

The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

# Freethought News



Vol. 8 No. 5, May, 2019  
Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

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\* TBCoR member

### Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

#### Calendar

Rick O'Keefe

Web site

Jim Peterson

Newsletter

Jim Peterson

Special Projects

Mark Brandt

& Bill Norsworthy

See our event websites at:

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

This publication online at:

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

## Marios Psomas



Philosopher and Librarian for the Humanist Society has died.

A memorial celebration of life will be held on May 4th. His many friends and family members will celebrate his outstanding achievements, and share some moments of his life.

Marios will always be remembered for his impish sense of humor and wide ranging intellect. Among his many services to the Humanist Community, was his stint as treasurer which he carried out with his usual panache. His was a life marked by both curiosity and kindness- a wonderful humanist in all the ways that really mattered. JP



## The American Ethical Union

is having its annual conference in Tampa.

**20 - 23 June 2019**

**The 104th AEU Assembly Registration is now OPEN!**

Early bird prices end May 17th. This will be a great opportunity to hear from some leading ethical thinkers about some of the most perplexing problems we face.

American Ethical Union

2 West 64th Street #408, New York NY 10023  
[212-873-6500] [office@aeu.org] [aeu.org]



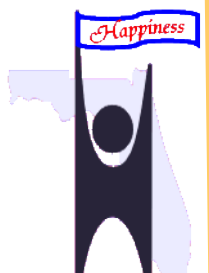
## Distinguished Humanist Pioneer in the Tampa Bay area to be honored

Edward L. Ericson, author of *The Humanist Way* (1988) and several other books on humanism, will be honored with the Felix Adler Lifetime Achievement Award at the AEU Assembly in Tampa. The ceremony will take place on Saturday, June 22 during the National Ethical Service luncheon. Look for registration soon so you can join us June 20-23 for "Reclaiming Democracy For All."

## 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 the 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 [Humanists of Florida](#), the [AHA](#), [COR](#), & [ASHS](#). Find us at [www.suncoasthumanist.com](http://www.suncoasthumanist.com)

**Dr. Frank Tedesco** is well-known for his research on the social and religious dimensions of Buddhism and the practice of abortion in Korea, as well as social engaged Buddhism in general and contemporary inter-religious affairs.

Frank has served as Visiting Professor of Korean Studies at the Academy of Korean Studies, Seongnam, South Korea, and as a lecturer in Asian Studies at the University of Maryland, Asian Division. He has also held various professorships at Sejong University, Dankook University and Yeungnam University in South Korea. Frank was Consulting Editor of Korea Journal (1988-1991) and editor of the World Fellowship of Buddhists 40th Anniversary Souvenir Volumes (1990) and Conference Report volumes (1990, 1994).

A prolific writer and scholar, Frank has over 25 publications to his credit in both English and Korean, translated numerous texts from Korean to English, and presented over 20 academic papers on Buddhism and related subjects. Frank enjoys promoting progressive activities within the Korean Buddhist world such as Join Together Society (JTS), the Buddhist Academy for Ecological Awakening, the Buddhist Coalition for Reform, Buddhist volunteerism and the world wide humanitarian work of Mother Park, a renown Won Buddhist kyomu (nun). Frank has regularly given talks at various temples in Seoul and around Korea, to Buddhist youth groups and international dharma teacher classes. He and his wife hosted a daily dharma and Korean/Sanskrit/English vocabulary lesson for a year on the national Korean Buddhist FM radio station BBS highlighting issues affecting Korean Buddhism today. The lessons were published in a popular monthly journal for general education about Buddhism. See more [here](#)

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



## Humanism

is a movement that concerns itself with all that threatens or enhances the prospect for human thriving in all respects.

## Notes on Preparing for a Good Death

and Auspicious Rebirth



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

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

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

Vol. XXXII No. 5 May, 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](mailto:marios_psomas@hotmail.com)

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address -if new : \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \* \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

(Privacy respected)

Send check made out to:

**"Marios Psomas"**

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

Humanist Society of the Suncoast, AHA  
1013 Connecticut Rd  
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

\*= optional

### List of Fake News Websites:

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

**The list:**

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





*Humanists work to build a world in which happiness is the enduring criterion of all policy.*

## What is the Humanist Way?

- ♦ **To extend** a human centered approach to the critical problems of life & society.
- ♦ **To encourage** attitudes of kindness, compassion, tolerance & a loving generosity in human relationships, & in our treatment of all life. These attitudes help us to see ourselves in the lives of others, & encourage appreciation for the remarkable diversity of human culture & experience.
- ♦ **To develop** & popularize the skills of creative & critical thinking that empower people to challenge prejudice, superstition & irrationality in every area of life. Such empowerment enables the individual to reach the highest levels of achievement.
- ♦ **To exalt** those artistic & imaginative expressions of life which have been the source of the greatest pleasure & enlightenment, & which reflect compelling human truths. Through music, literature, art, dance, & other expressions, we embrace the essence of what it means to be human.
- ♦ **To explore** the grounds of ethics & morality within the unfolding history of our evolving culture. Such knowledge will enable us to become effective protagonists for the happiness of the individual person. JP

## The Movable Feast

the Humanist Society's monthly social Dinner

Join us May 19 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

From the NEW WORDS section...

GINERATION: Inherited alcoholism

ELFORTLESS: Little people with no garrison

SISPENDED: When your female sibling is hung up

INTERLUBE: The time between oil changes.

COUPERAGE: Anger during a government overthrow.

PERVARICATION: Lies told by sex offenders to cover up.

PUTZCH: An insurrection by the clumsy.

LU GOO GAI PAN: a somber Chinese dish that produces unexpected hilarity.

CONPUTER: Device used by prisoners to calculate their escape.

MORF: Demand by audiences for Encores of the work of composer, Carl Orff.

Extra chuckle...

Petyer de Vries is pretty good at this. He said, "People used to be pagans and polytheists and believe in multiple gods, and then they started believing in one god. And they are getting nearer the true figure all the time." This is progress. Hitchens

## Humanist Society of the Suncoast

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

### Board of Directors.

Meets Sept., December, April

**Jay Alexander,**  
**Steve Brown,**  
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**Dave Kovar,**  
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~\*~\*~\*~\*

Jordan Williams, mail Publisher

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

## Need Psychological Counseling?

For a secular therapist, **click:**

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

### Or call:

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

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



## What humanists believe

Humanists accept that this is the only life we can know we have and that it is up to us to try to live it to the full. It is the responsibility of all of us to **co-operate in trying to find solutions to the world's problems and to preserve the planet for the future of humankind.**

Humanists agree that human nature and experience are the only sources of morality. When we make decisions and judgements about others, we try to use reason and humanity and to judge each situation on its merits. This means keeping an open mind and examining all the available evidence.

Humanists embrace the moral principle known as the Golden Rule. This means we believe that people should aim to treat each other as they would like to be treated themselves – with tolerance, consideration and compassion.

Being a humanist does not mean agreeing with other humanists about everything. Humanists can hold conflicting views about various ethical issues and political questions. On topics as varied as euthanasia and vegetarianism, the death penalty and drug decriminalisation, global warming and prostitution, humanists can be found arguing from different perspectives. The main point is that humanists engage in discussion in a spirit of free inquiry and try to use reason and evidence in support of their arguments. We are committed to dialogue and debate in trying to achieve consensus and compromise. We learn from each other and from many different thinkers, both historical and contemporary.

## What humanism is not

Humanism is not a godless religion, according to the commonly **understood definition of the word 'religion'.** Although it has certain principles, it has no laws, no scriptures, no dogma, no rituals, no gurus, no churches or temples.

Humanism is not a faith position, although it is sometimes described as such by religious believers. Faith implies a belief without testable evidence. An absence of belief in gods or the supernatural is not a faith. It is sometimes argued that believing in the capacity of human beings to behave morally and solve more problems than we cause is a faith, but **this 'faith' is based on our knowledge of what humankind has already achieved.**

Humanism is not just atheism and should not be defined narrowly in opposition to religion but as a positive alternative to it. Most humanists are atheists or agnostics (though many atheists and agnostics would not define themselves as humanists) but humanism is a more expansive worldview that is concerned about the well being of humankind, believes positively in human potential and celebrates human creativity and achievement. Some theists who don't blindly follow all the teachings of a religion and who use science and reason — rather than mythology and appeals to the supernatural — to understand the world, might also choose to define themselves as humanists.

Humanism is not scientism. Humanists value science as a means of developing knowledge but few humanists would argue that science holds the answer to everything.

Humanism is not individualism. Humanists believe that individual freedom is important but we believe also that considering the feelings of others and social co-operation are equally important.

See [Think Humanism](#) for more.



**Member, TBCoR,  
Hum Society, &  
AHA affiliate.**

Our regular meeting at N. Tampa Public Library has been cancelled for the summer. Check back later.

## Humanist Quotes

5/19

There is no humanist creed, no set of beliefs to which every humanist has to subscribe. Humanism is not a dogma or a sect...as human beings we can find from our own resources the shared moral values which we need in order to live together, and the means to create meaningful and fulfilling lives for ourselves.

**Richard Norman, [On Humanism \(Thinking in Action\)](#)**

The word 'humanism' has more than one meaning—Generally, it implies a desire to think for yourself; to 'do your own thing'; to accept the results of free inquiry, whatever they may be; and to act in accordance with those results, in the light of reason and in co-operation with others, for the promotion of human happiness.

**Barbara Smoker, [Humanism](#)**



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

## EcoSocialism

by [Jonathan Smolens](#)

What we dream about the future affects how we act today. If utopias express our desires, dystopias distill our fears.

**Utopias and dystopias** are images we invoke to think and act in the present, producing futures that often look very different from either our dreams or our nightmares.

An oft-repeated criticism against the green movement is that it is dystopian and catastrophist (some call this 'Malthusian') when it comes to its diagnosis, and utopian when it comes to its prognosis. On the one hand, greens warn of a scary future of planetary disaster, and on the other, offer a peaceful dreamland where people bike to their artisanal work and live in picturesque houses with well manicured food gardens and small windmills. Nowhere to see is a realistic political plan on how we could ever escape from the current capitalist nightmare, and move to something remotely close to an egalitarian and ecological future.

I won't deny that some green writings, especially in the 1970s and 80s (but also still today) merit this critique. But in the meantime, there has been a lot of new thought, under the labels of ecosocialism, degrowth, or environmental justice that cannot be caricatured and packaged in this simplistic mold. And yet this is what geographer, **Matt Huber** does in a recent article published at the Socialist Forum, entitled [Ecosocialism: Dystopian and Scientific](#). Huber argues that there are two types of green socialism, one that is utopian and unscientific, and one that is realistic and scientific, his.

### Tired dichotomies

Democratic socialism is a project in the making, and it is important to avoid tired dichotomies and divisions of the past, especially between green and not-so-green socialists. I find a lot to agree with in [Huber's socialist climate politics](#) and would fully sign on to his concluding agenda in the Socialist Forum piece, where he defends an 'inspiring and positive political program that can win the masses of the working classes ... built on the decommodification and universal access to [their] needs, but also a more radical and democratic vision of organizing production to integrate ecological knowledge' based on 'public transport, green public housing ... and public ownership of energy'. Yet, before that Huber argues that 'degrowth oriented ecosocialists' (his term), like us are too utopian, and not scientific. And here I disagree. What I want to argue is that, first, being utopian is not a problem as Huber makes it seem it is, and second, we are scientific, at least as scientific as Huber can claim his position is.

### Dialectical utopias

To begin with: what does Huber mean by 'utopian' and 'scientific'? By utopia, Huber, following Engels, understands a social arrangement that does not and cannot exist (a place that has no place, a *u-topos*). If such an arrangement cannot exist, then it is a waste and misdirection of our energies, Huber implies.

Forgive me the heresy, but thinking about utopias has progressed – fortunately – a lot since Engels' time. David Harvey, who Huber certainly reads, wrote a wonderful book on cities and utopias almost 20 years ago ([Spaces of Hope](#)). Harvey says we should oppose utopias that are meant as models or blueprints – not so much because they are unrealistic, but because the realization of a perfect ideal tolerates no objection and crushes everything that stands in its way. Harvey recognizes, however, the value of 'dialectical utopias' – contradictory and incomplete images that express desires about the future, that challenge and make us reflect, that generate conflict with prevalent visions and open up new syntheses.

Ernst Bloch famously called utopias the education of desire. As Hug March and I [argued](#), the future prefigured in the degrowth literature is indeed a dialectical utopia that wants to reshape desires. When French activists and intellectuals launched the word 'degrowth' in the early 90s, they intentionally meant it as a missile slogan that would generate a conflictual antithesis to the prevalent, and taken for granted, imaginary of growth-based development. The hope was – and is – that this conflict would catalyze a new synthesis – maybe not the bio-region of low-tech eco-communes utopia that Huber sees in de-growth writings, but at least some unpredictable new future other than one which would look exactly like capitalism, only with the workers in command.

*Continued on page 14*

### 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](mailto: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:

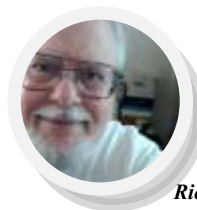
<https://www.meetup.com/MARS-astronomy-club-at-MOSI/>





The mission of the Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay has been to foster a secular society based on science, reason, freedom of inquiry, and humanist values. Since October 3, 2002, our all-volunteer chapter has served West Central Florida.

Won't you support us? <http://bit.ly/2pTDfEj>



*Rick O'Keefe,  
Branch  
Coordinator*

## Programs of Center for Inquiry <http://bit.ly/2Ij7tb7>

**The Committee for Skeptical Inquiry** is the science and skepticism arm of the Center for Inquiry. CSI promotes science and scientific inquiry, critical thinking, science education, and the use of reason in examining important issues. It encourages the critical investigation of controversial or extraordinary claims from a responsible, scientific point of view and disseminates information about the results of such inquiries to the scientific community, the media, and the public. CSI produces a bi-monthly magazine called the *Skeptical Inquirer*. <https://skepticalinquirer.org/>

**The Council for Secular Humanism** advocates and defends a nonreligious lifespans rooted in science, naturalistic philosophy, and humanist ethics and to serve and support adherents of that lifespans. The Council for Secular Humanism is a program of the Center for Inquiry, a not-for-profit educational corporation. The Council supports a wide range of activities to meet the needs of people who find meaning and value in life without looking to a religion. Its activities range from publishing the magazine *Free Inquiry* and campaigning on ethical issues to holding conferences and supporting a network of autonomous local groups. <https://secularhumanism.org/>

**Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science's** mission is to realize Richard's vision to remove the influence of religion in science education and public policy and eliminate the stigma that surrounds atheism and non-belief. <https://www.richarddawkins.net/>

**The Teacher Institute for Evolutionary Science (TIES)** gives middle school teachers the tools they need to effectively teach evolution and answer its critics based on new Next Generation Science Standards. <https://www.richarddawkins.net/ties/>

**Secular Rescue** is a program of the Center for Inquiry designed to provide emergency assistance to writers, bloggers, publishers, and activists who face threats due to their beliefs or expressions regarding religion. Generous public support has allowed the Center for Inquiry to assist more than two dozen individuals and their families in escaping to safety, either temporarily or permanently. <https://secure.centerforinquiry.net/secular-rescue>

**Center for Inquiry on Campus** promotes and defends reason, science, and freedom of inquiry in education. We are committed to the enhancement of freethought, skepticism, secularism, humanism, philosophical naturalism, rationalism, and atheism on college and high school campuses throughout North America and around the world. CFI On Campus provides leadership training, volunteer opportunities, internships, and educational resources for students through its network of international affiliates. We also coordinate national and global activism and service campaigns, and help students create welcoming spaces for those who exercise curiosity and a passion for evidence-based thinking. <https://centerforinquiry.org/on-campus/>

**Secular Celebrants:** While some people of the secular

worldview do not see a need for rituals and ceremonies of any kind, many feel that having a way of marking life passages is important. CFI feels that this is a personal choice and that secular ceremonies - and persons to conduct these ceremonies - should be available to those who want them. The Center for Inquiry has created a Secular Celebrant Program to train and certify secular celebrants to perform weddings, memorials, and other "milestones of life" ceremonies. [https://centerforinquiry.org/secular\\_celebrants/](https://centerforinquiry.org/secular_celebrants/)

**The Freethought Trail**, including our Birthplace of Robert Green Ingersoll, is a collection of locations in West-Central New York important to the history of freethought. Sites can be browsed by location, by name, by cause, and by type of site. Each site is described in words and in photographs, and directions are provided from one Freethought Trail location to another, so anyone who wants to can make their own path along the multitude of sites on the Trail! <https://freethought-trail.org/>

**The Center for Inquiry Libraries (CFI Libraries)** research library, located across from the North Campus of the University of Buffalo in Amherst, NY, is the world's largest collection of freethought and skeptical publications and memorabilia, including many one-of-a-kind and first edition material. The Libraries are a program of the Center for Inquiry and have been around as long as both The Committee for Skeptical Inquiry and the Council for Secular Humanism. The Libraries consisted of small collections of books and materials housed in different areas of the building. In 1995, construction of a formal library was completed. After several years, more space was added, taking warehouse space and converting it into both a periodical room and a rare book room.

Collections: <http://www.cfilibraries.org/collections.html>  
Catalog: <http://maple.cybertoolsforlibraries.com/cgi-bin/CyberHTML?CFIWNHYO>

**Openly Secular:** Atheists, freethinkers, agnostics, humanists and nonreligious people - are everywhere. They are your friends, your neighbors, your coworkers - even your loved ones. But they often can't be open about who they are. Openly Secular is changing that. Our toolkits, resources, and videos help break down barriers and help secular people live full, honest, and open lives. Tell Your Story. Speak Your Truth. Together we can eliminate discrimination and increase acceptance.

<https://centerforinquiry.org/blog/category/openly-secular/>

**CFI's Free Thinking Blogs:** Consistent with CFI's mission, Free Thinking offers uninhibited, unsparing, and provocative observations and insights on a variety of topics of interest to CFI and its supporters. Visit the Blog Category Page for a list of all the Free Thinking Blog Categories.

<https://centerforinquiry.org/category/>

*(Continued on page 7)*



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*

(Continued from page 6)

**The Morning Heresy** is your daily digest of news and links relevant to the secular and skeptic communities. Designed for active fact-oriented minds, like yours.

<https://centerforinquiry.org/blog/category/the-morning-heresy/>

**A Skeptic Reads the Newspaper**

<https://centerforinquiry.org/blog/category/a-skeptic-reads-the-newspaper/>

**Skeptical Inquirer** publishes critical scientific evaluations of all manner of controversial and extraordinary claims, including but not limited to paranormal and fringe-science matters, and informed discussion of all relevant issues. In addition to news, articles, book reviews, and investigations on a wide variety of topics, Skeptical Inquirer has a stellar stable of regular columnists on their blog.

<https://centerforinquiry.org/blogs-magazines/>

**FREE INQUIRY** is the bimonthly transnational magazine of the nonprofit Council for Secular Humanism. It is the world's largest-circulation English-language magazine for and about men and women who live value-rich lives without religion. Founded in 1980 and published bimonthly (six times per year), FREE INQUIRY (circulation averaging 30,000) features leading thinkers and activists who explore issues of critical importance to all who seek to live the good life ... in this life. <https://centerforinquiry.org/blogs-magazines/>

**Point of Inquiry** is the Center for Inquiry's flagship podcast, where the brightest minds of our time engage in deep conversation about the big questions in science, religion, politics, and culture. Since 2005, some of the show's remarkable guests have included Ta-Nehisi Coates, Brian Greene, Susan Jacoby, Richard Dawkins, Ann Druyan, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Eugenie Scott, Adam Savage, Bill Nye, Howard Fineman, Sam Harris, and Francis Collins, among many, many others.

<https://centerforinquiry.org/blogs-magazines/>

**Reasonable Talk** is your source for high-quality video of the best presentations from the brightest minds and most compelling speakers in all of freethought. At Reasonable Talk, passionate and brilliant thinkers, writers, and activists stand before eager and inquiring audiences to enlighten minds, spark debate, and inspire action. They join us from a wide variety of fields such as science, journalism, politics, religion, philosophy, and grassroots activism. They come to us as champions of reason, critical thinking, and free expression over dogma, superstition, and misinformation.

<https://centerforinquiry.org/blogs-magazines/>

**CFI Archives** is a repository of the past publications of the Center for Inquiry, and a rich history of freethought.

<https://centerforinquiry.org/blogs-magazines/>

**Center for Inquiry NEWS** by Paul Fidalgo is our compendium of CFI press releases, calls to action, statements on world events .... <https://centerforinquiry.org/news/>

**The Translations Project of the Books of Richard**

**Dawkins:** Professionally Translated for Free Access in the Muslim World "I want to persuade the reader, not just that the Darwinian worldview happens to be true, but that it is the only known theory that could, in principle, solve the mystery of our existence."

In many parts of the Muslim world, obtaining books that explain and celebrate science written in one's own language can be prohibitively difficult, especially in places where foundational scientific concepts such as evolution are perceived by religious extremists as threats to their authority.

The books of Richard Dawkins—including *River Out of Eden*, *The Magic of Reality*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, and *The God Delusion*—are being professionally translated into languages such as Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, and Indonesian and made available to download free of charge.

<https://centerforinquiry.org/news/introducing-the-translations-project/>

## Organized religion is losing its followers

By Jennifer Rubin

**CNN reports**, "For the first time 'No Religion' has topped a survey of Americans' religious identity, according to a new analysis by a political scientist. The non-religious edged out Catholics and evangelicals in the long-running General Social Survey." Ryan Burge, a political scientist at Eastern Illinois University and a Baptist pastor, found that 23.1% of Americans identify as "No Religion." In the survey, 23 percent say they are Catholic and 22.5 percent say they are evangelical Christians.

For comparison, in 1972 only 5 percent said "No Religion." ("The meteoric rise of religious 'nones' began in the early 1990s and has grown 266% since 1991," Burge found.) Since 1972, those who identify with one of the mainline Protestant denominations have gone from 28 percent to 11 percent, and Catholics have declined from 27 percent to 23 percent. By contrast, evangelicals have gone from 17 percent to 23 percent. The nones category includes people other than atheists, including "agnostics, the spiritual, and those who are no specific organized religion in particular."

Collectively, those who identify with some religion still greatly outnumber those with no religion. But the numbers do put into perspective how many Americans find no home in organized religion. (Read the rest [here](#).)

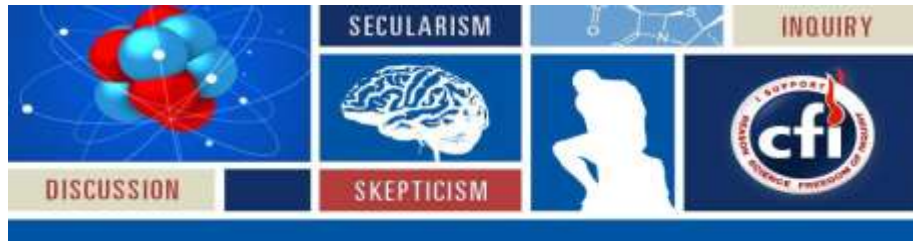
The mind has exactly the same power as the hands: not merely to grasp the world, but to change it. ~ Colin Wilson

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- ◇ May 7: National Teacher Appreciation Day

Future books for the **CFI S.H.A.R.E. Book Club**. Provided so attendees can be prepared.

(Requirements: Must be a paid-up member of CFI, and must have read book before attending. Not a member? Join: <http://bit.ly/2pTDfEj> )

5/25 Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression – and the Unexpected Solutions, by Johann Hari

6/22 The Long Honduran Night: Resistance , Terror, and the United States in the Aftermath of the Coup, by Dana Frank

Now, when an American has an idea, he directly seeks a second American to share it. If there be three, they elect a president and two secretaries. Given four, they name a keeper of records, and the office is ready for work; five, they convene a general meeting, and the club is fully constituted. ~ Jules Verne

### POINT OF INQUIRY RADIO SHOW & PODCAST

We find ourselves in the information age among many who, although have the access to proper and accurate scientific information, choose not to believe it.

What causes the parents of a newborn to avoid vaccines? Where do the misconceptions of genetics originate? Today on *Point of Inquiry*, Kavin Senapathy talks with Carl Zimmer and Dr. Paul A Offit while at CSICON 2018 about their research into vaccinations, science denial, and how some groups in the US have tried to use genes and heredity to argue in favor of white supremacy. Podcast: <http://bit.ly/2FIWELV>

Sign up to receive the newsletter: <http://bit.ly/2FjiLcw>



## CHURCH AND STATE

### Here are Evangelical Christianity's 10 biggest gaslighting tactics

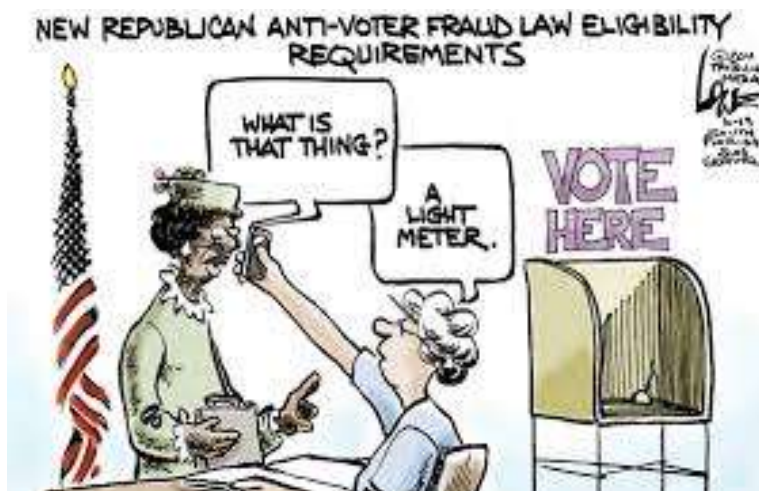
Some stuff people tell you messes with your head if you buy into it. Maybe it's self-contradictory. Maybe it doesn't line up with what you know about yourself or the world around you. Maybe it makes you question the evidence of your own senses or your ability to think straight. Maybe it muddles your intuitions about right and wrong, making you ashamed of doing things that don't actually harm anyone—or, conversely, prompting you to do things you would otherwise be ashamed of.

The idea that your own mind, logic, and the evidence in the world around you is not to be trusted may be Evangelicalism's biggest mindfuck, because it is subtext in all the others. Any doubts are just evidence that your mind (and basic human decency) are shaky. Since doubt is a sign of weak faith—and sometimes even direct from the devil—you should never ever trust what you think, feel, see or experience over what the Bible says and the Church teaches. *Walk by faith, not by sight*. Stop asking questions!

That article is all here, and much more news: <http://bit.ly/2FQVO3t>

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





## Education?

"In brief, the teaching process, as commonly observed, has nothing to do with the investigation and establishment of facts, assuming that actual facts may ever be determined. Its sole purpose is to cram the pupils, as rapidly and as painlessly as possible, with the largest conceivable outfit of current axioms, in all departments of human thought—to make the pupil a good citizen, which is to say, a citizen differing as little as possible, in positive knowledge and habits of mind, from all other citizens. In other words, it is the mission of the pedagogue, not to make his pupils think, but to make them think right, and the more nearly his own mind pulsates with the great ebbs and flows of popular delusion and emotion, the more admirably he performs his function. He may be an ass, but this is surely no demerit in a man paid to make asses of his customers."

~ H.L. Mencken, A Mencken Chrestomathy

**Daniel Dennett** (b. March 28, 1942), whom artificial intelligence pioneer Marvin Minsky has called "our best current philosopher" and "the next **Bertrand Russell**," poses an apt question that probes some of the basic tendencies and dynamics of today's everyone-is-a-critic culture:

In **Intuition Pumps and Other Tools for Thinking** — the same fantastic volume that gave us Dennett on **the dignity and art-science of making mistakes** — he offers what he calls : a list of rules formulated decades ago by the legendary social psychologist and game theorist Anatol Rapoport, best-known for originating the famous tit-for-tat strategy of game theory. Dennett synthesizes the steps:

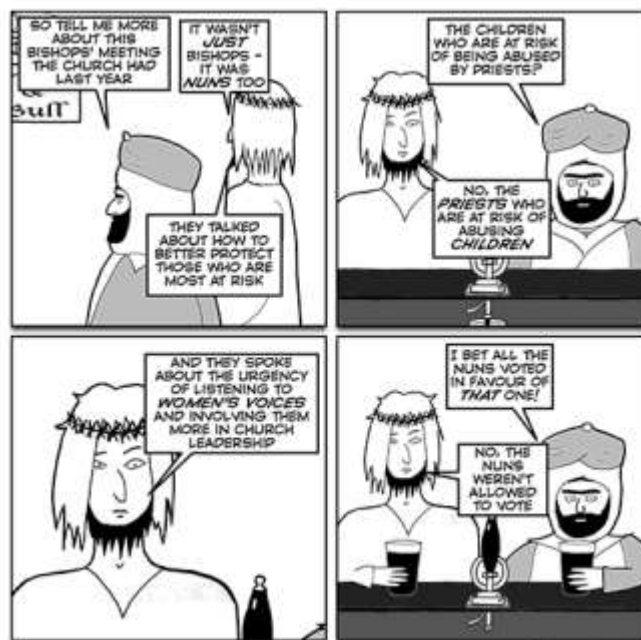
How to compose a successful critical commentary:

*You should attempt to re-express your target's position so clearly, vividly, and fairly that your target says, ....*

Read the full article here: <http://bit.ly/2H1eSvy>

## "Science and the Public" Master of Education

In partnership with the Graduate School of Education at the State University of New York at Buffalo, CFI offers an accredited Master of Education program in Science and the Public, available entirely online. Aimed at students preparing for careers in research, science education, public policy, science journalism, or further study in sociology, history and philosophy of science, science communication, education, or public administration, the program explores the methods and outlook of science as they intersect with public culture, scientific literacy, and public policy. The Science and the Public Ed.M. graduate program at the State University of New York at Buffalo is now accepting applications. For information on how to apply, please visit the **Graduate School of Education website**.



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, we need you — <http://bit.ly/2pTDfEj>

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



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



## What Is Skepticism - Skepticism Definition

**Skepticism** | *noun* | skep'ti·cizm :

The method of suspended judgment, systematic doubt or criticism characteristic of skeptics

The word “skepticism” comes from the ancient Greek *skepsis*, meaning “inquiry.” Skepticism is, therefore, not a cynical rejection of new ideas, as the popular stereotype goes, but rather an attitude of both open mind and critical sense.

The ancient skeptics simply doubted that human beings can achieve certain knowledge, and preferred to be agnostic about a number of notions which they felt we just did not grasp securely.

That philosophical tradition eventually informed the beginnings of science in the 17th and 18th centuries, and it is best captured by David Hume’s advice that wise persons proportion their beliefs to the evidence. Or, as Carl Sagan put it much later, extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.

The modern skeptical movement is a grassroots phenomenon that aims at helping the public navigate the complex borderlands between sense and nonsense, science and pseudoscience.

Skepticism does so by way of investigation of alleged extraordinary phenomena, mindful cultivation of critical thinking, and an honest attitude toward intellectual inquiry.

### Skeptics and Science Deniers

Public discussion of scientific topics such as global warming is confused by misuse of the term “skeptic.” A Nov. 10, 2014, New York Times article incorrectly referred to Sen. James Inhofe as “a prominent skeptic of climate change.” Two days later Scott Horsley of NPR’s Morning Edition called him “one of the leading climate change deniers

in Congress.” These are not equivalent statements.

There is a concern that “skeptic” and “denier” have been conflated. Proper skepticism promotes scientific inquiry, critical investigation, and the use of reason in examining controversial and extraordinary claims.

It is foundational to the scientific method. Denial, on the other hand, is the a priori rejection of ideas without objective consideration.

As scientific skeptics, we are well aware of political efforts to undermine climate science by those who deny reality but do not engage in scientific research or consider evidence that their deeply held opinions are wrong.

The most appropriate word to describe the behavior of those individuals is “denial.” Not all individuals who call themselves climate change skeptics are deniers.

Skeptics are those who have devoted much of their careers to practicing and promoting scientific skepticism.

### CFI and Skepticism

CFI is committed to the pursuit of scientific skepticism as part of our core mission.

Through our [TIES Program](#), CFI gives middle school teachers the tools they need to effectively teach evolution to children. Our vision is to build a generation of thinkers that approach natural world through a scientific lens.

If you found this definition helpful you can help the Center for Inquiry by sharing on Facebook or Twitter

## The Education Myth About Learning Styles

By Jamie Hale

When teaching is tailored to a person’s preferred learning style, they will learn better than when it is not. At least that is the thought promoted by many educators, students, and parents. I have spoken with numerous educators (high school and college) who assert that one of the biggest problems in education is the mismatch between teaching style and individual learning preference. Are you visual learner? Are you an auditory learner? Do you learn best by doing? Those are a few questions sometimes addressed when determining learning style. But are these questions meaningful? Should educators be more concerned with identifying learning styles and teaching to those styles?

Read the article here: <http://bit.ly/2IW5VEem>



### Committee for Skeptical Inquiry

promotes science and scientific inquiry, critical thinking, science education,

and the use of reason in examining important issues. It encourages the critical investigation of controversial or extraordinary claims from a responsible, scientific point of view and disseminates factual information about the results of such inquiries to the scientific community, the media, and the public. *Click the magazine cover logo to subscribe.*

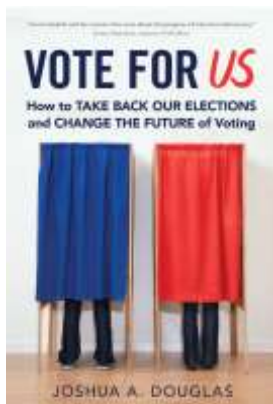
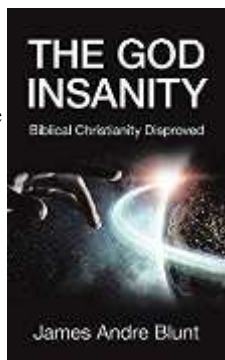


## Recommended Reading

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

James Andre Blunt uses critical thinking and logic to dismantle and disprove all of the laws and concepts of biblical Christianity, leaving no gray areas. In addition, readers will discover that there is nothing remotely similar or consistent between the teachings of the Bible and the modern laws and sociocultural ethics of the United States.

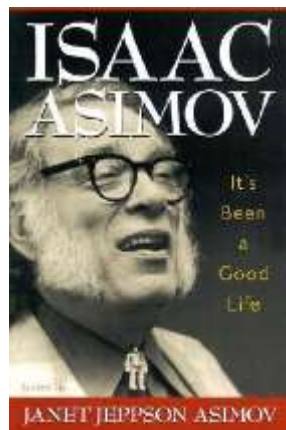
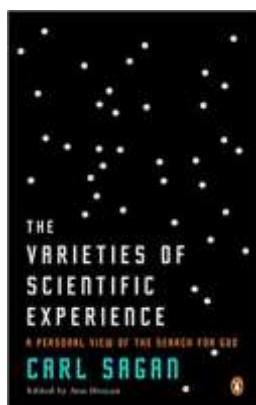
For too long we have been shackled to an unfounded belief system—one that has even been used to promote slavery and discrimination, among other unacceptable practices. Yet, with more knowledge about the world and its workings, and by critically examining the foundations of religious beliefs like Christianity, we can free ourselves from unconscious defense mechanisms and explore these timeless questions for ourselves.



“Vote for US is the rare book that shows how we will actually fix America’s political crisis. It reveals that vexing political gridlock, partisanship, extremism, and corruption are caused by broken election, campaign-finance, and ethics laws. It highlights the unprecedented and fantastically inspiring stories of state and local reformers who are fixing those laws, right now, at unprecedented levels across our nation. And it shows how we are following the footsteps of suffragettes and marriage-equality advocates to fix our political crisis—from the cities and states all the way to Washington, DC. This book is mandatory reading for anyone who wants to stop spinning their wheels and actually fix the dystopia that grips American politics.”

—Josh Silver, cofounder and director, RepresentUs

**Maria Popova:** “The best book on the subject, by far, is *The Varieties of Scientific Experience: A Personal View of the Search for God* — a remarkable posthumous collection of essays by Carl Sagan (November 9, 1934–December 20, 1996), based on the prestigious Gifford Lectures on Natural Theology he delivered at the university of Glasgow in 1985, following in the footsteps of such celebrated philosophers as James Frazer, Arthur Eddington, Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, Alfred North Whitehead, Albert Schweitzer, and Hannah Arendt. Titled after the famous treatise on religion by William James, who delivered the Gifford Lectures in the beginning of the twentieth century, this anthology of illustrated and illustrious meditations showcase Sagan’s singular gift for championing knowledge with equal parts conviction and humility.



**Marie Popova:** Above all, however, Asimov was an unrelenting humanist: I’ve never been particularly careful about what label I placed on my beliefs. I believe in the scientific method and the rule of reason as a way of understanding the natural Universe. I don’t believe in the existence of entities that cannot be reached by such a method and such a rule and that are therefore “supernatural.” I certainly don’t believe in the mythologies of our society, in Heaven and Hell, in God and angels, in Satan and demons. I’ve thought of myself as an “atheist,” but that simply described what I didn’t believe in, not what I did.

Gradually, though, I became aware that there was a movement called “humanism,” which used that name because, to put it most simply, ...

## 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.

#### # TITLE AUTHOR

1. The Expanding Circle Peter Singer
2. In Gods we Trust Scott Atran
3. Why Evolution is True Jerry Coyne
4. The Second World Panag Khanna
5. Denialism Michael Specter
6. The Selfish Gene Richard Dawkins
7. Democracy Incorporated Sheldon Wolin
8. The Upside Irrationality Dan Ariely
9. The End of Growth Richard Heinberg
10. The God Delusion Richard Dawkins
11. All That We Share Jay Wallgasper
12. Sex, Time, and Power Leonard Shlain
13. Sex at Dawn C. Ryan, & C. Jetha
14. What liberal Media Eric Alderman
15. The End of Faith Sam Harris
16. Plan B Lester Brown
17. The Portable Atheist Christopher Hitchens
18. Open Society George Soros
19. Non Believer Nation David Niose
20. God on Trial Peter Irons
21. Natural Experiments of History Diamond-Robinson
22. The Missionary Position Christopher Hitchens
23. Life Inc Douglas Rushkoff
24. A brief History of Time Stephen Hawking
25. Breaking the Spell Daniel Dennett
26. The Philosophy of Humanism Corliss Lamont
27. The Quotable Atheist Jack Huberman
28. 50 Reasons People Believe In G.G. Harrison
29. Mathematics and Politics Alan Taylor
30. Stealing Elections John Fund
31. The God Virus Darrel Ray
32. What Every American Should Know About World Rossi
33. Imagine There’s no Heaven Editors of Free Inquiry
34. Hidden Order David Friedman
35. What the Dog Saw Malcom Gladwell
36. Sway Ori, Rom Brafman
37. The Better Angels of our Nature Steven Pinker
38. Letter to a Young Contrarian Christopher Hitchens
39. Hot, Flat, and Crowded Thomas Friedman
40. Gaming the Vote William Poundstone
41. Subversion Fable Alexa KcKearing
43. Evolution and the Big Question David Stamos
44. Why People Believe Weird Things Michael Shermer
45. The World is Curved David Snick
46. The Snow Ball Warren Buffett
47. The Moral Landscape Sam Harris
48. How We Believe Michael Shermer
49. Full House Steven Jay Gould
50. The Origins of Political Order Francis Fukuyama
51. Asimov’s Guide to the Bible Isaac Asimov
52. Autobiography of Mark Twain Harriet Smith, Editor
53. Science Friction Michael Shermer
54. Genius James Gleick
55. Inevitable Illusions Piatrelli & Palmarini
56. Demon Haunted World Carl Sagan
57. Being Right Is Not Enough Paul Waldman
58. Loser Takes All Mark Crispin Miller
59. Taking Back Politics Cathy Allen
60. Spiritual Common Sense Mark Lindquist (Gift by author)
61. Autobiography of Mark Twain Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith
62. The Skeptics Annotated Bible Various
63. 12 Vol Complete Works Robert Ingersoll
64. On Religious Liberty Roger Williams & Davis
65. The God Makers Baker & Hunt
66. Inevitable Illusions M. 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

Evolve Fish is a source for freethought paraphernalia:

<http://evolvefish.com/>

To access more Freethought history & perspectives,  
Frank Prahl’s Freethought Library [fpahl77@gmail.com](mailto:fpahl77@gmail.com)



## Earth Day Notes

On the 49th annual Earth Day, some Tampa Bay residents celebrated by having a go at cleaning up our beaches and parks.

Florida Conservation Voters and Tampa Bay Watch organized a cleanup effort. Around 25 volunteers picked up an average of about 10 pounds apiece, or 272 pounds of trash, showing both the enormity of the problem and the inadequacy of the response. St Petersburg mayor, Rick Kriseman commented, "Our efforts need to be year-round. You know we talk here in St. Pete about having 361 days of sunshine; well we should be working 365 days, but at a minimum, those 361, not just one,"



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 &



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

## St Pete Atheists // Freethought Group

Moderated by: Gary Thompson

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

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

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

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

## UU Humanists of Clearwater

at 2470 Nursery Rd. in Clearwater.

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



## University of South Florida Humanities Institute

### THE SUPER HERO IN ME!

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USF Contemporary Art Museum



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### The Crafty Freethinker ...

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

I am a lifelong freethinker. My work can be seen by clicking on the image above.



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## A Humanist Discussion group in East Tampa !



### UU Humanists of Tampa

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

Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa

# Atheists of Florida,



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

See [AoF Meetup](#) for details Website: <http://aof.ngo>

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



The Atheist Forum



The broadcast is on hiatus during the summer. Previous programs are available **on the internet** [www.youtube.com/atheistforum](http://www.youtube.com/atheistforum).

All programs are being archived on the AoF web site, [www.aof.ngo](http://www.aof.ngo). Tune in!

Subscribe to our  
**You Tube Channel**



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



## May Events

[Find details by clicking here](#)

*meetup*

Be sure to check for changes and RSVP!

### May 5th

Que Pasa Mexi-cantina  
10466 Roosevelt Blvd N  
St. Petersburg, FL 33716  
with St Pete Atheists

### May 19th

Applebee's.  
Largo 5 PM  
See page 3  
top.

## Atheism & Humanism

**Atheists and humanists are united in the conclusion that the supernatural isn't real.** This means that both are without a belief in a god or gods and both hold that people have to take final responsibility for their actions. The buck stops here. In this regard, both also see themselves as at least as capable to lead sane and moral lives as people who believe in confession, absolution, and an afterlife. And by their fruits we know them: the large number of atheists and humanists who count as significant contributors to society in such diverse fields as science, the arts, and social action make this clear.

As a practical matter, atheists and humanists in the United States are also united by the circumstance that they belong to an unpopular minority, ranking at the bottom of the heap in public opinion: well below gays, African Americans and other minorities who are breaking through the social barriers that used to exclude them from the mainstream. Since atheists and humanists are still a long way from achieving parity with other minorities, both share the important goal of establishing a place at the table along with the rest of the diverse groups that constitute our heterogeneous nation.

This fundamental agreement on principles and purpose doesn't necessarily lead to agreement on tactics, however. It would be surprising if it did. The world's major religions started out agreeing on doctrine and goals and soon split into a myriad of sects. Nontheists (atheists and agnostics) are much the same—only they don't have religious dogmas to tie them together.

C. Coon

## *Ecosocialism from page 5*

### **Unscientific socialism?**

Huber claims this vision is ‘unscientific’. A scientific socialism, Huber tells us, is one ‘grounded in analysis of what kind of socialist society is possible given historical and material conditions’. So far so good. Only one problem: who is to judge what is really ‘possible’?

Huber, for example, seems to think that something close to the energy or material consumption of an average American, secured for everyone in the world, is possible (Huber is against wasteful capitalism, and implies that unnecessary production and consumption could be curtailed, but is not clear what he classifies as waste – and in any case, insists on the point of ‘abundant energy’, which one can only think means at least as much energy as it is currently consumed, if not more). Energy should come from renewable energy, or why not 80% renewable and 20% nuclear, which is fine, Huber claims – and food from robotic agriculture. Moreover, we will do all this without exploiting anyone, taking everyone’s concerns democratically into account, somehow minimizing damage, or at least making those on the receiving side of such damage concede to it ‘democratically’.

I am a scientist too, and I think this vision is unrealistic. To use Huber’s terms, it is ‘materially impossible’. I explain why [here](#) or [here](#) in more detail. The emissions, land use and material extraction involved in a scenario like Huber’s make impossible a sort of American standard of energy abundance available for everyone (or more precisely, it can be possible but just for a few at the expense of many others, as it has been actually till now).

And if we were to take really into account everyone’s concerns (those who live next to mines where the lithium for the batteries and the uranium for the reactors will come from, those who will have to be relocated or see their landscape destroyed to put windmills, etc) and actually compensate them for the damages our consumption causes, then production would be inevitably much, much lower than it is today on average. (Not to mention how much the economy would slow down if we were to devote time to reach decisions on such matters truly democratically).

### **The past is not proof of the future**

Granted, I might be wrong, and Huber right. But who is to judge whose science about what is possible is right and whose is wrong? And what makes Huber so sure that he is right and scientific while others are not? Any science—scientific socialism including—is bound to be incomplete, uncertain and debatable. There are different, contested views, of what is possible – crucially, these views cannot be separated easily from our desires about the future.

Huber, for example, thinks it is undesirable to live with less energy. His argument is that since agricultural work is drudgery and no one wants to do it, societies without fossil fuels to power tractors had to and will have to have slaves. First, it is questionable whether the historical and anthropological record supports the claim that all societies without fossil fuels were slave-based.

Second, even if many were, this does not mean that we cannot have a future society without fossil fuels, with more manual work and without slaves. The fact that something did not exist in the past is not proof that it cannot happen in the future – if it were, then we wouldn’t be discussing socialism to begin with.

Third, no one that I know in the ecosocialist, degrowth or other environmentalist communities that Huber seems to have in mind

has argued for a total substitution of fossil fuels by manual labor. It doesn’t help to take the arguments of others to their extremes just to prove that they are impossible and unscientific. The claim of those who support decentralized renewables or peasant agro-ecology for example is much more nuanced and is based on the recognition that a sustainable future would involve both cleaner energy and less energy use, as well as less use of chemicals in agriculture. Agro-ecological, lower-intensity models that would involve more human labor than is currently the case in countries such as the U.S., are advocated. But these arrangements are generally envisioned as a mix of old and new, peasant and industrial experiences, not a total overhaul of modern techniques or a return to a pre-capitalist mode of living.

**“An ounce of action is worth a ton of theory.” F. Engels**

Engels was right and it turned out materially possible for capitalism to produce plenty of goods at a fraction of the time they needed before. But that doesn’t mean that it is today possible to power ever-growing energy use with renewable and nuclear energy, with no harm done to others (or with harm done at levels that can be ‘democratically’ tolerated by others). These are different times and different arguments, and the fact that siding with a ‘pro-technology’ (so to speak) argument at one moment in time may have proved right, does not make all similar arguments always and everywhere right or ‘scientific’.

### **Degrowth: radical abundance**

Capitalism produced (more than) enough, quite soon after Engels’s time, but there is still poverty amidst an overabundance of goods and productive possibilities. This should make us pause for a moment. The problem may not be that we are not producing enough, but as Marx and Engels were among the first to note, that we are not distributing equally what we are producing.

As Jason Hickel argues in ‘[Degrowth. A call for radical abundance](#)’, the continued enclosures and dispossessions that sustained capitalism have always been justified in the name of growth. The story we are constantly being told is, as Malthus first put it, in the service of his argument in defense of capitalist growth (yes, Malthus was [a defender of growth, not of limits to growth](#)), is that ‘there is not enough for everyone to have a decent share’. The artificial scarcity created in turn by enclosures makes everyone live in need, and therefore work harder to stay afloat, which is essential if the engine is to keep going and growing. So the problem isn’t that we don’t produce enough, but that we can’t share the abundance that we already have.

Huber’s vision of sharing and public luxury is not as far as he thinks from a de-growth vision. I would only add that this has to take place in a context of private sobriety – a sobriety that actually socialist revolutionaries of all times have espoused and lived in their everyday lives. It is what Enrico Berlinguer, leader of the Italian Euro-communists called ‘revolutionary austerity’. It is the sort of personal austerity that real revolutionaries of all times have practiced in their personal lives.

### **Relative versus absolute scarcity**

Huber agrees that there is so much waste going on within capitalism, and so much work expended just to goods and services whose purpose is no other than to pay for rents and profits. Then just ending profits and rents could reduce resource use significantly. Why insist on robots and nuclear plants if we could live with less and sustain a decent material standard of

*Continued on page 19*



## Tampa Bay Thinkers



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

**Monday, May, 2019**  
**Topic: TBA**

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

## The Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers



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

**Local Contact:** Chris  
([christbrown@yahoo.com](mailto:christbrown@yahoo.com))  
MSgt, USAF (Retired)

Co-Organizer:  
**MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB**

## Humanist Families of Greater Tampa

**Jennifer Hancock** started this organization several years ago. It uniquely serves Humanist families with a variety of wonderful programs throughout the year.

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

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

Throughout the year we host parties like Darwin Day in February, World Humanist Day in June, Freethought Day at Disney in October & Carl Sagan Day in November. Among our spin off groups, is a Parenting Beyond Belief group which gets together to discuss the challenges of raising children without religion. We are on [Facebook](#).

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



## USF Freethinkers

Join [Freethinkers@USF](mailto:Freethinkers@USF) for genuine, conversational discourse & a communal atmosphere.

Freethinkers@USF is a cosmopolitan collective of USF students promoting critical thinking & pluralism through dialogue & reasonable inquiry. Join the official group and vote on upcoming discussions:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FreethinkersUSF/> for more information.  
contact: [fadibitar@mail.usf](mailto:fadibitar@mail.usf)

**TB-CoR Welcomes**

## Ethical Humanism

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

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



## Tampa Bay Technology Center & Thinkers Salon



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

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

Check out [Thinker's Salon](#) a forum for serious social & scientific ideas & issues.

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



## Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From our friends at the British Humanist Association...

## Living Well By Richard Docwra

*Living Well* pulls together some of the topics that we will explore in more detail later in the series. It touches on the questions of what it means to think well, how to find life's meaning, to think about death. This is the perfect place to start for a clear, practical introduction into the humanist's vision of the good life.

### About the author

Richard Docwra is a writer, coach, and consultant who has written extensively on a variety of topics related to culture, politics, and the art of living. He is the author of *Modern life – as good as it gets?* published by Green Books in 2008, and his articles have appeared in a wide range of magazines and websites. **Download (free)**

<https://humanism.org.uk/humanism/the-big-questions/>



## The Big Questions

**What is the meaning of life? How should we live? How can I be good? What happens when we die?**

The Big Questions is a brand new series of publications in which we aim to offer humanist perspectives on how to lead confident, happier, and more fulfilled lives in the one life we have. This series will explore some of the fundamental questions in our lives: questions about life, death, morality, meaning, and happiness — and will hopefully help you along the way to living a good life.

Each publication, written by a different guest author, will also delve a little deeper into humanist thought and provide some guidance on further reading to give you a rounded understanding of the ideas underpinning these big questions.

Each publication is available to download for **free** for you to keep.

Watch this space for more titles to come.



### 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](mailto:tbcor@metrodirect.net) CoR Facilitator



## Humanistic Therapy

Humanistic therapy is a positive approach to psychotherapy that focuses on a person's individual nature, rather than categorizing groups of people with similar characteristics as having the same problems. Humanistic therapy looks at the whole person, not only from the therapist's view but from the viewpoint of individuals observing their own behavior. The emphasis is on a person's positive traits and behaviors, and the ability to use their personal instincts to find wisdom, growth, healing, and fulfillment within themselves.

## How It Works

In the late 1950s, humanism grew out of a need to address what some psychologists saw as the limitations and negative theories of behavioral and psychoanalytic schools of therapy. This was a new, more holistic approach that focused less on pathology, past experiences, and environmental influences on a person's behavior, and more on the positive side of human nature. Around this time, psychotherapist Abraham Maslow developed a human hierarchy of needs and motivations, and fellow therapist Carl Rogers developed his person-centered approach. Humanistic therapy evolved from these theories. Humanistic therapists believe people are inherently motivated to fulfill their internal needs and their individual potential to become self-actualized. Self-actualization can take many forms, including creative endeavors, deep enlightenment, a pursuit of wisdom, or altruism.

## When It's Used

Humanistic therapy is used to treat depression, anxiety, panic disorders, personality disorders, schizophrenia, addiction, and relationship issues, including family relationships. People with low self-esteem, who are having trouble finding their purpose or reaching their true potential, who lack feelings of "wholeness," who are searching for personal meaning, or who are not comfortable with themselves as they are, may also benefit from humanistic therapy.

## Finding a Humanistic Therapist

A humanistic approach may be incorporated into various therapies. A humanistic therapist must be a warm, empathetic, understanding, and non-judgmental person. Look for a licensed, experienced mental [health](#) professional with humanistic values and a humanistic approach to their practice. In addition to finding someone with the appropriate educational background and approach, as well as relevant experience, look for a humanistic therapist with whom you feel comfortable working. See Page [3](#)

Psych Today



**Humanists of Sarasota Bay, Inc.**  
Sarasota, Florida

Our next lecture is on June 3rd 2019

Karen Koenig will speak on...

**Weight Stigma—Time to End the  
Blame-Shame Game?**

Presented at the Roskamp Center for Arts and Humanities  
1226 N. Tamiami Trail

## The time to teach your kid the skills they need succeed in life is now!

*Keeping up with Jennifer...*

*Thinking Freely Speaking Out*



**Jen helps parents focus on the real purpose of parenting: which is to teach our kids the skills they need to succeed in life. Whether the topic is bullying, choosing friends, being financial responsible, or simply why not to cheat, she makes difficult topics seem easy. Her advice is so practical it will leave you thinking, "Why didn't I think of that?"**

As a Humanist parent herself, Jen practices what she preaches. Her parenting philosophy is to treat her son with compassion and respect. She actively models responsibility, compassion for others and ethical behavior. However, she has been known to subject her son to the Socratic Method, which she calls mental jujitsu, in an effort to help him learn how to choose his actions wisely. People who meet her son are always impressed with how confidently he carries himself.

## What is Humanistic Parenting?

The Humanist approach to parenting is a compassionate and respectful approach to raising children. It is the application of Humanist values and principles to the job of parenting.

The starting point of this approach to parenting is to respect your child for the individual they are. We treat young people the same way we treat all other humans: compassionately, ethically and responsibly.

A Humanist views their job as a parent as that of a teacher. We recognize that our children are autonomous individuals. Our job is not to dictate their behavior, but rather to teach them to make good decisions for themselves and we teach them the life skills they need to be successful in the world.

Think about it. Which would you rather have, a child who obeys out of fear. Or a child who chooses to do the right thing because they understand their actions have consequences and they want to make good decisions that will benefit themselves and those around them?

The time to teach your kid the skills they need to succeed in life is now!

Thanks and take care.

Jennifer

For more, see: <http://www.jen-hancock.com/index.html>





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

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

## Ecosocialism from page 14

living for everyone? Note also that what counts as ‘decent’ living is always socially determined and it makes little sense to defend an average, or middle class standard of living. A poor person today does not die from diseases that royals died of in bygone eras. But if your loved one dies from a curable disease that a rich person can pay to treat, this creates a real sense of scarcity.

Crucially, this scarcity is relative. If housing was public and cheap, [Hickel argues](#), then people could live with well with a fraction of their salary – and produce and consume much less than they do now. To imagine an absolute scarcity, and use it as a justification for mobilizing ever more work and ever more resources in the name of making everyone have what the rich persons of their epoch happen to have, is a fundamental myth that sustains capitalism.

### Bending material reality is not scientific

Huber also has a second take on the meaning of ‘scientific’. He writes that ‘let’s get real, or ‘scientific’ ... we are not going to win the masses of workers with a socialist program based on ... ‘drudgery for all’. Science here seems to refer to realism about how can ‘we’ (sic) win the masses of workers. There are problems with this formulation too.

First, even if Huber were right and there were a mass of workers that wouldn’t be mobilized to anything that sounds like ‘less’, that still wouldn’t make it materially possible to have ever more stuff. Huber argues that given that the workers will never buy into a de-growth utopia then ‘the key to an ecosocialist future is finding some way to replicate the labor-saving aspects of the fossil economy with clean energy’.

This actually seems to me a very unscientific, and utopian in the bad sense – having to ‘find some way’ to make something possible, independently of whether it is materially possible or not. Rather than consider integrating your political strategy to what is materially possible, the call here is to bend material possibility, one way or the other, to what you came to think as the only possible political strategy.

### Fixed desires

But, second, like the statement on material possibility, the idea that some of us can know with certainty the limits of political possibility – that is, know what the workers really want – is also problematic. Who is to say that workers everywhere and always would only be attracted to visions of ‘more’?

I live in Barcelona, and our mayor Ada Colau won the municipal elections with the support of a substantial fraction of the working class. Her program emphasized dignity and equality, not growth and material affluence. Colau wanted to stop evictions and secure decent housing for everyone, she did not have to promise air-conditioning and cheap charter flights for all (I am not saying that Huber advocates these, but Leigh Phillips, a provocateur who Huber for some reason enthusiastically cites twice, [does](#)).

Third, Huber implicitly assumes that what workers want is fixed, and that desires cannot be shaped through reflection and dialogue. This leaves no space for new ideas or new desires and makes one wonder, how is it that workers come to want what they want, and how does this ever change in time? If we follow Huber’s logic then we can only cater to what exists, never shape the possible – this to me seems a quite restricted view of the political.

Politics has a make-believe quality. Pre-defining what is possible leads to self-fulfilled prophecies. If we assume that we cannot even utter our dreams of a different future, because they are unrealistic and impossible, then of course ‘workers’ will want what they currently want and alternative dreams will remain unrealistic and impossible.

But fourth, and more importantly, it is not clear why, for Huber, ‘we’ who write these things are not part of the working class, and can’t understand what ‘they’ want. If the working class is those who have to sell their labour in order to survive, then it is not only coal miners and Joe the plumbers that make the working class, not even only nurses and teachers, but also we University professors and the precarious post-docs and students that read our musings. Those among us who desire some sort of a de-growth future are not some weird romantic animals, different from the rest of working people – we are not people who live from rents, we are workers like anyone else who have to work in order to make it from month to month.

Of course there are different experiences, and different power positions within a broadly defined working class, or the 99%. We shouldn’t be blind to our positionalities, for example, as academic urbanites, with a decent income, a health insurance, flying regularly and so on. But the desires of education workers or precarious youngsters are as legitimate as those of factory workers. And our desires do not necessarily have to be different either (actually keeping them different is essential for the hegemony of capitalism). And they are increasingly not different, as the incomes, social protections and privileges of the professional middle income groups are collapsing.

We owe ourselves and the few people who might read us a more informed and refined debate than a repetition of tired dichotomies from the 1970s. Reality is complex, what is possible and what not is hard to know, and the roads to ecosocialism (or however else you might want to call an egalitarian and sustainable future) are many.



# Why not?

## Op-ed - Op-ed - Op-ed - Op-ed - Op-ed - Op-ed - Op- Twelve Years to Apocalypse?

By Gary P. Posner

If God exists, and stubs his toe on a fallen tree while singlehandedly extinguishing a raging fire in a remote forest, does his unholy obscenity make a sound? Science has yet to provide an authoritative answer to this burning question, much less a unanimous one. Fortunately, however, it has resolved, with unquestioned certitude, many other vital issues.

For example, scientific research has proven that ingesting eggs regularly is unhealthful harmless beneficial dangerous Um, OK, let's skip this one. Granted, making that determination is obviously far too complex, with far too many variables (eat eggs, track coronary artery disease), for us to expect consistent findings and recommendations that vary by less than 180 degrees.

Compared to a person's stomach, a planet's atmosphere is obviously a far more hospitable place in which to play "scientific consensus." One need only watch, for example, a few-second video of Jupiter's clouds ([tinyurl.com/Jupiter-Atmosphere](http://tinyurl.com/Jupiter-Atmosphere)) to intuit that the intricacies of climate should be a breeze to untangle. And, as Presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke confirmed during a March 14 campaign rally (15:30 and 17:20 of [tinyurl.com/Beto-12-Years](http://tinyurl.com/Beto-12-Years)), "We face catastrophe and crisis on this planet even if we were to stop emitting carbon today, right now, at this moment. ... The scientists are absolutely unanimous on this, that we have no more than 12 years to take incredibly bold action on this [global warming] crisis."

Countries such as Russia, India, and China (which pumps twice as much CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere as the U.S.) drastically reducing their carbon emissions in the next 12 years seems about as likely to happen as God's expletive being detected by radio telescope. So for the sake of us all, let's hope Beto, and the others echoing this apocalyptic portent, are as off-base as the Associated Press fact-checkers say they are ([tinyurl.com/12-Years-AP](http://tinyurl.com/12-Years-AP)).

Personal anecdotes may not suffice as scientific proof, but in the case of Hurricane Harvey's ravaging of his home state of Texas, Beto's riff (15:42 of [tinyurl.com/Beto-12-Years](http://tinyurl.com/Beto-12-Years)) has the backing of the so-called "scientific consensus." In fact, in *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine, Dr. Michael Mann of "hockey stick" fame accused me of being a "climate change denier" — morally akin to a "Holocaust denier" — for skeptically scrutinizing the dogma that anthropogenic global warming is responsible for not only Harvey's legacy of devastation but Superstorm Sandy's as well ([gpposner.com/climate\\_change.html](http://gpposner.com/climate_change.html)).

But how soon the "consensus" has forgotten that Harvey stalled over coastal Texas for days due to high pressure blocking its northward path. And that Hurricane Sandy was run-of-the-mill until it unfortunatously merged with a nor'easter and then, like Harvey, encountered a high-pressure system, which pushed the now-hybrid "Superstorm" into low-lying real estate at high tide.

Even NOAA's hurricane experts continue to say (at least as of February 8) that despite predictions for the future, "In the Atlantic, it is premature to conclude with high confidence that human activities — and particularly greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming — have already had a detectable [i.e., clearly distinguishable from the variability due to natural causes] impact on hurricane activity" ([tinyurl.com/NOAA-GFDL-Hurricanes](http://tinyurl.com/NOAA-GFDL-Hurricanes)). How they have escaped admonition for such sacrilege is another of life's unexplained mysteries.

## READER COMMENTS

Gary Posner's April column on page 14 is titled "Walking Away From the Left". This commentary is heresy. It is outrageous that this could sneak its way into our fine responsible newsletter. It is akin to screaming fire in a theater or exposing a Scientologist to high level doctrine before they are clear. Oh the humanity!

Posner must be drawn and quartered then burned at the stake while climate priests sprinkle Holy water on the mass of witnesses. I will wear a pope hat and swing the smoking ball thingy. We must act quickly to prevent this delusion from spreading. Someone could accidentally click on the link in Posner's column and the world magnetic pole would flip. Pray it is not so!

PS: I think I'll use Posner's column in my May 2nd Skeptics meeting. — Howard Gray

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**Critical thinking** is a rich concept that has been developing throughout the past 2,500 years. The term "critical thinking" has its roots in the mid-late 20th century. Below, we offer overlapping definitions which together form a substantive and trans-disciplinary conception of critical thinking.

## Critical Thinking as Defined by the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, 1987



A statement by Michael Scriven & Richard Paul, presented at the 8th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform, Summer 1987.

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.

It entails the examination of those structures or elements of thought implicit in all reasoning: purpose, problem, or question -at-issue; assumptions; concepts; empirical grounding; reasoning leading to conclusions; implications and consequences; objections from alternative viewpoints; and frame of reference.

Critical thinking — in being responsive to variable subject matter, issues, and purposes — is incorporated in a family of interwoven modes of thinking, among them: scientific thinking, mathematical thinking, historical thinking, anthropological thinking, economic thinking, moral thinking, and philosophical thinking.

**From the Foundation for Critical Thinking**