



The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Freethought

News



Vol. 8 No. 8, August, 2019

Jim Peterson, EiC, Rick O'Keefe, Judy Adkins, Editors

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Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

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Judy Adkins

Web site

Jim Peterson

Newsletter

Jim Peterson & Rick O'Keefe

Special Projects

Mark Brandt

& Bill Norsworthy

See our event websites at:

www.tampabaycor.net &
www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason

This publication online at:

www.tampabaycor.net

Repeal Blasphemy Laws

Exciting news! Yesterday, Representatives Raskin (D-MD) and Meadows (R-NC) introduced House Resolution 512 to support the repeal of blasphemy laws globally. This necessary resolution strongly encourages the State Department to make the repeal of blasphemy laws a priority in their relationships with foreign nations.

More than 70 nations around the world still have blasphemy laws that endanger the lives of those who do not conform to the state's official religion or worldview. Christians, Muslims, Hindus, nontheists and other religious minorities are all at risk. These laws have dire consequences; conviction can mean life in prison or a death sentence.

Joint efforts to move the needle have been working. Recently, countries such as Greece, Ireland, and Canada have repealed their blasphemy laws and more are considering bringing these draconian laws to an end. **Can you take a moment right now to ask your Representative to co-sponsor H.Res.512?**

In today's divided political climate, Republicans and Democrats have come together to say that this issue is too important for politics. That's because the issue of religious freedom, which includes the right to believe any faith or none at all, is something that all Americans can support. **Will you join us in supporting international religious freedom by asking your Representative to co-sponsor this resolution?**

Many people don't know what biodiversity means

by Brandon Keim | Jul 24, 2019

Since being adopted by scientists in the mid-1980s, the word 'biodiversity' has become a default term for describing nature and its significance. We're in the midst of a biodiversity crisis; biodiversity loss threatens human well-being; citizen scientists monitor their local biodiversity; and so on. The word is so ubiquitous that its comprehension by the public is taken for granted—yet a great many people don't even know what it means.

"It seems prudent for communicators to use 'biodiversity' cautiously," write ecologists led by Michael Weston of Australia's Deakin University in the journal *Pacific Conservation Biology*. "At the very least, anyone using this term should provide a definition with it."

Weston, joined by fellow Deakin ecologist Heather Kiley and Gillian Ainsworth of Charles Darwin University, prompted 499 demographically representative residents of the Australian state of Victoria with the question, "What does the term 'biodiversity' mean to you?"

Nearly 50 percent of the respondents either said they didn't know what it meant, or furnished an answer that had little to do with the accepted scientific definition: a diversity of species, genetic heritage, and ecosystems. Some 18 percent mentioned either plants or animals, or described concepts like harmony and balance. That left just one-third with an understanding that tracked the scientific—and even they didn't necessarily mention each of biodiversity's three aspects.

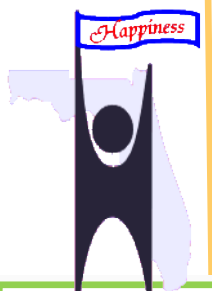
When the researchers cross-referenced the results with demographic information, they found no relationship to income or sex. Only education had a significant effect, with two-thirds of people who'd attended college having at least a rough idea of what biodiversity is.

Continued on Page [17](#)

Listen to Freethought Views and News

Atheists of Florida produces *Atheist Forum*, which is now on summer hiatus. to provide information and opinion from a secular POV. New editions of the program will be available on the **AoF channel of YouTube.com** from time to time. Regular programming to resume in the fall. See page [13](#) for more.

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



The Humanist Society of the Suncoast

An Epicurean society dedicated to the proposition that only the fully examined life is worth living.

Associate organization of the the [AHA](#), [COR](#), & [ASHS](#). Find us at www.suncoasthumanist.com

The Humanist Roundtable

What do you think about the condition of our world, humankind, our nation, our state, yourself?

One hesitates to comment at times because anything we can say sounds like an exaggeration; things could not possibly be worse than say 1929 or 1939 or 2001, could they?

Yes, they could.

There is presently a worldwide trend that favors a generally reactionary, fearful, and nostalgia driven response to the ever changing condition of both the human community and the natural world. There are many psychological and social reasons for this, not the least of which is the sense of a loss of control, and the confusion that arises when confronted by new technology and the unfamiliarity of emerging social patterns

As Humanists, we are challenged to find in this morass, a coherent approach to help our species avoid the moral and political pitfalls that now can ruin the progress we have made, crush our dreams, and even bring an end to the human experiment.

This meeting will be important as we each contribute to the task of finding a



new direction for our Humanist Society. With our separate interests and histories, and with what we have learned, we can create a new program for ourselves that allows us to retain the things we have valued, while breaking down the detritus of old habits and expectations, and finally coming out with a local program that stimulates more participation.

On the practical level, what new ideas for topics, speakers, social responsibility projects, and events, would you like to see as an expression of your personal commitment to a renewed Humanist presence? **Please be there!**

Jim Peterson

Please Join us in:



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

Saturday, August 10th
at 2:00 PM

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

Tampa Bay Harvest



Bring food: the first kindness & the measure of our Hospitality. Humanists aspire to true friendship with our fellow human beings. Money is more effective than cans and boxes to get the most benefit to the greatest number of people. But we can also use personal care toiletries. Many thanks to **Jordan Williams**. **We need volunteers!** See jim@suncoasthumanist.com Thanx.

Vol. XXXII No. 8 August, 2019



**Please Join or renew
Now!**

Humanist Society of the Suncoast

Annual Dues

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



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

If you have questions concerning your dues or status, contact our treasurer,
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:

"Jim Peterson"

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

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

*= optional



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 August 18 at Applebee's at 5 O'clock for American style cuisine, and decidedly the best company:

Applebees

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

5110 E Bay Dr Clearwater, FL 33764

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

Laugh Lines From the Skeptics Dictionary

When the patient died, the attending doctor recorded the following on the patient's chart: "Patient failed to fulfill his wellness potential."

The letter from the Air Force colonel in charge of safety said that rocket boosters weighing more than 300,000 pounds "have an explosive force upon surface impact that is sufficient to exceed the accepted overpressure threshold of physiological damage for exposed personnel." In other words, if a 300,000-pound booster rocket falls on someone, he is not likely to survive.

A reader reports that the Army calls them "vertically deployed anti-personnel devices." You probably call them bombs.

At McClellan Air Force base in Sacramento, California, civilian mechanics were placed on "non-duty, non-pay status." That is, they were fired.

The description on the package of Stouffer's Veal Tortellini with Tomato Sauce says it contains "exquisite egg pasta." The list of ingredients, however, includes "cooked noodle product."

The Minnesota Board of Education voted to consider requiring all students to do some "volunteer work" as a prerequisite to high school graduation.

A republican senator said that "capital punishment is our society's recognition of the sanctity of human life."

According to the tax bill signed by President Trump in late 2017, Don Tyson and his sister-in-law Barbara run a "family farm." Their "farm" has 25,000 employees and grosses \$1.7 billion a year. But as a "family farm" they get tax breaks that save them \$135 million a year.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Works, calls them "ground-mounted confirmatory route markers." You probably call them road signs, but then you don't work in a government agency.

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,
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~*~*~*~*

Jordan Williams, mail Publisher

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

Need Psychological Counseling?

For a secular therapist, click:

[Secular Therapy Org.](http://seculartherapy.org)
[Cognitive Neurosciences](http://cognitiveneurosciences.org)

Or call:

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

Or, Joel Schmidt

www.floatoncounseling.com
321-604-7637



Hold the date...



A terrific lineup of speakers is coming to Orlando this fall and you don't want to miss it! The Florida Humanist Association's biennial conference **FREEFLO**, has been confirmed.

Register here: <https://www.freeflo.org/>

- ✓ Friday Night Party.
- ✓ Saturday and Sunday have two full days of speakers.
- ✓ Dinner on Saturday night.
- ✓ Trivia after dinner.
- ✓ Some of the speakers scheduled to speak:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| • Bertha Vazquez | • Seth Andrews |
| • Monica Miller | • Gina Duncan |
| • Dr. Dan Batchelder | • Dr. Ryan Cragun |
| • Dr. Anjan Chakravarty | • Sikivu Hutchinson |
| • Aron Ra | • Matt Dillahunty |
| • Debbie Goddard | • Brandon Haught |
| • Amy Monsky | • Sarah Gillooly |

November 1 - 3

Fun & Educational? Absolutely!

Holiday Inn Orlando International Airport

5750 T G Lee Blvd.

Orlando, FL 32822

407/851-6400

Near the Orlando Airport (MCO)

Watch these pages for more to come.

Coming up sooner...

CSICON, October 16th to the 20th in Las Vegas. Many prominent world Skeptics will be featured. For more details, see:

<https://csiconference.org/>

Also, Save This Date:

2020 World Humanist Congress

Most of our national associations will be there! Pre-announcement of next World Humanist Congress organized by the American Humanist Association in **Miami, 6-9 August 2020**. Venue: Miami Hyatt Regency Hotel. More info as it develops.



Member, TBCoR,
Hum Society, &
AHA affiliate.

**AoF & THA
present**

What is meant by free exercise?

At the North Tampa Public Library
8916 N Blvd, Tampa, FL 33604

Saturday, August 17, 2019
1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Let's discuss what does the first amendment mean when it says "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; "

The exercise is free, so you won't be needing your gym shoes.

All are welcome to attend and express your ideas.

Humanist Quotes

6/19



"The day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know peace."
— **Mahatma Gandhi**

"Human decency is not derived from religion. It precedes it."

— **Christopher Hitchens**, [God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything](#)



"Being human means throwing your whole life on the scales of destiny when need be, all the while rejoicing in every sunny day and every beautiful cloud."
— **Rosa Luxemburg**

"Remember your humanity, and forget the rest."
— **Bertrand Russell**





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

Accelerating our Choices

There's a growing consensus that the next 18 months will be critical in dealing with the global heating crisis, among other environmental challenges.

Last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that to keep the rise in global temperatures below 1.5C this century, emissions of carbon dioxide would have to be cut by 45% by 2030.

But today, observers recognize that the decisive, political steps to enable the cuts in carbon to take place will have to happen before the end of next year.

The idea that 2020 is a firm deadline was eloquently addressed by one of the world's top climate scientists, speaking back in 2017.

"The climate math is brutally clear: While the world can't be healed within the next few years, it may be fatally wounded by negligence until 2020," said Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, founder and now director emeritus of the Potsdam Climate Institute.

The sense that the end of next year is the last chance saloon for climate change is becoming clearer all the time.

"I am firmly of the view that the next 18 months will decide our ability to keep climate change to survivable levels and to restore nature to the equilibrium we need for our survival," said Prince Charles, speaking at a reception for Commonwealth foreign ministers recently.

So why are the next 18 months so important?

The Prince was looking ahead to a series of critical UN meetings that are due to take place between now and the end of 2020.

Ever since a global climate agreement was signed in Paris in December 2015, negotiators have been consumed with arguing about the rulebook for the pact.

But under the terms of the deal, countries have also promised to improve their carbon-cutting plans by the end of next year. One of the understated headlines in last year's [IPCC report](#) was that global emissions of carbon dioxide must peak by 2020 to keep the planet below 1.5C.

Current plans are nowhere near strong enough to keep temperatures below the so-called safe limit. Right now, we are heading towards 3C of heating by 2100 not 1.5.

As countries usually scope out their plans over five and 10 year timeframes, if the 45% carbon cut target by 2030 is to be met then the plans really need to be on the table by the end of 2020.

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: spaceaminer@gmail.com

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

[Calendar](#)

M.A.R.S. – Tampa Astronomy Club

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/>

One in four species are at risk of extinction

Species assessed by the IUCN Red List



Amphibians

40%



Conifers

34%



Reef corals

33%



Sharks and rays

31%



Selected crustaceans*

27%



Mammals

25%



Birds

14%

*Assessed species include lobsters, freshwater crabs, freshwater crayfishes and freshwater shrimps

From the IUCN list of threatened species.

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](http://aof.meetup.com) 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 during the summer. Previous programs are available **on the internet**
www.youtube.com/atheistforum . Tune in!
Contact us: info@atheistsoffloridainc.org



A few contradictions, anyone?

Although random chit chat is always a pleasant way to spend the evening, one of our attendees said he knows of some interesting biblical contradictions that might make for a fun topic. What do you think? Know of any interesting biblical errors/contradictions you'd like to share? I know I have some favorites.

As always, any atheist/agnostic/freethinker/rationalist/methodological naturalist/secular humanist or, what the heck, any atheist friendly folks are welcome - we just ask that people not come to preach or proselytize - aside from that, all are welcome! Since we're taking up table space at the coffee shop there, please consider patronizing their establishment with a purchase.

Hope to see you there. Later, my fellow primates
Books-a-million 9570 US Highway 19 North, Port Richey, FL, 34668

July Events [Find details by clicking here](#)

July 28 1PM
Secular Sunday -
brunch with
action **Metro Diner,**
4011 W Kennedy
Blvd Tampa

Be sure to check for
changes and RSVP!

Aug 18
5PM (See
Pg. 3) Apple -
bees Largo

Aug 4 4PM
Que Pasa Rest.
10466 Roose-
velt Blvd. with
St Pete Atheists

Secular Sunday Discussion

The last Sunday of every month we meet for our social dinner and a good roundtable discussion on various ungodly matters.

You are welcome to join us and bring forth news and opinion on your favorite topics and add relish to your closely reasoned thoughts.

We pick a different venue generally in the west Tampa area with easy access to St. Petersburg.

To find out where and when, check out our Meetup site or the TB-CoR site

meetup

Counter Protest



We will be going to counter-protest the KJV Baptist Church who has been bringing in a busload of people to shout down the event. While we respect the right of the church to protest, we want to help protect the children who are in attendance.

Bring a chair and something to keep you cool and join us in showing we support the children and their enjoyment of the story hour.

Sunday, August 4, 2019

1:00 PM to 2:00 PM

At the **Paperback Exchange** Bookstore, 6412 Ridge Rd. Port Richey, 34668

Saturday, August 3, **The Socrates Cafe**
A discussion hosted by **Brent Hardaway**

Do Inalienable Rights Exist?

“We hold these truths to be self-evident”, wrote Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, “That all men are created equal, and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights...”. The word inalienable is usually taken to mean “can’t be taken away from”, but dictionaries also include a second meaning – that they can’t even be given away by the possessor.

In this view, governments may not recognize a person’s rights, but they would still exist. The government would only be limiting their expression. John Locke argued that even if a people chose to surrender freedom for safety and security, for example, it would still be wrong for the government to deny them. They are considered natural rights, and are part of natural law.

A contrasting theory would be that of Thomas Hobbes. In his view, before governments, humans had a right to everything, even to cannibalize each other. Because this would be chaotic and dangerous, humans agreed to surrender their rights to a government so that they could live and survive together.

But this raises questions – does this then mean that a society is never wrong in denying a particular right, if the society agrees to surrender it? What if a sizable majority agrees to surrender or deny a right, but a minority disagrees. Does the minority still possess the right, but simply is being repressively denied of it?

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

Be sure to RSVP!
meetup



Atheist
COMMUNITY
of Polk County



For more info, visit, <http://polkathiests.org/>

American Atheists

Adoption and foster care programs exist to serve the best interests of vulnerable children, and yet there are 10 states that allow child placement agencies to discriminate based on their religious beliefs.

Please call your Senators and Representative and urge them to support and cosponsor the Every Child Deserves a Family Act!

The Every Child Deserves a Family Act (S.1791/H.R. 3114), which was reintroduced in both the Senate and the House of Representatives last month, helps expand the number of homes for these vulnerable children. It would prohibit discrimination based on religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and marital status in the adoption and foster care system.

No longer could taxpayer funded adoption and foster care agencies cite religion to discriminate against atheist, LGBTQ, or religious minority children and potential parents.

Support the Every Child Deserves a Family Act! Call your Senators and Representative now, and ask them to cosponsor S.1791/H.R. 3114 to stop religious exemptions and discrimination in adoption and foster care!



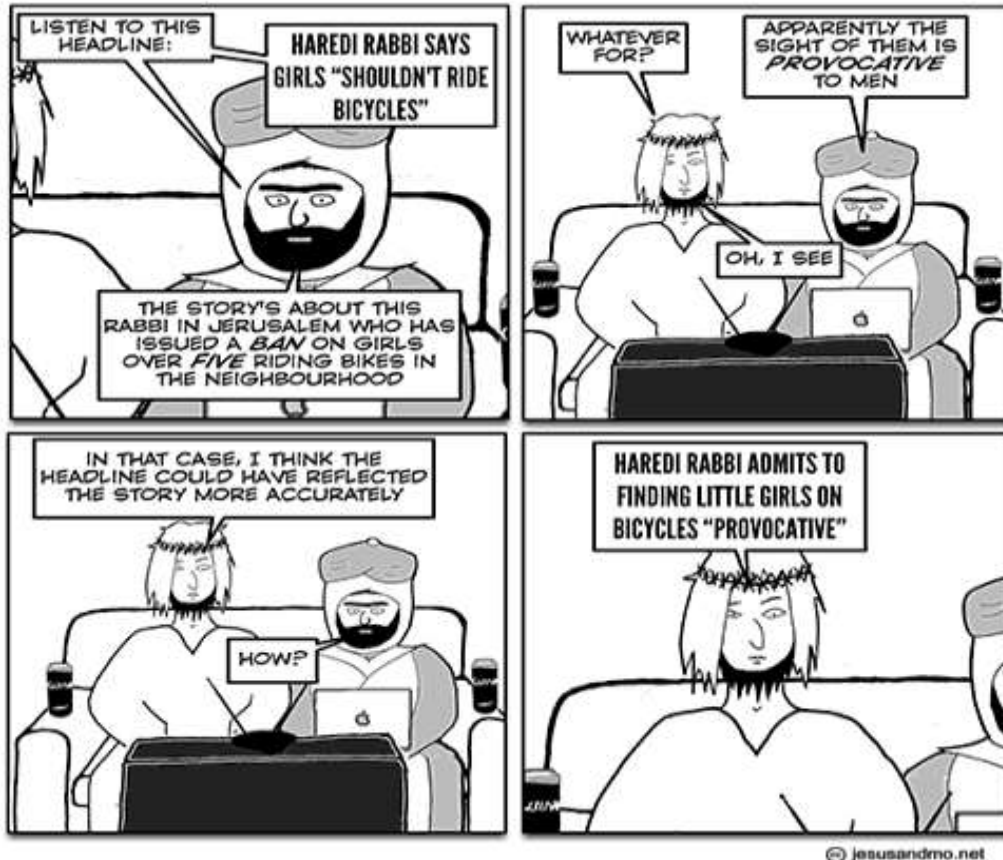
Editorial cartoons are democracy's canary in a coal mine



By Ann Telnaes, Editorial cartoonist.

The NY Times' decision to drop all editorial cartoons after publishing a controversial cartoon is another body blow to the profession of editorial cartooning."

To read the article, go here: <https://buff.ly/2KS3eog>



More heresy? See Page 11

Dominion theology (also known as **dominionism**) is a group of **Christian political** ideologies that seek to institute a nation governed by **Christians** based on their personal **understandings of biblical law**. Extents of rule and ways of achieving governing authority are varied. For example, dominion theology can include **theonomy**, but does not necessarily involve advocating **Mosaic law** as the basis of government. The label is applied primarily toward groups of **Christians in the United States**.

Prominent adherents of these ideologies are otherwise theologically diverse, including **Calvinist Christian reconstructionism**, **Roman Catholic Integralism**, **Charismatic/Pentecostal Kingdom Now theology**, **New Apostolic Reformation**, and others. Most of the contemporary movements labeled dominion theology arose in the 1970s from religious movements asserting aspects of **Christian nationalism**.

Some have applied the term *dominionist* more broadly to the whole **Christian right**. This usage is controversial. There are concerns from members of these communities that this is a **label** being used to **marginalize** Christians from **public discourse**. Others^[who?] argue this allegation can be difficult to sympathize with considering the political power already held by these groups and on account of the often verbally blatant intention of these groups to influence the political, social, financial, and cultural spectrums of society for a specific religion, often at the expense of other marginalized groups.

**TEACHER
INSTITUTE FOR
EVOLUTIONARY
SCIENCE (TIES)**
Provides middle school
teachers
the tools they need
to effectively teach
evolution.

The meaning of life is not to be discovered only after death in some hidden, mysterious realm; on the contrary, it can be found by eating the succulent fruit of the Tree of Life and by living in the here and now as fully and creatively as we can. ~ Paul Kurtz



17
years in
Florida



We are deeply concerned with the moral education of our children. We want to nourish reason and compassion. We believe in an open and pluralistic society and that democracy is the best guarantee of protecting human rights from authoritarian elites and repressive majorities. ~ Center for Inquiry *The Affirmations of Humanism: A Statement of Principles*

When Superstition Replaces Science

By **Rick O'Keefe,**
Branch Coordinator



L. Sprague De Camp wrote *The Ancient Engineers*, in which he elucidated why the budding of science in the age of pre-imperial Rome rapidly faded in the West during the Principate. Afterward, it took nearly 1,400 years before Europe began to recover, and a few centuries thereafter for reason and reality to overcome the brutal opposition of religion. The following is excerpted from De Camp's book (pp. 254–256).

In commenting on the growing dominance of credulity and religion, Seneca wrote that "... far from advance being made toward the discovery of what the older generations left insufficiently investigated, many of their discoveries are being lost." (Seneca: *Quaestiones naturales*, VII, xxiv, 4.)

De Camp continues: There was no active discouragement of Science under [Imperial] Rome, at least before Christianity came into power. But science has to compete for attention, belief, respect, interest, and financial support with politics, commerce, art, literature, religion, entertainment, sport, war, and all the other areas of human activity. If any of these interests greatly expands its appeal to the people, it does so at the expense of the others.

Now, the great intellectual movement of the classical world under the Principate was towards supernaturalism; that is, religion, mysticism, and magic. There was nothing new about these. All went back to primitive times. Mystery cults had flourished in Greece from –500 on and probably earlier if the record were complete.

But, under Rome, those who exploited the human love of the marvelous and fear of the unknown made striking advances in methods, just as metal workers learned to make brass and glaziers to make windowpanes. They found that it added to their following and advanced their own power, glory, and wealth to flourish a body of sacred writings wherewith to confound the heathen; to promise lavish rewards and punishments after death, in order to right the injustices of earthly life; to set up a tightly knit, far-flung, conspiratorial organization; to expound a verbose and seemingly logical body of spiritual doctrine; to impose a fixed code of morals and tabus—some reasonable and some purely arbitrary—on their followers; and, most of all, to incite a fanatical hatred of rival groups and a grim determination to win the world to one's own faith. All these procedures were inventions, just as much as Heron's toy steam engine. With these new techniques, the priests, prophets, and magicians could more effectively compete for public attention and support. Credulity they redefined as "faith", and fanaticism as "zeal", while respect for laws of cause and effect was condemned as "blind materialism."

The success of a cult depended upon its fidelity to these principles.

This success, needless to say, had nothing to do with the objective truth of its doctrines, any more than the success of a modern advertising campaign has to do with the virtues of the cigarette or detergent being sold.

As a result, the world witnessed a great "return to religion." The new cults grew swiftly. The old Greek and Roman polytheisms, with no central organization, no theology but a mass of childish and inconsistent myths, and no particular doctrine of future life, crumbled before the tide. The worship of Kybelê, Mithra, Isis, Yahveh, Serapis, Abraxas, and Christ waxed mighty. The magical cults of the Neopythagoreans, the Neoplatonists, and the Gnostics thrived. The pseudo-science of astrology flourished, and hedge-wizards like Simon Magus swarmed.

The methods listed above had already, before the Christian era, appeared to some extent in Judaism and Zoroastrianism. So it is not surprising that the strongest of the new religions should prove to be Christianity and Mithraism, heretical offshoots of Judaism and Zoroastrianism respectively.

... Who wanted to spend years in pursuit of some obscure natural law, or pay somebody else to do so, when by joining one of the new cults you got drama, passion, mystery, a feeling of superiority to all non-members, and a promise of eternal bliss in heaven? ... Strabo of Amasia, the great geographer of the time of Augustus, knew what he was talking about when he remarked: "The great mass of women and common people cannot be induced by mere force of reason to devote themselves to piety, virtue, and honesty. Superstition must therefore be employed, and even this is insufficient without the aid of the marvelous and the terrible." (Strabo, I, ii, 8.) But supernaturalism is not, on the whole, friendly to science and technology, and there is no use pretending that it is.



I belong to the Great Church which holds the world within its starlit aisles; that claims the great and good of every race and clime; that finds with joy the grain of gold in every creed, and floods with light and love the germs of good in every soul.

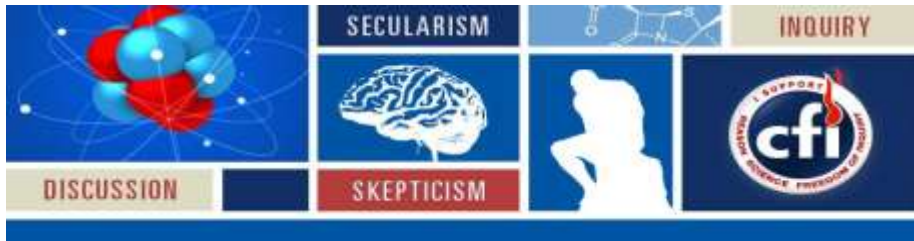
~ Robert Green Ingersoll (*Letter to Henry M. Field*)

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Incorporated in
Florida on October
3, 2002

Our dear departed friend **Jack Robinson** had his own views of what science terminology is and as it should be used. Here is what he shared with CFI OnCampus group Freethinkers@USF, way back in 2000.

Some science concepts and terminology

By Prof. Jack H. Robinson, March 4, 2000

One of our goals as Freethinkers is "to overcome ignorance through science and logic". The pursuit of this goal will be facilitated if we all have the same understanding of important scientific concepts and related terminology. Therefore, I offer the following definitions and explanations.

Fact: Something that's known with virtual certainty. In science, facts are typically descriptions of things or actions, determined empirically (i.e., by observation, direct or indirect); and they are expressed by simple descriptive statements, e.g.: The Earth is spherical with mean diameter approximately 8000 miles. The acceleration due to gravity at the Earth's surface is approximately 32 ft/sec per sec. The Sun's surface temperature is about 10,000° F. The last fact was determined by indirect observation, but it was found by applying three different theories that are independent of each other, and they all gave the same result.

Law: A statement and/or algebraic equation that indicates the relationship between two or more variables. Example, the "law of gravity": Every object in the universe attracts every other object, with a force that is directly proportional to each of their masses, and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them; i.e., $F = G Mm/d^2$. This law is now considered to be superseded by Einstein's General Theory of Relativity/Gravitation; but Newton's law is still correct to an excellent degree of approximation, and it is preferred (for its simplicity) unless extremely high speeds or very strong gravitational fields are involved.

Hypothesis: A tentative statement of a fact, law, or theory—which has yet to be verified. Cold fusion (the idea that hydrogen nuclei could be fused into helium nuclei at ordinary temperatures) was "only a hypothesis"; and when it was further tested, it was cast into great doubt--virtually disproved.

Theory: A well verified idea or set of ideas that relate and explain a number of facts and perhaps laws as well. For example, the Newtonian theory of the solar system (based on Newton's law of gravity and his laws of motion) relates and explains Kepler's three laws of planetary motion; it also explains—and enables us to predict—many facts about the Earth, other planets, satellites, comets, asteroids, and about

processes that go on within the solar system.

Notes: When a hypothesis is well verified, it becomes a fact, law, or theory--according to its nature. If anyone says, "Evolution is only a theory", or talks about a theory becoming a fact, that person misunderstands how most scientists use the terms and concepts discussed above.

P.S. A few legitimate, accomplished scientists do use the above terms differently. For example, they may say, "Evolution is a fact," or they may say "theory" instead of "hypothesis". Perhaps they do this so as to better communicate with the general public.

Honest investigation is utterly impossible within the pale of any church, for the reason, that if you think the church is right you will not investigate, and if you think it wrong, the church will investigate you. ~ Robert Green Ingersoll, "Individuality" (1873)



[Excerpt]: An infinite God ought to be able to protect himself, without going in partnership with State Legislatures. Certainly he ought not so to act that laws become necessary to keep him from being laughed at. No one thinks of protecting Shakespeare from ridicule, by the threat of fine and imprisonment.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, proving himself a prophet, of sorts, while discrediting prophesy itself! Quoted from, *Some Mistakes of Moses, Section III., "The Politicians"*, in Works, Dresden Edition, Volume 2 ††



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.



When the religious right was pro-choice evangelicals applauded Roe v Wade

By [Rmuse](#) (Community article appearing on Daily Kos.)

Have Christians Accepted the Scientific Conclusion That God Does Not Answer Intercessory Prayer?

By [Brian Bolton](#), *Free Inquiry Magazine*, [Volume 39, No. 1 December 2018 / January 2019](#) In 1982, a young cardiologist at the San Francisco General Medical Center named Randolph Byrd had a brilliant insight that would motivate several important investigations of prayer during the following two decades. He realized that the standard research paradigm known as the double-blind randomized clinical trial could be used to test the efficacy of intercessory prayer with medical patients in the hospital setting.

Despite the endless excuses generated by fundamentalist believers, the only rational conclusion supported by the five replicated studies is that God does not respond to altruistic prayers for hospitalized cardiac patients. This conclusion can be reasonably generalized to non-hospitalized patients and those with other medical conditions and to all forms of prayer to all gods under all circumstances. Put simply, *God does not answer prayer*. What does this conclusion mean for two larger issues of Christian faith. *now something to chuckle about.*

Trump Orders Pence to Find Passage in Bible Where Jesus Tells People to Get the Hell Out

By [Andy Borowitz](#)

July 22, 2019 WASHINGTON ([The Borowitz Report](#))—Hoping to bolster the core message of his 2020 campaign, [Donald J. Trump](#) ordered [Mike Pence](#) to locate a passage in the Bible where Jesus tells people “to get the hell out of here,” White House sources confirmed on Monday.

According to the sources, Trump summoned Pence to the Oval Office and commanded him to find “somewhere in the Bible” where Jesus “tells people that they don’t belong here and they should beat it.”

Pence, who seemed startled by the request, asked Trump if he meant the time when Jesus expelled money changers from the Temple, but Trump shook his head angrily. “No, not that. I don’t want to piss off Deutsche Bank,” he said. “I want something where Jesus tells the poor and the meek or whatever to go back to the shithole places they came from.”

After a shaken Pence said that he would “see what I can find,” Trump reportedly demanded that the Vice-President also locate a passage where Jesus calls journalists “the lowest form of life.”

Are vitamins a waste of money? A new study says yes

For decades, [Consumer Reports](#) laid out the facts on vitamin/mineral supplements. There is nothing new that is contraindicatory. People remain immune to reality, to the tune of billions of dollars. A major

new study reinforces that conclusion—supplements and diets will not improve health, prevent disease, or extend life.

“There are some important exceptions — namely, for pregnant women who need additional folic acid and iron and for people who have known vitamin or mineral deficiencies. “If there’s a known micronutrient deficiency, then it would behoove someone to supplement,” says Vaishnava. In other words, don’t drop your dietary supplement because of this study if you’re taking one prescribed by your physician or nutritionist. “What does help you live a longer, heart-healthy life? [Eating a healthy diet](#). As Moyer points out: “You can’t out-supplement an unhealthy diet. It’s very much along this ‘take a pill and everything will be okay’ mentality we have with health and medicine.”

“Bottom line: If you eat a healthy, well-balanced diet and do not have any nutritional deficiencies, you don’t need to pop those vitamin and mineral supplements.”

Full report: <https://yhoo.it/2M25mum>

From *The Morning Heresy*

NEWS TO HELP YOU WAKE THE HELL UP

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

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

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

Sounds like a fun place. Which is why repealing blasphemy laws is vital, as made plain on page 1.

The Center for Inquiry (CFI) strives to foster a society free of the dogmatic influence of religion and pseudoscience; a society inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment, the wonders of science, and the limitless potential of human intelligence and creativity; a society in which beliefs are not granted the same rights as people, where the freedom of expression is enjoyed by all, and all ideas are open to the scrutiny of reason.

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



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

Human Space Exploration: Our History or Our Future?

By [Terry A. Smiljanich](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

In response to such opposition, however, President Obama has indicated that there might be some compromises, allowing development of some additional booster capabilities and a very long-range plan to go to Mars, maybe by 2030.

This history of space flight points to one obvious fact. Our willingness to support a full space program must rely on something

beyond its economics. Forget all the talk about how the space program pays for itself in innovations that filter down into society. That is absolutely true, but taxpayers want something for their money right now, not down the road. "Why should I pay for a bunch of people to bounce around the moon when we have problems enough of our own right here on earth?"

The only reason we were able to move so quickly from the first man in space to the first man on the moon had to do with their respective nation-alities, Russian and American. As has been so well documented elsewhere, the sole impetus for the "Space Race" was the Cold War, not a love of science nor a "desire to explore." Lacking the military and international pressures to succeed in space, we are destined to a future of low-earth orbit.

There is one hope, however -- the Chinese. While we are winding down our ability to transport humans into space, the Chinese are embarked on their own visions of space exploration. Current Chinese plans call for a manned moon landing by 2020, followed by a mission to Mars. With the GDP of China growing at an aggressive rate, fueled in large part by America's desire to buy Chinese goods and borrow money from China to support our burgeoning federal debt, China is currently a better bet at beating us back to the moon. Once that reality starts to sink in, politicians will wring their hands at the "loss of American prestige," and voters will likely be more willing to support expensive and inefficient crash programs to try and catch up. There's nothing like a good international rivalry, a "death match to the finish," to stoke the fires.

Very little of this debate has to do with actual science. Oh sure, we all know that a human exploring the surface of Mars is much better than little can-do robots like the Spirit and Opportunity rovers. It goes without saying, however, that you can deploy an entire battalion of robots to cover the surface of Mars a lot more cheaply than sending fragile humans there. A broken robot can set back a program hardly at all. A dead human can set back a manned program by years.

But, alas, even our unmanned missions are suffering. In May, a review panel of scientists and engineers concluded that NASA is experiencing a decline in basic research, jeopardizing its ability to explore our solar system. NASA's ten research centers were found by the panel to be "marginally adequate." Most of the research centers are more than 40 years old and have been deferring needed maintenance for several years due to lack of funding. At the current rate of funding, said one panel member, "In five years the research community would not be able to support NASA's long-term goals."

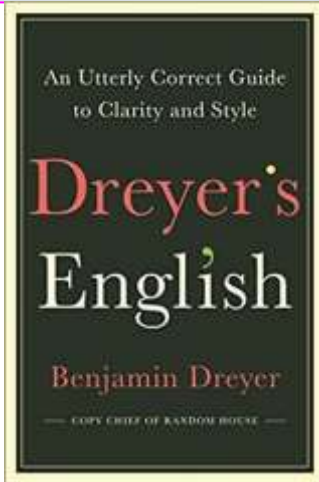
And it is not only space research that is suffering. Aeronautics research has seen a 50% decrease since 2005. America may soon lose its edge in basic research. The impact of such a tendency is much like eating the "seed corn" necessary for next year's crop.

Continued on Page [20](#)



Recommended Reading

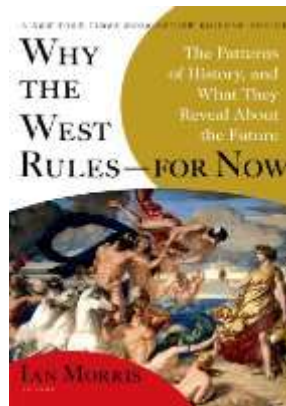
Click on the book's **image** for more info



A witty, informative guide to writing "good English" from Random House's longtime copy chief and one of Twitter's leading enforcers of proper grammar--a twenty-first-century Elements of Style.

As authoritative as it is amusing, this book distills everything Benjamin Dreyer has learned from the hundreds of books he has copyedited into a useful guide not just for writers but for everyone who wants to put their best foot forward in writing prose. Dreyer offers lessons on the ins and outs of punctuation and grammar, including how to navigate the words he calls "the confusables," like tricky homophones; the myriad ways to use (and misuse) a comma; and how to recognize--though not necessarily do away with--the passive voice. (Hint: If you can plausibly add "by zombies" to the end of a sentence, it's passive.)

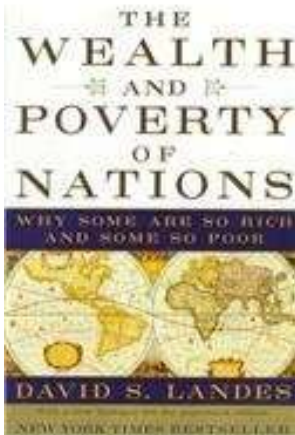
Sometime around 1750, English entrepreneurs unleashed the astounding energies of steam and coal, and the world was forever changed. The emergence of factories, railroads, and gunboats propelled the West's rise to power in the nineteenth century, and the development of computers and nuclear weapons in the twentieth century secured its global supremacy. Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, many worry that the emerging economic power of China and India spells the end of the West as a superpower. In order to understand this possibility, we need to look back in time. Why has the West dominated the globe for the past two hundred years, and will its power last?



The Wealth and Poverty of Nations is David S.

Landes's acclaimed, best-selling exploration of one of the most contentious and hotly debated questions of our time: Why do some nations achieve economic success while others remain mired in poverty? The answer, as Landes definitively illustrates, is a complex interplay of cultural mores and historical circumstance. Rich with anecdotal evidence, piercing analysis, and a truly astonishing range of erudition, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* is a "picture of enormous sweep and brilliant insight" (Kenneth Arrow) as well as one of the most audaciously ambitious works of history in decades.

For the paperback edition, Landes has written a new epilogue, in which he takes account of Asian financial crises and the international tension between overconfidence and reality.



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<https://skepticalinquirer.org/>

Evolve Fish is a source for freethought paraphernalia:

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The Matt Cooper

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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 &



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St Pete Atheists // Freethought Group

Moderated by: Gary Thompson

Contact: 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.
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Next meet: Check the meetup site above.

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University of South Florida Humanities Institute



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

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Monday, August 12, 2019

**Topic: What Are The Most
 Important Issues Facing Our
 Country Now?**

See our Meetup site:

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)
 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**: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HumanistFamiliesTampa/>

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

Thanks, **Jennifer Hancock**



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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.



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By Norm R. Allen Jr.

Institute for Science and Human Values

There was a time in the not-too-distant past when I believed that it did not really matter who became the President of the U.S. I was of the opinion that any moron could reach that position without any serious damage being done to the nation.

However, President Donald Trump has quickly disabused me of that foolish notion. Trump is the most anti-intellectual, anti-science, hopelessly irrational, conspiracy-minded president in the history of this nation. And the damage that he could do to the world is truly terrifying. Recently, Trump has been in the news for his willingness to speak with President Kim Jong Un of North Korea about denuclearization. However, what has not received front-page news coverage is the fact that he has done so without the help of a White House science adviser.

According to a story by Coral Davenport in the New York Times: Trump is the first president since 1941 not to name a science adviser, a position created during World War II to guide the Oval Office on technical matters ranging from nuclear warfare to global pandemics.

As a businessman and president, Trump has proudly been guided by his instincts. Nevertheless, people who have participated in past nuclear negotiations say the absence of such high-level expertise could put him at a tactical disadvantage in one of the weightiest diplomatic matters of his presidency. ("In the Trump administration, science and advice have been made unwelcome," the Buffalo News, June 10, 2018, p. A4.)

The story goes on to quote R. Nicholas Burns, who headed negotiations with India about nuclear power for civilian uses during the Presidency of George W. Bush. Burns pointed out that without a powerful senior science adviser at the negotiations, the U.S. is at a clear disadvantage. "You can be sure the other side will have that," he said.



The article summed up leadership under Trump as "the death of science in shaping U.S. policy." As evidence supporting this disturbing claim, the story related: There is no chief scientist at the State Department, where science is central to foreign policy matters such as cybersecurity and global warming. Nor is there a

chief scientist at the Department of Agriculture. Trump last year nominated Sam Clovis, a former talk show host with no scientific background, to the position, but he withdrew his name and no new nomination has been made. (Emphasis added.)

The article pointed out that due to Trump's war on science, the Interior Department and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have done away with their committees addressing climate science. Moreover, the Food and Drug Administration eliminated its Food Advisory Committee that addressed the issue of food safety.

All of this is added to the long-known fact that government scientists complain that the Trump Administration is squashing their research. Trump is alienating scientists to the point where many of them are moving to other countries to do their research.

Trump is, in many ways, dumbing down the United States. Trump has taken the lead in attacking Obama's climate change policies. The article quoted William K. Reilly, head of the Environmental Protection Agency during the Presidency of George H.W. Bush. Reilly says that Trump's moves "will diminish the characterization of pollution as risky."

John Walke, who specializes in clean-air policy with the Natural Resources Defense Council, noted that EPA head Scott Pruitt, "wants to set a definition of clean air that is medically unsafe." Trump and his cronies are primarily interested in making money for big businesses, the environment and the people (and other animals) be damned. They are suppressing research that shows the relationship between surface mining and poor health. They see the Earth as a playpen with unlimited riches for the wealthy. However, it is good to know that some people will not sell out. The story pointed out that: In January, the majority of members of the Interior Department's National Parks System Advisory Board, which advises on management of national parks, resigned to protest Trump administration policies.

Tony Knowles, the former head of the board, said [Interior Department secretary Ryan] Zinke "appears to have no interest in confronting the agenda of science, the effect of climate change, pursuing the protection of the ecosystem." Trump loves playing to his deluded, ignorant base and their hatred of "elites," scientists and other smart people deemed too big for their britches.

All the while, the world continues to suffer at the hands of these ridiculously incompetent, unreasoning buffoons.

Norm R. Allen Jr. is the editor of two groundbreaking books,

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

For 21 years, Allen had been the first and only full-time African American secular humanist to travel the world promoting secular humanism. He has spoken on numerous radio and television shows including National Public Radio, and strengthened 72 humanist groups in 30 African nations. His writings have appeared in numerous books and encyclopedias, including VOICES FOR EVOLUTION, published by the National Center for Science Education.

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What are the steps?

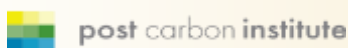
The first major hurdle will be the [special climate summit](#) called by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, which will be held in New York on 23 September.

Mr Guterres has been clear that he only wants countries to come to the UN if they can make significant offers to improve their national carbon cutting plans.

This will be followed by COP25 in Santiago, Chile, where the most important achievement will likely be keeping the process moving forward.

"And we need at COP26 to ensure other countries are serious about their obligations and that means leading by example. Together we must take all the steps necessary to restrict global warming to at least 1.5C."

Will the US be there?



Foundation beyond Belief



Calling All Humanists! FBB (along with [All Hands and Hearts: Smart Response](#)*) is deploying to Florida to help rebuild from Hurricane Michael—the strongest hurricane ever to pummel the panhandle. If you (or anyone you know) can join us Sept. 3rd-14th, FBB wants you! Communal housing, food, snacks, water, and training are all provided. Travel assistance is an option! Click [here](#) for more details.



Our next lecture series will begin in the fall. Watch this space!

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

Continued from page 1

The researchers don't speculate in their findings as to the consequences of this limited awareness for Australia's biodiversity, which is declining at calamitous rates even as the country's government is pilloried by conservationists for largely failing to take meaningful action. That so few people even comprehend what's being lost can't help, though.

"I suspect this is one contributor to Australia's biodiversity extinction crisis," Weston says. And Australia certainly isn't alone: one survey found that only one-third of Europeans say they know what biodiversity is.

Given the importance of public engagement, Weston and colleagues recommend that conservation communicators do a better job of explaining what biodiversity means when speaking to general audiences, or else use more intuitive language. The "balance of life," for example, or "richness of life," may better resonate.

"Perhaps, like commercial marketing campaigns, governments and the science community need to express the concept of biodiversity in a variety of ways to maximize engagement," they write. "More radically, the term could be avoided when engaging with the public."

That would be radical indeed. Yet if—to paraphrase the oft-quoted Senegalese forester Baba Dioum—people only conserve what they love, and only love what they understand, the reliance of scientists and conservationists on a term that many people don't understand is reason for concern.

Source: Kiley et al. "Modest levels of interpretability of the term 'biodiversity', mediated by educational level, among the Australian public." ©Pacific Conservation Biology, 2019.

About the author: Brandon Keim is a freelance journalist specializing in animals, nature and science, and the author of *The Eye of the Sandpiper: Stories From the Living World*. Connect with him on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Along with Americans United and the ACLU, FFRF prevailed in July against a constitutionally disdainful board of commissioners in Florida that had censored nontheistic invocations



"The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Brevard County Commissioners' policy of using religious beliefs to determine who can offer invocations at public meetings is unconstitutional, discriminatory and a violation of religious freedom," [the local paper reports](#). "The case was brought by the Freedom From Religion Foundation, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the American Civil Liberties Union and the ACLU of Florida on behalf of several nontheists whom commissioners have barred from offering invocations."



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

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

From our friends at the **British Humanist Association...**

Introducing humanism: non-religious approaches to life

Join **Sandi Toksvig** for an exploration of humanism and life's big questions.

The course covers a wide range of topics relevant to the study of any worldview: identity, knowledge, meaning, and morality. Featuring contributions from philosophers, representatives of humanist organisations, and members of the public, it encourages discussion and debate around life's big questions: *How can I know what is true? What is the best way to live? What kind of world do I want?*

You'll explore the tensions and dilemmas contained within a humanist view, as well as the arguments against it, and the responses humanists give to those arguments. Whether you are a humanist, religious, or none of the above, it should allow you the opportunity to reflect on life's bigger questions for yourself.

Launched in 2018, over **10,000 people** have already taken the course. Over 9 out of 10 would recommend it to others.

Join us for a conversation about the best way to live!

Course outline

Week 1: Humanism and the human being

Week 2: Understanding reality

Week 3: Making life meaningful

Week 4: Being good

Week 5: Humanism in practice: a better world?

Week 6: What is humanism?

Click [here](#) for more information and to register for Introducing humanism.



TBCoR Leadership Team 2019

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UUCH

Chris Brown,
MAF

Jenn Hancock,
GTBHF

Rick O'Keefe,
CFI, TBS

Jim Peterson - Facilitator
HSS, TBPC

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



Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – August, 2019 Calendar

This is produced from preliminary information. Check the individual Web sites to insure the event is being held, when & where We are not liable for changes, errors, or omissions.
Compiled by Rick O'Keefe & Jim Peterson. Your RSVP is requested, & often is required for admittance.
See our Meetup site for more: www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason



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

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

Extreme Heat in Miami Will Only Get Worse, Scientists Warn

Dr. Cheryl Holder was volunteering at the Overtown Music & Arts Festival this past weekend when an 11-year-old girl became extremely ill. The temperature was in the low 90s, but the heat index level — a combination of heat and humidity that more accurately explains what the temperature feels like — was closer to triple digits. Noticing the girl was displaying early stages of heat exhaustion, Holder provided water and cooled the child down with a cold compress until emergency medical technicians arrived.

Miami has broken heat records left and right this summer, but scientists say this is just the beginning. [A study published this morning by the Union of Concerned Scientists](#) reveals an extremely hot future for the Southeast United States.

"If we don't take drastic action to reduce carbon emissions, then most people in the United States will be experiencing a lot more killer heat days," says Juan Declet-Barreto, a climate scientist for the Union of Concerned Scientists and one of the report's authors. "We're putting millions of people in danger."

Florida averages 125 days per year with a heat index above 90 degrees Fahrenheit — the point at which outdoor workers can easily fall ill. Assuming no global action to reduce carbon emissions occurs, Florida can expect 166 "extreme caution" heat days by midcentury and 186 days by 2100. Florida has historically had about three weeks every year where the heat index tops 100 degrees, but Floridians can expect more than three months of temperatures in the triple digits by midcentury. Currently, four days on average have a heat index above 105 degrees, classified as dangerous by the National Weather Service, but that number is predicted to skyrocket to 63 days per year by midcentury and 111 by the century's end.

Limiting warming to 2 degrees Celsius (35.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels — the goal set by the Paris Climate Agreement — would minimize the frequency of extreme heat days in South Florida. Days above a heat index of 105 degrees Fahrenheit could be capped at 41 days per year.

"The more rapid reductions in carbon emissions we take today, the higher the possibility we can avoid the worst-case scenario of climate change," Declet-Barreto says.

The National Weather Service offers no calculation for a heat index above 137 degrees Fahrenheit. Such extreme temperatures are reserved for places such as Death Valley in California, where very few people live due to what the government agency calls "extreme danger" heat. Fewer than 2,000 people nationwide have experienced heat above 137 degrees, but by the end of the century, 13 million will have experienced those conditions. Florida currently averages zero off-the-chart heat days in any given year, but Floridians can expect two weeks a year to be 137 degrees or hotter if the current rate of warming and emissions continues.

"We keep waiting for 2050 to look for these magical changes in our climate," Holder says. "It's not 2050 — it's right now." Holder, a physician in Little Haiti and the co-chair of Florida Clinicians for Climate Action, says Miamians are already feeling the health consequences of climate change. Extreme heat waves are the number one climate killer in the world, exacerbating issues with the cardiovascular system and causing health complications such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma. Dehydration is another major concern, particularly in children because they lose sweat much faster and are more susceptible to overheating. Those who work outside all day, such as in the construction and agricultural industries, will need access to water and cool-down stations to reduce their body temperature. Society's most vulnerable populations — children, the elderly, and the poor — will be most adversely affected by heat waves. "Environmental justice and climate resiliency need to become one," Holder says.

(UPDATE: According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, Miami averaged 16 days per year with a heat index at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit from 1971 to 2000. The city can expect that number to multiply by seven times to 114 days by the middle of the century and by nearly ten times to 153 days per year by the end of the century. Days with a heat index level of 105 degrees will grow from an average of one per year to 59 by mid-century and 119 by 2100. Sunstroke, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion are likely health consequences at such extreme temperatures, according to the National Weather Service, and heat stroke is possible with prolonged exposure or physical activity.)

Metropolitan construction materials such as cement, glass, and steel store heat faster than they release it, so urban areas often have higher temperatures than surrounding rural areas with more trees and land cover. "Florida is ground zero for the impacts of climate change," Declet-Barreto says. "Floridians know climate change is happening because they are living it."

JESS NELSON | JULY 16, 2019 FL CLIMATE

Space Exploration - Continued from page 12

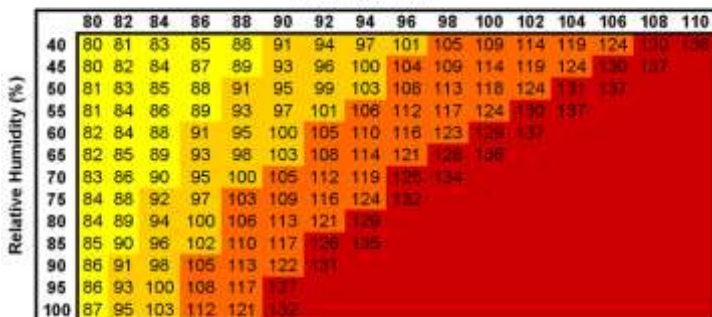
There will always be a vigorous debate over the relative advantages and disadvantages of manned versus unmanned space missions. What would be unforgivable would be an abandonment of both. Other nations, like China or India, will take up the slack.

We will undoubtedly maintain our unbeatable lead in armaments, with America currently responsible for over 40% of the world's expenditures on defense (China is a distant second with 6%). In the last ten years, Pentagon spending, unrelated to the "War on Terror" or the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, has increased by 39%. Few are complaining about a lack of funding.

We all "support the troops," but surely there's enough spare change somewhere to fund the space program. Until we voters demand more -- and it is unlikely we soon will -- Gene Cernan will be the last American on the moon. The next human on the moon will likely be carrying a Chinese flag.

NOAA's National Weather Service

Heat Index
Temperature (°F)



Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure or Strenuous Activity

Caution Extreme Caution Danger Extreme Danger