



The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Freethought News



Vol. 8 No. 12, December, 2019

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

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* TBCoR member	

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

Why are we Moral?

As never before, our society is in the grip of a moral crises.

Because morality is an artifact of human culture, it is continuously modified by the internal and external experiences of the society that shaped it. Thus, it can never be said to be wholly objective.

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

We are very honored to present Dr. Doug Mann in a consideration of this most important issue. The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason is presenting Dr Mann as part of its continuing program in bringing distinguished thinkers such as Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins, Herb Silverman, and many others to our Tampa Bay area.

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

Saturday, February 8th at 10 AM is the time and the UUC Octagon 2470 Nursery Rd. in Clearwater is the place.. Tickets are available for \$25. Head to www.tampabaycor.net to get more information and buy a ticket online soon.

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

~~

Talk Up Secular Values

The holiday season provides opportunities for conversations. If you're able to, re-educate yourself, family, and friends about holidays like Christmas and share with others why you're not religious. You can even host a living room conversation where participants practice being open and curious about all perspectives, with a focus on learning from one another.

Listen to local Freethought Views and News on **You Tube®** Atheist

Forum, provides information and opinion from a secular Point of View. More coming soon....



Volunteer

Humanist volunteers emphasize that religious affiliation isn't necessary for compassion, social responsibility, and proactive responses. Help those affected by disaster, consider joining Foundation Beyond Belief's **vast volunteer network**.

Write to your Representatives.

Your elected officials are all in office to represent you—but they need to hear from you. Policymakers depend on receiving information and guidance from their constituents and other citizens when deciding how to vote on important issues. That's why various organizations have made it easy to make sure your ideas and values are heard and represented. Regularly check AHA's action page for information on how to contact your representatives about the latest issues affecting humanists and others.

Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Calendar

Judy Adkins

Web site

Jim Peterson

Newsletter

Jim Peterson & Rick O'Keefe

Back & current issues online at:

www.tampabaycor.net

Special Projects

Mark Brandt

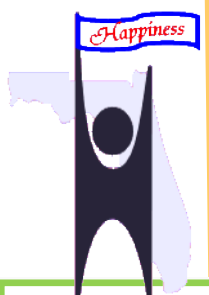
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event websites at:

www.tampabaycor.net &

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

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



The Humanist Society of the Suncoast

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

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

Science

The Summit of Human Achievement.

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

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

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

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

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

Jordan Williams, Brad Perryman, and Mike Kahn.

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

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



**Please
Join us in:**



The Dunedin Public Library

At 223 Douglas Ave. in Dunedin. ([map](#))
(NB. Avoid routing through downtown.)

**Saturday, December 14th
at 2:00 PM**

**Canceled by Library
Closure. See this program
in January 11th**

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



Tampa Bay Harvest



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

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

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

Vol. XXXII No. 12 December, 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 new treasurer, Scott Wilson scott33761@yahoo.com

If new, please fill out the form; if renewing just indicate your name & any changes from our previous information. Thanks!

Name: _____

Address -if new : _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: * _____

E-mail: _____

(Privacy respected)

**Send check made out to:
"Jim Peterson"**

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

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

*= 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 Dec. 15th at Applebee's at 5 O'clock for American style cuisine, and decidedly the best company:

Applebees

For map Menu

5110 E Bay Dr Clearwater, FL
33764

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

The Humorous Humanist

FORTISSIMO: The musical moment produced when someone serially slaps the first-violin section.

TATYR: A lecherous Mr. Potato Head.

DOLTERGEIST: A spirit that decides to haunt someplace stupid, such as your septic tank.

SARCHASM: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the recipient who doesn't get it.

CONRATEMPS: The resentment permanent workers feel toward the fill-in workers.

IMPOTIENCE: Eager anticipation by men awaiting their Viagra prescription.

REINTARNATION: Coming back to life as a hillbilly.

INOCULATTE: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.

HIPATITIS: Terminal coolness.

TATERFAMILIAS: The head of the Potato Head family.

OSTEOPORNOSIS: A degenerate disease.

SUCKOTASH: A dish consisting of corn, lima beans and tofu.

BURGLESQUE: A poorly planned break-in. (See: Watergate)

KARMAGEDDON: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like a serious bummer. JR

Humanist Society

of the **Suncoast**

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

Board of Directors.

Meets Sept., December, April

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

Emeritus members: Terry Eckstein, Dr. Jon Green, Mark Kligman, Dr. Jack Robinson, Dec. Jerry Moore, Anita Garcia, Mark Winterbottom, Sidney Goetz Dec. Bob Collette, Glenn Paul, Don Acenbrack Dec., Rob Byrch, Dec. Jackie Jordan, Brent Yaciw, Mike Hubbard, Matt Cooper Dec, Jim Butler, Marios Psomas, Dec

~*~*~*~*~

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



Bottoms up! Cocktails to imbibe with today's news

The Whistleblower: straight Ukrainian *horilka*, best served sweet (like justice)

ImPEACHment: peach sangria

ImpeachMINT: add some mint to that sangria!

Dirt on Biden: a black Russian using *horilka* instead of vodka

Quid Pro Quo: reveal damaging info on your host's political opponent and get a shot of whisky!

The Rude Rudy: a Manhattan with extra bitters and a splash of hot sauce

A Sobering Thought: herbal tea with a dash of honey (to help you sleep through it all)

and two specials (depending on your mood):

Orange Crushed: orange-flavored vodka, triple sec, and squeezed oranges over crushed ice

Pardon Me: gin, tequila, grenadine, orange and lime juice, and a splash of 7-Up



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

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

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

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



Humanist Quotes

On Happiness

"Reason, Observation and Experience – the Holy Trinity of Science – have taught us that happiness is the only good; that the time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others so."

– **Robert Green Ingersoll, *The Gods*, 1876**

"The happy life is to an extraordinary extent the same as the good life."

– **Bertrand Russell, *The Conquest of Happiness*, 1930**

"The secret of happiness is this: let your interests be as wide as possible and let your reactions to the things and persons that interest you be as far as possible friendly rather than hostile."

– **Bertrand Russell, *The Conquest of Happiness*, 1930**

"It is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving, it consists in professing to believe what one does not believe."

– **Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*, 1794**

"The things you really need are few and easy to come by; but the things you can imagine you need are infinite, and you will never be satisfied."

– **Epicurus, *Principal Doctrines*, C300 BCE**



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

Tipping Points

In [an interview](#) with the *Manchester Guardian*, Professor Tim Lenton at the University of Exeter, the lead author of a recent article on this subject, said: "As a scientist, I just want to tell it how it is. It is not trying to be alarmist, but trying to treat the whole climate change problem as a risk management problem. It is what I consider the common sense way."

"This article is not meant to be a counsel of despair. If we want to avoid the worst of these bad climate tipping points, we need to activate some positive social and economic tipping points [such as renewable energy] towards what should ultimately be a happier, flourishing, sustainable future for the generations to come." —Prof. Tim Lenton, University of Exeter

Citing campaigners around the world, including young people this year who kicked off global climate strikes, Lenton acknowledge that these people understand what world leaders seem unwilling to accept or act upon. "We might already have crossed the threshold for a cascade of interrelated tipping points," Lenton said. "The simple version is the schoolkids are right: we are seeing potentially irreversible changes in the climate system under way, or very close."

In their paper, the scientists write that "the consideration of tipping points helps to define that we are in a climate emergency and strengthens this year's chorus of calls for urgent climate action—from schoolchildren to scientists, cities and countries."

Despite the frightening warnings and the scale of the threat, the researchers are not trying to be doom-and-gloomers who say that nothing can be done.

In his comments to the *Guardian*, Lenton said, "This article is not meant to be a counsel of despair. If we want to avoid the worst of these bad climate tipping points, we need to activate some positive social and economic tipping points [such as renewable energy] towards what should ultimately be a happier,

Continued on page 20

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: spaceexaminer@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/>

RAISING THE ALARM

Evidence that tipping points are under way has mounted in the past decade. Domino effects have also been proposed.



A. Amazon rainforest
Frequent droughts

D. Boreal forest
Fires and pests changing

H. Permafrost
Thawing

B. Arctic sea ice
Reduction in area

F. Coral reefs
Large-scale die-offs

I. West Antarctic ice sheet
Ice loss accelerating

C. Atlantic circulation
In slowdown since 1950s

G. Greenland ice sheet
Ice loss accelerating

J. Wilkes Basin, East Antarctica
Ice loss accelerating

[enature](#)

Source: T. M. Lenton et al.

Atheists of Florida Inc.



For our Atheists helping the Homeless project -

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

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

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



The broadcast is on hiatus for now. Previous programs are available **on the internet** www.youtube.com/atheistforum. Tune in!

Contact us: info@atheistsoffloridainc.org



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.
- * Defend the separation of church & state *at all levels of government* as guaranteed by the Constitution.
- * "To Smell the Roses Along the Way"

Next meet: Check the meetup site above.

Dec. Events

[Find details by clicking here](#)

meetup

Be sure to check for changes and RSVP!

**Dec. TBD.
4PM**

Que Pasa Rest.
10466 Roosevelt Blvd. with
St Pete Atheists

**Dec 15th
5PM** (See
Pg. 3) Apple -
bees Largo

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

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

Starts Jan. 8!

From AoF; stay tuned for more details.

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

Atheist
COMMUNITY
of Polk County

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

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

The Atheist Community of Polk County (ACPC), an affiliate of American Atheists, has launched a campaign supporting homeless and in-transition students in the Polk County Public School (PCPS) District.

"As part of our growing organization's commitment to giving back to our communities, we have been looking at a variety of organizations and charities to support and partner with," said Sarah Ray, co-founder and Director of ACPC. For more, see:

<http://polkatheists.org/> or <https://www.meetup.com/Atheist-Community-of-Polk-County>

Saturday, December 7th,
The Socrates Cafe

An open discussion hosted by **Brent Hardaway**

~ **Do Humans need a Higher Power?** ~

One difference between humans and the animal kingdom is our spirituality. Evidence of ritual ceremonies that point to some sort of attempts at communication with the transcendent extend far back into prehistoric times. In modern times, this has been explained in various ways – humans felt afraid, and longed for protection from the forces of nature. They desired enough crops and clothing for survival, and felt helpless in and of themselves to provide it, and looked to their gods to provide them. Various other theories of wish fulfillment or projection have also been proposed. Along with these ideas also came the belief that as science and modernity progressed, the forces of nature would be explained and also provide increased relief from material want. This would eventually cause religion and the belief in God or gods to die out.

Where do things stand today? While institutional religion (esp. Christianity) in the West has experienced a decline, an interest in other forms of spirituality seems to be creeping into its place. And in places like Africa and Asia, Christianity is growing along with modernity and economic development. Other world religions remain numerically strong in their traditional homelands. Is it possible that humans have a hunger within them that seeks a connection with something that transcends ourselves and the universe in which we live? Some (though not all) atheist thinkers have concluded that without the existence of a higher power, objective morality and duties cannot exist. But this does not sit well with most humans, as they find themselves having moral convictions that we believe everyone “ought” to follow.

Join us for another spirited discussion, and join us for dinner and drinks at the Independent Bar And Cafe afterwards!!

Join us for another fascinating discussion, then for dinner/ drinks at The Independent (5016 N. Florida Avenue) afterwards! Join us **Dec. 7th at 3 PM in the Seminole Heights Branch Library, 4711 N Central Ave, Tampa, FL, 33603**
Be sure to RSVP!
Meatup



Thoughts on War

If America's wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia, and Yemen prove anything, it's that every war scars our planet -- and hardens our hearts. Every war makes us less human as well as less humane. Every war wastes resources when these are increasingly at a premium. Every war is a distraction from higher needs and a better life.

Despite all of war's uses and abuses, its allures and temptations, it's time that we Americans showed some self-mastery (as well as decency) by putting a stop to the mayhem. Few enough of us experience “our” wars firsthand and that's precisely why some idealize their purpose and idolize their practitioners. But war is a bloody, murderous mess and those practitioners, when not killed or wounded, are marred for life because war functionally makes everyone involved into a murderer.

We need to stop idealizing war and [idolizing](#) its so-called warriors. At stake is nothing less than the future of humanity and the viability of life, as we know it, on Spaceship Earth.

(See page 20)

The [Turin Shroud](#) is a Fake.

That is the verdict of Catholic Bishop Pierre d'Arcis who has written to tell the Pope it was “a clever sleight of hand” by someone “falsely declaring this was the actual shroud in which Jesus was enfolded in the tomb to attract the multitude so that money might cunningly be wrung from them”.

Admittedly, since Bishop d'Arcis was writing in 1390, to Pope Clement VII rather than [Pope Francis](#), this is not exactly new news.

But since some have refused to believe the bishop's findings, or the [1988 carbon dating](#) showing the shroud was from the medieval, not the [Biblical](#) era, or the subsequent debunking of claims disputing the carbon dating, scientists today are still studying the [Turin Shroud](#). Perhaps more difficult to dismiss than medieval bishops was the evidence of 20th Century scientists from the University of Oxford, the University of Arizona and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, who were allowed to carbon date samples of the shroud in 1988.

After three separate tests in laboratories in Arizona, Oxford and Zurich, the scientists stated with 95 per cent confidence that the shroud dated from 1260-1390, (a date range which happened to include the first documented references to the cloth).



17
years in
Florida



Living Humanist Values: The Ten Commitments

by [Kristin Wintermute](#) • 27 August 2019 *The Humanist*
[Download a PDF version of The Ten Commitments](#)

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF HUMANISM?

How does one live as a humanist?

Like many of you, I have read a plethora of articles and longer works defining humanism. Each proclaims a different emphasis highlighting various aspects of what is valued by humanists. Some declare humanism to be a religion, a life stance, or a worldview, while others profess it to be a progressive philosophy, an ethical perspective, or a belief system. Usually, an array of principles is provided as a list of what's key to humanists—affirming human worth and dignity, reason, compassion, morality, ethics, democracy, scientific inquiry, naturalism, and critical thinking with no adherence or affirmation of a divine creator or other supernatural force. None of the definitions are entirely conclusive, and all are correct in outlining the fundamentals of humanism.

However, this brings little clarity to what humanism is or how one lives as a humanist. Without a definitive set of beliefs, dogma, or scripture, humanism appears nebulous, which is the main reason we at the American Humanist Association

*Rick
O'Keefe,
Branch
Coordinator*



Center for Education have developed the Ten Commitments.

Whereas the Ten Commandments of the Hebrew Bible are a set of strict rules dictated by God, the Ten Commitments stand on their own as humanist values to maintain and strive to practice daily. They propose we put our values into action to work towards positively impacting our communities and society. In their simplicity, the Ten Commitments ultimately define what we are about and what we stand for. I also see the Ten Commitments as an avenue for collaboration—a gathering point for all humanists to work together.

Now, having grown up humanist and having worked in a variety of professional capacities in the movement, I'm very aware that within humanist circles, independence of mind is a significant priority—a venerated value for those who feel they narrowly escaped the confines of a religion that was “commanding” and, in some cases, repressive. And so many may initially feel the Ten Commitments smack of a directive authority and should be rejected.

However, I think the Ten Commitments are less about absolutes and serve more as a guide to putting our beliefs into action. They hold us accountable to our values. They ask humanists to be proactive versus reactive. They demonstrate that being humanist involves doing what is inherently right to ensure the well being of everyone and everything in this world. They inspire me to be better as a person and do better as a humanist.

It is my hope that readers find similar value in them. (A simpler version has also been developed for use in educational settings with younger humanists and in various other promotional ways). The AHA Center for Education plans to build a curriculum around the Ten Commitments that would also appeal to others in a variety of secular settings, such that the Ten Commitments become not only widely accepted character education, but a guide within professional settings promoting health and wellness.

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



The “post-truth” era indisputably proves that there is a great need for an organization like the Center for Inquiry, which champions facts, reason, truth, science, and secularism. During a time where ideas are under threat by the changing tides of national and global events, everyone who shares these core values will be needed. CFI needs your help to be part of the solution, to join the good guys. <http://bit.ly/2pTDfEj>

Cosmocracy, We Hardly Knew Ye

Tom Flynn, *Free Inquiry*, Vol. 39, No. 6, October / November 2019

I believe at some future day, the nations of the earth will agree on some sort of congress which will take cognizance of international questions of difficulty and whose decisions will be as binding as the decisions of the Supreme Court are upon us.

The words, amazingly enough, are those of Ulysses S. Grant in 1873, when he was president of the United States.

At a national freethought conference held in August 1878 at Watkins (now Watkins Glen), New York, Vermont freethinker Lucian Scott gave an address in which he foresaw “an international system of police of sufficient force to keep the peace of the world, and let the nations and the churches fight out their battle with the force of logic in the halls of legislation and the schools of learning.”

At the turn of the twentieth century, H. G. Wells imagined a future “world state” ensuring peace and human welfare. (Okay, it was a world state comprising only the globe’s English-speaking countries, but still.) When the League of Nations rose from the ashes of World War I, idealists hoped it might develop into a world state. But the Great Powers were loath to share the tools of military coercion, so the world body collapsed after its impotence in the face of fascism became manifest.

As World War II ground on, the dream of world government gained renewed momentum. It came to be called “world federalism,” because it envisioned national governments subordinating themselves to a world body rather as American states were subordinate to their federal government.

Full article: <http://bit.ly/2Jht1F3>

One Thing You Can Do: [Know Your Climate Facts](#)

By Susan Shain, *The New York Times*, Nov. 20, 2019

Sometimes, Thanksgiving dinner comes with a side dish of climate denial.

Whether it’s grumbling about “the climate hoax” from your parents, a sibling or that cousin you rarely see, it’s time to get ready in case climate myths come up at the dinner table. Here are 10 resources to refresh your understanding of our warming planet.

Websites and Fact Sheets

Being all-volunteer means CFI urgently needs volunteers, members, & donors.

Might you become one?

Skeptical Science — This stalwart’s “Arguments” page lists 197 common myths about climate change (“It’s the sun”) alongside what the science actually says (“In the last 35 years of global warming, sun and climate have been going in opposite directions”). It’s all backed by abundant research.

Climate Change: How Do We Know? — With a multitude of visuals, and using language that you don’t need to be a rocket scientist to understand, NASA dissects the evidence, causes and effects of climate change. You might want to bookmark the FAQ page.

What on Earth Is Going On?

Sign up for our weekly newsletter to get our latest stories and insights about climate change — along with answers to your questions and tips on how to help.

The 12 Questions Every Climate Activist Hears and What to Say — This PDF from The Climate Reality Project will arm you with evidence-based answers to the “most common arguments against man-made climate change.”

Podcasts

The Origin of Climate Denial — It’s important to remember that climate change wasn’t always questioned. This engaging episode of WNYC’s “The United States of Anxiety” explores how we went from broad climate consensus to having a persistent denial movement.

Today I Learned: Climate — You can’t really argue with MIT scientists. Well, you can, but you’ll probably lose. These nine bite-size podcasts from the Massachusetts Institution of Technology interview professors on topics like clouds, carbon pricing and geoengineering.

The climate crisis is an oceans crisis — On a recent episode of his podcast, Ezra Klein, a co-founder of Vox, had a smart discussion with Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, a marine biologist, about the water that covers more than 70 percent of the planet and the hundreds of millions of people who depend directly upon it.

Videos

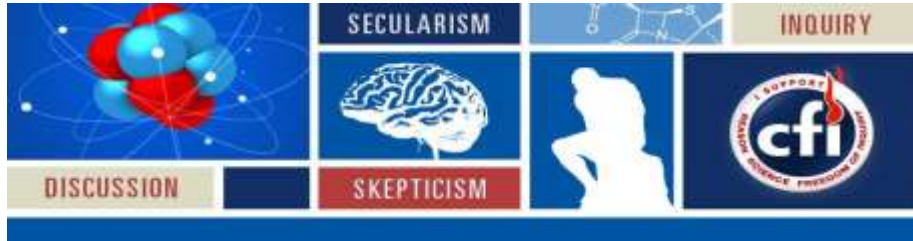
Why Climate Change Is Anti-Justice — Talia Buford, a ProPublica reporter, offers an introduction to the subject of environmental justice on the PBS show “Hot Mess.” Also worth a click: this video from its sister show “It’s Okay to Be Smart” explaining where that “97 percent of climate scientists agree” statistic originated, and this video divvying climate science into 24 parts.

(Continued on page 11)



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2002. Only
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we succeed.

From *The Morning Heresy*

Eric Rasmusen is a tenured economics professor at Indiana University who, among other things, **believes women are ruining academia**, that gay men are similarly problematic for being “promiscuous and unable to avoid abusing students,” and that black students are, as the *Post* reports, “unqualified for attendance at elite institutions and are academically inferior to their white counterparts.” But the university can’t fire him! So here’s what they did. <http://bit.ly/2QI81vp>

Clarence Mason Weaver, a member of Trump’s black outreach advisory board, could find a lot of common cause with Rasmusen...except for the fact that he’s black, of course. Weaver says **women should be “handmaidens”** and “be submissive,” and that men “don’t want to be around [women] in a business.” He also says “homosexuality is an abomination. Not just a sin. It’s an abomination.”

Jonathan Thompson at *National Geographic* reports on **the rise of “UFO tourism,”** which, alas, is not about traveling by UFO. He speaks to Area 51 tour guide Nate Arizona (and yes, that is the same name as the guy with all the babies in *Raising Arizona*), and it’s not encouraging:

“I think paranormal tourism is growing for one simple reason — more people are believing in it,” he adds. “Improvements in technology, particularly mobile phones, means there’s far more evidence of the paranormal being collected. There’s so much documentation out there now that you have to really step back and re-evaluate things, and tours like this are great for that kind of perspective.”

*For I dipt into the future, far as human
eye could see
Saw a Vision of the world, and all the
wonder that would be ...
Till the war-drum throbb’d no longer
and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the
Federation of the world.*

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “Locksley Hall” (1842)

Science as a system is
better at answering
questions about the real
world than any other human
system. ~ Franklin Veaux



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A division of the Center for Inquiry

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2nd Sunday annually— **Human Rights Day**

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22nd—**Winter Solstice**

Brandon—Thank Goodness for Godless Friday Nights

E. Clearwater—Howard’s Skeptic’s Corner

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

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

(Continued from page 9)

Editors' Picks

What Happened to the Stolen Gold Toilet?

Stop! Don't Charge Your Phone This Way

Respect the Hustle of Soda Can Raccoon and Murder Cat

13 Misconceptions About Global Warming: Got six minutes? Then watch Derek Muller, host of the YouTube channel Veritasium and holder of a doctorate in physics education research, offer humorous rebuttals to more than a dozen common climate myths.

Short Books

The Madhouse Effect: In just 208 pages, the climatologist Michael E. Mann and the cartoonist Tom Toles dismantle climate change denial with the help of witty writing and cartoons.

What Is Climate Change? This 112-pager from Gail Herman, which made Yale Climate Connections' list of recommended books for children, will allow you to learn the science of climate change alongside your kids.

There you have it. As Jamie Margolin, the 17-year-old co-founder of Zero Hour, a youth-led environmental justice group, said: "It's the one-on-one conversations that are slowly but surely going to change the political climate on, well, the climate."

Western civilisation is an idea worth defending—and reapplying

We need liberal values of freedom and markets more than ever, says Joe Lonsdale, an entrepreneur and investor
By Joe Lonsdale, *Open Future*, Aug 3rd 2018

In recent decades, the idea of "Western civilisation" has found few fans on American campuses. In a haze of ethnic studies programmes and Stanford's chants of "Hey, hey, ho, ho, 'Western Civ' has got to go!", many people have lost sight of the principles that make "the West" exceptional.

Like all civilisations, the West's evolution included terrible violence, such as the subjugation of the native populations in North America and the slave trade. Its history was often ugly and racist, from the idea of "the white man's burden" that was used to justify colonialism to the pseudoscience of eugenics. These noxious episodes lead critics to claim that Western principles are vacuous: a mask for unrepentant imperialism or merely the philosophy of a simpler age. But that is plain wrong.

Read the article here: <https://econ.st/2PBHm2S>

There is today almost no scientific theory which was held when, say, the Industrial Revolution began about 1760. Most often today's theories flatly contradict those of 1760; many contradict those of 1900. In cosmology, in quantum mechanics, in genetics, in the social sciences, who now holds the beliefs that seemed firm sixty years ago? Yet the society of scientists has survived these changes without a revolution, and honors the men whose beliefs it no longer shares. No one has recanted abjectly at a trial before his colleagues. The whole structure of science has been changed and no one has been either disgraced or deposed. Through all the changes of science, the society of scientists is flexible and single-minded together, and evolves and rights itself. In the language of science, it is a stable society.

— Jacob Bronowski as quoted in *American Journal of Physics*.

God-loving people will not appreciate this, so send it enclosed with your seasonal greetings:

<http://bit.ly/2WyLRN4>

"Holy Horrors: Religious slaughter through the centuries"

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>

New & Beautiful ~

- ◆ *Free Inquiry* Magazine and Council for Secular Humanism
<https://secularhumanism.org/>
- ◆ *Skeptical Inquirer* Magazine and Committee for Skeptical Inquiry
<https://skepticalinquirer.org/>
- ◆ *The Humanist* <https://thehumanist.com/>

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. Secular government. Free inquiry. Critical thinking. Humanist values. This is the Center for Inquiry. *Join us or donate, we need you* —
<http://bit.ly/2pTDFej>



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!](#)



Presidential Curse & the Election of 2020

[Timothy Redmond](#), *Skeptical Inquirer*, [Volume 43, No. 6](#)
November/December 2019

As the 2020 presidential election approaches, talk of the presidential death curse has been renewed. Yet this hex has more to do with human psychology than the malevolent musings of a nineteenth-century medicine man.

In November 1811, Governor William Henry Harrison of the Indiana Territory led a detachment of nearly one thousand soldiers on a mission to disband the Native American village of Prophetstown. The settlement, founded by the Shawnee chief Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa, or the “Prophet,” served as the headquarters of a tribal confederacy that opposed the United States’ encroachment upon native lands (Mahon 1991).

As the governor’s soldiers established a camp at the confluence of the Wabash and Tippecanoe Rivers, Tenskwatawa daubed his warriors with sacred clay, assuring them that the white man’s bullets would turn to mud, and ordered them to attack. What became known as the Battle of Tippecanoe was a quick, albeit brutal, affair. Contrary to the assurances of the Prophet, several Indian fighters succumbed to the hail of gunfire unleashed by Harrison’s forces, and the natives were compelled to abandon both the battlefield and their village. Soon thereafter, the governor’s men marched on Prophetstown and burned it to the ground (Mahon 1991).

Several months later, the United States declared war on Britain in the War of 1812. Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa’s confederacy allied with the Crown and proceeded to wreak havoc on the American frontier. In October 1813, however, Harrison won a decisive and far-reaching victory over the Shawnee brothers at the Battle of the Thames in Ontario, Canada. In fact, Tecumseh’s death during the fight would result in the dissolution of his confederacy, the end of native resistance east of the Mississippi River, and the establishment of U.S. hegemony over the Great Lakes frontier (Mahon 1991).

But the Battle of the Thames did more than change the course of American history. It also contributed to the canon of American lore. Indeed, legend holds that Tenskwatawa avenged the death of his brother by placing a hex on his archenemy and other future U.S. presidents. The Prophet allegedly exclaimed, “Harrison will die, I tell you! And after him every Great Chief chosen every 20 years thereafter will die. And when each one dies, let everyone remember the death of my people” (Mikkelsen 2014).

This malediction, commonly referred to as the Curse of the Prophet, was apparently set in motion when William Henry Harrison was elected president in 1840. Sure enough, “Old Tippecanoe” succumbed to pneumonia just one month after taking office. Abraham Lincoln was elected in 1860 and shot to death by John Wilkes Booth in 1865; James Garfield was elected in 1880 and assassinated by a disgruntled office seeker in 1881; William McKinley was elected in 1900 and shot to death by an anarchist in 1901; Warren G. Harding was elected in 1920 and died of a heart attack in 1923; Franklin D.

Roosevelt was elected in 1940 and died from a cerebral hemorrhage in 1945; and John F. Kennedy was elected in 1960 and assassinated three years later by Lee Harvey Oswald. In all, seven Great Chiefs, chosen every twenty years, had died while in office.

Is this curse a tall tale or an unsettling portent? Find out here –the rest of the article: <http://bit.ly/2XLqWXN>

1,800 Studies Later, Scientists Conclude Homeopathy Doesn’t Work

A major Australian study debunks homeopathy—again
By Erin Blakemore, [smithsonian.com](http://www.smithsonian.com), March 11, 2015

Perhaps you remember when scientists debunked homeopathy in 2002. Or 2010. Or 2014. But now a major Australian study analyzing over 1,800 papers has shown that homeopathy, the alternative treatment that relies on super-diluted substances and the principle of “like cures like” is completely ineffective.

After assessing more than 1,800 studies on homeopathy, Australia’s National Health and Medical Research Council was only able to find 225 that were rigorous enough to analyze. And a systematic review of these studies revealed “no good quality evidence to support the claim that homeopathy is effective in treating health conditions.”

The Australian study, which is the first position statement relying on such an extensive review of medical literature, strikes the latest blow at a 200-year-old alternative treatment developed by a German physician with “no interest in detailed pathology, and none in conventional diagnosis and treatment.” The Washington Post reports that the study’s authors are concerned that people who continue to choose homeopathic remedies over proven medicine face real health risks—including the nearly 4 million Americans who use homeopathic “medicines.”

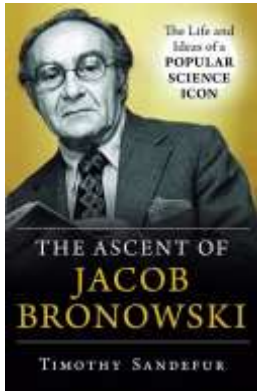
The head of the National Health and Medical Research Council told the Guardian that he hopes the findings will lead to changes in Australia’s health insurance and pharmacy systems. But he also said that “there will be a tail of people who won’t respond to this report, and who will say it’s all a conspiracy of the establishment.”

News of the Australian study comes on the heels of newly released National Health Interview Survey data showing a “small but significant” increase in the use of homeopathy during 2012. And recently, a Canadian homeopathic college came under fire for taking an anti-vaccination stance and promoting homeopathic “nosodes” as an alternative to vaccines.

But will the not-so-new news that homeopathy is ineffective keep consumers from wasting their money on the complementary therapy? If the growing homeopathic industry is any indication, the answer is probably no.

Recommended Reading

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

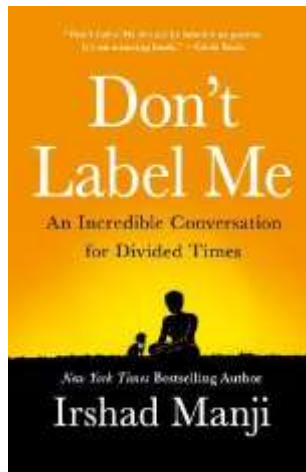


"Before Neil deGrasse Tyson, Richard Dawkins, and Carl Sagan, there was Jacob Bronowski, a world-class scientist, caring humanist, elegant poet, magisterial writer, and inimitable host of the first documentary science series, *The Ascent of Man*. That millennials and Generation Z are unfamiliar with his name makes this biography—the first of this Renaissance man—all the more vital, as science becomes ripped apart by political divisiveness and the need for a unifying message calls out for a voice. Listen to Dr. Bronowski and read this book." — Michael Shermer (See quote below)

In these United States, discord has hit emergency levels. Civility isn't the reason to repair our caustic chasms. Diversity is.

Don't Label Me shows that America's founding genius is diversity of thought. Which is why social justice activists won't win by labeling those who disagree with them. At a time when minorities are fast becoming the majority, a truly new America requires a new way to tribe out.

Studded with insights from epigenetics and epistemology, layered with the lessons of Bruce Lee, Ben Franklin, and Audre Lorde, punctuated with stories about Manji's own experiences as a refugee from Africa, a Muslim immigrant to the U.S., and a professor of moral courage, *Don't Label Me* makes diversity great again.



Seven Misconceptions that Hijacked the Holiday (And How We Can Take It Back)

Johnson argues that Christmas has been hijacked by seven different myths—seven myths that control how people conceive of and celebrate the holiday.

Modern Christmas celebrations serve as a source of conflict—and can make us anxious, stressed, fat, poor and stupid. Christmas owns us; we do what it wants, when it wants. But, Johnson argues, taking a close look at the history of the holiday, and the social, political and economic issues that surround it, can turn the tables and allow us to own Christmas once again. Christmas is not a Christians-only holiday. Christmas belongs to us all and we can each simply make it what we need it to be.



The most remarkable discovery made by scientists is science itself. The discovery must be compared in importance with the invention of cave-painting and of writing. Like these earlier human creations, science is an attempt to control our surroundings by entering into them and understanding them from inside. And like them, science has surely made a critical step in human development which cannot be reversed. We cannot conceive a future society without science. I have used three words to describe these far - reaching changes : discovery, invention and creation. There are contexts in which one of these words is more appropriate than the others. — **Jacob Bronowski**

The Matt Cooper

Humanist Lending Library

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

TITLE AUTHOR

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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
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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
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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 Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith, Editor
53. Science Friction Michael Shermer
54. Genius James Gleick
55. Inevitable Illusions Piatrelli & Palmarini
56. Demon Haunted World Carl Sagan
57. Being Right Is Not Enough Paul Waldman
58. Loser Takes All Mark Crispin Miller
59. Taking Back Politics Cathy Allen
60. Spiritual Common Sense Mark Lindquist (Gift by author)
61. Autobiography of Mark Twain Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith
62. The Skeptics Annotated Bible Various
63. 12 Vol Complete Works Robert Ingersoll
64. On Religious Liberty Roger Williams & Davis
65. The God Makers Baker & Hunt
66. Inevitable Illusions M. Piatrelli-Palmarini
67. Ain't Nobody's business If You Do Peter McWilliams
69. Bonk Mary Roach
70. What Money Can't Buy Michael J. Sandel
71. Financial Shenanigans Howard Shilit
72. Sex & God Darrel Ray, ED.D
73. Best American Non required Reading Dave 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



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



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

Bill Norsworthy, is our Florida representative.

Please sign up [here](#).

Volunteer activists are wanted, needed, & appreciated!

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

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

Atheists of Florida Wants You to be... Always Vigilant

Public school prayer events are generally billed as being student-organized in order to *appear* constitutional. But in reality, school staff are often actively involved, even to the extent that they're the ones organizing the event.

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

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

Thanks, WWW.aof.ngo

UU Humanists of Clearwater

at 2470 Nursery Rd. in Clearwater.
727-531-7704

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



University of South Florida Humanities Institute



More: <https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/institutes/humanities/events/>



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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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Tampa Bay Thinkers



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Monday, Dec. 9th 2019

Topic: What's the role of the United States military?

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

Humanist Families of Greater Tampa

Jennifer Hancock started this organization several years ago. It uniquely serves Humanist families with a variety of wonderful programs throughout the year. There is a strong emphasis on creative childrearing. Here, you can make connection with other families dealing with the problems of living in a society that is still hostile to an explicitly Humanist Way of life. Jennifer is author of several books including: *The Humanist Handbook*, *The Humanist Approach to Happiness*, & her latest book, *The Bully Vaccine*.



Humanist Families organizes social outings every month. These are opportunities to do something fun, socialize & enjoy each other's company. Sometimes we go to a park, sometimes a museum, sometimes we go swimming. Our group has grown over the past year to the point we now organize Tampa area outings & Manatee/Sarasota area outings every month.

Throughout the year we host parties like Darwin Day in February, World Humanist Day in June, Freethought Day at Disney in October & Carl Sagan Day in November.

Among our spin off groups, is a Parenting Beyond Belief group which gets together to discuss the challenges of raising children without religion. We are on **Facebook**: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HumanistFamiliesTampa/> See more at: <http://www.Jen-Hancock.com>.

Thanks, **Jennifer Hancock**

The Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers



The **MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH)** community was created for atheist & secular humanist military personnel stationed at MacDill Air Force Base, their families & retired military residing in the Tampa Bay area. MASH provides a valuable & much needed resource in which you will find common ground to socialize, discuss issues, & draw emotional support from like-minded members.

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

Co-Organizer:

MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB



USF Freethinkers

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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:

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TB-CoR Encourages

Ethical Humanism

Ethical Humanism, also called Ethical Culture, is an evolving body of ideas that inspires Ethical Societies. Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity (**Humanist Manifesto III**). For Ethical Humanists, the ultimate religious questions are not about the existence of gods or an afterlife, but rather, "How can we create meaningfulness in this life?" and "How should we treat each other?" The American Ethical Union was founded in 1877 by Felix Adler in New York, and currently has over 30 member societies.

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



Tampa Bay Technology Center & Thinkers Salon



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

Find us at:
www.tampa-bay.org

Why I Promote Freethought, Atheism, and Humanism



By Norm R. Allen Jr.
Institute for Science and Human Values

For some odd reason, many theists actually wonder why so many atheists believe that atheism is such a big deal. They say that atheists should simply disbelieve in God and remain silent about it. Boy, wouldn't religious leaders just love that? They could continue ruling- and ruining- societies, influencing public policy, starting and justifying wars, controlling people's lives and so on, without interference from open atheists.

First, I promote non-theism because I am deeply passionate about it, and because it matters. It matters that throughout the history of human civilization, most people have believed strongly in a Being for whom there appears to be no strong evidence whatsoever. Many theists are easy to lead astray, to manipulate, to oppress and to enslave. Many others do a great deal of harm in the name of God. Therefore, I am intellectually and morally obligated to stand uncompromisingly opposed to theism. I could not in good conscience run away from such a duty.

Skepticism, however, in the scheme of things, is just not nearly as important. While I am a skeptic and applaud those passionate skeptics that continue to critique paranormal beliefs, such beliefs generally do not pose great harm to humanity as a whole. No genocidal maniac has ever killed in the name of Big Foot or astrology. No one has been accused with the equivalent of blasphemy for critiquing a belief in UFOs. Paranormal believers do not determine the outcomes of major political elections. Fortune tellers do not try to force their outdated morality on the masses or try to force their beliefs to be taught and accepted in the public schools. For these reasons and others, skepticism will never be a priority in my life as is non-theism.

To be honest, I uncompromisingly promote non-theism because I have the courage to do it. Sadly, not many people have the intestinal fortitude to unflinchingly take on something as big, widespread and seemingly intractable as theism. Most non-theists do remain silent about their lack of belief. Their silence, however, only helps to perpetuate the age-old hoax of theism.

I promote humanism so that non-theists know that they have a secular alternative to theistic religion. They do not have to believe that they must send their children to houses of worship for moral instruction. There are secular ethical systems such as Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, consequentialist ethics, and so on. Moreover, while teaching children about secular ethics, we can teach them why it is important to have good reasons to support or reject ethical ideas. The Divine Command Theory (just do it because God commands it) is irrational and dangerous. It has led to widespread human misery throughout the millennia.

I promote non-theism so that non-theists understand that they can have a sense of community with like-minded people. They should not have to feel that they are all alone. There are millions of non-theists throughout the world, and they connect in real time or online.

I promote atheism to encourage atheists to have a sense of pride in who and what they are, and what they stand for. Why should one be ashamed to use her intellect fully where questions about God arise? Why should one be ashamed to hold a minority view? After

all, truth is not determined by popular opinion. Atheists should be proud that they can go through life without superstitious baggage and without believing that they cannot get through life without the aid of a possibly existent Being.

I promote atheism to show atheists that there are secular alternatives to organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous. People can recover from alcoholism and drug addiction without reliance upon a supposed Higher Power. Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS, or Save Ourselves) has been doing this for decades. I promote non-theism to show that there is a naturalistic alternative to supernaturalism and religious explanations. Instead of the Adam and Eve "theory" there is evolution by natural selection. Rather than believe that God creates stars, we have high-powered telescopes, such as the Hubble telescope, with which we can see how stars form naturally. Rather than believe that an angry God sends hurricanes, tsunamis, and earthquakes to harm humans and innocent animals, we can use science to describe the naturalistic causes of these kinds of phenomena. Rather than believing that God created every animal after its kind, we can draw upon science to describe the magnificent diversity of life.

Finally, some people ask: why must miserable, negative atheists rain on theists' parade by denying them their comforting illusions? First, I have never felt obligated to go along with a so-called Noble Lie simply because it is comforting. However, my main objection to this question is that the lie is not so noble. For example, while there are many elderly women that get through life by believing in God, many of those women voted for Donald Trump and what he represents. There are also many seemingly harmless elderly women that are patriarchal, homophobic religious bigots. Such is the paradox of religion. When I am fighting against the negative aspects of religion, I never feel compelled to protect anyone's comforting illusions. I honestly consider some believers to be collateral damage in the war against negative religion – a war that I must wage.

I dream of a world in which no atheist feels that it is better to stay in the closet about her atheism. I dream of a world in which atheists – like their religious counterparts – feel free to acknowledge their worldview and to state plainly, proudly and without fear, hesitation or regret, that they simply do not believe in God.



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

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

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.

Politics Anyone? Share your Opinions

Hello Secular Friends,

In the last few months, I've been working on launching a new project: The Secular Voices Panel. This will be a survey of nonreligious folk (atheists, agnostics, nones, or religious nontheists) about politics and the 2020 Elections. We're recruiting participants now and the plan is that from January to December they will get one short survey each month (no need to collect demographics since they will be pre-collected) about a specific theme, and also some horserace questions that will be repeated and adapted as the Presidential field gets clearer.

The link to join the [panel is here](#).

Thanks for your time.

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Thanks to Dr. Ryan Cragun



“Under God” wasn’t part of the original Pledge of Allegiance. Those two words were added to the Pledge in 1954, when the country was in the grip of McCarthyism and communist witch-hunt hysteria.

Before 1954, the Pledge affirmed that we were “one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Indivisible means we can rise above our differences, religious or otherwise. Liberty means the right to act and speak freely no matter what one’s faith or philosophy may be. And Justice, of course, means equal rights for all, regardless of whether or not we believe in a deity. The Knights of Columbus – a Catholic men’s group – led the lobbying effort to add “under God.” Now the Pledge is twisted, with divisive religious language that implies true patriots must be believers.

With “under God” added, the Pledge is not a statement of patriotism. Instead, extremist preachers and politicians point to the language to validate their view that those who don’t believe in God don’t belong. Religious or not, don’t say this altered Pledge. Until the Pledge is restored to its inclusive version, we can take it upon ourselves to refuse to

Foundation beyond Belief



Weathering the storms: Nearly 70,000 residents of the Bahamas were rendered homeless by Hurricane Dorian in September. So far, 600 remain missing and 56 are counted dead. The country reports 1.5 billion pounds of debris needs to be cleaned in one community alone.

The good news is that humanists responded in a big way, donating over \$22,000 in less than a month to our Humanist Disaster Recovery appeal for Dorian!

[Our appeal remains open](#) as we continue to monitor other storms, which so far have not posed a significant threat to communities.

participate in what’s become a discriminatory exercise. (Note: A Supreme Court case – West Virginia vs. Barnette – gives public school students the absolute right to sit out the Pledge, for any reason. Public schools might not tell you about this right, but if anyone questions you about sitting out the Pledge, contact the AHA’s Legal Center.)

Whether you are religious or not, you can make a statement for true inclusiveness. Support liberty and justice for all, and support indivisibility. Stand up for America by sitting down during the Pledge of Allegiance boycott until the inclusive version is restored.

[Learn more at boycottthepledge.com](http://boycottthepledge.com)



On the first Wednesday of each month, our popular Science, Technology & Medicine discussion group meets in Sarasota. Please note the starting time of 1:15pm.

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



Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

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

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

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

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

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

TBCoR is an alliance of groups identified with the secular / freethought / Humanist / Atheist movement.

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

Contact:

council@tampabaycor.net

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

Robert Peston delivers the Holyoake Lecture 2019: 'Mending a fractured society'



Robert Peston, journalist, broadcaster, and Political Editor at ITV News delivered the Holyoake Lecture 2019 to an audience of over 300 in central Manchester on Thursday 21 November.

No politician was spared criticism in a fast-moving and wide-ranging lecture on 'Mending a fractured society' – or 'Humpty Dumpty Britain'. Peston argued that though economies have their ups and downs, the shattering of the UK's legal, political, and social institutions could see our way of life suffer long-term and irreparable harm.

Peston noted that our standard of living has still not returned to pre-2008 levels, and that it may not do so until the middle of the next decade. He asked his audience to consider what effects this might have on the political culture and examined the changes in the nature of political campaigning and electioneering, suggesting that national newspaper headlines seemed almost an irrelevance in comparison to the growing influence of social media and targeted advertising.

He considered whether the 'broad church' nature of political parties – which have historically had to accommodate a wide spectrum of opinions due to the disproportionate effects of our 'first-past-the-post' voting system on smaller parties – could be coming to an end, with ideological 'purity' being valued more and more highly, and suggested that significant electoral reform measures could well be brought before Parliament regardless of who wins the next election. He also explored the corrosive effects of the increasing prevalent language of 'betrayal' in contemporary political rhetoric, and the threat that it poses to our democratic norms and institutions as society is increasingly divided into opposing camps and an embittered 'culture war'.

Humanists UK Chief Executive Andrew Copson, said, 'Robert Peston was an excellent Holyoake Lecturer, and his talk – in the middle of the general election campaign – could not have been more timely. As defenders of liberal democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and an evidence-based approach to public policy, humanists have a lot of work to do.'



TBCoR Leadership Team 2019

Judy Adkins
AoF

Bill Norsworthy,
UUCH

Mark Brandt,
UUCH

Chris Brown,
MAF

Jenn Hancock,
GTBHF

Rick O'Keefe,
CFI, TBS

Jim Peterson - Facilitator
HSS, TBPCC

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



Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – December, 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

“Tipping Points” From Page 5

flourishing, sustainable future for the generations to come.”

But the paper makes clear that the climate emergency is here in very profound ways.

“In our view, the evidence from tipping points alone suggests that we are in a state of planetary emergency: both the risk and urgency of the situation are acute,” the paper states. The researchers even provide a mathematical risk equation:

The group of scientists also acknowledge that some in the scientific community believe their warnings exceed what the available evidence shows when it comes to the threat of tipping points or the timeline:

Some scientists counter that the possibility of global tipping remains highly speculative. It is our position that, given its huge impact and irreversible nature, any serious risk assessment must consider the evidence, however limited our understanding might still be. To err on the side of danger is not a responsible option.

If damaging tipping cascades can occur and a global tipping point cannot be ruled out, then this is an existential threat to civilization. No amount of economic cost–benefit analysis is going to help us. We need to change our approach to the climate problem.

The Guardian spoke to Professor Martin Siegert at Imperial College London, about the researchers' paper and whether or not its warning comes in too heavy. “The new work is valuable,” Siegert said. “They are being a little speculative, but maybe you need to be.”

In the end, the new paper's conclusion was twofold: more needs to be known about these crucial tipping points and that only urgent action can stave off the urgent threat an increasingly hotter world.

“We argue that the intervention time left to prevent tipping could already have shrunk towards zero, whereas the reaction time to achieve net zero emissions is 30 years at best,” the paper states. “Hence we might already have lost control of whether tipping happens. A saving grace is that the rate at which damage accumulates from tipping—and hence the risk posed—could still be under our control to some extent.”

“The stability and resilience of our planet is in peril,” it concludes. “International action—not just words—must reflect this.”

Stop War - Now

Brown University's Costs of War Project concludes that post-9/11 wars in the Middle East have directly resulted in about 800,000 deaths, and have cost \$6.4 trillion. And, researchers warn that the true death toll is much higher, once the number of indirect deaths is factored in. A member of the project board writes that indirect deaths are estimated to be four times higher - well over three million total deaths. Note that this study does not include the thousands of people killed by the U.S. in Africa (e.g. Somalia, Libya, and Niger).

We must end our wars. By documenting and honoring the actions and accomplishments of antiwar activists we can cause an evolutionary shift in our culture, one that will inspire more Americans to publicly express their antiwar sentiments and work for peace.

MAKE ANNUAL DONATIONS UNTIL THE WARS ARE OVER.

Join us in honoring Americans who stand for peace, and help us end U.S. wars.



Please contribute - \$5, \$10, \$50 - whatever you can afford. We need your support to build a national monument to peace in our lifetime. [US Peace Memorial online donation.](https://www.uspeacememorial.org/Donors.htm)

Or consider making a donation of \$100 (or more) to become a Founding Member. You will be listed on our website (www.uspeacememorial.org/Donors.htm), in our forthcoming book, and eventually at the National Monument we will build in Washington, DC.

• **YES, I want to become a Founding Member by donating \$100 or more.**

[Founding Member signup.](#)

• **Or, mail your contribution to:**

US Peace Memorial Foundation
334 East Lake Road #136 • Palm Harbor, FL 34685.

Thank you for supporting our efforts to create a culture of peace.

Michael Michael D. Knox, Chair

US Peace Memorial Foundation

The Foundation directs a nationwide effort to honor Americans who stand for peace by publishing the [US Peace Registry](#), awarding the [US Peace Prize](#), and planning for the [US Peace Memorial](#) in Washington, DC. We celebrate these role models to inspire other Americans to speak out against war and to work for peace.