

# The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason



# Freethought News

Vol. 7 No. 12, December, 2018  
Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

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\* TBCoR member

### Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

#### Calendar

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Web site

Jim Peterson

Newsletter

Jim Peterson

Special Projects

Mark Brandt

& Bill Norsworthy

See our event websites at:

[www.tampabaycor.net](http://www.tampabaycor.net) &  
[www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason](http://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason)

This publication online at:

[www.tampabaycor.net](http://www.tampabaycor.net)

Anywhere in this newsletter  
CLICK on an image or blue  
text for the link.



Don't be cooked in Trump world. Stay engaged in Political action!

## Editorial

While the results of the recent election may not have pleased everyone, it did provide plenty of evidence of movement in our society.

Politics is pervasive, ongoing, and dynamic. It requires constant attention if our best dreams are to be realized and the worst outcomes avoided.

**Rick Boling's** brilliant depiction at left summarizes many aspects of our current dilemma. We have much at stake.

*JP & RO, Editors*



## Hemant Mehta

Will speak at **Darwin Day**,  
Sat. Mar. 16th

Hemant Mehta is the editor of Friendly Atheist, appears on the [Atheist Voice channel](#) on YouTube, and co-hosts the uniquely-named [Friendly Atheist Podcast](#). He is a former National Board Certified high school math teacher in the suburbs of Chicago, where he taught for seven years.

Hemant has appeared on [CNN](#) and [FOX News](#) (really). He has served on the board of directors for [Foundation Beyond Belief](#) (a charity organization targeting non-theistic donors) and the [Secular Student Alliance](#) (which supports college atheist groups nationwide). He is the author of [I Sold My Soul on eBay](#) and [The Young Atheist's Survival Guide](#).

## Inevitable changes along the way...

In the United States, the fastest-growing religious affiliation is "no affiliation," and it is leading to a major crisis for religious leaders. The report cited a Pew Research poll which found that 36% of younger millennials identify as either atheist, agnostic, or "nothing in particular." The report found that the vast information available through the internet is leading many away from churches, and toward their own personal journeys of spiritual discovery.

## Listen to Freethought Radio Friday Afternoons at 2 PM

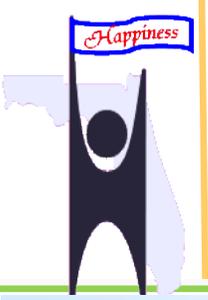
Atheists of Florida produces *Atheist Forum*, every **week** for your dining and dancing pleasure.

You will find a variety of subjects discussed, from atheism (of course) to science, politics, ethics, art and social culture.

The broadcast is available on WTAN-1340 and **on the internet at [TanTalk1340.com](http://TanTalk1340.com)**

Be sure to **call-in 727-441-3000**, with your questions and comments. See page [13](#) for more.

Check out twenty years worth of past programs of the Atheist Forum on our website [www.aof.ngo](http://www.aof.ngo) And check our channel at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) for more.



# The Humanist Society of the Suncoast News

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

Volume 31 No. 12 December, 2018

## Our Aspirations

Who are we?  
What do we want?  
How shall we live?  
Where do we go from here?

Many questions; many possible answers. For this meeting we will explore what your interests are. We can plot a course of what we need to do to get to where we should be to realize our ambitions.

Humanism is not just a monthly afternoon talk fest. We need to be aware of the centuries long project of guiding the course of social and cultural evolution along pathways that will nourish the life we live, while finding a better path for those who will come after.

Our organization, Humanist Society of the Suncoast, has worth and value in its very concept. And yet, in my view, it does not seem to elicit the kind of fulsome commitment one might expect in a group with such a hopeful and comprehensive worldview.

The questions then is, what should we change about either our conception of who we are and our mission, or do we simply accept the limited way we have evolved.

More questions...

- Should we continue to meet in this library? How to add members?
- How frequently should we meet?
- Are you willing to serve in any capacity? Etc....

JP

## Honor Roll



Of those who have well served our organization this past year

- *Marios Psomas*
- *Brad Peuyman*
- *Jordan Williams*
- *Lois Fries*
- *Dave 'Doc' Dockery*
- *Duncan Kocar*
- *And all those kind members who helped.*

Please Join us in:



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

**Saturday, Dec 1 at 2:00 PM**

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



**Tis the season to 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.(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 treasurer, [marios\\_psomas@hotmail.com](mailto:marios_psomas@hotmail.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:  
**"Marios Psomas"**

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

Humanist Society of the Suncoast, AHA  
1013 Connecticut Rd  
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689  
\* = optional

## Tampa Bay Harvest

**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. Thanks to *Jordan Williams*. **We need volunteers!** Write to [jim@suncoasthumanist.com](mailto:jim@suncoasthumanist.com) Thanx.

## List of Fake News Websites:

Before you get too excited about an item you want to share or comment about, make sure the social media item is legit.

**The list:**  
<http://bit.ly/2vvrXbb>



*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 Dec. 16 at Applebee's at 5 O'clock for American style cooking, and decidedly the best company:

# Applebees

For map Menu

5110 E Bay Dr, Largo, FL 33771

Phone: (727) 539-6388

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

## Laugh Lines From the Ironic Dictionary 12-

**ABDICATE:** To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.

**ADULT:** A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.

**AUTHOR:** A writer with connections in the publishing industry.

**BALDERDASH:** A rapidly receding hairline.

**BEAUTY PARLOR:** A place where women curl up and dye.

**BOSS:** A personal dictator appointed to those of us fortunate enough to live in free societies.

**CANNIBAL:** Someone who is fed up with people.

**CHILDHOOD:** The rapidly shrinking interval between infancy and first arrest on a drug or weapons charge.

**COFFEE:** The person upon whom one coughs.

**COMMITTEE:** A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

**CONSCIOUSNESS:** that annoying time between naps.

**DENIAL:** How an optimist keeps from becoming a pessimist.

**DUST:** Mud with the juice squeezed out.

**EGOTIST:** Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.

**ESPLANADE:** To attempt an explanation while drunk.

**EXPERIENCE:** In the working world, something you can't get unless you've already got it, in which case you probably don't want any more of it.

## 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,**  
**Steve Brown,**  
**Lois Fries,** Secretary  
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~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Jordan Williams, mail Publisher

**Jim Peterson, Editor**  
E-Mail us at:  
[jim@suncoasthumanist.com](mailto: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

Joel Schmidt  
[www.floatoncounseling.com](http://www.floatoncounseling.com)  
321-604-7637





Patrick Stewart, who played Captain Jean Luc Picard in Star Trek, attends the recent Las Vegas Star Trek Convention.



## The Humanist Trek Continues

It has been just over two months since Patrick Stewart's epic announcement: Captain Jean Luc Picard would be returning in a new *Star Trek* series continuing the storyline of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and would be played by Stewart himself (of course).

Intense, giddy speculation as to what we could expect from this "new Picard" ensued with fervent curiosity at all levels of Trekkdom, from fans to cast and crew. at the August 2018 *Star Trek* Convention in Las Vegas when Stewart appeared on the stage to an uproar of Trekkie elation, as he explained the reason for his return: that over the years, the overwhelming message from *Star Trek* viewers had been that the show gave them hope. Hope that humans can aspire to profound greatness. Hope that the devastating struggles we face today, both on a personal and global scale, can be overcome. Hope that each of us can be the best possible version of ourselves, still imperfect but united as one species seeking connection among all living things.

## Remember...

M<sub>arch</sub>

Is

M<sub>ehta</sub>

M<sub>onth</sub>

Details upcoming!

## Tampa Humanist Association

Meets every third Saturday at, 11:00 AM

**North Tampa Public Library**

8916 North Blvd. Tampa, FL 33604 [Map](#)



Member, TBCoR,  
Hum Society, &  
AHA affiliate.

**No Program in December**

Leaders: *Lucas Hopegood & Jim Peterson*

*As Humanists it is our task to discover the secret world above and within the level of conscious recognition. Using the instruments of reason, & critical thinking, we strive to be at one in understanding both the world that made us, and the one we are inventing.*

*Each month a new investigation thoughtfully & critically dissects a novel intersection of mind and matter. Be part of it.*

*At present, we are a small, intimate group meeting in a neighborhood library. But we are ambitious, and hope to grow. Ideally, such small discussion groups should appear in every neighborhood. The need is as great as the potential. What is required is a few longtime humanists willing to take on the relatively small effort to secure a library meeting room once a month, post a few notices here and there (including this newsletter), and show up to lead a discussion, share a little knowledge; give something to the future. JP*

Learn more about the association at: <http://tampahumanist.com/>

## Humanist Quotes

12/18

(...) when people thought the earth was flat, they were wrong. When people thought the earth was spherical, they were wrong. But if you think that thinking the earth is spherical is just as wrong as thinking the earth is flat, then your view is wronger than both of them put together. ~ *Isaac Asimov*

- We cannot despair of humanity, since we ourselves are human beings.
- Moral courage is the highest expression of humanity. ...
- Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed. ...

Love life and life will love you back. ...



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

## We are exceeding Earth's Carrying Capacity By *Richard Heinberg*

In his article, "[The Earth's Carrying Capacity for Human Life is Not Fixed](#)," Ted Nordhaus, co-founder of the Breakthrough Institute, a California-based energy and environment think tank, seeks to enlist readers in his optimistic vision of the future. It's a future in which there are many more people on the planet and each enjoys a high standard of living, while environmental impacts are reduced. It's a cheery vision. If only it were plausible.

Nordhaus's argument hinges on dismissing the longstanding biological concept of "carrying capacity" — the number of organisms an environment can support without becoming degraded. "Applied to ecology, the concept [of carrying capacity] is problematic," Nordhaus writes, arguing in a nutshell that the planet's ability to support human civilization can be, one presumes, infinitely tweaked through a combination of social and physical engineering.

Few actual ecologists, however, would agree. Indeed, the concept of carrying capacity is useful in instance after instance — including modeling the population dynamics of nonhuman species, and in gauging the health of virtually any ecosystem, be it ocean, river, prairie, desert, or forest. While exact population numbers are sometimes difficult to predict on the basis of the carrying capacity concept, it is nevertheless clear that, wherever habitat is degraded, creatures suffer and their numbers decline.

The controversy deepens in applying the carrying capacity concept to humans. Nordhaus seems to think we are exceptions to the rules. Still, as archaeologists have affirmed, many past human societies consumed resources or polluted environments to the point of **collapse**. Granted, societies have failed for other reasons as well, including invasion, over-extension of empire, or natural climate change. Yet in cases where societies depleted forests, fisheries, freshwater, or topsoil, the consequences were dire.

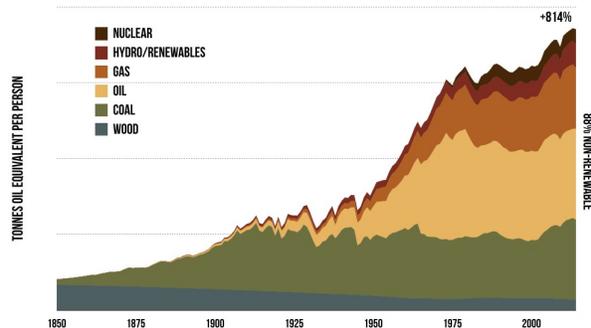
But that was then. The core of Nordhaus' case is that we are now living in a magical society that is immune to the ecological law of gravity. Yes, it is beyond dispute that the modern industrial world has been able to *temporarily* expand Earth's carrying capacity for our species. As Nordhaus points out, population has grown dramatically (from less than a billion in 1800 to 7.6 billion today), and so has per capita consumption. No previous society was able to support so many people at such a high

level of amenity. If we've managed to stretch carrying capacity this much already, why can't we do so *ad infinitum*?

To answer the question, it's first important to understand the basis of our success so far. Science and technology usually glean most of the credit, and they deserve their share. But sheer energy — the bulk of it from fossil fuels — has been at least as important a factor.

With lots of cheap energy, we were able to extract raw materials faster and in greater quantities, transport them further, and transform them through industrial processes into a breathtaking array of goods — including fertilizers, pesticides, and antibiotics, all of which tended to reduce human death rates.

### WORLD PER CAPITA PRIMARY ENERGY CONSUMPTION (BY FUEL, SINCE 1850)



source: Hughes GSR, Inc 2015 (data from BP Statistical Review 2015)

But there was still another essential factor in our success: nature itself. Using science, technology, and cheap energy, we expanded farmlands, Continued on page [17](#)

## 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: [spacexaminer@gmail.com](mailto: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

Welcome 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 mission of the Center for Inquiry is to foster a secular society based on science, reason, freedom of inquiry, & humanist values. Since 2002, our all-volunteer chapter has served West Central Florida. Won't you support us? [Join our community today.](#)



Rick O'Keefe,  
Coordinator

### Some of December's activities are:

- Brandon—Skeptics at Brunch
- N. Pinellas—CFI Supper Club
- Howard's Skeptics Corner—Dec. 6
- 2+ astronomy clubs' meetings
- CFI SHARE Book Club—Dec. 1
- Thank Goodness 4 Godless Friday Nights
- Tampa Bay Tech Center many activities

And more at <http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I>

Subscribe to our CFI Tampa Bay newsletter here: <http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I>, Then scroll down the page until you see the red section with "Receive E-Mails".

### SCIENCE SALON # 39

Heather Mac Donald — *The Diversity Delusion: How Race and Gender Pandering Corrupt the University and Undermine Our Culture*

The Diversity Delusion: How Race and Gender Pandering Corrupt the University and Undermine Our Culture (book cover)

In this riveting review of the campus craziness investigative journals, writer, and lawyer Heather Mac Donald and Michael Shermer dive deep into the root causes of what has gone wrong on college campuses, in corporations, and in government agencies, over the decades that has led to a crisis in higher education ... and beyond. Race and gender form the core of Identity Politics, which Mac Donald and Shermer discuss in dunking the myth that American society in general — and academia in particular — are rampant environments of bigotry and prejudice. Just the opposite is the case, as there has never been a safer and more inviting space to be than a college campus in 2018 America.

### Naturalized: White Settler Christianity and the Silence of Earth in Political Theology

#### *Political Theology and Ecology*

The white US Evangelical denialists see something that many other political theologians do not: that taking seriously our ecological relations requires a kind of paganism.

Over the past decade I have puzzled over why white US Evangelicals (WUSE) turned from cautiously concerned about climate change to open hostility to the very idea of it. As some WUSE now malign as pagan anyone who cares for Earth and warn parents about the **Green Dragon** coming for their children's souls, I have tried to understand the strategy of their political ecology. Why publicly wager your way of faith on the non-existence of a problem? Why, as anthropogenic environmental troubles become ever more a part of daily experience, align evangelical faith with material sources of the trouble? It seems irrational on first glance.

### *The Atheist's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life without Illusions* by Alex Rosenberg

We can't avoid the persistent questions about the meaning of life-and the nature of reality. Philosopher Alex Rosenberg maintains that science is the only thing that can really answer them—all of them. His bracing and ultimately upbeat book takes physics seriously as the complete description of reality and accepts all its

In a **lawsuit** filed Monday with a U.S. District Court, the Center for Inquiry (CFI) is challenging Texas's marriage law, which limits the authority to solemnize marriages to clergy and certain government officials. 2JIA0Wh And, you can give us support: <http://bit.ly/2pTDfEj>

### *The Anunnaki Bible: The Sumerian Text's Origin of the Judeo Christian Bibles* by Donald Blackwell

This revealing work is devoted to word for word textual evidence, juxtaposing the ancient texts with the Judeo Christian Bibles, to reveal what to date has been surreptitiously ignored, pushed aside, and avoided. His decades long careful research and scholarly approach will provide the reader with the knowledge and ability to make a syllogistic decision....or not.

### *How to Break Up with Integrity: Rilke on Unwounding Separation and the Difficult Art of Recalibrating Broken Relationships*

We speak of love as a gift, but although it may come at first unbidden, as what Percy Shelley called a "speechless swoon of joy," true intimacy between two people is a difficult achievement — a hard-earned glory with stakes so high that the prospect of collapse is absolutely devastating. When collapse does happen — when intimacy is severed by some disorienting swirl of chance and choice — the measure of a love is whether and to what extent the kernel of connection can be salvaged as the shell cracks, how willing each partner is to remain openhearted while brokenhearted, how much mutual care and kindness the two who have loved each other can extend in the almost superhuman endeavor of redeeming closeness after separation.

consequences. He shows how physics makes Darwinian natural selection the only way life can emerge, and how that deprives nature of purpose, and human action of meaning, while it exposes conscious illusions such as free will and the self. The science that makes us nonbelievers provides the insight into the real difference between right and wrong, the nature of the mind, even the direction of human history. The Atheist's Guide to Reality draws powerful implications for the ethical and political issues that roil contemporary life. The result is nice nihilism, a surprisingly sanguine perspective atheists can happily embrace.



17  
years in  
Florida



Know the difference, between those who stay to feed the soil and those who come out to grab the fruit.  
~ Anon.



*The Morning Heresy* is your **daily digest** of news and links relevant to the secular and skeptic communities. What you wouldn't otherwise know.



**Richard Dawkins  
Foundation  
for Reason & Science**  
A division of the Center for Inquiry

Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay is forming a Board of Advisors to help with planning, fund-raising, working events, finding speakers, suggesting civic activities.

If you are a paid member of CFI for two or more years, you are eligible.

Please contact Rick at [tampa@CenterForInquiry.net](mailto:tampa@CenterForInquiry.net). He will discuss your qualifications, interests, availability ....

Remember that our local freethought communities do not exist for public (free) amusement. Only people with a record of commitment will be considered. Rick is certain that there are more than enough eligible CFI boosters to make this happen!

Otherwise, you can be a big help [here](#).

What attributes did Yahweh have before becoming a monotheistic deity?

Answered by Frans du Plessis on Quora,

Until less than three millennia ago Yahweh was the Israelite war god, one of the seventy children of the sky god El and his wife Asherah, the head gods of the Canaanite pantheon, called the Elohim (meaning "children of El").

In those days in the Ancient Near East, the different gods ruled over different geographical areas like kings, and El, also called El Elyon (the "Most High of all the gods") in the Ugarit texts, divided people into seventy nations and gave the nation of Israel to his son Yahweh as his inheritance:

When Elyon divided the nations, when he separated the sons of Adam, he established the borders of the nations according to the number of the sons of the gods. Yahweh's portion was his people, [Israel] his allotted inheritance.

◆ Deuteronomy 32:8-9 (Dead Sea Scrolls)

Then, a couple of centuries before Yahweh became a monotheistic god, he was merged together with El and some of El's other sons, like the storm and rain god Ba'al and the sea god Yam, to become the god called God/Elohim/Yahweh. In the process Asherah, previously the wife of El and the mother of Yahweh, became the wife of Yahweh, as can be seen on numerous inscriptions on archaeological finds, including the inscriptions on these two eighth century BCE pottery shards:

"I have blessed you by Yahweh and his Asherah."

"Blessed be Uriyahu by Yahweh and by his Asherah; from his enemies he saved him!"

The Bible refers to Asherah as the Queen of Heaven, and she was worshiped in Yahweh's temple.

From the seventh century BCE onwards, the Israelites changed their religion from Canaanite polytheism to Israelite monotheism (the acknowledgement of the existence of other gods, but the insistence on the worship of Yahweh only). For example, the Ten Commandments with the jealous God who prohibits the worship of other gods was written during this period.

Finally, during the sixth century BCE, during and after the Israelites' captivity in Babylonia and their exposure to Zoroastrianism, an older monotheistic religion than Judaism, Yahweh finally became monotheistic, and the Bible only starts to deny the existence of other gods in those parts of the Bible written after the Babylonian captivity.

The Israelites got rid of Asherah and assigned the traditional role of the female goddess, namely the creation of life itself, to Yahweh. In the end, only the male sky god, the Heavenly Father, remained.

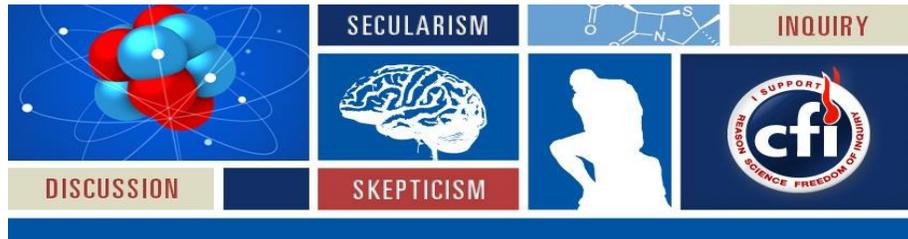
Keep up on all current events at: <https://CFITampaBay.org>

Being all-volunteer means CFI needs volunteers, members, and donors. Might you become one?



Click below

**JOIN NOW**



### *Special freethought days in December:*

- 12/10—Int'l. Human Rights Day
- 12/21—WinterSolstice (the real Reason for the Season)
- 12/23—Festivus for just being goofy
- 12/23—Humnan Light Celebration, alt-xmas

### **Woman's conviction in Austria for calling the Prophet Mohammed a paedophile did not breach her right to free speech, European Court of Human Rights rules**

The woman, named as Mrs S., 47, from Vienna, held two lectures on Mohammed

During seminars she reportedly talked about his relationship with a six-year-old. At one point she was quoted as saying Mohammed 'liked to do it with children'. She was convicted by Vienna Regional Criminal Court back in 2011 for statement

Mrs S. has appealed to several Austrian courts and finally the ECHR this year. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled a woman convicted by an Austrian court of calling the Prophet Mohammed a paedophile did not have her freedom of speech rights infringed.

The woman, named only as Mrs. S, 47, from Vienna, was said to have held two seminars in which she discussed the marriage between the Prophet Mohammad and a six-year old girl, Aisha.

According to scripture the marriage was consummated when Aisha was just nine years old, leading Mrs. S. to say to her class Mohammad 'liked to do it with children'. She also reportedly said '... A 56-year-old and a six-year-old? ... What do we call it, if it is not paedophilia?'

## **CHURCH AND STATE**

### **It's Time to Start Calling Evangelicals What They Are: The American Taliban**

By [J.C. Weatherby](#)

Evangelicals in churches and state houses across the country support laws and political systems that brutalize and imprison MILLIONS of African Americans, that deny equal rights and protections to LGBT people and tacitly support violence toward them, and seek to deny women the right to govern their own bodies, often with threats or outright acts of physical violence. They seem hell-bent on ejecting science from education and replacing it with their own creationist ideas.

In doing these things, evangelicals are advocating a religious extremism that is no different from muslim extremism, ....

... *Read the rest and much more news here:* <http://bit.ly/2FQVO3t>

**READ THIS:** TB-CoR's [Meetup](#) makes it easy to **view & RSVP** to our activities & some affiliated events. The value to us of your joining our Meetup is that we need to know how many folks expect to attend an activity. Some programs are limited in seating; some require ordering books, etc.; some are open only to paid-up CFI members; & some require prepayment. So, sign up if you aren't already participating.

### **Who Can We Call A Humanist?**

By [William Harwood](#)

Mel Gibson claims that the pope is not a Catholic. The pope claims that he is a Catholic.

Supporters of Ian Paisley's Protestant sect claim that the pope is not a Christian. The pope claims that he is a Christian.

The late president of England's British Society of Medical Hypnotists claimed that Christian Scientists are not Christians. Christian Scientists claim that they are Christians.

Tea Party dogmatists claim that anyone who supports Barack Obama's desire to provide all Americans with an economic safety net is not a Republican. The persons denounced as RINO (Republican in name only) are adamant that they are Republicans.

Opponents of [Christopher Hitchens](#)'s willingness to resort to war in order to resist an oppressor, if that is what proves necessary, have claimed that Hitchens is not a [humanist](#). Hitchens claims that he is a [humanist](#).

So which are right?



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

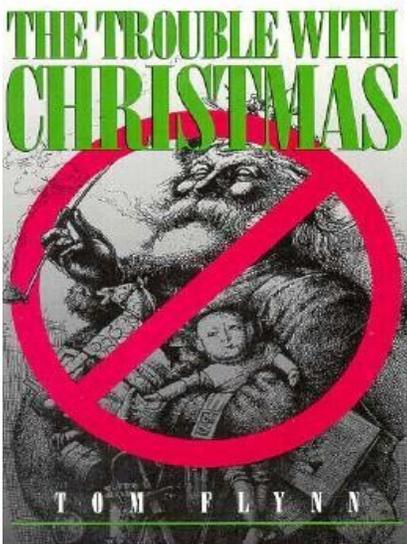
The Skeptical Inquirer, Fall 1989, Vol. 14, No. 1, Pp. 35-44

## **The Relativity of Wrong**

By Isaac Asimov

I RECEIVED a letter the other day. It was handwritten in crabbed penmanship so that it was very difficult to read. Nevertheless, I tried to make it out just in case it might prove to be important. In the first sentence, the writer told me he was majoring in English literature, but felt he needed to teach me science. (I sighed a bit, for I knew very few English Lit majors who are equipped to teach me science, but I am very aware of the vast state of my ignorance and I am prepared to learn as much as I can from anyone, so I read on.) The rest: <http://bit.ly/2RSrG9y>

Tom Flynn, the effervescent disparager of hokum, has a timely book you might like. Alternately outrageous, satirical, and thoughtful, this rollicking critique calls Christmas to account. How many holiday traditions are authentically Christian? (Next to none.) Does the contemporary Christmas holiday have ancient roots? (Hardly. It was largely invented by six eminent Victorians.). Is the Santa Claus myth unhealthy for children? (Yes, Virginia.). Are Christmas critics discriminated against? (Is "Scrooge" an insult?). What is the future of Christmas as America becomes a multicultural, multifaith society? (Educators should start sweating now). The Trouble with Christmas is not only for curmudgeons, but for citizens, parents, teachers, and freethinkers of every stripe. Anyone curious about the origins and future of one of the Western world's most celebrated holidays will find something of interest in this provocative book. [Click the image for the source.]



**Tom Flynn** is the Center for Inquiry's vice president for media and director of Inquiry Media Productions. He is also executive director of the Council for Secular Humanism and editor of its flagship magazine, *Free Inquiry*. He designed and directs the Council's museum at the Dresden, N.Y., birthplace of 19th century agnostic orator Robert Green Ingersoll. He has written or edited eight books, including *The New Encyclopedia of Unbelief* (Prometheus, 2007).

## **What Secular Humanism Means to Me**

Secular humanism is *emancipatory*. My near-to-hand *American Heritage Dictionary* defines its root, *emancipate*, as follows:

To free from bondage, oppression, or restraint; liberate.

*Law.* To release (a child) from the control of parents or a guardian.

Like (I think) a majority of U.S. secular humanists, I grew up within a traditional religion. Like a smaller number, I took that religion seriously. I lost my faith only after I caught it failing to live up to its stated ideals. Those who followed different routes to secular humanism may disagree, but I find it brilliantly emancipatory in both senses of the definition above.

Let us count the ways:

*Emancipation from divine scrutiny.*

Under any traditional monotheism, we are *perpetual* children (God the Father, and all that). Rejecting a supernaturalism centered on an omnipotent lawgiver is profoundly self-liberating. It's the ultimate release from "parental" control. What real parent's scrutiny could be as intrusive as that of a deity who never sleeps, never looks away, and can never be deceived or misled? For me, putting away that childlike thing was the beginning of adult responsibility.

*Emancipation from a worldview contrary to our senses—and common sense.* Life as most traditional faiths present it is so paltry next to eternity. Never mind the billions of years cosmologists speak of; eternity is *forever*. And it isn't just the universe that lasts forever. *You* last forever (at least on the Christian view). Uncountable epochs after the Last Judgment, whenever that happens, you'll still be going on thrilling to the bliss of heaven or writhing in the agonies of hell. Even then, there'll be no end in sight. It's difficult to imagine a world picture better calculated to alienate us from our real lives, finite and bounded as they are. ... [Read the rest—click the title.]



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!](#)



Appropriately, TBS answers a newspaper article titled “**Lottery guides aim toward winning tips**”. This article is from the Saturday, March 31, 1990 *St. Petersburg Times*. In effect, the article is a free advertisement. The engineer who created his rules for picking numbers studied the statistics, concluding that the lottery is truly random, but “some numbers have hot streaks and others disappear for periods of times.” Buy his guide and see what (was) “hot” . . . .

As Gary Posner’s letter to the Times says, “Although the pervasiveness of *illiteracy* in this country is well documented, the problem of *innumeracy* (even among the literate, including reporters and their editors) is largely unappreciated and unaddressed.” The problem has gotten worse.

Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2CXm2PQ>

Special thanks to Dr. Gary Posner for undertaking the arduous task of scanning all the printed news articles about Tampa Bay Skeptics that have appeared in various newspapers and magazines since Gutenberg. Or, at least 1984. These efforts appear on our Web site here: [http://www.tampabayskeptics.org/news\\_articles\\_letters.html](http://www.tampabayskeptics.org/news_articles_letters.html). New scans are posted frequently.

Many useful links appear at the bottom of the page here: <http://www.tampabayskeptics.org/>.

Just click the links for a good read.

## Tallahassee’s ‘Witch’s Grave’

by Joe Nickell

Investigative Files, A Study in Superstition and Ignorance

In Tallahassee’s Old City Cemetery stands an imposing monument that—many people insist—denotes the grave of a witch. Curious symbols atop the marker and a cryptic verse, together with other factors—notably the monument’s facing west rather than the traditional east—are cited as evidence in the identification. But was “BESSIE,” as her name is boldly incised, truly a witch, or can [we unlock the secrets](#) of this mysterious grave?

## On the Set of *Cosmos*’s Season Two

Special Report By *Kendrick Frazier*

*SKEPTICAL INQUIRER* Vol. 42.5, September / October 2018

How might the **2019 *Cosmos*** differ from the 2014 series? “It’s much more ambitious,” she says. “It is a much bigger production.” She adds, “I think it will be way more inspiring. I hope so.” She says she expects it to be “more emotional”—not the science, she quickly reassures us, but the human stories will be “more heart-based” with a strong emphasis on “a hopeful future.” She worries, as do I, that young people today lack inspiration and hope about the future, and she wants to restore those things.

More than likely I think you can expect that next year millions of us worldwide will be watching evocative stories of human discovery, past and present, some much-needed celebrations of science and reason, and an altogether new and inspiring glimpse of our cosmos.

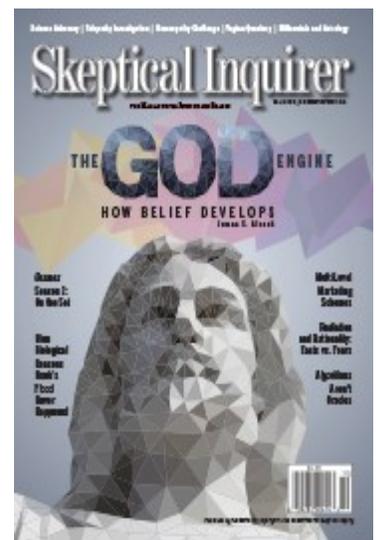
## An Old Scam Flourishes—MLM

If you’ve been around social media lately, you’ll have come across a friend who suddenly is posting about makeup, diet shakes, essential oils, shampoo, or even insurance. Their personality seems somehow different. And they want to “catch up for a coffee”—with an agenda.

More and more people are being lured into the glittering promises that are multi-level marketing (MLM) companies. Social media provide rich hunting grounds. MLMs are proliferating. They are aggressive recruiters, with trained workforces using influence techniques to reel in new members. Once signed up, they exploit their members ruthlessly. This isn’t an issue we can afford to ignore—we’re not safe.

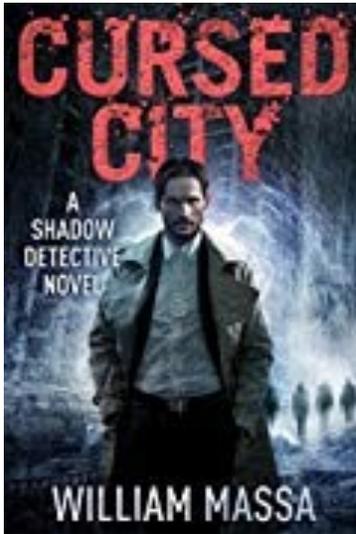
Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2CXMLfo>

The **Committee for Skeptical Inquiry** promotes science and scientific inquiry, critical thinking, science education, and the use of reason in examining important issues. It encourages the critical investigation of controversial or extraordinary claims from a responsible, scientific point of view and disseminates factual information about the results of such inquiries to the scientific community, the media, and the public.



## Recommended Reading

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

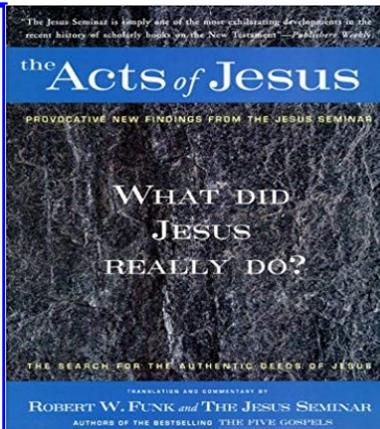


*Shadow Detective* series of books by William Massa. If you enjoy fantasy, the walking dead, ghouls, creatures from the dark recesses of the primitive mind, things that go bump in the night ... this series is sure to please.

William Massa is a produced screenwriter and bestselling Amazon author. His film credits include *Return to House on Haunted Hill*. He writes dark urban fantasy horror and science fiction with an action-adventure flavor. He currently divides his time between the Shadow Detective and Occult Assassin series.

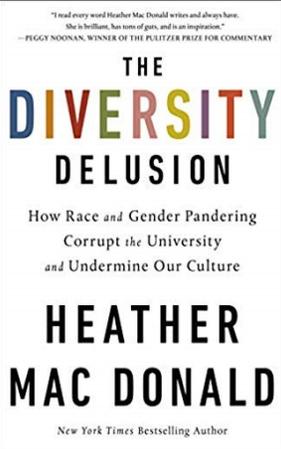
In 1998, CFI's Jesus Seminar and Robert Walter Funk published *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus*—a new take on the historical Jesus demythologizes the Gospels, proposing a figure who is more historical than theological.

Funk also authored *The Acts of Jesus: What Did Jesus Really Do?* and *The Five Gospels: What Did Jesus Really Say? The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*



America is in crisis, from the university to the workplace. Toxic ideas first spread by higher education have undermined humanistic values, fueled intolerance, and widened divisions in our larger culture.

But there is hope in the works of authors, composers, and artists who have long inspired the best in us. Compiling the **author's** decades of research and writing on the subject, *The Diversity Delusion* calls for a return to the classical liberal pursuits of open-minded inquiry and expression, by which everyone can discover a common humanity.



The year's end remains a gift-giving time. I've included more books for your consideration on page 19. Wishing you a thoughtful and satisfying holiday season, as you remember the all-natural Reason for the Season. Rick O'Keefe, scrivener

Evolve Fish is a good source for freethought paraphernalia:

<http://evolvefish.com/>

To access more Freethought history & perspectives,  
Frank Prah's Freethought Library [fprah177@gmail.com](mailto:fprah177@gmail.com)

## The Matt Cooper

### Humanist Lending Library

Humanist Society members can select the number of the book you wish to borrow, and send it to [marios\\_psomas@hotmail.com](mailto:marios_psomas@hotmail.com) Then pick it up at the next meeting. **Be sure to return it!** Donations appreciated.

#### # TITLE AUTHOR

1. The Expanding Circle Peter Singer
2. In Gods we Trust Scott Atran
3. Why Evolution is True Jerry Coyne
4. The Second World Panag Khanna
5. Denialism Michael Specter
6. The Selfish Gene Richard Dawkins
7. Democracy Incorporated Sheldon Wolin
8. The Upside Irrationality Dan Ariely
9. The End of Growth Richard Heinberg
10. **The God Delusion Richard Dawkins**
11. All That We Share Jay Wallgasper
12. Sex, Time, and Power Leonard Shlain
13. Sex at Dawn C. Ryan, & C. Jetha
14. What liberal Media Eric Alderman
15. The End of Faith Sam Harris
16. **Plan B Lester Brown**
17. The Portable Atheist Christopher Hitchens
18. Open Society George Soros
19. Non Believer Nation David Niose
20. God on Trial Peter Irons
21. Natural Experiments of History Diamond-Robinson
22. The Missionary Position Christopher Hitchens
23. Life Inc Douglas Rushkoff
24. **A brief History of Time Stephen Hawking**
25. Breaking the Spell Daniel Dennett
26. **The Philosophy of Humanism Corliss Lamont**
27. The Quotable Atheist Jack Huberman
28. 50 Reasons People Believe In G.G. Harrison
29. Mathematics and Politics Alan Taylor
30. Stealing Elections John Fund
31. The God Virus Darrel Ray
32. What Every American Should Know About World Rossi
33. Imagine There's no Heaven Editors of Free Inquiry
34. Hidden Order David Friedman
35. What the Dog Saw 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



The mission of the [Secular Coalition for Florida](#) is to increase the visibility of & respect for non-theistic view-points in the State, & to protect & 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.

### St Pete Atheists // Freethought Group

Moderated by: Gary Thompson

Contact: [easy8@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:easy8@tampabay.rr.com)

On the web: <http://atheists.meetup.com/209>

- \* Provide intellectual & emotional support to each other & to others in our community who share our philosophy.
- \* Foster humanistic moral values & ethical behaviors.
- \* Promote a naturalistic worldview wherein beliefs must be verified by a scientific examination of evidence.
- \* Defend the separation of church & state *at all levels of government* as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America.
- \* "To Smell the Roses Along the Way"

**Next meet:** Parkside Café on 49th St. 11 AM, Sun Dec. 9



AOF is joining with other FBB teams to collect funds to help the Foundation make grants to address the needs of the children separated from their parents.



Help us

Help Children



Go to <http://bit.ly/AOFHelp>

### UU Humanists of Clearwater

at 2470 Nursery Rd. in Clearwater.

Usually every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday at 12:30 to 1:30 pm, after UU services,



### University of South Florida Humanities Institute



<http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities> Many previous lectures are available on YouTube.



**The Crafty Freethinker ...**  
Yorkshire lass born and bred, currently living in the Sunshine State. Maker of fine Secular Jewelry, and lifelong freethinker, my work can be seen by clicking on the image above.

**The Hotline Project**

**184-I-DOUBT-IT**

## Travel Now



Phone: 800-557-5463

Text: 407-314-5403

Freethought Friendly Travel Agency

<https://www.thetravelsuperhero.com>

Stef Katz

**Travel by Stef**

### A Humanist Discussion group in East Tampa !



### UU Humanists of Tampa

Public Discussion, 2nd Wednesday eve from 7-9 PM, & on the 4th Sunday Morning 9:45-10:45.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa

# Atheists of Florida,



Ed Golly, Chair - Judy Adkins, Exec. Dir.  
Al Hann, Vice chair,

See **AoF Meetup** for details Website: <http://aof.ngo>

AoF is a comfortable & safe place in which to find rewarding new friendships, to 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 Atheist Forum



Fridays 2 to 3 pm.

The broadcast is available **on the internet** at [TanTalk1340.com](http://TanTalk1340.com), live streaming on smart phones using the "TuneIn" application, [www.youtube.com/atheistforum](http://www.youtube.com/atheistforum) and on the following frequencies in the Tampa Bay area – WTAN AM 1340, WZHR AM 1400, WDCF AM 1350, WTAN FM 106.1, and WZHR FM 104.3.

Listeners can call **727-441-3000**, where four lines await your call in of questions and comments. All programs are being archived on the AoF web site, [www.aof.ngo](http://www.aof.ngo).

Subscribe to our

**You Tube Channel**



Contact us: [info@atheistsoffloridainc.org](mailto:info@atheistsoffloridainc.org)



## December Events

[Find details by clicking here](#)

**Dec 2**

Tampa Dinner meet. Check meetup for place - time.

*meetup*

Be sure to check for changes and RSVP!

**Dec 9th**

11 am  
Parkside  
Café P.P.

**Dec 16th**

Applebees  
Largo 5 PM  
See page 3  
top.

**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).

**Sunday, December 9th: 1 pm Board meeting** (all paid members are invited to attend and members are given time at the beginning of the meeting to make any statement they wish to the board) - 5103 S West Shore Blvd Tampa.

**Atheists** are often accused of hating religion and its followers. We do not. We do, however, strongly support the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees the right to have and express religious ideas, but also protects the right to criticize those same ideas. For most Americans, believer or not, shooting people in a church, synagogue, mosque, grocery store, or anywhere else, would never enter their minds. Trying to bomb public officials, celebrities, or any person, would never be contemplated. Unfortunately, there are a few people who do these horrendous acts. Those people are the enemy of our country, of our way of life, and of our representative democracy. It is the duty of all loyal citizens who encounter the ideology of hate, bigotry, and violence, to join together to actively and openly denounce it. It is the practical duty of government to prevent those who threaten harm from realizing their ambitions.

Our people, with various cultures and philosophies, bring a vibrancy to our nation that is phenomenal. We must unite together and oppose those that would tear us apart. We must work to restore the idea of inclusion, that everyone is a part of our society, that everyone belongs. We must defend the values of our constitution – the values of freedom to speak, express, assemble and report. In the long history of civilization, these are still new, fragile, fresh ideas, still being tested by those who prefer a smaller, more silent world.

JA

## Society, especially Western society, places a high value on **Truth: The Didactic View**

Truth is the foundation for a fair and just society. In court, we require witnesses to swear to tell *'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'*, because only that way can justice be delivered.

Most modern religions also have something to say on the matter, and it is clear that they ostensibly place a high value on the principle of truthfulness.

But is truthfulness an outdated principle in modern times, or does it still have value?

### Two Types of Truth

There are two aspects of truthfulness: being true to yourself, and being true to others.

The two are not quite the same thing, although they are closely linked. Shakespeare, for example, suggested that someone who was true to themselves was unlikely to be false to others.



### Truthful people will:

- **Understand themselves**, and know their own strengths and weaknesses. They will not delude themselves about their successes or failures;
- **Present themselves in a way that shows who they really are**. Their reputation will be founded on what they are and, whether in public or private, they will be the same;
- **Meet any commitments or promises that they make**;
- **Be accurate in their descriptions of themselves or others**, so that they do not mislead others.

### The Importance of Truth

Truth matters, both to us as individuals and to society as a whole.

**As individuals**, being truthful means that we can grow and mature, learning from our mistakes.

**For society**, truthfulness makes social bonds, and lying and hypocrisy break them.

If you doubt this, consider what happens when you find out that someone has lied to you. You feel less inclined to trust them next time, and also less inclined to trust other people more generally.

### Is it Ever Right not to Tell the Truth?

There are two possible ways not to tell the truth: not to

provide any information, and to provide false information.

**First, you do not need to tell everyone everything.** Excessive sharing of personal information is not welcome, even if it is the truth. Context is all-important, and you have to consider whether people need and/or want to know.

### Sometimes it is better not to say something.

You also need to be able to remain silent if someone has confided in you and asked you not to share the information further.

Under these circumstances, it is therefore appropriate not to tell **all** the truth.

### However, is it right to provide false information or lie?

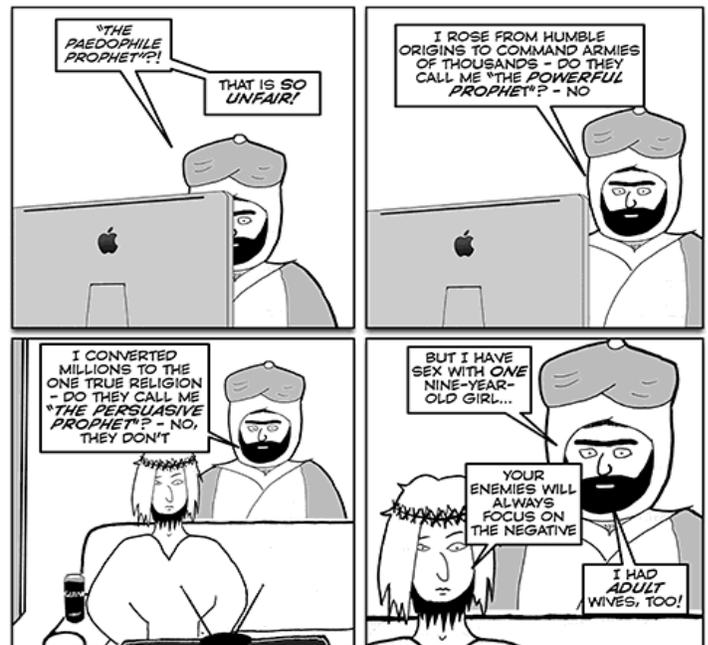
Is the *'right'* answer to the question *'Does my bum look big in this?'* ever *'yes'*?

Well, maybe, in the changing room, before *'this'* is bought. But maybe not. The truthful person will think very carefully about the right answer to that question.

Truthfulness is important, but so is not hurting others. Truthfulness and tact must go hand in hand, because otherwise the truth may be unacceptable to those who hear it.

And consider a government agent. They may need to lie, or pretend to be something that they are not, for the sake of the greater good. But they may still be true to themselves if they believe in the importance of the greater good. At what point does the truth become more important?

That is a matter of personal conscience.



## Tampa Bay Thinkers



Discussing serious matters since 2008. **Carrollwood Cultural Center**, Tampa, every 2nd Monday, monthly at 7 PM.

**Monday, December 12, 2018**

**Topic: TBA**

See our Meetup site:

[www.meetup.com/tampa-bay-thinkers/](http://www.meetup.com/tampa-bay-thinkers/) for more info.

## 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](mailto:christbrown@yahoo.com) )  
MSgt, USAF (Retired)

Co-Organizer:

**MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB**

## 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](#).

See more at: <http://www.Jen-Hancock.com>.



## USF Freethinkers

Join [Freethinkers@USF](mailto:Freethinkers@USF) for

genuine, conversational discourse & a communal atmosphere.

[Freethinkers@USF](mailto: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:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FreethinkersUSF/> for more information.

contact: [fadibitar@mail.usf](mailto:fadibitar@mail.usf)

*TB-CoR Welcomes*

## 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.



## Tampa Bay Technology Center & Thinkers Salon



*We repair our member's computers - Free!*

Lectures, discussions, & hands-on demonstrations of the humane use of technology. Our new address is 2189 Cleveland Street, Suite 229, Clearwater FL 33765. [Map](#)

Check out *Thinker's Salon* a forum for serious social & scientific ideas & issues.

Find us at:

[www.tampa-bay.org](http://www.tampa-bay.org)

# Tampa Bay CoR

TAMPA BAY COALITION OF REASON

## Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

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

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

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

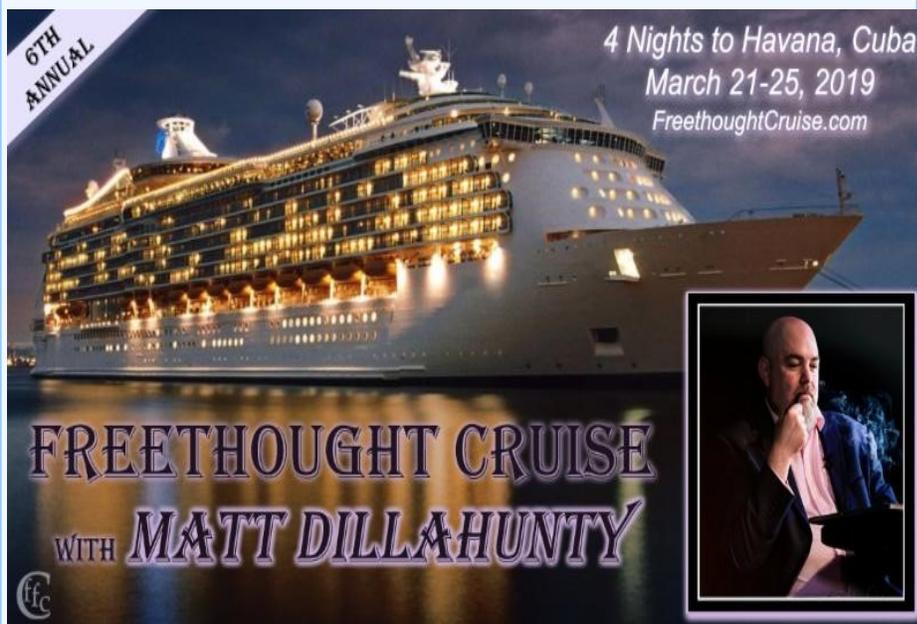
We are especially grateful to the national office of the United Coalition of Reason & its director, Sarah Levin.

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:** [tbcor@metrodirect.net](mailto:tbcor@metrodirect.net)  
**Or see,** <http://tampabaycor.org/>  
**Or,** <https://unitedcor.org/coalition-of-reason/tampa-bay/>



6TH ANNUAL

4 Nights to Havana, Cuba  
March 21-25, 2019  
FreethoughtCruise.com

FREETHOUGHT CRUISE  
WITH MATT DILLAHUNTY

**Mar 21-25, 2019**

**Freethought Cruise to Cuba with Matt Dillahunty**

Enjoy a cruise aboard the Royal Caribbean's Majesty of the Seas.

Two ports of call offer opportunities to enjoy the intrigue of Havana, Cuba and the culture and coastline of Nassau, Bahamas. Each night on board you can enjoy dinner as well as numerous entertainment options.

Refurbished in 2018, the ship boasts a rock climbing wall, original theater productions, Splashaway Bay for kids, outdoor movies and sports for the whole family, live bands and other musicians, Vegas-style casino. There are opportunities for entertainment or you can find a quiet place to sunbathe, read, or enjoy a philosophical discussion with your new freethinking friends. [RSVP on Meetup](#)

### CRUISE DETAILS

- From: Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Ship: Majesty of the Seas, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line
- Dates: March 21st - 25th, 2019
- Ports of Call: Havana, Cuba and Nassau, Bahamas
- Itinerary and much more at [freethoughtcruise.com](http://freethoughtcruise.com)

Sponsored by *Central Florida Freethought Community*



Al Hann  
AoF



Bill Norsworthy,  
UUCH



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UUCH



Chris Brown,  
MAF



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GTBHF



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## Carrying Capacity... continued from page 4

chain-sawed forests, exploited fisheries, mined minerals, pumped oil, and flattened mountains for their buried coal. And we did these things in a way that was not remotely sustainable. By harvesting renewable resources faster than they could regrow, by using non-renewable resources that could not be recycled, and by choking environments with industrial wastes, we were borrowing from future generations and from other species.



Nordhaus writes: "For decades, each increment of economic growth in developed economies has brought lower resource and energy use than the last." This trend of severing the tie between GDP and energy/materials throughput is called "decoupling." Many economists make big claims for past decoupling and promise much more of it in the future. But careful analysis of decoupling to date shows that most is attributable to accounting error.

And to get the developing world up to the level of an average American's energy usage would require nearly quadrupling global energy consumption, even assuming advances in efficiency. So, unless we find ways to make decoupling actually happen in the future more reliably and at higher rates, growing the global economy will require us to use more of the Earth's depleted resources. It is true that some past warnings about the consequences of overpopulation and overconsumption, framed as forecasts, proved wrong.

Thomas Malthus famously thought famine would engulf humanity within decades; it didn't. He failed to foresee industrial agriculture. Paul Ehrlich thought rapid population growth would lead to catastrophe in the 1980s, but he failed to anticipate the impacts of globalization and debt — which enables us to consume now and pay later. Peak oil analysts didn't foresee the fracking frenzy. Yet cornucopian economists who perceive no problem in the expectation of endless growth on a finite planet likewise failed to foresee climate change, the exponential increase in extinction rates primarily as a result of human-caused habitat degradation, the collapse of fisheries from overfishing, and much, much more.

How can we judge whether cornucopians, or so-called Malthusians, will be right in the long run? One way would be to keep a running account of key biophysical factors on which the prospering of our species depends. If an alarm bell sounds for any of those key factors, we should sit up and pay attention. After all, Liebig's Law (another foundation of ecology) tells us that growth limits are set not by total resources available, but by the single scarcest necessary resource.

Fortunately, somebody is keeping those accounts. Indeed, a cottage industry of environmental scientists, led by Johan Rockström of the Stockholm Resilience Center and Will Steffen of the Australian National University, has identified nine planetary boundaries that we transgress at our peril: climate change, ocean acidification, biosphere integrity, biochemical flows, land-system change, freshwater use,

stratospheric ozone depletion, atmospheric aerosol loading, and the introduction of novel entities into environments. We are currently exceeding the "safe" marks for four of these boundaries:

Another way of keeping track is the ecological footprint, which measures human demand on nature in terms of the quantity of land and water it takes to support an economy sustainably. The Global Footprint Network calculates that humanity is currently exceeding Earth's sustainable productivity by 60 percent. We do this, again, by drawing down resources that future generations and other species would otherwise use. So, as a result of our actions, Earth's long-term carrying capacity for humans is actually declining. Nordhaus is right that it's not a fixed quantity; the problem is that we're reducing it rather than adding to it in a way that can be maintained.

**D**evise your own scorecard. What warning signs would you expect to see if we humans were pressing at the limits of global carrying capacity? Resource depletion? Check. Pollution? Check. Dying oceans? Check. Human populations subjected to increasing stress? Double check.



Here's one more that we probably should be paying more attention to: Wild terrestrial mammals now represent just 4.2 percent of terrestrial mammalian biomass, the balance — 95.8 percent — being livestock and humans. Maybe we could make some inroads on that remaining 4.2 percent, but it's pretty clear from this single statistic that we humans have already commandeered most of the biosphere.

Optimism is essential; it draws us toward the best possible futures. But when it turns into wishful thinking, it can blind us to the consequences of our present actions. In the worst potential case, the results could be collectively suicidal.

### Keeping up with Jennifer... *Thinking Freely Speaking Out*



#### Thoughts of Thanksgiving...

To me, as a Humanist, I feel it is better to just accept that change plays a part in my life and work around it. I can do what I can to change the odds in my favor, but really - I can't totally control what happens. So - I chose to be grateful for what I do have and can control.

I am thankful I am alive. Despite the fact it is sometimes hard and painful. I REALLY like being alive. It beats the alternative. I really am glad that I have wonderful people to share my time on earth with. As annoying as they can sometimes be - I'm glad to know them.

My courses are online at: <https://humanistlearning.com>

Thanks and take care. *Jennifer Hancock*



**Monday December 3rd Sherry H. Penny, Author and Professor from the University of Massachusetts, Boston**  
Presenting: "Still Stuck: Women in the 21st Century"

All lectures are at The Center for Arts and Humanity, 1226 N. Tamiami Trail, unless specified otherwise.



## Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – December 2018 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](http://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason)



Various Sunday, 2 PM; & Friday night	BRANDON–CFI Sunday Freethought Social & Godless Friday Night	Skeptical interests with critical thinkers. Click to <b>RSVP</b> : <a href="http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I">http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I</a>	             
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA– Atheists of Florida, Inc.	Details & <b>RSVP</b> : <a href="http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup">http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup</a>	
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA– Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc..	Details & <b>RSVP</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I">http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I</a>	
1st Saturday, 2 PM see Pg. 2 3rd Sunday -Dinner see Pg. 3.	DUNEDIN– Humanist Soc. of the Suncoast	Details & <b>RSVP</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists">http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists</a>	
3rd Sunday, 12:30 PM	E. CLEARWATER– UU Clearwater Humanists	Details: <a href="http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists">http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists</a>	
TBA – various activities at MOSI	E. TAMPA– Museum Astronomical Resource Society (MARS) at MOSI	Details & <b>RSVP</b> : <a href="http://bit.ly/1Psc2Pi">http://bit.ly/1Psc2Pi</a> Other events: <a href="http://bit.ly/MARS-home">http://bit.ly/MARS-home</a>	
TBA - numerous events—this semester	E. TAMPA– Humanities Institute at USF	See <a href="#">Web site</a> for full listing of many events & calendar. <a href="http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities">http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities</a> Locations vary! <b>Page 11.</b>	
4th Monday, 6 PM	N. PINELLAS AREA– CFI Freethought Supper	<b>RSVP is required.</b> Seating is limited to 25! <i>For CFI &amp; TBS paid members.</i> <a href="http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I">http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I</a>	
3rd Saturday, 11 AM	N TAMPA – Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & <b>RSVP</b> : <b>No program this month!</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists">http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists</a>	
4th Saturday, 10:30 AM;	CLEARWATER – CFI Readers Book Discussion	Limited to <i>10 paid-up CFI members.</i> <b>RSVP is required.</b> <b>Must have read the book under discussion to attend.</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I">http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I</a>	
3rd Monday, 7 PM	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. <b>RSVP</b> here: <a href="http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers">http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers</a>	
4 <sup>th</sup> Friday, 8 PM general meeting. Many more events monthly.	ST. PETERSBURG– Astronomy Club	For several dates, locations, & details: <a href="http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Home">http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Home</a> <a href="http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Calendar">http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Calendar</a>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday plus various other times/venues	TAMPA BAY REGION– Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay	Details & <b>RSVP</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I">http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I</a>	
TBA – various activities	TAMPA BAY REGION– Humanist Families	<b>RSVP</b> here: Family outings & other activities. Details & <b>RSVP</b> : <a href="http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN">http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN</a>	

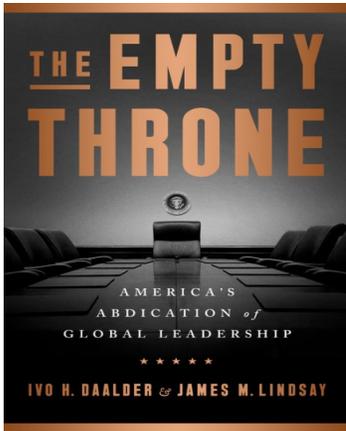
## 2019 Freethought Cruise

Nassau-Cuba itinerary. For more details: P. [16](#) or, [www.freethoughtcruise.com](http://www.freethoughtcruise.com). Departs March 21.



Read more on the web at: [www.tampabaycor.net](http://www.tampabaycor.net)

## How about a few more books to perk up your Little Grey Cells?



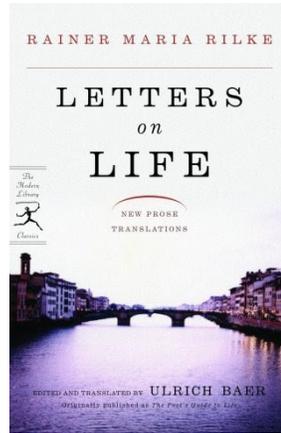
### The Empty Throne America's Abdication of Global Leadership

By Ivo H. Daalder & James M. Lindsay

American diplomacy is in shambles, but beneath the daily chaos is an erosion of the postwar order that is even more dangerous.

America emerged from the catastrophe of World War II convinced that global engagement and leadership were essential to prevent another global conflict and further economic devastation. That choice was not inevitable, but its success proved monumental. It brought decades of great power peace, underpinned the rise in global prosperity, and defined what it meant to be an American in the eyes of the rest of the world for generations. It was an historic achievement.

Now, America has abdicated this vital leadership role. The Empty Throne is an inside portrait of the greatest lurch in US foreign policy since the decision to retreat back into Fortress America after World War I. The whipsawing of US policy has upended all that America's postwar leadership created—strong security alliances, free and open markets, an unquestioned commitment to democracy and human rights. Impulsive, theatrical, ill-informed, backward-looking, bullying, and reckless are the qualities that the American president brings to the table, when he shows up at all. The world has had to absorb the spectacle of an America unmaking the world it made, and the consequences will be with us for years to come.



### Letters on Life

By Rainer Maria Rilke,  
Ulrich Baer, (Translator)

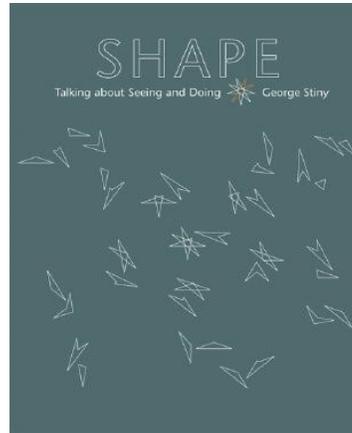
Gleaned from Rainer Maria Rilke's voluminous, never-before-translated correspondence, this volume offers the best writings and personal philosophy of one of the twentieth century's greatest poets. The result is a profound vision of how the human drive to create and understand can guide us in every facet of life. Arranged by theme—from everyday existence with others to the exhilarations of love and the experience of loss, from dealing with adversity to the nature of inspiration—here are Rilke's thoughts on how to infuse everyday life with beauty, wonder, and meaning.

Intimate, stylistically masterful, brilliantly translated and assembled, and brimming with the passion of Rilke, *Letters on Life* is a font of wisdom and a perfect book for all occasions.



**Rainer Maria Rilke**

*"The only journey is the one within."*



### Shape: Talking about Seeing and Doing

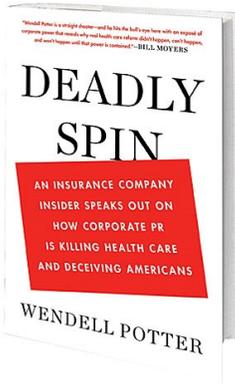
By George Stiny

In *Shape*, George Stiny argues that seeing shapes -- with all their changeability and ambiguity -- is an inexhaustible source of creative ideas. Understanding shapes, he says, is a useful way to understand what is possible in design.

Shapes are devices for visual expression just as symbols are devices for verbal expression. Stiny develops a unified scheme that includes both visual expression with shapes and verbal expression with signs. The relationships -- and equivalencies -- between the two kinds of expressive devices make design comparable to other professional practices that rely more on verbal than visual expression. Design uses shapes while business, engineering, law, mathematics, and philosophy turn mainly to symbols, but the difference, says Stiny, isn't categorical. Designing is a way of thinking. Designing, Stiny argues, is calculating with shapes, calculating without equations and numbers but still according to rules. Stiny shows that the mechanical process of calculation is actually a creative process when you calculate with shapes -- when you can reason with your eyes, when you learn to see instead of count.

The book takes the idea of design as calculation from mere heuristic or metaphor to a rigorous relationship in which design and calculation each inform and enhance the other. Stiny first demonstrates how seeing and counting differ when you use rules -- that is, what it means to calculate with your eyes -- then shows how to calculate with shapes, providing formal details. He gives practical applications in design with specific visual examples. The book is extraordinarily visual, with many drawings throughout -- drawings punctuated with words. You have to see this book in order to read it.

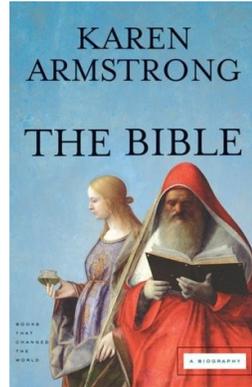
Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him. ~ Maya Angelou



This is a [CFI Tampa Bay SHARE Book Club](#) selection for Dec. 1  
*Deadly Spin* : an insurance company insider speaks out on how corporate PR is killing health care and deceiving Americans. By Wendell Potter

Since Wendell Potter walked away from his executive position at a top health insurance company in May of 2008, he has worked tirelessly as an outspoken critic of corporate PR and the distortion and fear manufactured by America's health insurance industry. It is a PR juggernaut that is bankrolled by millions of dollars, rivaling lobbying budgets and underwriting many "non-partisan" grassroots organizations. How would Potter know? He wrote many of the industry's talking points himself. From clandestine meetings carefully organized to leave no paper trail to creating third party front groups, Potter lets the reader in on the dirty secrets most big corporations would rather have the masses be in the dark about because the stakes are high and the profits even higher.

*DEADLY SPIN* is not just an exposé of health insurers but a stark warning that corporate spin is distorting our democracy.



This is a [CFI Tampa Bay SHARE Book Club](#) selection for Jan.26, 2019  
*The Bible: a biography* By Karen Armstrong

"In this seminal account, acclaimed historian Karen Armstrong discusses the conception, gestation, and life of history's most powerful book. Armstrong analyzes the social and political situation in which oral history turned into written scripture, how this all-pervasive scripture was collected into one work, and how it became accepted as Christianity's sacred text. She explores how scripture came to be read for information, and how, in the nineteenth century, historical criticism of the Bible caused greater fear than Darwinism. This is a brilliant, captivating book, crucial in an age of declining faith and rising fundamentalism."



For your eye-crossing pleasure: [12 Mind-Bending Perceptual Illusions](#) By Steve Stuart-Williams, Oct 26, 2018

Everyone loves a good optical illusion. Most people first come across them as kids, and are instantly transfixed. And most of us never quite outgrow them. Even cats seem to enjoy the occasional optical illusion!

The good news, then, for humans and nonhumans alike, is that our illusions seem to be getting better over time. In the age of social media, lots of people are making and sharing them, and the best ones are quickly going viral and setting the new standard. In effect, our illusions are evolving culturally to be more and more powerful.

But although perceptual illusions are fun, they also have important philosophical implications. They show us in a clear and unambiguous way that we don't directly perceive the world around us. Perceptual experience is a simulation—a mental model—that doesn't always correspond to the reality it aims to depict.

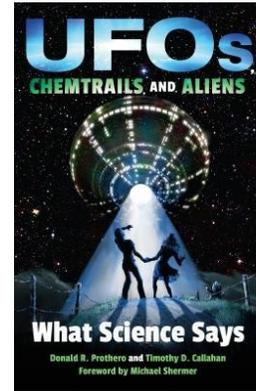
The following illusions are some of my favorites. Enjoy!

#### 1. The Power of Top-Down Processing

To get the ball rolling, here's a good example of how expectations guide perception.

##### Breezy Clothing

We're so used to words being arranged in a certain order that, when the words are jumbled up, we often don't notice: We mistake our expectations for the world. That's why proofreading your own essays is so hard. [Click the title for the rest of the story & illustrations.]



Donald R. Prothero and Timothy D. Callahan deliver the goods on UFOs. Aliens. Strange crop circles. Giant figures scratched in the desert surface along the coast of Peru. The amazing alignment of the pyramids. Strange lines of clouds in the sky. The paranormal is alive and well in the American cultural landscape.

Explore why such demonstrably false beliefs thrive despite decades of education and scientific debunking. Employing the ground rules of science and the standards of scientific evidence, Prothero and Callahan discuss a wide range of topics including the reliability of eyewitness testimony, psychological research into why people want to believe in aliens and UFOs, and the role conspiratorial thinking plays in UFO culture. They examine a variety of UFO sightings and describe the standards of evidence used to determine whether UFOs are actual alien spacecraft. Finally, they consider our views of aliens and the strong cultural signals that provide the shapes and behaviors of these beings. While their approach is firmly based in science, Prothero and Callahan also share their personal experiences of Area 51, Roswell, and other legendary sites, creating a narrative that is sure to engross both skeptics and believers.