.](#)
[Cognitive Neurosciences](#)

Or call:

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

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





AHP IS... An active and dynamic community with multiple avenues for engagement. Connect with members across the country who have similar interests through our Members Network. Feel passionate about something? Submit an article for publication in our online *Perspective Magazine*. We also have an extensive research database, book list and store, and multiple other resources for our members wishing to learn more about the empirical roots of Humanistic Psychology.

Re-envisioned and revitalized. Over the last two years, we have worked tirelessly to enhance our organization, return to our humanistic roots, and provide meaningful and enriching experiences for our membership. In March 2014, we launched the online publication of the *Perspective*. Our newest addition is our revamped Members Network, which provides our membership with a social network through which they can connect with other, similar-minded individuals and groups. Please take some time to read our new [Vision](#).

Not just for Psychologists. We are an organization with a shared vision and a rich, diverse, membership. Founded by Carl Rogers, Virginia Satir, and Abraham Maslow in the late 1950s, we have grown into a national organization comprised of educators, students, doctors, politicians, scientists, health and social workers, activists - anyone who shares humanistic values and wants to make a difference.



Coming on August 6th to the 9th of this year **In Miami**

This year's theme is **Beyond Borders: Our Global Humanist Culture**. Come examine humanist perspectives on human rights, the importance of supporting apostates and ending blasphemy laws, the humanist role in issues of migration and the climate crisis, approaches to death and loss, the role of young humanists, humanist education, our role in mass media and much more.

Celebrate our global humanist culture by attending off-site art events and visiting the humanist art gallery.

After you've [registered for the World Humanist Congress](#), don't forget to book your hotel room at the [Hyatt Regency in Downtown Miami](#)!

Humanist Quotes

**We have a great history;
we have a great humanist
face to put forward to the
world.**

Emmanuel Macron

**A wise man proportions
his belief to the evidence.**

David Hume

**Humanists hold that
ethical values are relative
to human experience and
need not be derived from
theological or meta-
physical foundations.**

Paul Kurtz

**To be a believer does not
make you superior to
others; but to be a
humanist does make it
so!**

Mehmet Murat ildan



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

Epistemology is the study of how we know things.

All of us cycle between two main ways of knowing in our modern culture: 1) the rational, reductionist way and 2) the holistic, relational, intuitive way. By far the most dominant way is the rational, reductionist way and our institutions, scientific, economic, financial and organizational are governed by this way of thinking.

For the reductionist thinker, everything in the universe is made up of parts. If we can understand the parts, we can understand the whole. Depending on the field, the physical world is nothing but atoms and molecules and the social world is nothing but self-maximizing, rational actors. The reductionist view is very powerful and filled with “nothing but” statements. It never occurs to the thoroughgoing reductionist that the idea of “parts” is merely a mental construct.

In our everyday relationships with friends and family, in our non-rational pursuits in music and the arts, in our mental lives, we tend toward a way of thinking, holistic, relational and intuitive.

We cycle back and forth between these ways of knowing almost effortlessly and for the most part unconsciously. That seems to work well for us as individuals—except when we miscalculate or misperceive a situation and bad consequences follow. Mostly, we regroup and recover and go on, adjusting for what we have learned.

Can the same be said of society as a whole? Yes and no. Global human society can be likened to a superorganism that has its own logic and modes of action. Each of us is strongly influenced by its trajectory and constrained in our actions. We may wish fervently to address income inequality or hunger or climate change. But the complex interactions and power arrangements in our global society make it difficult to do anything but make a small dent. Even our personal destinies seem to be caught up in a flow of events which we cannot control, but rather must react to.

The reductionist way suggests mastery through manipulation of carefully measured forces: mass, temperature, vectors of force, energy gradients (both physical and chemical). We build machines that use energy to build yet more machines. We erect great public works, dams, bridges and roads that create the arteries through which commerce and people flow. We douse the land with chemical fertilizers boosting farm yields to feed hungry billions.

The holistic way suggests mastery through alignment with natural and social forces. We say that it is best to “go with the flow” in both the physical and social dimensions of our lives. Such words imply an intuitive apprehension of an entire pattern. Recognition of patterns becomes the master key to understand the world. But what is a pattern? It is certainly something that repeats, but not always exactly.

Mark Twain is often quoted as saying, “History never repeats itself but it does rhyme.” The mystery of comparison is the engine of perception, cognition and our resulting cultural outputs of literature, art and music.

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. For additional information send your emails 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

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/>

The holistic way tries to see the entire picture including all the messy consequences. Knowing that those consequences ramify infinitely, it can only intuit the extent and significance of any pattern. The holistic way knows ahead of time that it will never see the whole, only “feel” its meaning.

Both ways are general approaches to modeling the world we see. We create mental models of how the world works and fits together. When we mistake those models for “the truth,” we can get stuck, failing to adjust to new information and experience. We begin to dismiss information contrary to our model rather than embracing such information as a new insight for our process of adjustment. You can hear the dismissal happening when people say, “That can’t be” or “Everybody knows that...”

Heraclitus says, “Nothing endures but change.” The global superorganism—described by Nate Hagens in the piece cited above entitled, “Economics for the future – Beyond the superorganism”—keeps changing but in a direction that constantly undermines the survivability of humankind (and many other organisms and animals). That organism perceives the world as parts to be controlled and exploited, not just partially and temporarily, but completely and permanently. The perception that the universe is a seamless whole where a victory of mastery in one place means a perilous defeat in another, never occurs to this superorganism.

As Hagens describes it, the global human superorganism does not understand that there is a future in which the consequences of its actions will be manifested in a colossal systemic collapse. There is only the hungry maw of now, of immediate control and mastery, of immediate gratification, of immediate power.

The point is not to banish the reductionist way of thinking. Rather, it is to recognize it for what it is, but one model of perception that has its limitations and will never embrace the entire universe—a model that is as prone to error as any other model and one that will never get close to “the truth” because as Heraclitus tells us, “the truth” of the universe is always changing.

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



The broadcast is on hiatus for now. Previous programs are available **on the internet** www.youtube.com/atheistforum. Tune in!
Contact us: info@atheistsoffloridainc.org



Atheist
COMMUNITY
of Polk County

The Atheist Community of Polk County, Inc. is a registered 501 (c)(3) Florida non-profit Corporation dedicated to protecting the separation of church and state and promoting positive atheist community.

We are a growing community of atheists, freethinkers, skeptics and humanists organizing in Polk County, Florida to network, socialize, work in the community, provide educational speakers and more. We are making efforts to expand our programming, with emphasis on scheduling events in various places around the county, at different days/times, etc so that more people can find

Jan. Events

[Find details by clicking here](#)

meetup

Join us for dinner with members of the Humanist Society.

January 19th
5PM See Page 3 for Location, etc.

Be sure to check for changes and RSVP!

Jan. 8th
Register for our on-line meeting below.

Reasons you should join our *new* online real-time meeting:

1. You can learn about current events, history, social scientific news;
2. You can explore ideas and new points of views;
3. You can make new friends, visit with old friends;
4. You can share your knowledge and exercise curiosity;
5. It's interactive, you're not just watching someone talk;
6. It's easy – join using your computer, laptop, tablet, phone;
7. It's convenient, with 2 meetings a month to fit your busy schedule;
8. You can save gas by not having to drive anywhere;
9. You can feel a real sense of community.
10. Best of all it's online and **FREE**...

Starts Jan. 8!

From AoF; stay tuned for more details.

Register at: <https://www.free2think.org/>

Letter to the Editor,

A religious group has issued a list of books in public school libraries they consider to be pornographic. They have begun an effort to get these books removed from the school system in Florida. They are encouraging people to contact their representatives to request their removal and a strengthening of anti-pornographic laws. While we personally may not like the content of some of these books, should they be banned for everyone? Because they are objected to on religious grounds, should they be banned for all?

Here is what they say in their "review":

"Almost all of these pre K-12 novels violate Florida statutes with sexually explicit content or undermine the Florida Constitution that marriage is between a man and a woman. And they certainly violate common decency for age-appropriate material and undermine Judeo-Christian and traditional family values."

It is important to remember that almost every book of any significance that has won a world audience of appreciative readers and influenced generations of thinkers, has been banned.

No one wants to ban books (TV and films) that don't matter. Sexuality and gender have become volatile issues, but without the kind of discussion that can be creatively provoked by books, nothing will change. Perhaps it is not pornography but change that is truly feared by these people.

Judy Adkins Executive Director AoF

Saturday, January 6th,
The Socrates Cafe

An monthly discussion hosted by **Brent Hardaway**

ASKING THE BIG QUESTIONS: Philosophy is the "love of wisdom." Even if you haven't studied much philosophy, you can still ask the big questions. After all, Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living. And who says philosophy has to be boring? In our Socrates Cafe, we want to ask the big questions: • What is the meaning of life? • Why does anything exist at all? • Why should I be moral? What is the good life? • Why do evils take place? • Where do human duties and obligations come from? • How can we test a worldview to see if it is true? • Are all religions basically the same? • Do we have free will, or are we more like puppets on strings?

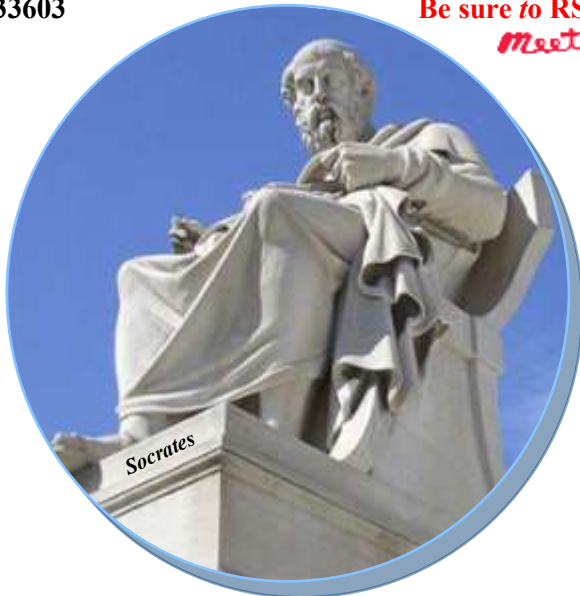
People often take assumptions about life and the universe for granted because they are in the intellectual "air" we breathe. These may come from church, from mass media, from a teacher, or from the arts. But are they valid assumptions? If you like to dig into these questions, this group is for you! Hopefully, you'll be challenged and also challenge others to think more clearly and deeply about these issues. maybe these discussions can even help change the direction of our lives in the pursuit of wisdom!

WHO CAN COME? Thinkers and seekers from all perspectives (Classical theist, Pantheist, Atheist, Agnostic, etc.) are welcome. At each monthly meeting, we'll do three things: (1) We'll talk about some philosophical, ethical, or theological topic. (2) We'll have a discussion with lots of Q&A. Everyone is welcome to participate. You don't have to agree. We just ask that you ask questions and interact cordially. (3) Then, we'll continue the discussion around some snacks and beverages.

January 18th - What is Freedom?

Join us for another fascinating discussion, then for dinner/drinks at The Independent (5016 N. Florida Avenue) afterwards! Join us **Jan. 18th at 3 PM in the Seminole Heights Branch Library, 4711 N Central Ave, Tampa, FL, 33603**

Be sure to RSVP!
meetup



Doomed. We're all doomed, I tells ya!

2020 and the decade that it is ushering in is not going to be a "happy" time for the vast majority of us humans on this planet or even to those of us living in this most fortunate of nations, geographically speaking.

Consider: The year starts with North Korea declaring an end its voluntary suspension of nuclear tests and with the US promising a reaction if, as announced, Pyongyang detonates a "new super weapon." The year starts too with the US establishing a new branch of its already unprecedentedly huge and globally deployed military, this time expanding war-making into the realm of space both in low orbit and inevitably onto the moon and beyond.

It starts too with the US having quit the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, and with Russia responding to the threat of nuclear missiles being emplaced minutes from Russia's border by deploying a new type of virtually unstoppable hypersonic cruise missile weapon, promising a whole new international arms race.

The 2020s also promises to be the decade that will likely witness the complete vanishing of the ice cap covering the Arctic Ocean during the late summer months -- something that has never happened in the entire history and prehistory of the human species, and probably the history of our genetic forebears too. It will witness the extinction of perhaps half or more of the plant and animal life-forms that have evolved over hundreds of millions of years, the desertification of vast regions of the globe on which hundreds of millions of humans currently live, and the virtual vanishing of the Amazon jungle.

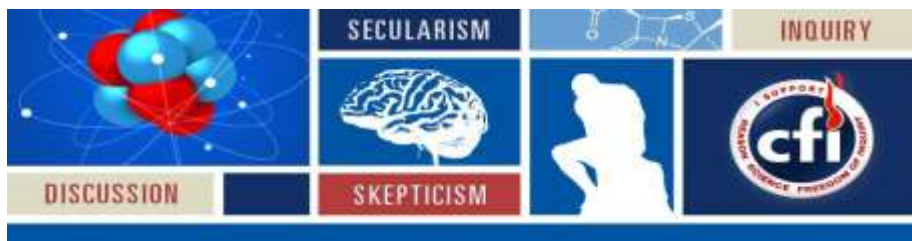
And it will witness a dramatic sea-level rise that by the decade's end will force many cities to face the choice of enduring year-on-year epic flooding and eventual inundation or a pre-emptive migration away from coastlines.

Beyond that, we humans being what we are -- that is to say hard-wired to be tribal, selfish and quick to resort to violence -- and the United States being the hubristic imperialist nation that it is, this promises to also be a decade of unending conflict and war. Probably too, we humans being vulnerable to appeals to our worst instincts in times of trouble and fear, it will be a decade of increasingly authoritarian regimes, including here in the United States.

I want to say that technically we *could* mitigate this dystopic near future. We *could* pull together as a nation and wrest control of our political destiny from the pathologically grasping and immoral minority who see, in this coming decade of crisis, only the potential for their own short-term gain.

We *could* also, as a nation, take a leading role in ending international conflict and encouraging a global effort to refocus all our combined resources to ameliorating the damage of all the changes that are about to manifest themselves in such terrifying ways, offering aide to those populations that are most vulnerable, and working to

Continued on page [16](#)



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

The Morning Heresy is your daily digest of news and links relevant to the secular and skeptic communities.

From *The Morning Heresy*:

Interactions With Incorrect Ideas Pope Francis ends the “pontifical secrecy” rule that keeps everything involving sexual abuse investigations under wraps, and will now make documents and information available to “lawful authorities” upon request. We shall see. Here we go again.

Shalom With Legs The Washington Post seems to be in a sort of grief state over climate change. (Me too!) I mean, look at the opening of its editorial: Think back only four years. A U.S. president was committed to American global leadership and honesty about climate change. At a conference center in Paris, after decades of frustrated

You Should Not Be A Physician Saudi Arabia has had secularist blogger and activist **Raif Badawi** in prison for what amounts to blasphemy charges for almost as long as I’ve worked here. In 2015 he was formally **sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1000 lashes**, among other things. He’s gotten 50 of those lashes, but his health has been so weak that they haven’t gotten back to the whippings yet. Now he’s in solitary confinement

I Am Dirty In My Business CFI’s *Point of Inquiry* podcast this week features special guest Richard Dawkins, where he talks to Jim Underdown about his latest book *Outgrowing God*. Pope Francis says atheists are awesome. I’m lying. He actually said it’s better to be an atheist than a hypocritical Catholic, and I guess that’s maybe true, but he meant it ...

Yes, you can receive the daily news from *The Morning Heresy*.

One of the reasons for its success is that science has a built-in, error correcting machinery at its very heart. Some may consider this an overbroad characterization, but to me every time we exercise self-criticism, every time we test against the outside world, we are doing science. When we are self-indulgent and uncritical, when we confuse hopes and facts, we slide into pseudoscience and superstition.

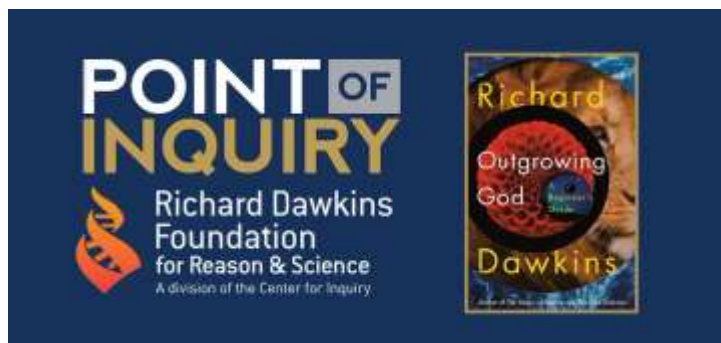
~ Carl Sagan



TEACHER INSTITUTE FOR EVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE (TIES)

Providing teachers with the tools they need
to effectively teach evolution.

To provide middle school teachers the
tools they need to effectively teach
evolution and answer its critics based on
new Next Generation Science Standards.



What’s coming up in January?

2nd Sunday annually—

Brandon—Thank Goodness for Godless Friday Nights

E. Clearwater—Howard’s Skeptic’s Corner

Brandon—CFI’s Sunday skeptics Brunch

N. Pinellas—CFI Monthly Dinner

E. Clearwater—S.H.A.R.E. Book Club

For info & to **RSVP** <http://bit.ly/2kZTAfI>

“Freethinker — “a person who forms opinions on the basis of reason, independent of authority or tradition, especially a person whose religious opinions differ from established belief.”

“Synonyms — skeptic, agnostic; atheist.”

Source: Dictionary.com” ~ The Freethinkers Flyer

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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.

From *The Morning Heresy*

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom, which you'll remember is chaired now by the Ken Doll of Theocracy, Tony Perkins, nonetheless [praises House Resolution 512](#), which calls for the end of world blasphemy laws. We, of course, also strongly support this resolution, [as should you](#).

Likely uninterested in what we think, the city council of Saonara, Italy has introduced a law to [fine people €400 if they "blaspheme against any faith or religion."](#) Here's what the mayor said, via the *Telegraph*:

"We have taken a series of measures to contain all those uncivilised activities that make coexistence difficult. ... It will no longer be possible to cut the lawn at certain times, dogs must be kept on a leash and those who are blasphemous will pay the consequences. ... We want to send a message that incorrect behaviour will no longer be tolerated."

Sounds like a fun place. Which is why repealing blasphemy laws is vital.

Freedom of expression is at a ten-year low, study says

By **Mathew Ingram**, December 5, 2019

According to a new report from the UK-based charity Article 19 (named for [one of the clauses](#) in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) freedom of expression has reached a ten-year low globally, as a result of what the report calls "digital authoritarianism" and threats against journalists. Governments in a number of countries have been increasing online surveillance and cracking down on content and behavior that indicates dissent, [the report says](#). The survey notes that while there were some improvements in the overall freedom of expression environment around the world between 2008 and 2013, these gains were eroded in the five subsequent years. According to Article 19's analysis, more than 65 countries with a combined population of over 5 billion people [have seen their freedom](#) of expression decline over the past decade.

The report [looked at what it argues](#) are five key metrics of freedom of expression: 1) Civic space, which looks at indicators related to the ability of individuals and civil society organisations to associate and be active; 2) Digital, which measures online censorship and freedom of online discussion, and covers internet shut-downs by governments, censorship of social media, and online content moderation; 3) Media, which measures factors such as government censorship and self-censorship, laws that limit online expression, etc. 4) Protection, which measures threats to the safety of journalists and other communicators and human rights defenders, including murders and imprisonment, as well as judicial harassment, and 5) Transparency, which looks at whether laws are transparent and enforced in a predictable manner, whether there are effective oversight bodies, impartial public administration, and so on. Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2PlfMFc>

The Campaign for Free Expression is an initiative of the Center for Inquiry (CFI) to focus the public's attention and efforts on one of the most basic and foundational human rights: the freedom to express yourself.

We hope you join us. <http://bit.ly/2zlcRVl>

Timely snippets from *Free Inquiry*

Toxic Environment

[Russell Blackford](#), From: [Volume 40, No. 1](#)

In the case of climate change, the political and cultural toxin came mainly from the political Right. As the philosopher Neil Levy has argued, the scientific topic of global warming was intensely politicized by organizations with vested interests in unrestricted capitalism. These hired the notorious "merchants of doubt" to propagandize against respectable science—the doubt merchants set out to debunk the whole idea of global warming and climate change. There was no deep reason such radical science denial should have become a shibboleth for right-wing orthodoxy, but it's now the case in many circles. There is evidence that many right-wing or conservative citizens view acceptance of climate science as the mark of an ideological enemy—an ill-intentioned person who cannot be trusted and should not be given a hearing.

Free-market opportunists and fanatics have the most to answer for in this instance—they have acted cynically to damage the social fabric—but left-wing environmentalists have not always been helpful to their own cause or to the planetary future.

Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2LONX7F>

Malthus Says I Told You So

[Ophelia Benson](#), From: [Volume 40, No. 1](#)

It's absurd but true that the future of the planet is being determined by such trivial sources as right-wing television channels and Twitter trolls.

But maybe that's inevitable, humans being what we are—just mammals, just primates, with bigger brains than chimpanzees but not so much bigger that we can stop racing toward this edge of the cliff. We're clever enough to exploit the power of fossil fuels, but not clever enough to stop using them when it becomes clear we're destroying our own habitat. We're clever enough to invent trawlers that can scrape the ocean floor, but not clever enough to stop using them when it becomes clear they're destroying coral reefs and depleting the fish stocks. We're clever enough to develop agricultural technologies that can feed billions, but not clever enough to change our behavior when it becomes clear that we're approaching the limit of the earth's carrying capacity.

We're clever enough as individuals, but not enough as a collective, especially a collective of seven billion people. We can't get everybody to act in the interests of everybody, and we can't get our present selves to act in the interests of future people. Put the two together—billions of people, and a century from now—and you get the stampede toward the edge.

To cap it all, we're clever enough to see, belatedly, that it's happening—but not clever enough to act on what we see.

Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2LvWANE>

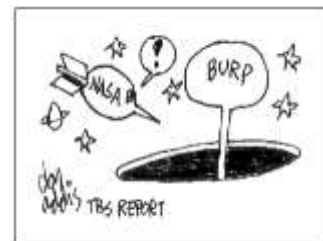
Reported locally: well-known blind wood carving artist Harold Stone received a miracle cure during a visit from evangelist Sarah Cheney. When Mr. Stone had finished his tribute carving to Jose Gasparilla, a legendary pirate celebrated widely hereabouts every year, faith healer Cheney laid hands upon Mr. Stone who promptly picked up his hammer and saw.

Click on the red

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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!](#)



With an "expose" on TV about Area 51 coming up soon, perhaps this reprint of Tampa Bay Skeptics Report [Vol. 23 No. 1 Summer 2010 online](#) will perk your interest.

Locals Reveal the Truth About "Area 51"

Thanks to the *Tampa Tribune's* May 2 article, "Local men kept Area 51 secrets," the truth is now out there. The front-page story quotes three Tampa-area residents who spent time working in the super-secret Groom Lake area within Nevada's Nellis Air Force Base.

Reporter Howard Altman paints a picture quite different from what director Robert Altman might have portrayed in a movie about Area 51. In the portion of the article beneath the heading "Agent Mulder was wrong," comments from all three men make clear that none ever saw "a little green man, a flying saucer or anything from another planet."

Lewis Nelson, who lives in Hudson, was a welder working on classified aircraft at MacDill Air Force Base when, in 1957, he was reassigned to Area 51. He described what he saw there as "so top secret you didn't talk about it. This outfit ... had more security than the Manhattan Project." But what he was referring to was not ET -- it was U-2, the uniquely designed high-altitude spy aircraft whose pilots wore astronaut-like suits. "The UFOs started to come to light from this U-2 outfit," says Nelson. "In my opinion, that's what these [witnesses] saw."

As Altman reports, in 1967, Largo resident James Janowski was "a young hotshot engineer with Honeywell" who "jumped at the chance" to work at Area 51. But, like Nelson, his UFOs, while looking other-worldly, were of this Earth. "When it would take off at night, it was the most awe-inspiring sight that humans had ever seen," he said of the A-12 Archangel, which replaced the U-2 after pilot Francis Gary Powers was shot down by the Russians in 1960. "To see this aircraft take off and fly was just unreal," he added. "It was something out of the future."

Alva McMillion of Bradenton agrees that civilians who saw U-2s and A-12s in flight back then would have mistaken them for flying saucers. On daily base security patrol with his dog, he never once encountered an alien at Area 51, though the suits worn by U-2 and A-12 pilots were, as he recalls, "similar to the ones that travelers into space wore."

The article ends with Nelson urging Area 51 conspiracy theorists to "leave it alone. Let Uncle Sam do his thing under secrecy stuff because that's what keeps us out of trouble."

And then there is this timely reprint from the same issue by Terry Smiljanich, board member of TBS and former officer (who is now enjoying studying astronomy).

Human Space Exploration: Our History or Our Future?

By [Terry A. Smiljanich](#)

It has been almost 50 years since man first ventured into space (Yuri Gagarin, 1961). Forty years ago, the world was glued to TV sets watching the Apollo 13 crisis play out. Thirty-eight years ago, Gene Cernan became the last man on the moon. The entire history of manned spaceflight beyond low-earth orbit spanned three-and-a-half years.

Since then, we have seen lots of big space exploration plans. The current Space Shuttle and International Space Station owe much to Ronald Reagan's desire to see humans maintain a presence in space. George H.W. Bush announced the "Mission to Planet Earth," and put Vice President Quayle in charge of a panel to explore a mission to Mars. When the price tag came in, \$500-billion spread out over two decades, the administration and Congress quickly lost interest.

President Clinton put the nail in the coffin of American manned space exploration when he opted for "faster, better, cheaper" as the way to go, hoping that the Shuttle program could become as ubiquitous as milk runs. In his turn at the helm, President Bush heralded a broad plan for a Mars mission by 2020. The Constellation program, announced in 2005, envisioned the development of new booster rockets to replace the Shuttle and get us to the moon, and new spacecraft (Orion and Altair) to take humans to the moon and Mars.

After five years of lackluster progress, hampered in large part by a combination of inadequate funding and cost overruns, President Obama recently announced that the Constellation program would be canceled and that America would rely on private industry rather than the federal government to keep the Space Station accessible to astronauts and to get us beyond low-earth orbit and on to the planets and stars.

There has been an outcry of protest since this was announced. The Senators from Florida and Texas (the two states most affected by lost federal jobs and money) have promised opposition to this plan (nothing like federal pork to get politicians from opposite parties together). Former astronauts have bemoaned the abandonment of space exploration. Gene Cernan called the plan "a blueprint for a mission to nowhere."

Not all have been opposed to the new plan, however. The commercial space industry is obviously delighted at the influx of funding that is soon coming its way. Planetary scientists at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory are hoping that some of the unspent human exploration funds will be diverted to their robotic missions. And the American taxpayers will not be asked to foot yet another spending bill in a heavily indebted economy.

In response to such opposition, however, President Obama has indicated that there might be some compromises, allowing development of some additional booster capabilities and a very



If you want to learn something, explain it in its most basic form. But do not make it 'simple'; because in this pretense you risk reducing it below its basic form, and into something more ignorant and prone to agenda abuse.

Recommended Reading

Click on the book's image for more info



Prejudential is a concise, authoritative exploration of America's relationship with race and black Americans through the lens of the presidents who are elected to represent and govern all of its people.

Throughout the history of the United States, numerous presidents have been remembered as slaveholders, bigots and inciters of racial violence, but were others generally regarded as more sympathetic to the plight and interests of black Americans--such as Lincoln, FDR and Clinton--really much better? And what of all the presidents whose interactions with and impacts on the lives of black America are hardly considered at all? Over the course of 45 chapters--one for each president--Kimberley examines the condition of black America through the attitudes and actions of the highest elected official in the country.

This is not meant to be a definitive examination of the topic but rather an informative and engaging guide that illustrates the merits and especially the shortcomings of even those presidents considered more progressive than their contemporaries on race issues. By casting sunlight on an aspect of American history that is largely overlooked, *Prejudential* aims to increase awareness in a manner that will facilitate discussion and understanding.

Forget the boring maps you had to review in school — these cool maps reveal interesting facts and figures about the world and country you live in.

You'll be surprised to learn the most popular last names in Europe, as well as the most beloved booze in each nation. Do you know where the billionaires of the world live? How about which countries are the happiest, and which are the most corrupt? Have you ever wondered what the world looked like centuries ago?

Check out the following maps for a fun read that will boost your confidence at the next trivia night you attend.

Note: Some of these maps contain slightly outdated numbers. Do not use these for your next test without doing your research first! 100 Slides <http://bit.ly/33ChZ4k>



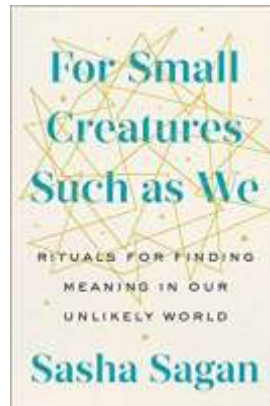
As an impressionable young student, Susan Blackmore had an intense, dramatic and life-changing experience, seeming to leave her body and travel the world. With no rational explanation for her out-of-body experience (OBE) she turned to astral projection and the paranormal, but soon despaired of finding answers. Decades later, a Swiss neurosurgeon accidentally discovered the spot in the brain that can induce OBEs and everything changed; this crucial spot is part of the brain's self-system and when disturbed so is our experience of self. Blackmore leaped back into OBE research and at last began to unravel what had happened to her. *Seeing Myself* describes her long quest for answers through spirituality, religion, drugs, meditation, philosophy and neuroscience.

Anyone can have an OBE, indeed 15 per cent of us have. Even more have experienced sleep paralysis, lucid dreaming and the creepy sense of an invisible presence. At last, with the advent of brain stimulation, fMRI scanning and virtual reality, all these phenomena are beginning to make sense. Long relegated to the very fringes of research, the new science of OBE is now contributing to our understanding of consciousness and our very selves.

Sasha Sagan was raised by secular parents, the astronomer Carl Sagan and the writer and producer Ann Druyan. They taught her that the natural world and vast cosmos are full of profound beauty, that science reveals truths more wondrous than any myth or fable.

When Sagan herself became a mother, she began her own hunt for the natural phenomena behind our most treasured occasions--from births to deaths, holidays to weddings, anniversaries, and more--growing these roots into a new set of rituals for her young daughter that honor the joy and significance of each experience without relying on religious framework.

As Sagan shares these rituals, *For Small Creatures Such as We* becomes a moving tribute to a father, a newborn daughter, a marriage, and the natural world--a celebration of life itself, and the power of our families and beliefs to bring us together.



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** below is our new librarian.



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| 32. | What Every American Should Know About World | Rossi |
| 33. | Imagine There's no Heaven | Editors of Free Inquiry |
| 34. | Hidden Order | David Friedman |
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| 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 Elinor Smith, Editor |
| 53. | Science Friction | Michael Shermer |
| 54. | Genius | James Gleick |
| 55. | Inevitable Illusions | Piattelli & 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. Piattelli-Palmarini |
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| 69. | Bonk | Mary Roach |
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| 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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The Food and Drug Administration in 2017 approved the much more effective, **Shingrix** as the preferred alternative to Zostavax, which was approved in 2006.

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Also, don't forget your **Flu Shot!**



The mission of the **Secular Coalition for Florida** is to increase the visibility of, and respect for, non-theistic view-points in the State, and to protect



and strengthen the secular character of our government as the best guarantee of freedom for all.

Bill Norsworthy, is our Florida representative.

Please sign up [here](#).

Volunteer activists are wanted, needed, & appreciated!

SC wants **you** to represent the voice of thousands of people of reason in the halls of power.

As our government undergoes its seemingly perpetual crises, the secular coalition is needed to remind citizens & officials alike that ours is indeed a secular society. But to preserve its character from the predations of zealots, *requires your involvement*.

Atheists of Florida Wants You to be... 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

UU Humanists of Clearwater

at 2470 Nursery Rd. in Clearwater.
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Usually every 3rd Sunday at 12:30 to 1:30 pm, after UU services,

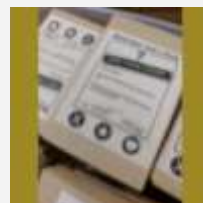


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The Crafty Freethinker ...

I am a Yorkshire lass born and bred, currently living in the Sunshine State. Maker of fine Secular Jewelry, many pieces of my own design and using the best material.

I am a lifelong freethinker.

My work can be seen by clicking on the image above.



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Monday, Jan. 13th 2020

Topic: Share Your Predictions for 2020

For more info, See our Meetup site:
www.meetup.com/tampa-bay-thinkers

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. There is a strong emphasis on creative childrearing. Here, you can make connection with other families dealing with the problems of living in a society that is still hostile to an explicitly Humanist Way of life. Jennifer is author of several books including: *The Humanist Handbook*, *The Humanist Approach to Happiness*, & her latest book, *The Bully Vaccine*.



Humanist Families organizes social outings every month. These are opportunities to do something fun, socialize & enjoy each other's company. Sometimes we go to a park, sometimes a museum, sometimes we go swimming. Our group has grown over the past year to the point we now organize Tampa area outings & 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. We are on **Facebook**: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HumanistFamiliesTampa/> See more at: <http://www.Jen-Hancock.com>.

Thanks, **Jennifer Hancock**

The Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers



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 members.

Local Contact: Chris
(christbrown@yahoo.com)
MSgt, USAF (Retired)

Co-Organizer:

MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB



USF Freethinkers

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TB-CoR Encourages

Ethical Humanism

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.

Organizer **Bart Worden** hopes to get a local Meetup group started soon. Watch these pages.



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CHRISTIAN CHARITY GETS IN THE WAY OF GENUINE ECONOMIC PROGRESS



By Norm R. Allen Jr.

Paul Kurtz Institute for Science and Human Values

Conservative Christians relentlessly brag about how much more they give to charity than other religious and secular groups. For purposes of this article, I am not primarily concerned with the findings that show that most of that charity does not find its way to the intended targets. Let's say for the sake of argument that all of the money goes to the intended recipients.

Conservative Christians are especially generous around Thanksgiving and Christmas. No surprise there. What better way to call attention to your faith than to give money during two of the most popular holidays in the U.S.? Sadly, though, after the holidays are over, conservative Christian giving goes way down and the causes they support fall from the proverbial radar.

Charity is important and it makes the world a better place. I have given to charity throughout most of my life and will continue to do so. But like religious progressives, I understand that charity is simply not enough.

It is all well and good to open soup kitchens, build clinics and hospitals, open shelters for the homeless, and so forth. But as nice as all of this is, it simply puts a band aid on a gushing wound.

Conservative Christian Dinesh D'Souza rarely engages in formal debates to defend Christianity without bragging about how much more money conservative Christians give to charity than everyone else. Moreover, when told about the genuine success that secular social democracies in Europe are having in combating poverty, homelessness, bad health, and so on, he implies that that is no big deal because the government is responsible for that success.

Duh! That's exactly the point and the point of this article. That is the only way to make widespread progress for suffering people. Charity has never done so and never will.

Conservative Christians seem to have a point when they claim that the Bible does not say that the government should intervene on behalf of its citizens in need. If they are correct, it just shows how sadly outdated the Bible truly is.

While Conservative Christians pat themselves on the back for feeding some of the hungry, they want to cut food stamps and other government programs that could feed far more people than they ever could.

For example, shortly before Christmas in 2019, President Donald Trump, the hero of White evangelicals, made plans to cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As many as 3.1 million people could lose benefits as a result. No matter how much they give and pray, conservative Christians would be unable and unwilling to help so many needy people on a regular basis. That is the government's job!

The law is proposed to go in effect in April 2020. It would deny benefits to seniors, veterans, the disabled and hundreds of

thousands of children, i.e., the most vulnerable members of society. It would even hurt many of Trump's poor White supporters.

Conservative Christians love to point to the clinics and hospitals that they have built all over the world. They have volunteered their time as well as put their money where their mouth is. However, they have routinely opposed good health care for the poor majority.

For example, in 2018, Judge Reed O'Connor ruled that the entire Affordable Care Act be dismissed. Later, on December 18, 2019, a federal appeals court found that the act's requirement that people have health insurance is unconstitutional.

If the law is dismissed, millions of people could lose health insurance, including many of Trump's poor White supporters. Fifty million people with pre-existing conditions could be without health insurance. What, pray tell, could charitable conservative Christians do to help all of these people?

Incidentally, this raises the question of why hospitals are needed in the first place. Why can't Christians and other theists just ask God to intervene on behalf of the sick and suffering? Perhaps the omnipotent and omniscient God could even bring people back from brain death and grow people new limbs.

There are many other areas of need in which government aid is paramount, such as disaster relief. However, conservative Christians have steadfastly opposed government aid for those suffering from the ill effects of "acts of God."

Not surprisingly, on August 27, 2019, President Trump declared that he would take \$155 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to detain asylum seekers and create locations for their court hearings.

There are several secular and religious charities that provide disaster relief. However, such efforts are simply too short. For example, they cannot pay for the Coast Guard during floods, and so on.

Again, though, we must ask why Christians and other theists cannot simply pray away hurricanes, earthquakes, and so on. To make matters worse, many self-righteous conservative Christians blame the victims. For example, that have blamed alleged sinners for the fires in California, a major earthquake in Haiti, Hurricane Katrina, and so on.

Last but not least, Trump has proposed massive cuts to affordable housing, to bipartisan disapproval. Despite conservative Christians building houses for the poor, providing homeless shelters, and so forth, this simply will not help most poor people in need of housing.

Conservative Christians are too obsessed with their own sense of moral superiority to be truly concerned with the elimination of widespread human misery. They can always pat themselves on the back for the charity they give to hospitals that will not be able to serve those poor people to whom conservative Christians have gleefully denied health insurance.

Norm R. Allen Jr. is the editor of two ground-breaking books,

- **AFRICAN-AMERICAN HUMANISM: AN ANTHOLOGY**
- **THE BLACK HUMANIST EXPERIENCE: AN ALTERNATIVE TO RELIGION.**
- He is currently writing a third book, **SECULAR, SUCCESSFUL and BLACK: 25 PROFILES.**

Upcoming Events of Note

USF Women's & Gender
Studies Presents:

Reproductive Justice is for Everyone!

an art exhibit

A collection of work by
artists responding to the
question: what does
reproductive justice mean
to you?

Reproductive Justice is for Everyone! an art exhibit

w/USF Department of Women's and
Gender Studies Now - February 5, Monday-Friday, 1:00-5:00pm
(or by appointment)

CMC 202 (2nd floor), USF College of Arts and Sciences
Multidisciplinary Complex, Tampa, FL 33620

[Event website](#)



International
Relations
Study
Group

LWV

The Rise of Populism in Europe:

An LWV International Relations Study Group Discussion
Monday, January 6, 2020 at 2 PM – 3:30 PM

Barbara S. Ponce Public Library of Pinellas Park, 7770 52nd St
N, Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

[Facebook Event Page](#)

The Business Case for Medicare for All

• Hosted by WMNF Community Radio

Monday, January 6, 2020 at 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM The Palladium
at St. Petersburg College, 253 5th Ave N, Saint Petersburg,
Florida 33701 [Tickets](#) | [Facebook event page](#)



Film: "Troubled Waters",

an Ales and Wild Tails conservation get-together event

Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 6 PM – 7 PM

The Ale and the Witch

111 2nd Ave NE, Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701

[Facebook Event Page](#)



Mother of Exiles - a group exhibition of works that
document, represent, and re-contextualize the difficulties
and obstructions immigrants face

January 13–February 27, 2020

Gallery 221 @ HCC — Tampa, 4001 W. Tampa Bay
Blvd, Tampa, FL 33614

[Facebook event page](#)

Rising Above: Art and Climate Resiliency | exhibit viewing, coffee reception, panel discussion

Jan. 18, 2020, 10 AM – 12:30 PM

USF School of Music Conference Room (MUS 172), 3755
Holly Drive



Next Lecture: Monday, March 2, 2020

Speaker: Tom Boeke, Professor, State College of Florida

Topic: The Future of the Middle East

For more details, information, news and activities,
see: <https://www.husbay.org/index.htm>



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 as Darwin Day in February, Solstice day in December, and other activities all year long.

We are especially grateful to the national office of the United Coalition of Reason & its director, Sarah Levin.

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 groups identified with the secular / freethought / Humanist / Atheist movement.

As this momentum continues to grow, we will keep you informed of developments . JP

Contact:

council@tampabaycor.net

Or see, <http://tampabaycor.net/>

Doomed! Continued from page 7

disarm all nations so that resources can be focused where they are needed instead of on mutual assured destruction.

But I'm afraid, on the evidence of all of human and US history, that counting on any of this happening would be magical thinking.

That's not to say we shouldn't *try* to do something. We must, if we care about our children and grandchildren, if we care about the still amazing world we live on with all its amazing life forms.

But we cannot go on wishing each other a Happy New Year, and pretending that such a thing is even possible. Did the lovers and wives standing dockside on Dec. 31, 1942 as their uniformed boyfriends and husbands boarded the troop ships headed for the Pacific or European fronts in the early days of World War II wish their loved ones a "Happy New Year"? I doubt it. The wishes would have been on the order of "Good Luck," or "Keep safe!" or just "I love you." Clearly "Happy New Year" would have been rejected as inappropriate for such a moment.

The phrase "Happy New Year" is just as out of place now, and we need to realize how absurd it is.

© **Dave Lindorff** is a founding member of the collectively-owned, journalist-run online newspaper www.thiscantbehappening.net. He is a columnist for Counterpunch, is author of several recent books.

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, and holiday celebrations using a Humanistic lens.

For more, see: <https://www.meetup.com/Humanistic-Jews-of-tampa-Bay/>



TBCoR Leadership Team 2019

Judy Adkins
AoF

Bill Norsworthy,
UUCH

Mark Brandt,
UUCH

Chris Brown,
MAF

Jenn Hancock,
GTBHF

Rick O'Keefe,
CFI, TBS

Jim Peterson - Facilitator
HSS, TBPCC

Editorial E-Mail: tbcor@metrodirect.net CoR Facilitator



Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – January, 2020 Calendar

This is produced from preliminary information. Check the individual Web sites to insure the event is being held, when & where We are not liable for changes, errors, or omissions.
Compiled by Rick O'Keefe & Jim Peterson. Your RSVP is requested, & often is required for admittance.
See our Meetup site for more: 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/2ljTe9I	
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/2ljTe9I	
2nd Saturday, 2 PM see Pg. 2 3rd Sunday -Dinner see Pg. 3.	DUNEDIN– Humanist Soc. of the Suncoast	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists Now on the 2nd Saturday at 2 PM !	
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 Society (MARS) at MOSI	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/2ljTe9I	
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. Must have read the book under discussion to attend. http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I	
3rd Monday, 7 PM	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. RSVP here: http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers	
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	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I	
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

Op-ed



The Happiness of Others

Recently and around the world, we have seen the rise of ideologies that threaten to disrupt, divide, and destroy the solidarity needed by our species to meet the problems of the future, and indeed to maintain our very existence. This is an expression of some of the oldest, most primitive and atavistic of human impulses.

It is a fear of the stranger; the apprehensions of a dark and unlit night. It is all of the most elemental and pathological instincts arising from the imagination of unresolved anxieties.

It is the stuff of everyday news: an endless succession of criminal predation, murders, bombings, and mass killings relieved only by the usual repetition of concern from the nominal custodians of public safety. Meanwhile, as the classes of victims continues to expand, the calls for change grow ever louder as the indifference of elected leaders is revealed in their assignment of blame to those who are victims, or on those tasked with bringing us that news.

One solution for the human dilemma is to call for a change in attitudes, that encourages a great opening of dialog based on free and unrestricted examination of our way of life. This is not without precedent. Every great movement for change has been contingent on the optimistic moment of a favorable historic current engaged by millions and frequently altering the former view of our supposed limitations.

People of different cultures, religions (and no religion), and political affiliations, can find ways to see each other as members of the human family. That this can only be accomplished in conditions that maintain peace, tolerance, and democracy is a strong indicator that work is required. To abandon

the field to mindless jingoism, bigotry, and fanaticism of the kind promoted by fearful conspiracists is to become less responsible, less human.

The principle distinctions that makes us human are our ability to reason, to acquire information, to learn to perceive accurately. Without the nearly universal exercise of these abilities we are lost in a world overrun with the consequences of our bad judgements.

Since as humanists, our purpose, as defined by Robert Ingersoll, is to seek ultimately for the realization of happiness in our lives. As he saw it, the best means to accomplish this was to do what we can to ensure the happiness of others. And, because an understanding of the truths of our existence is an essential for a truly human life, we look toward education at many levels for the source of that understanding.

Corrupted humanity is everywhere ascendant now, and actively allowing the worst elements of our present society to rise to positions of power. It is up to us to join with others to rally the greater part of humanity to realize their potential, and before it is too late, begin to assert a benign humane influence on the governance of our society.

While it is true that every great idea starts with just one person, we are the lucky recipients of many thousands of great ideas bequeathed to us over the centuries. We need to find the energy and the power within ourselves to build on the great humanist tradition to find ways to make it a practical reality in the lives of people now living.

Time is short. The challenges are many, and we are few. But if we do not succeed, the self created dangers to our species will not be overcome.

Jim Peterson, Facilitator

The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Let us make this a truly

Happy New Year!