

The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Freethought News



Vol. 8 No. 10, October, 2019

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

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Starts November 1st in Orlando

This biennial event attracts Floridians and visitors from all over. Join the fun!
See page 4 for more information.

Fetal Heartbeats on Legislative Agenda

State Rep. Mike Hill, R-Pensacola, is making another attempt during the 2020 legislative session to pass a "fetal heartbeat" bill that would drastically limit abortions in Florida.

Hill's bill (HB 271) would prevent physicians from performing abortions if fetal heartbeats have been detected.

Since pulmonary function is one of the earliest systems to become evident in a fetus, this bill would effectively make abortions illegal.

The legislation, filed for the January legislative session would create third-degree felony charges for any "person who knowingly or purposefully performs or induces an abortion on a pregnant woman with the specific intent of causing or abetting the termination of the life of the preborn human being whose preborn intrauterine heartbeat has been detected."

Of course this presupposes that a fetus is a human being - a naïve religious proposition.

Hill and Sen. Dennis Baxley, R-Ocala, had filed such bills for the 2019 session, but the proposals were not taken up in House and Senate committees.

Florida Rep Daniels under Fire

As a U.S. Appeals Court rules President Trump's blocking people on Twitter who criticize him is unconstitutional, an elected official from Jacksonville is deleting comments and banning some constituents from expressing their views on her Facebook page.

A number of constituents in her district have complained she was blocking people who criticized her religious posts on the page titled "State Representative Kimberly Daniels."

Daniels' page discusses both policymaking and, increasingly, Christianity. Daniels is a pastor in addition to an elected official, and she uses the [State Representative Kimberly Daniels page](#) to post video sermons and taped episodes of her Christian radio program.

FFRF has sent cease-and-desist letters to about a dozen public officials for similarly blocking people, nationwide.

Downtown Clearwater target for Scientologists

According to a recent article in the Tampa Bay Times, a forthcoming election could put the Church of Scientology in a commanding seat in overseeing plans for the heart of Clearwater. The Downtown Development Board will acquire new members to help create policy and serve as a guide to assist the city council. The downtown area, already dominated by church related properties and church members is the object of speculation that the scientologist board has its own plans for the area that may not take into account the development goals expressed by the citizenry. See [here](#) for much more on this.

Dave "Doc" Dockery is on the mend after open heart surgery just weeks ago. The entire bay area freethought community breathes a collective sigh of relief as the restless wave of one of its most prominent leaders crests anew.



Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Calendar

Judy Adkins

Web site

Jim Peterson

Newsletter

Jim Peterson & Rick O'Keefe

Special Projects

Mark Brandt

& Bill Norsworthy

See our event websites at:

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

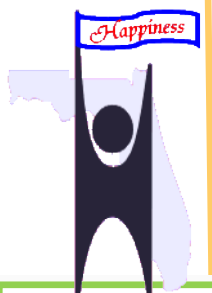
This publication online at:

www.tampabaycor.net

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

Listen to local Freethought Views and News on YouTube®

Atheist Forum, provides 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**. See page 13 for more.



The Humanist Society of the Suncoast

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

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



Matt Dillahunty

Leads our October discussion on video



Our topic:

Supernaturalism

Power beyond knowing or,
knowing without power

Many people believe that nature is inadequate to explain the natural world. For some, what emerges from tradition and imagination is much more satisfying than the limitations imposed by reality.

Tampa Bay Harvest



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

But logically, there are problems with constraining what can be said or considered when trying to solve the problems posed by an unruly world.

We know we need the discipline of science and reason, but we also know that we need to mine the rich veins of possibility offered by the imagination. Imagination anticipates both the wonders of invention and innovation, and the thrall of religious and supernatural fears.

Thus, there must be a balance, which from the human perspective, creates the vital tension that is a vibrant culture.

Please Join us in:



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

**Saturday, October 12th
at 2:00 PM**

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

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



Vol. XXXII No. 10 October, 2019

**Please Join or renew
Now!**

**Humanist Society of the
Suncoast**

Annual Dues

Regular -\$25

Reg. Couple -\$30.

Supporter -\$35/40 (With pin above)

Life -\$200. (Pin)

Life Couple -\$250. (Pin)

Associate -\$10



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

If you have questions concerning your dues or status, contact our new treasurer, Scott Wilson scott33761@yahoo.com

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

Name: _____

Address –if new : _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: * _____

E-mail: _____

(Privacy respected)

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

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

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

*= optional



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

What is the Humanist Way?

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

The Movable Feast

the Humanist Society's monthly social Dinner

Join us Oct. 20th at Applebee's at 5 O'clock for American style cuisine, and decidedly the best company:

Applebees

For map Menu

5110 E Bay Dr Clearwater, FL 33764

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

The Humorous Humanist

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

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

AUTHOR: A writer with connections in the publishing industry.

BALDERDASH: A rapidly receding hairline.

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

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

CANNIBAL: Someone who is fed up with people.

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

CIRCUMVENT: An opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men.

COFFEE: The person upon whom one coughs.

COMMITTEE: A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

CONSCIOUSNESS: that annoying time between naps.

DENIAL: How an optimist keeps from becoming a pessimist.

DUST: Mud with the juice squeezed out.

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

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

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Jim Peterson, President
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~*~*~*~*~

Jordan Williams, mail Publisher

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

Need Psychological Counseling?

For a secular therapist, click:

[Secular Therapy Org.](http://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
321-604-7637



Hold the date...



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

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

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

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

November 1 - 3
Fun & Educational? Absolutely!
Holiday Inn Orlando International Airport
 5750 T G Lee Blvd.
 Orlando, FL 32822
 407/851-6400
 Near the Orlando Airport (MCO)
 Watch these pages for more to come.

Coming up sooner...

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

<https://csiconference.org/>

Also, Save This Date:

2020 World Humanist Congress

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





Member, TBCoR,
Hum Society, &
AHA affiliate.

AoF & THA Meets suspended till Dec.

Saying this once a day will really increase your longevity...

"Today I broke my own personal record for most consecutive days lived."

W. J. R.

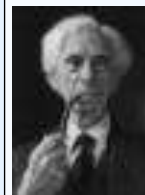
Humanist Quotes

6/19

"Life has no meaning a priori... It is up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing but the meaning that you choose."



- Jean Paul Sartre



"Remember your humanity, and forget the rest."

— Bertrand Russell

"Humanism is the only - I would go so far as saying the final- resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history." — Edward W. Said





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

Choosing Extinction

By Paul Gilding, PCI Fellow

The climate strikes over the coming weeks will focus a great deal of attention on government and the urgent need for policy action. Rightly so. But it's also a good time to reflect on the bigger context, as this is not anything like protests of the past. There has in fact, never been a point like this in all of human history.

I called this column 'choosing extinction' because that is the path we are on today. There is considerable debate whether that extinction applies to us humans, or 'just' to millions of other species. But either way a mass extinction event is on the way, unless we choose to stop it.

What we now know, is that we are facing a time sensitive, existential risk. Failing to respond adequately, could commit humanity to widespread misery for hundreds and possibly thousands of years. It could literally change the course of evolution and human history.

We are well advised on the risks and they are clear and material. Not certain, but nor unlikely. The evidence is very clear and it tells us:

- The scale and level of risk — it threatens civilization;
- The scale of change required — the transformation of the global economy; and
- The speed with which this transformation must be delivered — largely within a decade.

What this means is we have been warned of an imminent danger. Not just a danger to our prosperity or our level of progress but a danger to the very existence of organized civilization. We know how to fix this and we know we can afford to do so.

Now it's time to decide.

To decide whether humanity will continue on its long social, cultural and economic path of exploring and fulfilling our potential. Whether to find out what we are capable of.

To decide how many of the world's 8.7 million species we will allow to live and continue on their evolutionary path. And how many species we will choose to destroy, presumably never to return. Perhaps including our own.

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, Inc.

(SPAC), has been meeting continuously since 1927. It was incorporated in 1979 as a nonprofit, tax deductible organization.

For almost 50 years SPAC has provided free educational programs for its members & the public. For additional information send your emails to: spaceexaminer@gmail.com



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

Calendar

M.A.R.S. – Tampa Astronomy Club

Welcome to the [Museum Astronomical Resource Society](#), also known as the M.A.R.S. astronomy club. M.A.R.S. is sponsored by the [Museum of Science & Industry \(MOSI\)](#), in Tampa, Florida. We are also members of both the [Astronomical League & Night Sky Network](#). This site provides club news & astronomical information to our membership & to the public.

Whether you are new to astronomy & curious about how to experience it, or a seasoned veteran looking for an active club to spend observation time with. We invite you to attend a meetings as our honored guest.

Monthly meetings are normally held on the 3rd floor of MOSI in the Science Works Theater, & take place on the 2nd Friday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Meetings are free & open to the public.

Details & RSVP:

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

We know all this. Yet we sit idly by, as the evidence mounts and the risks get greater, paralyzed in various ways by ignorance, despair, delusion and fear. There should be no surprise in this, it is the path we have always taken in response to existential risk, even at smaller scale like WWII, which continues to be the closest analogy.

The big difference in this case however, is that the existential risk applies to our whole planetary civilization. With this, there is no historical parallel. Not since the dinosaurs. But unlike the dinosaurs, we are consciously aware of the risks, we fully understand them, and we *can* choose to address them.

We know exactly what we need to do. We cannot be certain of success if we act, but we can be pretty certain of catastrophe if we don't.

Some argue it is hopeless, that there is no chance of success. In war this attitude would be considered treason – aiding and abetting the enemy. Such people have nothing to contribute on this topic, except to serve the interests of today's 'enemy' – those who resist and delay change. They should cease all public comment and keep to themselves.

Some argue we may not succeed, that we may have left it too late. They are correct, we *may* have. But there is no evidence – nor can there be ahead of time – that we have done so. There is, therefore, no reason for this *possibility* to influence our decisions or actions today. There will be a future – our kids will live in it. We get to choose what it will be like.

What we have to do now is simple. We have to decide – do we choose extinction? Or do we choose to fight it? To rebel against it. To stand in its way.

To do all we can possibly do, to get humanity on a different path. That is our choice. And each and every one of us now gets to decide. That's why we're in the streets.

That's why this matters.....like never before.

Atheists of Florida Inc.



For our Atheists helping the Homeless project -

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

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

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



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

Contact us: info@atheistsoffloridainc.org

Secular Sunday Discussion

Suspended this month for Orlando **Freeflo** event. Join us there. Stop in and say "hi" at the TB-CoR table in the lobby. See you next month.

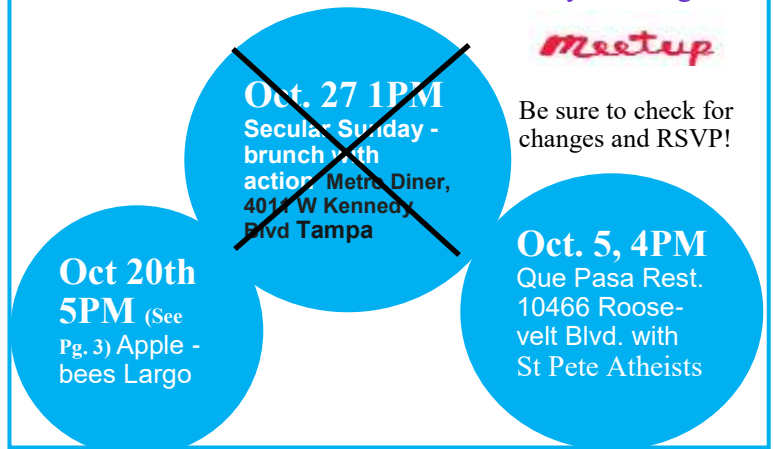
Judy Adkins, VP, AoF

You never see churches with free wi-fi because no church wants to compete with an invisible power that actually works.

Thx to J. Reinhardt



Oct. Events [Find details by clicking here](#)



Always Vigilant

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

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

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

Judy Adkins address to the Pinellas County School Board Sept. 23rd 2019

See the video here: <https://www.pcsb.org/Page/28820>

I want to begin by honoring the inhabitants of our area prior to our arrival – this would include the Tocobago, Pohoy, Uzita, and Mocoso tribes of what we call the Tampa bay region.

Please take a moment now to look around the room, at all of us here, sharing together this extraordinary experience of being alive and of dedicating ourselves to working toward improving the lives of our children.

I want to thank you for the important service you give to our community. Your position on the school board is only second in importance to the teachers, who help sculpt the content of our children's character. You have willingly taken on the mission of providing the best opportunity for all students to succeed, to provide a safe learning environment, to help them learn to contribute to the greater good of our common humanity.

Given our current political environment, with the government limiting resources and taking funds from public schools to support private schools, the tasks you have will be even more difficult. And here again, your service to education is greatly appreciated.

The purposes of public education include the unifying of a diverse population and preparing our people for citizenship in a democratic society. The need for citizens to understand

Continued on Page **7**

Saturday, October 5th,

The Socrates Cafe

An open discussion hosted by **Brent Hardaway**
Is Democracy doomed to Fail?

The 20th century saw democratic forms of government grow to levels unprecedented in human history. This seems to validate Winston Churchill's maxim that "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time". Monarchy and Authoritarianism are widely seen as failures, while Democracy will generally allow for greater freedom and less tyranny – but that doesn't exclude it from being very messy at times.

In fact, some have argued that democracy will eventually fail (like all the others). One of the earliest was Socrates, as he is presented in Plato's Republic. Socrates thought that the general populace was too strongly governed by appetites to remain stable. This would lead to unscrupulous leaders gaining power through appealing to what is popular rather than wise. And the next step would be tyranny.

Concerns over such ideas as "mob rule" led the Founding Fathers of America to try to put checks and balances on such excesses as they constructed America's representative democracy (or republic). But even they did not believe that this guaranteed stability forever. Benjamin Franklin seemed to echo Socrates on the dangers of Democracy when he said "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters".

There are other possible threats – will a crisis situation eventually lead to people surrendering their right to rule to someone who promises them security? If one group consistently loses elections, might they feel justified in attempting to seize power, for the peoples "own good" (in their minds)? At the very least, the survival of democracy depends on a deep respect for the democratic process that accepts that it is better that the people sometimes choose poor leaders and poor policies, rather than them not having a choice at all.

Join us for another fascinating discussion, and join us for dinner/drinks at The Independent (5016 N. Florida Avenue) for dinner/drinks afterwards! Join us **Oct. 5th at 3 PM in the Seminole Heights Branch Library, 4711 N Central Ave, Tampa, FL, 33603**

Be sure to RSVP!

Meetup



School Board address from page 6

political and social issues, to participate in civic life, and to protect the rights and freedom of all citizens is imperative if the nation we love is to survive.

Public school classrooms are one of the first places where children form a community that mirrors the larger society. It is here where students can learn the imperatives of logical and scientific thinking, the skills of making group decisions, establishing and enforcing rules, learning tolerance and handling disagreements.

You provide an excellent example of these skills by your commitment to respecting the inherent dignity and worth of each person and realizing that apparent differences of race, religion and party affiliation are merely the exuberance of our cultural diversity. Our common humanity unites us all and helps us recognize that through our interdependence, we share a common fate.

It is important that we root our policymaking process in these shared values, that are relevant to residents of Pinellas county, regardless of religious belief or nonbelief. That decisions are made using the unifying secular virtues of reason, curiosity, empathy, and compassion.

One of our most precious shared values is that of being able to think for ourselves. Since the 1980's, the last week in September has been recognized as Banned Books Week. Even if the motivation to ban or challenge a book is well-intentioned, the outcome is detrimental. Censorship denies our freedom as individuals to choose and think for ourselves. At least 46 of the Top 100 Novels of the 20th Century have been the targets of ban attempts. Among them is the book from which this quote is taken:

"In every bit of honest writing in the world, there is a base theme. Try to understand men, if you understand each other you will be kind to each other. KNOWING A MAN WELL NEVER LEADS TO HATE and nearly always leads to love."

This is from "Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck. I would be remiss if I didn't remind you that having an official prayer at a public-school function is unconstitutional and encourage you to replace prayerful invocations with a full moment of silence, to ensure all the people who attend feel welcomed. ~

Atheist
COMMUNITY
 of Polk County

Secular Social (PM)

16640 Cagan Crossings Blvd, Four Corners, Florida

Friday October 11 at 6:30 to 9:30 PM

For more info, see [site](#)



A Famous Argument Against Free Will Has Been Debunked

By Bahar Gholipour, *The Atlantic*, 9/14/2019

<http://bit.ly/2V6jDbK>

The death of free will began with thousands of finger taps. In 1964, two German scientists monitored the electrical activity of a dozen people's brains. Each day for several months, volunteers came into the scientists' lab at the University of Freiburg to get wires fixed to their scalp from a showerhead-like contraption overhead. The participants sat in a chair, tucked neatly in a metal tollbooth, with only one task: to flex a finger on their right hand at whatever irregular intervals pleased them, over and over, up to 500 times a visit.

The purpose of this experiment was to search for signals in the participants' brains that preceded each finger tap. At the time, researchers knew how to measure brain activity that occurred in response to events out in the world—when a person hears a song, for instance, or looks at a photograph—but no one had figured out how to isolate the signs of someone's brain actually initiating an action.

The experiment's results came in squiggly, dotted lines, a representation of changing brain waves. In the milliseconds leading up to the finger taps, the lines showed an almost undetectably faint uptick: a wave that rose for about a second, like a drumroll of firing neurons, then ended in an abrupt crash. This flurry of neuronal activity, which the scientists called the *Bereitschaftspotential*, or readiness potential, was like a gift of infinitesimal time travel. For the first time, they could see the brain readying itself to create a voluntary movement.

This momentous discovery was the beginning of a lot of trouble in neuroscience. Twenty years later, the American physiologist Benjamin Libet used the *Bereitschaftspotential* to [make the case](#) not only that the brain shows signs of a decision before a person acts, but that, incredibly, the brain's wheels start turning before the person even consciously intends to do something. Suddenly, people's choices—even a basic finger tap—appeared to be determined by something outside of their own perceived volition.

As a philosophical question, whether humans have control over their own actions had been fought over for centuries before Libet walked into a lab. But Libet introduced a genuine neurological argument against free will. His finding set off a new surge of debate in science and philosophy circles. And over time, the implications have been spun into cultural lore.

<SNIP>

In a new study under review for publication in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Schurger and two Princeton researchers repeated a version of Libet's experiment. To avoid unintentionally cherry-picking brain noise, they included a control condition in which people didn't move at all. An artificial-intelligence classifier allowed them to find at what point brain activity in the two conditions diverged. If Libet was right, that should have happened at 500 milliseconds before the movement. But the algorithm couldn't tell any difference until about only 150 milliseconds before the movement, the time people reported making decisions in Libet's original experiment.

In other words, people's subjective experience of a decision—what Libet's study seemed to suggest was just an illusion—appeared to match the actual moment their brains showed them making a decision.

When Schurger first proposed the neural-noise explanation, in [2012](#), the paper didn't get much outside attention, but it did create a buzz in neuroscience. Schurger [received awards](#) for overturning a long-standing idea. "It showed the *Bereitschaftspotential* may not be what we thought it was. That maybe it's in some sense artifactual, related to how we analyze our data," says Uri Maoz, a computational neuroscientist at Chapman University.

For a paradigm shift, the work met minimal resistance. Schurger appeared to have unearthed a classic scientific mistake, so subtle that no one had noticed it and no amount of replication studies could have solved it, unless they started testing for causality. Now, researchers who questioned Libet and those who supported him are both shifting away from basing their experiments on the *Bereitschaftspotential*. (The few people I found still holding the traditional view confessed that they had not read Schurger's 2012 paper.)

"It's opened my mind," says Patrick Haggard, a neuroscientist at University College London who collaborated with Libet and reproduced the original experiments.

It's still possible that Schurger is wrong. Researchers broadly accept that he has deflated Libet's model of *Bereitschaftspotential*, but the inferential nature of brain modeling leaves the door cracked for an entirely different explanation in the future. And unfortunately for popular-science conversation, Schurger's groundbreaking work does not solve the pesky question of free will any more than Libet's did. If anything, Schurger has only deepened the question.

Is everything we do determined by the cause-and-effect chain of genes, environment, and the cells that make up our brain, or can we freely form intentions that influence our actions in the world? The topic is immensely complicated, and Schurger's valiant debunking underscores the need for more precise and better-informed questions.

"Philosophers have been debating free will for millennia, and they have been making progress. But neuroscientists barged in like an elephant into a china shop and claimed to have solved it in one fell swoop," Maoz says. In an attempt to get everyone on the same page, he is heading [the first intensive research collaboration](#) between neuroscientists and philosophers, backed by \$7 million from two private foundations, the John Templeton Foundation and the Fetzer Institute. At an inaugural conference in March, attendees discussed plans for designing philosophically informed experiments, and unanimously agreed on the need to pin down the various meanings of "free will."

In that, they join Libet himself. While he remained firm on his interpretation of his study, he thought his experiment was not enough to prove *total* determinism—the idea that all events are set in place by previous ones, including our own mental functions. "Given the issue is so fundamentally important to our view of who we are, a claim that our free will is illusory should be based on fairly direct evidence," he wrote in a 2004 book. "Such evidence is not available."



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

Here's How Amazon Employees Know in 5 Seconds if Jeff Bezos Thinks a Meeting Requires 'High IQ' Brainpower—And why the Amazon founder intentionally puts off certain meetings until the following day.

By Jeff Haden Contributing editor, Inc. [@jeff_haden](#)

Imagine you're up for parole. You've been a model prisoner. You've shown remorse. You've even prepared a speech for the parole board to equal Red's from *Shawshank Redemption*.

Unfortunately, none of your effort might matter.

Researchers analyzed more than 1,000 parole decisions and found that prisoners who appeared before a parole board first thing in the morning had their parole granted about 70 percent of the time.

But as the day went on, the rate of favorable rulings fell to almost zero. (Although it did spike back up for the first case or two after lunch.)

Yep: *When* you go before the parole board -- the luck of the scheduling draw -- makes a bigger difference than any other factor.

Why? The judges got tired: They fell prey to [decision fatigue](#).

Which is why the best time to make difficult decisions -- to do important things -- is early in the day.

That's what Amazon founder Jeff Bezos does. [According to Bezos](#):

I like to do my high-IQ meetings before lunch. Anything that's going to be really mentally challenging: That's a 10 o'clock meeting. Because by 5 p.m., I'm like, "I can't think about that today. Let's try this again tomorrow at 10."

As a senior executive ... you get paid to make a small number of high-quality decisions. Your job is not to make thousands of decisions every day. Is that really worth it if the quality of these decisions might be lower because you're tired, or grouchy, or any number of things?

In fact, Bezos feels it's "enough" if he can make three good decisions each day.

The same is true for you: While you probably make dozens of decisions every day, only a few *truly* matter. (What [Bezos might call](#) "Type 1," meaning "almost impossible to reverse" decisions.)

So how can you make sure you -- and your team -- are operating at your peak when you need to make important decisions?

1. Limit the number of small decisions you need to make.

Every choice -- no matter how small -- you make throughout the day decreases your supply of mental energy and increases decision fatigue.

And then one of two things happens:

You make impulsive decisions: The "Oh, the heck

with it" response.

You avoid making decisions: The "I can't deal with this now" response. (That's what happened to the judges in the parole board study; as they grew mentally tired, it became easier and easier to delay releasing a prisoner.)

Either way, no matter how much willpower you try to summon, decision fatigue makes you look for shortcuts.

That's why the fewer decisions you need to make, the smarter the decisions you can then make when you do need to make a decision.

How can you reduce the number of decisions you need to make? Add a little [choice architecture](#) to your surroundings. Automate certain decisions. Make one decision instead of many by granting authority: Decide who will decide. (And make sure it's not you, unless it really, really needs to be.)

2. Do "high IQ" things early in the day.

The best time to make tough decisions is early in the day. The best time to do the most important things you need to do is early in the day.

Decide the night before what those things are, and plan to tackle them first thing.

And if you can't get them all done in the first couple of hours, schedule one right after lunch.

Although the judges studied started the morning strong, their decision-making graph looked like a roller coaster: Immediately after lunch, their likelihood of making favorable rulings spiked upward.

That's because [glucose is a key source of mental energy](#). Your brain doesn't stop working when glucose levels are low; it does respond more strongly to immediate reward and pay less attention to long-term outcomes.

3. Get enough sleep.

Seriously.

While saying they work 18-hour days seems like a badge of honor for many entrepreneurs, it's also a pathway to disaster. A chronic lack of sleep decreases daily functioning and adversely affects health and longevity.

One study even found that [reduced sleep time carries a greater mortality risk than smoking, high blood pressure, and heart disease](#).

To make matters worse, [chronic sleep problems may be linked to a greater risk of Alzheimer's](#).

On the flip side, Bezos says when he gets enough sleep, "I think better, I have more energy, my mood is better."

If a guy as successful as Bezos thinks it's important to get seven or eight hours of sleep every night, who am I to argue?

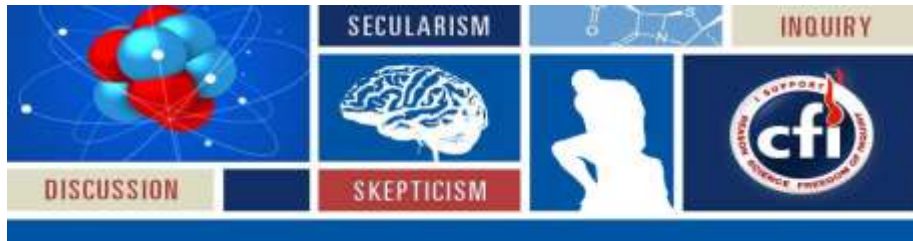
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THE HARD TRUTHS OF CLIMATE CHANGE — BY THE NUMBERS

By Jeff Tollefson, Sep 19, 2019

Bruno Rodriguez is only 18, but he has seen enough in his time on Earth to know that he must do something for the planet. Inspired by the student climate strikes in Europe, he founded Youth for Climate Argentina in his home country. The group drew more than 8,000 demonstrators to the national congress in May, and its leaders worked with senators to pass a resolution on 17 July, declaring a climate emergency.

Argentina is responsible for less than 1% of annual global emissions, but Rodriguez says the science is clear: everyone must take aggressive action if the world is to avoid a massive environmental and humanitarian crisis. "There is no middle ground," says Rodriguez. "We need radical industrial transformation."

Rodriguez is part of a [grass-roots climate movement that is gaining momentum across the globe](#). It is driven in part by a new generation of young activists, and by mounting evidence that global warming is accelerating, which is [increasing the odds of severe heatwaves in Europe](#), deadly fires in the western United States and massive tropical storms fuelled by increasingly warm oceans, among other things. With greenhouse-gas emissions still rising, frustrated activists are taking to the streets to pressure politicians to keep their promises.

This new activism will be on full display as groups in 150 countries stage strikes around next week's global climate summit in New York City, convened by United Nations secretary-general António Guterres. The meeting comes nearly four years after the Paris climate agreement, which seeks to limit global temperatures to 1.5–2 °C above pre-industrial levels. Guterres's goal is to build momentum as countries prepare to submit new commitments next year.

Whatever they decide, nations will have to reckon with some difficult numbers that will ultimately determine whether the world can avoid the rapidly approaching climate meltdown. *Nature* documents the scale of the challenge in an infographic that explores energy use, carbon dioxide pollution and issues of climate justice. At a time when countries have pledged to curb greenhouse gases sharply, the data show that annual emissions spiked by 2.1% in 2018 — owing in part to increased demand for coal in places such as China and India.

Read the rest & peruse the infographics here:
<https://go.nature.com/2m7btT0>

The secrets of evolution are death and time — the deaths of enormous numbers of lifeforms that were imperfectly adapted to the environment; and time for a long succession of small mutations that were by accident adaptive, time for the slow accumulation of patterns of favorable mutations. Part of the resistance to Darwin and Wallace derives from our difficulty in imagining the passage of the millennia, much less the aeons. What does seventy million years mean to beings who live only one-millionth as long? We are like butterflies who flutter for a day and think it forever. ~ Carl Sagan



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for Reason & Science**
A division of the Center for Inquiry

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What's coming up in October?

Brandon—Thank Goodness for Godless Friday Nights—10/4
E. Clearwater—Howard's Skeptic's Corner—10/4
Brandon—CFI's Sunday skeptics Brunch—10/13
N. Pinellas—CFI Monthly Dinner—TBA
E. Clearwater—S.H.A.R.E. Book Club—TBA.

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

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

Political/behavioral Origins in the Brain

NIH: Political Orientations Are Correlated with Brain Structure in Young Adults <http://bit.ly/2PcWl50>

Salon: Inside the conservative brain: What explains their wiring? <http://bit.ly/2P3Lp9K>

Psychology Today: Conservatives Big on Fear, Brain Study Finds. Are people born conservative? <http://bit.ly/2OZxr8C>

Discover: Your Brain on Politics: The Cognitive Neuroscience of Liberals and Conservatives <http://bit.ly/2OYg5ZF>

US National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health: Abstract: Cognitive neuroscience is a growing new discipline concerned with relating complex behavior to neuroanatomy. Relatively new advances in the imaging of brain function, such as positron emission tomography (PET), have generated hundreds of studies that have demonstrated a number of interesting but also potentially problematic brain-behavior relations. For example, cognitive neuroscientists largely favor interpretations of their data that rely on unobserved hypothetical mechanisms. Their reports often contain phraseology such as central executive, willed action, and mental imagery. As B. F. Skinner argued for decades, cognitive constructs of neurological data may yield nothing more than a conceptual nervous system. <http://bit.ly/2PcY7TI>



How do they compare?		Public	Private	Teachers
Must give statewide standardized tests in math, reading, science and social studies and make scores public		✓	✓	✗
Receives a school letter grade from state		✓	✓	✗
Must report graduation rates		✓	✓	✗
Must follow Florida's academic standards		✓	✓	✗
Permitted to teach religious curriculum		✗	✓	✗
Mandatory 20 minute recess in elementary school		✓	✗	✗
Teachers required to have a bachelor's degree and Florida certification**		✓	✓	✗
Must make budgets public		✓	✓	✗
Must meet state building codes for schools		✓	✓	✗

*The Sentinel found some private schools have limited outdoor space or don't have playgrounds.
 ** The statute allows teachers without a college degree so long as they have "special skills," etc.

Tim Flannery at *The Guardian* says climate activists like himself **have failed**: ... the climate crisis has now grown so severe that the actions of the denialists have turned predatory: they are now an immediate threat to our children. ... future Earth may have enough resources to support far fewer people than the 7.6 billion it supports today. British scientist James Lovelock has predicted a future human population of just a billion people. Mass deaths are predicted to result from, among other causes, disease outbreaks, air pollution, malnutrition and starvation, heatwaves and suicide.

My children, and those of many prominent polluters and climate denialists, will probably live to be part of that grim winnowing. [Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2VbVyk8>]

List of Fake News Websites:

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

The list:

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

New & Beautiful ~

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

The Center for Inquiry (CFI) strives to foster a society free of the dogmatic influence of religion and pseudoscience; a society inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment, the wonders of science, and the limitless potential of human intelligence and creativity; a society in which beliefs are not granted the same rights as people, where the freedom of expression is enjoyed by all, and all ideas are open to the scrutiny of reason. Secular government. Free inquiry. Critical thinking. Humanist values. This is the Center for Inquiry. *Join us or donate, we need you —* <http://bit.ly/2pTDfEj>



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



Astrology And Racism

By Benjamin Radford

There are many scientific and skeptical objections to astrology, including the fact that the constellations have shifted since astrology was devised, that many real-world tests have failed to find statistically meaningful patterns in the lives of people born under certain zodiac signs, and that there are multiple—and in fact contradictory—versions of astrology that adherents fervently believe. For more information see the [Skeptoid podcast](#), the [Skeptics Dictionary](#), and of course [many articles](#) for *Skeptical Inquirer*.

Full article: <http://bit.ly/2V8CGSU>

From the [TBS Report \(online\) Archives](#)

Questioning Dr. Isadore Rosenfeld's China Acupuncture Story

By Gary P. Posner, M.D.

"What's wrong with this picture?" That familiar refrain came to mind as I was reading the paragraph, in [Dr. Isadore Rosenfeld's](#) August 16, 1998, *Parade* magazine article about acupuncture, in which he describes an extraordinary Chinese operation witnessed by him in the 1970s. That same question echoed upon my inspection of the accompanying picture -- a documentary photograph of that operation, taken by the author himself.

Dr. Rosenfeld, a cardiologist and professor of medicine, has appeared on national TV talk/interview shows since the 1960s, and has authored several books, including the 1996 best-selling *Dr. Rosenfeld's Guide to Alternative Medicine*. Upon locating the book, I found a discussion of the operation in question on pages 30-32. My quotations herein are from the *Parade* article, the book, and several e-mail communications to me from Rosenfeld.

Accompanied on his China trip by several other prominent American physicians (now deceased), the Rosenfeld party watched as a 28-year-old female patient was wheeled into an operating room at the University of Shanghai and prepped for heart surgery to repair her mitral valve. But in lieu of standard anesthesia, a practitioner placed "an acupuncture needle in her right earlobe" (per *Parade*), with an electrode attached to supply a mild electrical current.

Rosenfeld observed as "the surgeon . . . cut through the . . . breastbone with an electric buzzsaw [and] her chest was split in two [and] spread apart with a large clamp to expose the heart" (per his book). Rosenfeld shortly thereafter snapped the photograph that appears in *Parade* (it was not used in the book). Because Rosenfeld had denied me permission to reprint his photograph in the articles I was planning to write for *The Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine* and *Skeptical Inquirer*, *TBS Report's* [Don Addis](#) has faithfully reproduced its image (see above), which is rotated 90 degrees

counterclockwise. *

Only the patient's face and incision are visible through the gaps in the surgical sheets. Let us assume, as the photo appears to indicate, that her head is essentially "face up" as opposed to being significantly rotated right or left. (Her eyes are focused to her left, as if she is attempting to observe the operation but cannot rotate her head.) Drawing a vertical line down the midline of her body, the operative field appears to be displaced far to the patient's left, rather than being centered where the breastbone and heart are situated. In fact, it appears so far to the left as to exist beyond the border of the patient's body (see 2nd sketch by Don Addis). There does not appear to be any appreciable distortion in the photo such as might be encountered from the use of a wide-angle lens.

Rosenfeld says that this apparent leftward displacement "must be due to the angle at which [the photo] was taken" (per e-mail to me). He teased me with the fact that one of the others present (Dr. Wilbur Gould, ENT) had also taken photos and that his widow " . . . no doubt has all his . . . pictures in her possession." But he would not assist me in contacting her to obtain the photographs for review, saying that he did not wish to "participate in your project to prove that my four colleagues and I did not see what we saw."

In addition to the photographic oddities, I asked Dr. Rosenfeld how such surgery could have been performed without artificial ventilation: With the I pointed out other problems as well, which are explored in [a more extensive article on this matter](#) that I have co-authored with [Dr. Wallace Sampson](#), tentatively planned for publication in the Fall/Winter 1999 issue of *The Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine*.

I suggested to Dr. Rosenfeld that his party may have been taken in by a hoax perpetrated for propaganda purposes -- a well-documented propensity of the Chinese during the Cold War. But Rosenfeld scoffed at the notion (as he does in his book), and suggested that I contact [Dr. Michael DeBakey](#), one of the world's foremost cardiac surgeons, who "witnessed a similar procedure one year later [and] can explain your legitimate technical questions about ventilatory support. I spoke with him yesterday . . ." (per his e-mail). I asked Dr. Sampson to speak with DeBakey on our behalf, and the results of that interview were quite enlightening.

DeBakey informed Sampson that despite his conversation with Rosenfeld of just a few days earlier, he had neither read Rosenfeld's accounts of the operation nor seen his photograph, and he was thus unacquainted with the precise details that were of concern to us. As for his own experience in China, DeBakey recalled that the mitral valve surgery that he had witnessed involved a patient who, it turned out, had been given pre-op medication intravenously prior to having the acupuncture administered. Additionally, . . .

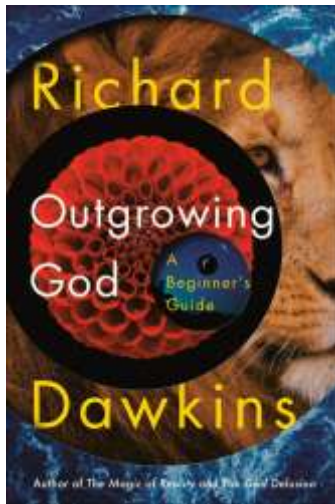
Notes: [A version](#) of this article appeared in the July/August 1999 issue of *Skeptical Inquirer*.

* The relevant portion of Dr. Rosenfeld's *Parade* article, including the photo, can now be seen on Gary Posner's website by clicking [here](#) and following the links.

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

Recommended Reading

Click on the book's [image](#) for more info



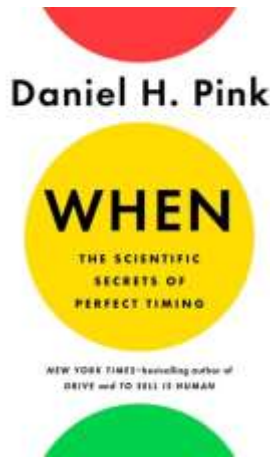
Should we believe in God? In this brisk introduction to modern atheism, one of the world's greatest science writers tells us why we shouldn't.

In twelve fiercely funny, mind-expanding chapters, Dawkins explains how the natural world arose without a designer—the improbability and beauty of the “bottom-up programming” that engineers an embryo or a flock of starlings—and challenges head-on some of the most basic assumptions made by the world's religions: Do you believe in God? Which one? Is the Bible a “Good Book”? Is adhering to a religion necessary, or even likely, to make people good to one another? Dissecting everything from Abraham's abuse of Isaac to the construction of a snowflake, *Outgrowing God* is a concise, provocative guide to thinking for yourself.

Everyone knows that timing is everything. But we don't know much about timing itself. Our lives are a never-ending stream of “when” decisions: when to start a business, schedule a class, get serious about a person. Yet we make those decisions based on intuition and guesswork.

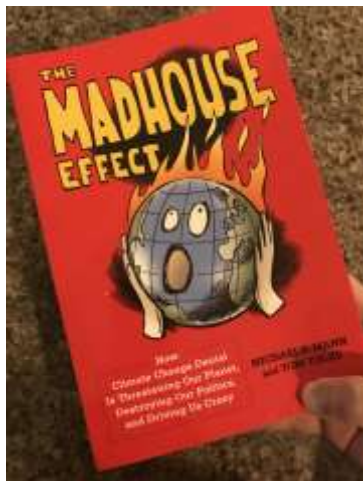
Timing, it's often assumed, is an art. In *When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing*, Pink shows that timing is really a science.

Drawing on a rich trove of research from psychology, biology, and economics, Pink reveals how best to live, work, and succeed. How can we use the hidden patterns of the day to build the ideal schedule? Why do certain breaks dramatically improve student test scores? How can we turn a stumbling beginning into a fresh start? Why should we avoid going to the hospital in the afternoon? Why is singing in time with other people as good for you as exercise? And what is the ideal time to quit a job, switch careers, or get married?



Mann and Toles have been on the front lines of the fight against climate denialism for most of their careers. They have witnessed the manipulation of the media by business and political interests and the unconscionable play to partisanship on issues that affect the well-being of billions. The lessons they have learned have been invaluable, inspiring this brilliant, colorful escape hatch from the madhouse of the climate wars.

The *Madhouse Effect* portrays the intellectual pretzels into which denialists must twist logic to explain away the clear evidence that human activity has changed Earth's climate. Toles's cartoons collapse counter-scientific strategies into their biased components, helping readers see how to best strike at these fallacies. Mann's expert skills at science communication aim to restore sanity to a debate that continues to rage against widely acknowledged scientific consensus. The synergy of these two climate science crusaders enlivens the gloom and doom of so many climate-themed books.



The Matt Cooper

Humanist Lending Library

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

TITLE AUTHOR

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2. In Gods we Trust Scott Atran
3. Why Evolution is True Jerry Coyne
4. The Second World Panag Khanna
5. Denialism Michael Specter
6. The Selfish Gene Richard Dawkins
7. Democracy Incorporated Sheldon Wolin
8. The Upside Irrationality Dan Ariely
9. The End of Growth Richard Heinberg
10. The God Delusion Richard Dawkins
11. All That We Share Jay Wallgasper
12. Sex, Time, and Power Leonard Shlain
13. Sex at Dawn C. Ryan, & C. Jetha
14. What liberal Media Eric Alderman
15. The End of Faith Sam Harris
16. Plan B Lester Brown
17. The Portable Atheist Christopher Hitchens
18. Open Society George Soros
19. Non Believer Nation David Niose
20. God on Trial Peter Irons
21. Natural Experiments of History Diamond-Robinson
22. The Missionary Position Christopher Hitchens
23. Life Inc Douglas Rushkoff
24. A brief History of Time Stephen Hawking
25. Breaking the Spell Daniel Dennett
26. The Philosophy of Humanism Corliss Lamont
27. The Quotable Atheist Jack Huberman
28. 50 Reasons People Believe In G.G. Harrison
29. Mathematics and Politics Alan Taylor
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31. The God Virus Darrel Ray
32. What Every American Should Know About World Rossi
33. Imagine There's no Heaven Editors of Free Inquiry
34. Hidden Order David Friedman
35. What the Dog Saw Malcom Gladwell
36. Sway Ori, Rom Brafman
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38. Letter to a Young Contrarian Christopher Hitchens
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44. Why People Believe Weird Things Michael Shermer
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46. The Snow Ball Warren Buffett
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48. How We Believe Michael Shermer
49. Full House Steven Jay Gould
50. The Origins of Political Order Francis Fukuyama
51. Asimov's Guide to the Bible Isaac Asimov
52. Autobiography of Mark Twain Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith, Editor
53. Science Friction Michael Shermer
54. Genius James Gleick
55. Inevitable Illusions Piatrelli & Palmarini
56. Demon Haunted World Carl Sagan
57. Being Right Is Not Enough Paul Waldman
58. Loser Takes All Mark Crispin Miller
59. Taking Back Politics Cathy Allen
60. Spiritual Common Sense Mark Lindquist (Gift by author)
61. Autobiography of Mark Twain Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith
62. The Skeptics Annotated Bible Various
63. 12 Vol Complete Works Robert Ingersoll
64. On Religious Liberty Roger Williams & Davis
65. The God Makers Baker & Hunt
66. Inevitable Illusions M. Piatrelli-Palmarini
67. Ain't Nobody's business If You Do Peter McWilliams
69. Bonk Mary Roach
70. What Money Can't Buy Michael J. Sandel
71. Financial Shenanigans Howard Shilit
72. Sex & God Darrel Ray, ED.D
73. Best American Non required Reading Dave Eagers
74. Reporting at Wit's End St. Clair McKelway
75. Corporations are not People Clements
76. Could I Vote Mormon for president? Cragun – Phillips
77. Culture of Honor Nisbett – Cohen
78. Rot on the Vine Stenes
79. Thoughts of a Freethinker New Kaye * Essential works
80. An Atheist Stranger by Herb Silverman
81. Candidate without a prayer- Herb Silverman



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The mission of the **Secular Coalition for Florida** is to increase the visibility of & 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](#).

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St Pete Atheists // Freethought Group

Moderated by: Gary Thompson

Contact: easy8@tampabay.rr.com

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

- * Provide intellectual & emotional support to each other & to others in our community who share our philosophy.
- * Foster humanistic moral values & ethical behaviors.
- * Promote a naturalistic worldview wherein beliefs must be verified by a scientific examination of evidence.
- * 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.

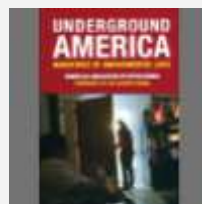
UU Humanists of Clearwater

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

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



University of South Florida Humanities Institute



Oct. 16 - Community Book Group: *Underground America: Narratives of Undocumented Lives* Ed. by Peter Orner

Location: **Seminole Heights Wine Bar** (6703 N. Florida Ave. Tampa, 33604)

Time: 7:00 pm

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



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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Monday, Oct. 14th 2019

Topic: How is Artificial Intelligence changing our culture, society, workforce, etc?

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

Humanist Families of Greater Tampa

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



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

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

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

Thanks, **Jennifer Hancock**

The Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers



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

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

Co-Organizer:

MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB



USF Freethinkers

Join 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

TB-CoR Encourages

Ethical Humanism

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

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



Tampa Bay Technology Center & Thinkers Salon



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

Paranoia Banned

Alex Jones, Bigotry, Falsehoods, and “Censorship”



By Norm R. Allen Jr.

Institute for Science and Human Values

Paranoid conspiracy theorist and reactionary polemicist Alex Jones has been banned from Apple, Facebook, YouTube and Spotify.

Jones, through his website Info Wars and other outlets over the past 20 years, has promoted such conspiracy theories as the following:

• *Barack Obama was not born in the U.S. and is not a U.S. citizen* • *Hillary Clinton headed a sex trafficking ring with the D.C.-based Comet Ping Pong Pizza establishment (aka, Pizzagate)* • *The terrorist attacks on 9/11 were inside jobs* • *Hitler and Mussolini were leftists that influenced the Left in the U.S.* • *The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is forming concentration camps to brainwash Americans* • *The Sandy Hook massacre, in which 20 children were murdered, was a hoax.*

However, as cruel and bizarre as these beliefs are, they are not why Jones has been barred from so many social media outlets. He was barred because these non-governmental businesses have standards against hate speech, which Jones repeatedly violated. The pressure from anti-bigots had become so great that the social media giants had to react. This is simply not an issue of censorship. The government had nothing to do with any of this. More importantly, Jones is free to peddle his bigotry and falsehoods on his website and in many other ways. Jack-booted government thugs are not coming after him and his ilk.

Still, Jones, predictably, has turned this into a First Amendment issue. Not surprisingly, Jones is in “good” company. The paranoid conspiracy theorist-in-Chief, President Donald Trump, complains that Google is biased against conservatives, as does Jones. Jones claims that he is advising Trump in his opposition to social media. (Trump has appeared on Jones’ show and has even stated that Jones is worthy of a Pulitzer prize!)

This is a baseless claim against Google. Google prioritizes credible original sources over paranoid conspiracy theories and “real” fake news.

However, how does one reason with a paranoid conspiracy theorist? In the convoluted logic of the conspiracy theorist, strong evidence against the theory is viewed as part of the conspiracy! As someone once said, “once fanaticism gets inside you, nothing else can.”

Ironically, the conservatives that whine about “fake news” are Jones’ biggest supporters. Like Trump, most of these conservatives seem to believe that anything with which they disagree must be fake news. Meanwhile, Trump tells an estimated seven lies per day, which his gullible followers eagerly accept.

To his credit, Jones has his share of progressive supporters. They embrace the slippery slope common logical fallacy, or

the idea that Jones was unjustly banned from social media, and that anyone with unpopular ideas could also be banned. Indeed, I first became fascinated with Jones’ banning from social media as I was listening to a radio program I used to appear on regularly as a guest. The talk show host, Mary Davis, asked her guests about anything in the news they wanted to discuss. Frank Gist, another regular guest, brought up the Alex Jones story. Much to my horror and disgust, Gist said that “some conspiracy theories are true,” and started to defend the idea that 9/11 was an inside job. He said he would gladly debate anyone on any number of conspiracy theories. Thankfully, there was a professor that was also a guest on the show who was able to show how crazy and dangerous these kinds of ideas are. It is sad that otherwise rational commentators can destroy their credibility by promoting paranoid conspiracy theories. However, should people be censored because they promote conspiracy theories?

Conspiracy theories can cause widespread panic, rage, violence and death throughout populations. Blacks and Jews have been historically victimized by conspiracy theories and rumor mongering. Is this any different than shouting fire in a crowded theater when there is no fire?

It seems that if conspiracy theories lead to violence, the conspiracy theorists should in some way be held accountable for his or her words. They could certainly be held legally accountable if they were found to be inciting to riot.

It is amazing how comfortable Trump supporters are with a paranoid conspiracy theorist in the White House. They do not understand – or care – what it means to have a sitting president that is divorced from reality.

What does this say to the rest of the world? There certainly will not be any support for reason in this regard coming from most of Trump’s fellow Republican politicians. He succeeded in terrorizing them way back during his run for the Presidency. Republicans seem to stand for nothing but naked political power by any means necessary. They have shown repeatedly that they are willing to put the pursuit of political power before the best interests of their country, while hypocritically wrapping themselves in the flag. Though they obviously do not care, history will judge them harshly for their greed, duplicity and cowardice.

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

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

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

Politics Anyone? Share your Opinions

Hello Secular Scholar Friends,

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

The link to join the **panel is here**.

Thanks for your time.

Juhem Navarro-Rivera, PhD
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Richard Sutherland is a former trial lawyer and Polk **resident** who graduated from Harvard Law School after earning graduate degrees from USC and Harvard in history and Far Eastern languages. He has studied the Bible all his life. Here, he calls Paul of Tarsus to the stand for rewriting the message of Jesus for an audience it was never intended for, and examines other core Christian ideas like original sin and judgement day.

Foundation beyond Belief



Weathering the storms: Nearly 70,000 residents of the Bahamas were rendered homeless by Hurricane Dorian in September. So far, 600 remain missing and 56 are counted dead. The country reports 1.5 billion pounds of debris needs to be cleaned in one community alone. The good news is that humanists responded in a big way, donating over \$22,000 in less than a month to our Humanist Disaster Recovery appeal for Dorian!

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



Monday, October 7, 2019

Speaker: Bill Schoolman—National Officer, **Final Exit**
Topic: Preparing for the next stage

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



No outside food or drink is allowed in the library meeting room. Water, coffee and snacks provided. Space is somewhat limited so please RSVP on Facebook or Meetup ahead of time if you plan to attend.
RSVP: [Facebook](#) | [Meetup](#)

THE HANGING DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

RICHARD SUTHERLAND, JD

Richard takes a trial lawyer's approach to various claims and details surrounding the death(s) of Jesus, and examines other core Christian ideas like original sin and judgement day.

FREE ADMISSION

ATHEIST COMMUNITY of Polk County

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26TH
2-4 PM
LAKE WALES PUBLIC LIBRARY



Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contact:

council@tampabaycor.net

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

Humanist Progress against Blasphemy Laws

A protest against Northern Ireland's blasphemy laws took place in Belfast September 30th to raise awareness of the damaging impact of the law in countries where people face extreme punishment for expressing their views on religion.

Northern Ireland Humanists, which is part of the charity Humanists UK, organised the protests on International Blasphemy Day (Monday, 30 September) as part of its campaign [to abolish Northern Ireland's blasphemy laws](#).

Protesters urged Northern Ireland to play its part in the global fight against blasphemy by removing it as a crime under common law, the [Law of Libel Amendment Act 1888](#), and the [Criminal Libel Act 1819](#), which remain in force in Northern Ireland.

Retaining blasphemy laws like those in Northern Ireland, even if they are not often used, legitimises their use in countries such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, where people face the death penalty, mob violence, and other persecution. The abolition of these laws, on the other hand, can be a striking declaration to the world that free speech should not be a crime. Recent abolitions in New Zealand, Canada, and elsewhere, and the upcoming abolition in the Republic of Ireland, have had this beneficial effect.

Even in countries where prosecutions are not common, these laws have still been a source of injustice, as was seen in the Republic of Ireland in 2017 when Humanists UK patron Stephen Fry was [investigated](#) for blasphemy.

[All parties in Northern Ireland support abolishing the laws](#) except for the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) which is considering its position.

Earlier this month Humanists UK submitted evidence to the UK Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee on alarming cases of individuals who have been [murdered for declaring they have no religious beliefs](#) on their social media accounts.

Courtesy, *British Humanist Assoc.*



TBCoR Leadership Team 2019

Judy Adkins
AoF

Bill Norsworthy,
UUCH

Mark Brandt,
UUCH

Chris Brown,
MAF

Jenn Hancock,
GTBHF

Rick O'Keefe,
CFI, TBS

Jim Peterson - Facilitator
HSS, TBPCC

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



Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – **October**, 2019 Calendar

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



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

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

Religious Freedom: Trump style

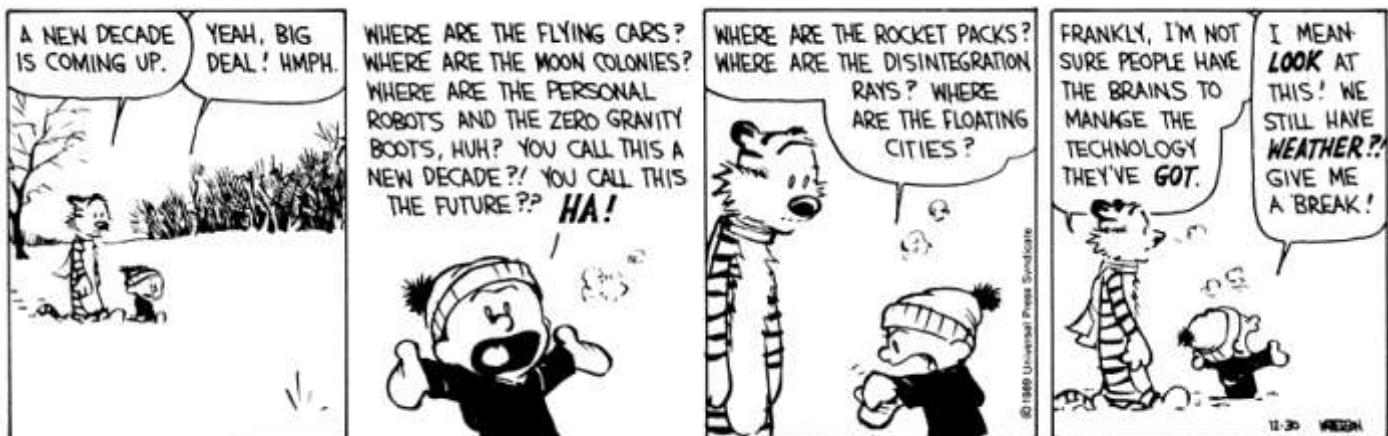
(Washington, D.C., September 23, 2019) – At the United Nations Global Call to Protect Religious Freedom event today, President Donald Trump announced the formation of a coalition of U.S. business leaders meant to “encourage the private sector to protect people of all faiths in the workplace.” The American Humanist Association’s executive director, Roy Speckhardt, attended at the invitation of the Department of State to represent the interests of humanists and other nontheists.

“Given this administration’s relentless attempts to permit religious bigotry and discrimination under the guise of religious freedom, this troubling language is likely nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to privilege Christianity at the expense of true religious freedom for all,” explained Speckhardt. The AHA’s humanist and atheist constituents were noticeably left out of Trump’s call for freedoms for the faithful.

Speckhardt continued, “Since his election, Trump attempted to create and enforce special rights for the religious right. Despite claims to stand by all who seek religious freedom, it’s obvious the president does not extend that protection to all. Religious freedom is not, nor should it ever be, a license to discriminate.”

The administration also announced efforts to encourage other governments to allow people to “follow their conscience, live by their faith, and give glory to God.” However, the number of countries in which nontheists experience harassment is growing rapidly. Twenty-two countries have criminalized apostasy, or renunciation of religious faith, and in 12 countries, the crime is punishable by death.

Calvin & Hobbes



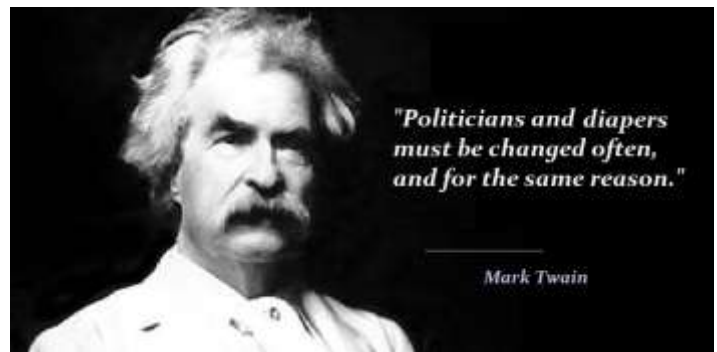
COMING SOON
U.S. SECULAR SURVEY
OCTOBER 15 - NOVEMBER 22

How often are young atheists rejected by their families? How many people are openly nonreligious in their daily lives? To what extent do atheists face discrimination in the workplace?

We don't know. There's no data to give us the answers to these questions and the many issues facing our community. Unlike demographics based on race, gender, and sexual orientation, federal surveys do not gather data about atheists and nonreligious people.

And this lack of data very much limits our ability to advocate for civil rights for atheists, to understand the challenges atheists face in their daily lives, to seek grant funding to benefit our population, and to establish programs to meet community needs.

That's about to change. On **October 15**, American Atheists will launch the **U.S. Secular Survey at SecularSurvey.org**. With your participation, this will be the largest and most comprehensive data collection about atheists and nonreligious people ever conducted.



Wisdom allusion suggested by Joe Reinhardt

Nov. 1
 Orlando
 see Pg.

4

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