

The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Freethought

Vol. 9 No. 7, July 2020

Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

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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.

Zoom, Zoom, Zoom...

Faith Oremland (Co-Organizer) sent a message to the Humanistic Jews of Tampa Bay . Upcoming Zoom Events on Youth Activism

If you are interested in learning more about young people and activism/involvement, check out the Summer Speaker Series at AU-Americans United for the Separation of Church and State and the American Humanist Association.

See links below to register for Zoom events being conducted by these secular organizations.

AU's Summer Speaker Series: Youth Activists for Religious Freedom

A forward to activism: Closed captioned. Click here to RSVP »

When: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM ET

Where: This virtual event will be hosted on Zoom.

This event will also be broadcast live on AU's Facebook page

 And, following the live webinar a recording will be posted on au.org/summer series – so be sure to check back there for information on the rest of our speaker series!

AHA-American Humanist Association: Speaking of Humanism | Youth Activism in Science and Humanism

Speakers: Bailey Harris & Elle Harris will discuss their experiences of growing up in a secular family in a highly religious area of the country. They will also talk about how they came to be writers and what inspired them at such a young age to be advocates of Humanism and science.

When: Thursday, July 30, 2020 6:30 PM EDT

Where: Livestreaming online Learn more

This event will be streaming on Facebook Live and Zoom.

Watch this talk on Zoom here: https://zoom.us/j/91843782348

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Supreme Court makes Serious Inroads on Religious Freedom

Recently, in the landmark private school vouchers case, Espinoza v. Montana Dept. of Revenue, the justices ruled in a 5-4 decision that taxpayer-funded voucher programs must fund private religious schools.

This is a catastrophic decision that corrupts the foundational principle of church-state separation. The court has overturned decades of precedent with a decision that has the effect of privileging certain religious beliefs and allowing them to dominate our civic life. The fight to protect religious freedom just got more difficult – and more important – than ever before.

Forcing taxpayers to pay for private religious education is a fundamental violation of their religious freedom. All too often, private religious schools are not obliged to reveal statistics on the results of their methods. They often reject civil rights for women and LGBTQ people. Taxpayers should not be forced to fund discrimination, or proselytization of a religion that is not their own.



A Virtual Celebration of Humanism

American Humanist Association 2020 Conference

More on Page 4

NB. Until further notice, following bestpractices and official medical recommendations, all group gatherings are postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We will let

you know here when



The Humanist Society of the Suncoas

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

CENTRAL FLORIDA

The Right to Die with Dignity, Compassion, and Peace Bill Schoolman

Originally scheduled for this past February at the Humanist Society

26 July 2020

SUNDAY July 26, 3:00 PM

The Right To Die With Dignity, Compassion, and Peace **Zoom Meeting**

Bill Schoolman is a Humanist and a former president of the Broward County ACLU and former vice president of the Florida ACLU. He will bring personal experience with decisions around death with dignity to the conversation and talk with us about the various moral, ethical, and legal aspects of the right to die on one's own terms.

RSVP on Meetup to attend or watch the YouTube live event here.

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.

Coalition to Congress: Do Not Support Inadequate JUSTICE Act



The AHA joined with other members of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights in urging the US Senate to vote no on proceeding with S. 3985, the Just and Unifying Solutions to Invigorate Communities Everywhere (JUSTICE) Act. The JUSTICE Act falls woefully short of the comprehensive reform needed to address the current policing crisis and achieve meaningful law enforcement accountability.

See more Here.

Vol. XXXIII No. 7 July, 2020



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. (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

Wry Eye with a Scientific View

How many particles does it take to change a light bulb? Hmmm...well, if we know the position of the burned-out light bulb, then we cannot answer this question with certainty.

How many particles does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, but IF the particle is a large one, then I has to do it VERY quickly. If a smaller particle, then it can take its time.

How many particles (okay, okay--how many 'amplitudes') does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, if it is supervised very carefully by a macroentity.

How many bosons does it take to change a light bulb? Probably only one or two, but bosons are so gregarious, we've never seen less than a gaggle try it!

How many particles does it take to change a light bulb? Depends on how "excited" they are about the job.

How many particles does it take to change a light bulb? On some days, none (e.g. fortuitous quantum fluctuation days)...

How many electrons does it take to change a light bulb? Don't be absurd--you have the question backwards--it's "how many light bulbs does it take to change an electron" silly!

How many particles does it take to change a light bulb? What a futile question! Don't you realize that any energy exchanged between the change-er and the change-ee is probably going to be in the form of photons anyway?! With all that light, why even hassle with changing the bulb?! (Good grief, what DO they teach these folk in school nowadays?)

How many Classic Foundationalists (epistemology) does it take to change a lightbulb?

Depends on whether the bulb is incorrigible or not...

How many Quantum physicists does it take to change a lightbulb? (version two)

Depends on the room size--you need to fill the room first with blind-folded scientists. Then, upon a signal, they all remove the blindfolds and look toward the general area of the 'old' bulb. Then, when the waveform collapses, whoever is CLOSEST to the newly 'congealed' bulb, grabs it, and WITHOUT blinking, makes the change. Also, this procedure MAY required one additional physicist to remove a dead cat from the room

How many Natural Selectionists does it take to change a lightbulb?

Well actually, we won't even TRY to change the bulb. We will simply stop using the room that has the burned out bulb, and start using only rooms with FUNCTIONING bulbs. That way, over time,

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

Jay Alexander, Kyle Hicks, Lois Fries, Secretary Dave Kovar, Brad Perryman Vice Pres. Jim Peterson, President Scott Wilson, Treasurer Jordan Williams.

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Cooper Dec, Jim Butler, Marios
Psomas, Dec, Steve Brown



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



Andrew Seidel LIVE July 11 at 5 p.m., hosted by

the Central Florida Freethought Community



FFRF Director of Strategic Response, Andrew L. Seidel, will discuss the state of the Establishment Clause, and how to fight to preserve Jefferson's "Wall of Separation" on Saturday, July 11 at 5:00 p.m. (EDT) Hosted by the Central Florida Freethought Community (CFFC), this YouTube Live event is free and open to the public. Set a reminder so you don't miss the opportunity to ask questions live, after the talk. Contact CFFC with questions.



American Humanist Association 2020 Conference

In continuing to keep our movement connected and inspired, we are pleased to invite you to join us for our virtual conference, "Distant but Together: A Virtual Celebration of Humanism," happening August 8, 2020, from 11 am - 6:30 pm ET.

Register https://conference.americanhumanist.org/

Humanist Quotes



"The highest activity a human being can attain is learning for understanding, because to understand is to be free." — Baruch Spinoza

"Stupidity is much the same all the world over. A stupid person's notions and feelings may confidently be inferred from those which prevail in the circle by which the person is surrounded. Not so with those whose opinions and feelings are an emanation from their own nature and faculties."

— John Stuart Mill, <u>The Subjection of</u> Women



"...the intellectual is a person who nurtures, preserves and propagates independent judgment, a person loyal exclusively to truth, a courageous and wrathful individual for whom no force of this world is too great or too frightening not to be subjected to scrutiny and called to account.



... A true intellectual, a genuine one, is always an outsider, ...he is a person who lives in selfimposed exile on the margins of society."

— Daša Drndić, <u>Belladonna</u>

"The only real radicalism in our time will come as it always has—from people who insist on thinking for themselves and who reject party-mindedness."

— Christopher Hitchens, <u>Christopher</u>



"Darwin did not know what a bitter satire he wrote on mankind ... when he showed that free competition, the struggle for existence, which the economists celebrate as the highest historical achievement, is the normal state of the animal kingdom. Only conscious organization of social production, in which production and distribution are carried on in a planned way, can lift mankind above the rest of the animals."



— Friedrich Engels

"Never try to discourage thinking, for you are sure to succeed."

— Bertrand Russell





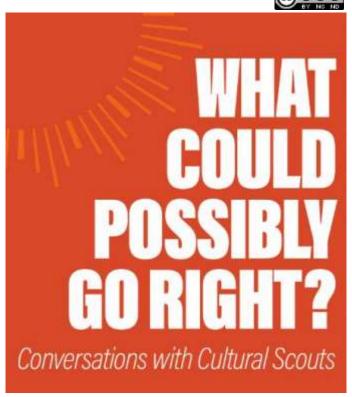
"But the whole thing, after all, may be put very simply. I believe that it is better to tell the truth than to lie. I believe that it is better to be free than to be a slave. And I believe that it is better to know than be ignorant."

- H. L. Mencken



An autonomous project of the Humanist Society. Affiliate of the Post Carbon Institute

Victoria Santos, Ocean Robbins, and Dr. Susanne Moser join author, and activist, Vicki Robin, for three new episodes of our video and podcast series, "What Could Possibly Go Right?" [click here to go to it.] In each episode, guests answer this central question from their own unique, informed perspective, while keeping all that is currently going wrong in clear view. @09⊜



"We need to make sure that we, to the best of our abilities, are bringing our lives into alignment with our values." post carbon institute

 Ocean Robbins Co-Founder, CEO of Food Revolution Network



The United States: An Obituary

The United States of America was problematic from the start. It was founded on genocide and slavery, and, while frequently congratulating itself on the rights and freedoms it granted its citizens, never managed to confront the demons in its past. The question would arise repeatedly, generation after generation: rights and freedoms for whom?

Nevertheless, the immigrants who founded a nation on a stolen continent managed to show up in the right place at the right time. The luck of geography and history insulated them from most wars in Europe, while supplying them with vast forests, navigable rivers, rich topsoils, valuable minerals, and much of the world's most easily accessible coal, oil, and natural gas.

The result, after a century-and-a-half of wealth accumulation and industrial buildup, was global dominance. America invented and taught the world the magic formula of consumerism: cheap energy + advertising + consumer credit = ever-growing levels of commerce, employment, tax revenue, and return on investment. The transformation of nature into quantifiable wealth via energy, technology, capital investment, and labor had never before occurred so rapidly, or on so grand a scale.

The 20th century was without question the American century. After World War II, which was fought at a distance from American soil, the dollar became the world's reserve currency, and there could be little doubt who was in charge. Even though politicians in Washington insisted that their nation led by example and shouldn't be thought of as an empire, any other nation's hesitance to adhere to US rules resulted in a CIA-engineered coup, an invasion, or economic sanctions.

At least since the start of the new century, it has been clear that America's star is waning. The first signs of trouble came in the 1960s and '70s, as the pointless Vietnam invasion divided the country, US oil production began to decline, and Richard Nixon devised the War on Drugs as a strategy to incarcerate and disempower large numbers of African Americans. Financialization started turning America into a two-tier casino in the 1980s, but the owner class never complained and the renter class had no voice. More needless, costly wars were to come under the aegis of George W. Bush, a clueless rich kid who wandered into the presidency via family connections, a winsome Texas drawl, and a little help from the Supreme Court. The end of Bush's second term happened to coincide with the peak of world conventional oil production, the bursting of a financial bubble in the housing market, and the start of the global financial crisis. But the nation dodged these deadly bullets, just barely.

Bush's successor, Barack Obama, was charged with cleaning up the mess. Obama was intelligent, articulate, and empathetic; moreover, in his speeches he appealed to values that united most Americans. However, despite hope from many progressives that his election would lead to substantive changes in economic, military, healthcare, and environmental policies, Obama was unable or unwilling to break with the status quo. Crucially, he failed to prevent Treasury and Federal Reserve officials from crafting a recovery that rewarded the investor class while further immiserating wage laborers.

Speculators, now flush with bailout cash, were eager to identify the Next Big Thing; many thought they found it in the fracking frenzy. Soon small, heavily hyped companies were producing millions of barrels of oil each day from shale formations in North Dakota, Texas, and Oklahoma, while yielding almost no profits for drillers and investors. It was a pyramid scheme, but one with a tangible product. Peak oil was postponed, and America was once again the world's top petroleum producer.

Throughout the Obama years, social media began playing an expanding role in the daily lives of most Americans. These convenient, addictive, and highly profitable digital tools facilitated fun communication while also fracturing the country's common understanding of reality. They offered users ever more fodder for whatever they already believed, even if those

Continued on page 11

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.

Now, tune in to the Voice of Reason See <u>page 13!</u> Contact us: info@atheistsoffloridainc.org





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 a positive atheist community. See, https://polkatheists.org/

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 more people can find something to enjoy that's convenient.



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 by AoF's regular Sunday night Zoom sessions starting at 5:00 PM. See our listings on the TB-CoR meetup for 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.

In late June, the Supreme Court aligned itself with the Religious Right and, for the first time in our nation's history, *required* our government to fund religious education.

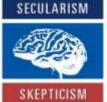
The Court's decision in <u>Espinoza v. Montana Department</u> <u>of Revenue</u> ignored and flouted hundreds of years of precedent—and values that go all the way back to the earliest days of our nation.

And while Christian Nationalists may celebrate this decision, we know it is, as Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration, <u>our patriotic right</u>, <u>our duty</u>, to <u>oppose</u> these attacks on equality and on our secular nation.

Atheists and secularists of all stripes salute the unique protections afforded by over 230 years of our history. Indeed the force of these ideas have spread around the world since 1789 and are the basis for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the UN.









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



'Plandemic' Asks Questions—But Won't Answer Them

By <u>Benjamin Radford</u>, <u>A Skeptic Reads the Newspaper</u>, May 21, 2020 <u>Share Tweet</u>

Earlier this month, a YouTube video for an (apparently) upcoming documentary titled *Plandemic* was released by Mikki Willis (credited onscreen as "father/filmaker" [sic]). The video features a lengthy interview with virologist Judy Mikovits, who offers scattershot conspiracy-laden assertions about the "truth" behind the COVID-19 pandemic, prefaced by claims of having been framed for a crime (she was charged with theft in 2011) and accusations of government coverups going back decades involving various medical authorities, including Dr. Anthony Fauci. Willis's voiceover gravely warns that "for exposing their deadly secrets, the minions of Big Pharma have waged war on Dr. Mikovits," who in the film (and in her new best-selling book the video promotes) bravely reveals "the plague of corruption that places all human life in danger."

Dozens of claims are made in the twenty-six-minute video, some of which are unverifiable—as conspiracy theories tend to be. But many statements made by Mikovits have been investigated and proven to be misleading or simply false.

Among its claims, the video suggests that a vaccine for the virus (which of course hasn't been developed) will be mandatory; however, no one is forced to get medical treatment. If and when a vaccine is available, federal agents armed with automatic weapons in one hand and a syringe in the other aren't going to be bursting through doors to forcibly vaccinate anyone—paranoid conspiracy fantasies to the contrary.

It's now been several weeks since the video was widely

shared on social media, and questions have been raised by reputable journalists for publications including *The Washington Post* and *The Atlantic*, as well as *Politifact*. For an expert and filmmaker who claim to have been censored and silenced (with social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube removing the video for containing dangerous misinformation), Mikovits and Willis have been strangely silent about answering legitimate questions raised about their claims.

In an effort to clarify the matter, the Center for Inquiry reviewed the video and, in collaboration with researcher Dr. Paul Offit, composed a list of eight simple questions about claims made in the video. CFI contacted Mr. Willis, who agreed in writing to respond to our questions. The next day he was provided the questions below, thanked for his cooperation, and asked to reply.

1) The *Plandemic* video claims that face masks "activate" coronaviruses, including SARS-CoV-2; what scientific evidence do you have that the virus is more infectious for individuals wearing masks than for those not wearing masks?

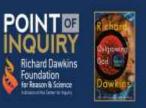
2) The video promotes hydroxychloroquine as effective against the virus (despite elevated cardiac risks and several placebo-controlled studies finding no efficacy at all). Instead of being ignored or suppressed by the medical establishment, controlled clinical trials of the drug *have* been performed. What is the "thousands of pages of data" answers as agreed to.

Read the full article here: https://bit.ly/2ztMS1Z











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.

The 'Best Arguments for God's Existence' Are Actually Terrible

By Jerry A. Coyne, *The New Republic*, January 17, 2014, https://bit.ly/2TkwcRj

The most common critique leveled at New Atheists is that we attack only puerile, fundamentalist forms of religion, and never engage with the "best" arguments of the faithful: those adumbrated by Sophisticated Theologians™. Never mind that most believers accept a view of God far more anthropomorphic than a simple "ground of being" or a deistic entity that made the world and then refused to engage with it further. If you want data to support this, at least for U.S. Christians, go here. Polls consistently show that around 70-80% of Americans believe in the existence of Heaven, Hell, Satan, and angels. And let's not even discuss whether the majority of Muslims think of Allah as a "ground of being" rather than as a disembodied ruler who tells them how to behave. Anyone who claims that regular monotheists view God like Karen Armstrong's Apophatic Entity or Tillich's Ground of Being simply hasn't gotten out enough.

Further, it's obvious that the bulk of harm committed in the name of religion is done by those not who see god as a Ground of Being, but rather as an anthropomorphic entity who has a personal relationship with his minions and supplies them with a moral system. For it is the belief that God has wishes for humanity, and a code of right and wrong, that drives people to do things like oppose abortion and stem cell research, deny rights to women and gays, burn "witches," throw acid in the faces of schoolgirls, and torture Catholics with guilt about masturbation and divorce.

The vast majority of believers don't even *read* theology, and are barely aware of the arguments for God made by Sophisticated Theologians $^{\mathsf{TM}}$. So is it our duty as atheists to refute those arcane theological arguments, or to prevent instead the harm done by religion? To me, the latter course

is preferable. Still it's both fun and intellectually profitable to read and refute the arguments of theologians, for it's only there that one can truly see intelligence so blatantly coopted and corrupted to prove what one has decided beforehand must be true. Theology is the only academic discipline where people get paid not to investigate their beliefs, but to rationalize them. Certainly it's more *useful* for atheists to point out to "average" believers the lack of evidence for their faith—and that is precisely what Dawkins did in *The God Delusion*—but it's more *fun* to chase the tails of obscurantists like Alvin Plantinga and John Haught.

Read the rest here: https://bit.ly/2TkwcRj

Snippets

Youtube on viruses & weekly clinical update. https://bit.ly/2WvzhPc

Science News: Blood clotting a significant cause of death in patients with COVID-19 https://bit.ly/2A1LZNX

American Atheists

34,000 nonreligious Americans participated in the Secular Survey, making it the largest data collection project ever conducted about the secular community. And now the long-awaited results are in! See them for yourself in the groundbreaking https://bit.ly/2W9oQ4Y

Piaue

On May 13 Federal Reserve Chair Powell said that almost 40% of U.S. households making less than \$40,000/ year lost a job in March. The Institute for Policy Studies reported that from March 18 to May 14 U.S. billionaires saw their wealth increase by \$368.8B, a 12.51% increase. Jeff Bezos became \$10B richer; Elon Musk is up \$5B. Those numbers are not about how much the billionaires are worth, but about *how much richer* they've gotten in just the couple of months since we all started worrying about the economy and our very security – and some of us died.

"The rights of every person are diminished when the rights of one are threatened."

John F. Kennedy

All the men of wealth should remember that everybody in a community has got, in some way, to be supported. I want to see them so that they can support themselves by their own labor. ~ Robert Green Ingersoll



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!



What Is Pseudoscience?

By Mario Bunge, Skeptical Inquirer, Vol. 09, #1, Fall 1984

"Pseudoscience can be clearly distuinguished from science only if a number of features are checked."

Editor Kendrick Frazier writes in the January /February issue, "[this article] is another seminal essay that listed and described several attitudes and activities by which to compare scientists and pseudoscientists. It provoked some controversy but still stands up well."

The Philosophy Behind Pseudoscience By Mario Bunge

From: Skeptical Inquirer, Vol. 30, #4, July / August 2006

"Every intellectual endeavor, whether authentic or bogus, has an underlying philosophy. Science, for example, involves six kinds of philosophical ideas. These differ totally from those behind pseudiscience. Evaluating a filed's underlying philosophy is a revealing way to make distinctions and judge worth."

In this powerful exposition of the orthogonal difference between science and pseudoscience. Editor Kendrick Frazier wrote, "In my view, 'it provides a comprehensive, explanatory, intellectual, philosophical framework for virtually every issue we address in the Skeptical Inquirer."

Food for Thought on BBC Shropshire Radio can be heard by going to https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p08b54q8 and listening on the timeline between 1:19:30 and 1:23:00.

"Don't worry I'm not going to talk lockdown, but my subject was prompted by some of the extraordinary things we hear coming out of the mouth of the current President of United States. It's pretty clear that he doesn't trust science or scientists or evidence or reason; he prefers to rely on his gut instinct, making it up as he goes along and listening to like-minded anti-science friends.

"It got me thinking. Why are so many people against

science and scientists? It's hard to believe but there are international societies claiming the world is flat and that, if you walk far enough, you fall off the edge! And over 40% of the United States are young earth creationists and believe that the world, the universe, was created much as it is now about 8,000 years ago. And then there's climate change. Despite a vast amount of high-level evidence that the world is warming up due to human activity, there're many, including Trump and some UK politicians, who deny it...."

Smithsonian

April 22 was to have been the **national March for Science** (in Washington, D.C.) in support of the idea that, "The whole point of science is that evidence should win over everything, regardless of the opinions you walked in the door with." "American scientists now find themselves in a strange new world of denial, fake news and alternative facts."

Should scientists march for science?

Pros: https://n.pr/3caVBEa

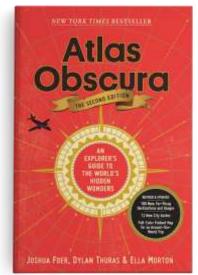
NPR: "We have often discussed how, after World War II, politicians of all parties understood that science was vital to the national good. Science provided input on policy decisions — and that was as far as it should go. If you, as a politician, didn't like that input, you could talk values or economics or any of the many other non-science things that went into policy-making. What you did not do, however, was call the science a hoax. You didn't do that because it would, eventually, undermine the whole scientific enterprise that the nation needs so badly."

Cons: https://bit.ly/2W6XZpU

New Republic. Famed scientist and civil rights protester Jerry Coyne says no. "To be fair, the March for Science isn't supposed to address issues of morality. "The March for Science is a celebration of science," according to organizers. "It's not about scientists or politicians; it is about the very real role that science plays in each of our lives and the need to respect and encourage research that gives us insight into the world...The March for Science champions and defends science and scientific integrity.""

Recommended Reading

Click on the book's image for more info



Inspiring equal parts wonder and wanderlust, Atlas Obscura is a phenomenon of a travel book that shot to the top of bestseller lists when it was first published and changed the way we think about the world, expanding our sense of how strange and marvelous it really is. This second edition takes readers to even more curious and unusual destinations, with more than 100 new places, dozens and dozens of new photographs, and two very special features: twelve city guides, covering Berlin, Budapest, Buenos Aires, Cairo, London, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Moscow, New York City, Paris, Shanghai, and Tokyo. Plus a foldout map with a dream itinerary for the ultimate around-the-world road trip. More a cabinet of curiosities than traditional guidebook, Atlas Obscurarevels in the unexpected, the overlooked, the bizarre, and the mysterious. Here are natural wonders, like the dazzling glowworm caves in New Zealand, or a baobob tree in South Africa so large it has a pub inside

THE POLITICS OF

Since the election of Scott Walker, Wisconsin has been seen as ground zero for debates about the appropriate role of government in the wake of the Great Recession. In a time of rising inequality, Walker not only survived a bitterly contested recall that brought thousands of protesters to Capitol Square, he was subsequently reelected. How could this happen? How is it that the very people who stand to benefit from strong government services not only vote against the candidates who support those services but are vehemently against the very idea of big government?

With *The Politics of Resentment*, Katherine J. Cramer uncovers an oft-overlooked piece of the puzzle: rural political consciousness and the resentment of the "liberal elite." Rural voters are distrustful that politicians will respect the distinct values of their communities and allocate a fair share of resources. What can look like disagreements about basic political principles are therefore actually rooted in something even more fundamental: who we are as people and how closely a candidate's social identity matches our own. Using Scott Walker and Wisconsin's prominent and protracted debate about the appropriate role of government, Cramer illuminates the contours of rural consciousness, showing how place-based identities profoundly influence how people understand politics, regardless of whether urban politicians and their supporters really do shortchange or look down on those living in the country.

The Politics of Resentment shows that rural resentment—no less than partisanship, race, or class—plays a major role in dividing America against itself.

See more books on the back page.



Keep your local bookstore in business. Shop locally. https://www.indiebound.org/

A Community of Independent Local Bookstores

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

<u>AUTHOR</u>

- 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 Malcom 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 KcKearing 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 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. Piattelli-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 Eagers
- 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



United States: an Obituary... continued from page 5

beliefs amounted to the looniest of conspiracy theories.

In 2008, a European acquaintance asked me how I thought the US would react to having an African-American president. I replied that, given the persistent racism rampant in my country, there would be hell to pay one way or another.

Eight years later, hell arrived in the person of Donald J. Trump, promoter of the discredited notion that Barack Obama was actually born in Kenya and was therefore ineligible for the presidency. Plenty has been written about Trump's psychology—his narcissism, his lack of curiosity and compassion, and his tendency to be driven by personal grievance. Much reportage has also been devoted to his administration's alarming actions—its dismantling of environmental regulations, its crippling of constitutional checks and balances, and its dramatic undermining of America's standing worldwide. Inevitably, a growing majority of the voting public is turning against Trump; his response is not to run a competent reelection campaign (or a competent government, for that matter), but instead to divide the country further on every conceivable issue, with the evident intent of contesting the results of the November ballot, thereby throwing the nation into political turmoil of a ferocity not seen since the spate of urban uprisings and assassinations (JFK, MLK, RFK, Medgar Evers, Malcolm X) in the 1960s, and perhaps not since the Civil War.

Oh, and there's the pandemic. The emergence of something like the novel coronavirus was inevitable at some point, as public health experts had long warned, but this particular bug just happened to arrive at a moment when America was divided and distrustful. Lack of federal leadership resulted in arguably the most inept pandemic response in any industrial country, with the US leading the world in infections and deaths. While some nations were able to eliminate the virus entirely by acting early and cooperatively, America under Trump dithered and denied its way into a polarized confusion wherein even the choice of whether to wear a facemask is a tribal signal. Up to half of Americans say they won't take a vaccine when it becomes available.

Due to the pandemic, America is now mired in an economic depression, with nearly unprecedented levels of unemployment and widespread bankruptcies. Meanwhile, the stock market—once again buoyed by unimaginably generous bailouts—is riding high.

As if the nation's body politic weren't already riddled with enough mortal ills, the cancer of racism has suddenly metastasized, exemplified in yet another police killing of an unarmed African American. Decades of Jim Crow laws, lynchings, criminalization, and government-backed loan programs that gave a lift to white citizens while holding blacks down have built up an unmanageable backlog of resentments and fears. As emotions reached boiling temperature, Trump responded by pouring fuel on the flames, tweeting, "When the looting starts, the shooting starts"—a phrase used by former Miami Police Chief Walter Headley.

However, days of massive street protests, most of them peaceful and featuring people of all ages and skin colors, have shifted the political calculus of the nation ahead of the November election. As students of the history of authoritarian regimes have frequently noted, once a slide toward dictatorship begins within a democracy, it is difficult to halt; usually, the only force powerful enough to stop it is large numbers of people in the street. The recent protests didn't specifically target Trump, but they certainly drew energy from long-simmering anger and resentment against him, and his transparent support for white nationalists and institutionalized racism in all its forms. Now military leaders are openly breaking with the president. As a result of these developments, the likelihood of Trump consolidating power over the longer term is considerably diminished.

The protests were an outpouring that a majority of the nation could be proud of. Over the short term, America seems to have dodged a couple of bullets. The possibility of a Trump dictatorship is receding; so is the

immediate threat of the pandemic—in most people's minds, at least. Businesses are reopening; concerts and sports are being rescheduled.

Nevertheless, expectations of a recovery to the status quo ante are not just premature; they're fundamentally unrealistic. Even assuming that a new administration takes charge next year, the United States is entering a period of political, social, and economic dissolution. Its unconventional oil production rate has now peaked and is in steep decline, a debt bubble even larger than the one that existed in 2007 is ripe to pop, and COVID-19 threatens to wash back through the populace in repeated waves. Meanwhile, the specter of climate upheaval, for which the US is also entirely unprepared, lurks in the background, promising rising seas, worsening wildfires, droughts, floods, and storms.

In short, we are living through the fall of a great power. With it will go a unique way of organizing the world. The symbolism of president Trump cowering in an underground bunker beneath the White House



It is reasonable to ask whether the United States will continue to exist as a unified nation for much longer. The federal government has become so incompetent as to be increasingly irrelevant to the solution of many pressing problems—and a new face in the White House may not change the situation decisively. Out of necessity, states are exploring strategies of regionalism, as governors in the Pacific Northwest, the Midwest, and the Northeast collaborate to respond to the pandemic. Governor Gavin Newsom has even taken to calling California a "nation state." States do not have monetary sovereignty, and therefore cannot run up huge deficits in order to cushion the impact of economic depression. State banks, which could create and lend money for such purposes, have been proposed as the next-best thing. However, devolution of power to the states may do little to address the political disparities that are ripping the nation's fabric.

Whether or not they ultimately remain legally united, the country's inhabitants and their descendants will probably still identify themselves as "Americans" of one subgroup or another. Out of necessity, they will find ways to adapt to a less consumptive, more localized way of life. For many—especially for those who take proactive steps to build personal, household, and community resilience—there could be some advantages to living in the wake of empire. But all will have some rough seas to navigate before there is much to cheer about.

Greed, consumerism, racism, and imperial ambition sealed our nation's fate. If, as people, we wish to move forward, we must revert to the best of our early unifying values: hard work, thrift, generosity, fairness, honesty, ingenuity, and mutual respect. We'll need to embody these values increasingly in local institutions, businesses, and other social arrangements of every conceivable kind if we are to minimize the human cost of national failure. It's not too soon to start.

Richard Heinberg, Post Carbon Institute. Ca

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

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 July13th online at 7 PM/



Topic: What Can Be Done About Racism in the U.S?

https://www.urban.org/features/structuralracism-america 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 <u>here</u>. *Karen Assel*, Leader

The Socrates Cafe

A monthly discussion since 2008. Hosted by **Brent Hardaway**

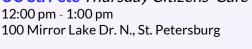


Humanistic Jews of Tampa Bay welcomes all who are interested in Jewish history, culture, and tradition independent of supernatural explanations. We believe human beings are responsible for their own choices and making the world a better place through science and reason. Join us for discussions, lectures,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

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



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

Next Lecture: Monday,

Speaker:

Topic: Cancelled for now.

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 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!"

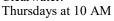
TBCoR is an alliance of West Central Florida groups identified with the secular, freethought, Humanist, Atheist

Hear a secular point of view on local radio.

Listen to:

The Voice of Reason

on WTAN Radio Network from Clearwater.





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: spacexaminer@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

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!



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

Please Don't Delay - Get Your Shingle 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.

Also, don't forget your current Flu & Pneumonia shots when they are available.

















TBCoR Leadership Team 2020

Eileen Stafford. A_OF

UUCH

UUCH

Bill Norsworthy, Mark Brandt, Chris Brown, MASH Jenn Hancock. **GTBHF** CFI

Rick O'Keefe, David Vangsness, Jim Peterson, TRS HSS, TBPCC,

CoR Facilitator



Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason - July, 2020 Calendar

Because of CV-19, <u>all</u> 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	cf
TBA – various activities	TRI-COUNTY – Atheists of Florida, Inc.	Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup	- CO - CO
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA- Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l	ampa Skep
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	U
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.	USI
4th Monday, 6 PM	N. PINELLAS AREA- CFI Freethought Supper	RSVP is required. Seating is limited to 25! For CFI & TBS paid members. http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l	cf
3rd Saturday, 11 AM	N TAMPA – Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & RSVP: No program this month! http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists	HUMANA ASSOCIA
Various Saturdays	NE CLEARWATER – CFI Readers Book Discussion	Limited to 10 paid-up CFI members. RSVP is required. Must have read the book under discussion to attend. http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l	cf
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	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l	cf
TBA – various activities	TAMPA BAY REGION - Humanist Families	RSVP here: Family outings & other activities. Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN	Retreate of the

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

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