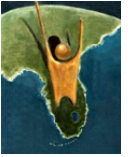




**The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason**



# Freethought News

Vol. 6 No. 12, December, 2017 Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

## TB-CoR celebrates yet another successful year with yet another Solstice Dinner.

Benedict's Restaurant in Clearwater is the site of the 2017 Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason end of the year celebration. As of this writing, tickets are selling briskly, with only a few seats left.. Write to: [mwbrandt@mail.usf.edu](mailto:mwbrandt@mail.usf.edu) to see if there might be any more space. This occasion also celebrates the 30th year of the Humanist Society of the Suncoast. See page 2 for more on this. We normally have this event in the social Hall off the Clearwater UU congregation, but this year, the hall is being renovated, so the potluck cornucopia has been suspended for what we hope will be a fine and convivial dinner at one of our better local eateries. Don't forget to bring canned food or personal toiletries for our ongoing homeless project. Mark Brandt and Bill Norsworthy are greatly to be thanked.

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## Humanists Champion Battle to Protect Non-Christians

(Washington, D.C., November 22, 2017) The Appignani Humanist Legal Center (AHLC) champions another battle to protect the separation of church and state. Governor Jim Justice of West Virginia received a letter today from the AHLC regarding his recent proclamation of the week of November 19-25, 2017 to be named "Christian Heritage Week" in West Virginia. The proclamation declares in part: "Thanksgiving week is an appropriate time to center attention on our thanks to Almighty God for His great and good Providence and for the Christian faith." Making numerous references to prayer, worship, Bible reading, and other religious elements, Governor Justice's proclamation can only be understood as an official government endorsement of Christianity.

In a letter to the governor, AHLC senior counsel, Monica Miller, wrote, "It is clear that this proclamation violates the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. We recognize that you and other elected officials may feel that protecting

### Freethought Radio on the air.

Atheists of Florida produces the *Atheist Forum*, every **Sunday, from 7 to 8 pm**. The broadcast is available on WTAN-1340 and on the internet at [TanTalk1340.com](http://TanTalk1340.com). Listeners can call 727-441-3000, call-in questions and comments. See page 12 for more.

Coming for **Darwin Day**, next February 3rd:

## The Evolution of Human Happiness

In general, secular people believe that the promotion of happiness along with the mitigation of suffering are important social and political goals. What separates the secularist approach to the question is the willingness to test practical policies with measurable reports of how people feel about the everyday experience of life. This contrasts with dogmatic religious and political advocates who sublimate indexes of human comfort and satisfaction to the realization of certain large scale changes that favor the hegemony of their philosophical perspective.

But since human needs, desires, and capacities are so varied, a society that is expansive in its tolerance for differences in ideas and behavior in its public square is more successful. This directly challenges the traditional authoritarianism that has motivated so many throughout history, and has caused so much grief through war and violence, poverty and indifference.

But we are learning as a species, that things can be different. Find out how much different when TBCoR presents our Darwin day program on February 3rd.

JP

### Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

#### Calendar

[Rick O'Keefe](mailto:Rick.O'Keefe@tampabaycor.net)

#### Web site

Jim Peterson

#### Newsletter

[Jim Peterson](mailto:Jim.Peterson@tampabaycor.net)

#### Special Projects

Mark Brandt  
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event website at:

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

See the full roster of the  
Leadership board  
on Page 15.

This publication online at:

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

# The Humanist Society of the Suncoast News

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

**Dunedin Public Library** 223 Douglas Ave, Dunedin, FL

Volume 30 No. 12 December, 2017

**Join or renew**  
**Humanist Society of the Suncoast**

## Annual Dues

- \_E-mail news -Free
- \_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 tax deductible (501c3) check  
made out to:*

**“Marios Psomas”**

Memo line: “Humanist Society Dues”

Humanist Society of the Suncoast, AHA

1013 Connecticut Rd

Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

\*= optional



## Wedding, Child naming, Memorial?

Florida has a large number of celebrants who are specially trained to solemnize the important life transitions in the Humanist way. <http://thehumanistsociety.org/celebrants/map/#FL>

*Celebrating*

**30 Years**  
**of**  
**Humanism**

In west central Florida

This month's meeting is cancelled in deference to the annual Solstice - Humanlight Celebration. See the front page for more details.

But join us to hear physicist,  
**Greg Rosasco** reveal new insights into the scientific understanding of the world in January.



## Be with us then at

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

**Saturday, Jan. 6  
at 2:00 PM**

Many of us go to dinner afterwards at: [Los Amigos](#) restaurant not far from the Library.

This month concludes our thirtieth year together as the Humanist Society of the Suncoast. Some of our founding members have been lost along the way, notably the late, **HAL EAST**, who started us off in 1987. but we have learned from them all, and been enriched by our association.

Along the way many have contributed to our existence and well being: **Florence Morgenroth, Brent Yaciw, Ken Poulson, Jacques Musy, Jerry Eckstein, Nan Owens, George Starkes, Jerry Moore, Jan Eisler, Connie Purdum, Liz & Greg Simpson, Matt Cooper, Bill Norsworthy, Jeanne Fletcher, Dr. Jon Greene, Abigail Martin, Mitch Modisett, Doris Kovalick, Sidney Goetz, Edward L Ericson, Glen & Kay Paul, Ann Berdine, Jackie Jordan, Lucille Odeneal, Jim Young, Merle Bigenho, Dr. Steven Shafersman, Anita Garcia, Steve Brown, Jim Butler, Jennifer Hancock, Robert Collette, Bill Hall, Robert Byrch, Roz Estrin, Don Acenbrach, Mark Winterbottom, Dave Kovar, Mark Kligman, Mike Hubbard, Dr. Jack Robinson, Frank Prah, Lois Fries, Marios Psomas, Mark Brandt, Jay Alexander, Rick O'Keefe, Susan Boone, John McMichael, ... and so many more, many of whom deserve a mention here, but space and memory fail. To them my apologies.**

But to all of us, the friends who persist; let us continue to make Humanism the better future of which we have dreamed.

**Jim Peterson, President**



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



*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 on Sunday, November 19th at 5 O'clock for exotic cuisine from the orient and good company too, at:

## Thai Bay & Sushi Restaurant

1300 E Bay Dr, Largo, FL 33771

Phone: (727) 584-5522

For map <https://www.zomato.com/tampa-bay/thai-bay-largo/menu>

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

## Laugh Lines Grand DICTIONARY 12-17

**AMNESIA:** Condition that enables a woman, who has gone through labor, to have sex again.

**DUMBWAITER:** One who asks if the kids would care to order dessert.

**FAMILY PLANNING:** The art of spacing your children the proper distance apart to keep you on the brink of financial disaster.

**FULL NAME:** What you call your child when you're angry with him.

**GRANDPARENTS:** The people who think your children are wonderful even though they're sure you're not raising them right.

**INDEPENDENT:** How we want our children to be as long as they do everything we say.

**OW:** The first word spoken by children with older siblings.

**PRENATAL:** When your life was still somewhat your own.

**PUDDLE:** A small body of water that draws other small bodies wearing dry shoes into it.

**SHOW-OFF:** A child who is more talented than yours.

**STERILIZE:** What you do to your first baby's pacifier by boiling it and to your last baby's pacifier by blowing on it.

**TOP BUNK:** Where you should never put a child wearing Superman jammies.

**VERBAL:** Able to whine in words.

## Humanist Society of the Suncoast

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

### Board of Directors.

Meets Sept., December, April

**Jay Alexander,**  
**Steve Brown,**  
**Lois Fries,** Secretary  
**Dave Kovar,**  
**Brad Perryman** Vice Pres.  
**Jim Peterson,** President  
**Frank Prahl,**  
**Marios Psomas,** Treasurer  
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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://SecularTherapyOrg.com)

[Cognitive Neurosciences Inc.](http://CognitiveNeurosciencesInc.com)

### Or call:

Lynda Gurvitz,  
(727) 725-8820

Patricia Walters,  
(813) 452-6547



## Tampa Humanist Association

Meets every third Saturday at, 11:00 AM

### North Tampa Public Library

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

December 16th, 11 AM

Leaders: **Lucas Hopegood & Jim Peterson**

Member, TBCoR,  
Hum Society, & AHA  
affiliate.



Tampa has over 100 libraries, Museums dedicated to History, Art, Science, Children, an Aquarium, two great universities, Concert Halls, performing arts centers, and a Zoo, among other amenities. And yet for all that stimulus, we have precious few venues to engage our intellectual faculties directly and socially. Such appears to be the nature of our society, that for the million people in our city, there is little encouragement nor scant time to consider the central questions of human existence in a way that does not involve some political or religious organization.

But that is precisely the intent of our group, and the few others that you see in this newsletter. In order to adequately serve our city we must find ways to grow; ways to attract more people to the difficult notion of examining their lives and the institutions that shape them. **Lets talk.**



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

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

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

As Isaac Asimov, former AHA president, is quoted as saying, "Since you can't take it with you, send it on ahead." Humanism is as much in need of good followership as it is of effective leadership. Now is the time to do your part in either category. We can help.

JP

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



## endorsing Protecting non-Christians

Continued from page 1...

the majority religion will be seen as a popular gesture, but your constitutional obligation requires that you respect the rights of religious minorities, and all citizens who value secular government, by refraining from such actions."

The AHLC goes on to demand assurances that "Christian Heritage Week" and similar events will not be repeated, and that Governor Justice's office will not issue similar proclamations endorsing religion in the future. If such assurances are not received, litigation may follow.

"Anyone, religious or not, can see that the purpose of a Christian Heritage Week is to promote Christianity," said Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association. "That's wrong because government endorsement of a particular religion subverts Thomas Jefferson's wall of church state separation. Everyone is entitled to be represented by a government that does not elevate one's worldview over all others."

## A Humanist Quote

12/17

"Isn't it a noble, an enlightened way of spending our brief time in the sun, to work at understanding the universe and how we have come to wake up in it? This is how I answer when I am asked – as I am surprisingly often – why I bother to get up in the mornings. To put it the other way round, isn't it sad to go to your grave without wondering why you were born? Who, with such a thought, would not spring from bed eager to resume discovering the world and rejoicing to be part of it?"

– Richard Dawkins, *Unweaving the Rainbow*, 1998

# Democracy at Risk

*Resilience* From Resilience.org

We are coming unmoored from our history, the Constitution, the better angels of our nature, our highest values, and our collective solidarity as Humans and Americans. In the words of David Frum:

“We are living through the most dangerous challenge to the free government of the United States that anyone alive has encountered. What happens next is up to you and me.”

Accordingly, we are here because our political dialogue—never gentle—has become course, violent, and mendacious.

We are here, because of the growing wealth gap between a small oligarchy and the rest of us. Three billionaires reportedly have more wealth than the bottom 60% of American workers. And we know the truth of Justice Louis Brandeis words that “we may have democracy or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can’t have both.”

We are here because 64 million American families exist on less than a living wage while 400 families make \$97,000 every hour.

We are here to demand a response to an unprecedented and ongoing attack by a foreign power on our electoral system and on the bonds that sustain us and define us as a free people.

We are here because the new technology of social media threatens to undermine truth, conviviality, and civil discourse and so weaken our democracy.

We are here because broad support for democracy is in decline here and elsewhere and we believe that it is worth defending.

We are here to counter the power and influence of “Dark Money” that has corrupted the political process and contaminated the very soul of democracy.

We are here because we remember Dwight Eisenhower’s warning about the effects of the military industrial complex and the perils of Empire and those long ago by James Madison on the threat standing armies pose to democracy.

We are here to oppose ongoing attempts to distort the will of the people by suppressing their right to vote in fairly drawn voting districts.

We are here because 3 million Americans are in prison and millions more live on the edge of destitution.

We are here because 30,000 of us die each year in a hail of gunfire because a small minority believes that the right to own guns supersedes our right to life.

We are here to oppose a tax system that favors those needing no help and allows the unscrupulous to hide their money in overseas accounts and avoid paying their fair share of support for the country that made them rich.

We are here because our political language, in Rev. William Barber’s words “is too puny for the crises we face.”

We are here to defend science, facts, honest dialogue and the hard-won gains of the Enlightenment.



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

We are here to energize and enlarge the necessary task of civic education, the bedrock of a true democracy.

We are here, liberals and conservatives alike, in the knowledge that each is necessary to the other.

We are here to close the gap between what a majority of people want and the laws and policies they get.

We are here because we know that the perils of rapid climate change and nuclear war threaten civilization. Sooner or later they will manifest unless the voices of an informed and alert citizenry are heard.

We are here to work for peace between peoples, factions, religions, ideologies, nations and between humankind and the web of life.

We are here to enlarge the boundaries of democracy to embrace issues about the fate of the Earth we share with future generations.

We are here because posterity—our children and theirs—is being deprived of its rights to life, liberty, and property by heedless actions of the present generation.

And to all of us who live in this historic town of Oberlin, we are here in particular because the mandate of our history, our heritage, and ...



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



*Rick O'Keefe,  
Coordinator*

## Sharing Reality: How Do You Create a Post-Post-Truth World? By Stephanie Savage

Picture a science fiction author of the 30s imagining a superscientific world like our own — with the entirety of human knowledge in the palm of a person's hand. Would he have conjured a worldwide web of proliferating falsehoods and fabrications drowning out demonstrable — even scientifically proven — facts? And that those established facts would be branded FAKE NEWS! by the president of the United States of America? A future existence where sharing reality is as easy as pressing a button, but as hard as changing human nature?

False facts spread like measles through the unvaccinated. Can sharing reality change that?

He — in the first half of the 20th century a SF writer would very likely have been male — most certainly could never conceive of parents refusing vaccination for their children in the name of protecting them. After all, polio was still the terror of every parent.

Who would want to read about, let alone live in a dystopia of mass misinformation like ours?

The rest of the article: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/miraclegirl/2017/10/sharing-reality-create-post-post-truth-world/>

## Can a faithful catholic combine their faith with the philosophy of secular humanism?

This question was posed on QUORA and was answered by [Ryan Reasons](#), Lifelong agnostic atheist and Humanist

“Never. [Humanism](#) is the diametric opposite of authoritarian religions like Roman Catholicism, which hold church dogma as inviolate.”

Can faith and reason successfully unite? Clearly, yes! From whence sprang theology? However, logic, no matter how tortured, cannot successfully a bad assumption. Read Ryan's analysis here: <http://bit.ly/2yDSJPj>.

## List of Fake News Websites

These sites intentionally publish [hoaxes](#) and [disinformation](#) for purposes other than [news satire](#).

Some of these sites use [homograph spoofing attacks](#), [typosquatting](#) and other deceptive strategies similar to those used in [phishing](#) attacks to resemble genuine news outlets.

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>

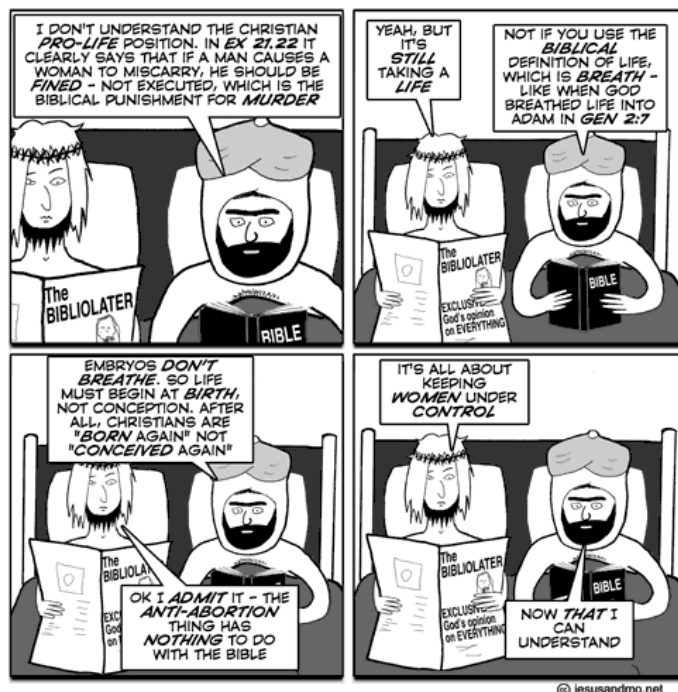


## CFI's all new “Point of Inquiry” Podcast

*The flagship podcast of the Center for Inquiry is beginning a brand new chapter!*

Surely, many of the planets in the Milky Way must be home to life forms, and even technologically advanced civilizations. So where the heck are they? Why can't we find them? Why won't they talk to us? Would we even know it if they did? To talk about the prospects for life on other worlds, intelligent and otherwise, Point of Inquiry host Paul Fidalgo talks to journalist Lee Billings. Lee is a reporter and editor for *Scientific American* covering space and physics, as well as the author of *Five Billion Years of Solitude: The Search for Life Among the Stars*. Go here for the rest: <http://www.pointofinquiry.org/>

You can subscribe to [Point of Inquiry](#) in your podcast app of choice, and if you're already a subscriber, well, *don't go anywhere!*



For more great *Jesus and Mo* shrewdness, go here: <http://bit.ly/2zrMwb1>

Recently CFI Tampa Bay has worked on these critical initiatives:

- Fighting against the anti-gay and anti-women legislation in Florida.
- Forcing public school systems to remove the blatant presence of religion in taxpayer funded activities, classrooms, sports events on public school campuses.
- Fighting Blasphemy Laws in Florida and around the world.
- Combatting the insurgence of pseudo-science and religion into healthcare and public education. Speaking out for freethinkers, secularists, atheists, agnostics, secular humanists, and non-believers.

## Support CFI Tampa Bay. Join Us Now!

Center for Inquiry is a 501(c)3 Educational Non-Profit. Memberships and donations are tax-deductible to the full extent provided by law.

When you become a [member](#) or make a [donation](#), you become a part of a worldwide movement of humanists, skeptics, atheists, and freethinkers, all working together to give voice to our values. Thank you! [http://bit.ly/CFI-TampaBay\\_Support\\_Us](http://bit.ly/CFI-TampaBay_Support_Us)

For more information about CFI Tampa Bay, contact branch coordinator Rick O'Keefe at [tampa@centerforinquiry.net](mailto:tampa@centerforinquiry.net). To learn about making a special donation, talk with Martina Fern, V.P. for Philanthropy, [mfern@centerforinquiry.net](mailto:mfern@centerforinquiry.net)

## You can Become a Certified Secular Celebrant

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.

### How to Get *Certified* as a CFI Secular Celebrant and Be Listed in the CFI Celebrant Directory

**Details:** <http://bit.ly/2cGksq7>

Requirements:

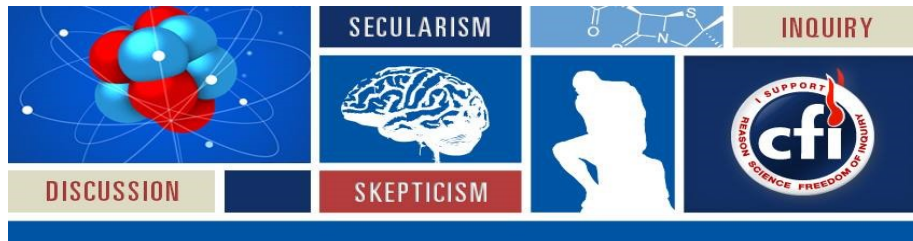
- 1) Be a CFI Member ([Planet level or above](#)).
- 2) Attend a CFI Secular Celebrant training.
- 3) Present a letter of recommendation from local CFI director or branch leader. If there is no local branch, two letters of recommendation are required: one from a previous employer and one from another person who is not a relative.
- 4) Submit an essay describing your worldview.
- 5) Be interviewed in person or by phone by the Co-Directors of the CFI Secular Celebrant Program (currently, Reba Boyd Wooden and Jim Underdown).
- 6) Approval of a CFI executive.

Our Secular Humanist belief is the third largest belief system in the United States, coming after Roman Catholics, all Baptists, then us. Paul Kurtz

If you won't participate,  
why expect others to do the work?

Click below

**JOIN NOW**



## Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science



Support science & reason; become a member today! *Membership starts at only \$25/year.*

Click the Flame to learn more.



BE ONE OF US

### University of South Florida Humanities Institute

For engaging speakers & socials,  
check the calendar at

<http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities>

Select lectures are available on YouTube.

*Can one truly claim to be educated without a broad knowledge of the Humanities? No!*

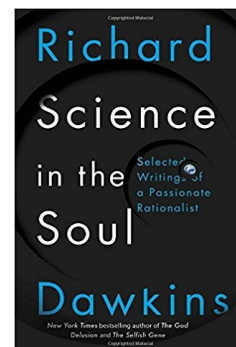


### "Science and the Public" Master of Education program

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](#).



Legendary biologist Richard Dawkins mounts a timely and passionate defense of science and clear thinking with this career-spanning NEW collection of essays, including twenty pieces published in the United States for the first time.

CFI's local [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.



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!](#)



## A very brief primer on skepticism

From Science & Skepticism [@ScienceSkeptic](#)

Skepticism is nothing new. In ancient Greece, Pyrrho of Elis (360-270 BC) questioned everything and withheld assenting to all beliefs. The Roman Sextus Empiricus (160-210 AD), who idolized Pyrrho, took skepticism one step further and developed a very sophisticated methodology for questioning the foundations of all types of knowledge. This school of skepticism, known as Pyrrhonism, sought to [free minds from the disturbance](#) of unfounded beliefs. Much later, one of the greatest modern philosophers, David Hume (1711-1776 AD), drank from the same fountain as these ancients. Although he had positive philosophical beliefs and contributed to fields like economics, history, and proto-psychology, Hume laid siege to many sacred cows like causation, [foundationalism](#), the design argument, traditional ethics, and miracles.

These Pyrrhonian skeptics, despite their brilliance, did not get too far when it came to attaining positive knowledge about the world around us. This is because their skepticism was predominantly focused on tearing down or undermining knowledge. Not constructing it. Scientific skepticism differs from this philosophical skepticism because it is not satisfied with merely questioning beliefs. It also wants to find out the how the world actually works and which methods are best for exploring it. To succeed at this task, the skeptics of our age have embraced, as Michael Shermer put it, "the most powerful tool ever devised for understanding how the world works." This tool is science.

What impresses skeptics about science is its long track record of successful prediction and potent application in fields like computing, medicine, and engineering. In the short time since the Scientific Revolution, science has explained the origin of species and shown us that our Milky Way galaxy is one among billions and billions. Most notably, it has eradicated diseases like Polio, made instantaneous communication around the world possible, and put men on the moon. The skeptic is equally as impressed by science's methodology. Unlike traditional ways of looking at the world, science is built on probability rather than certainty. This means that all knowledge in science is fallible and can be revised if new information becomes available. This track record and its openness to new ideas is why skeptics are confident that science is the way to go.

## The Debunking Handbook

[The Debunking Handbook](#), a guide to debunking misinformation, is now [freely available to download](#). Although there is a great deal of psychological research on misinformation, there's no summary of the literature that offers practical guidelines on the most effective ways of reducing the influence of myths. The Debunking Handbook boils the research down into a short, simple summary, intended as a guide for communicators in all areas (not just [climate](#)) who encounter misinformation.

**DOWNLOAD** [the Handbook](#)

The Handbook explores the surprising fact that debunking myths can sometimes reinforce the myth in peoples' minds. Communicators need to be aware of the various backfire effects and how to avoid them, such as: [The Familiarity Backfire Effect](#); [The Overkill Backfire Effect](#); [The Worldview Backfire Effect](#)

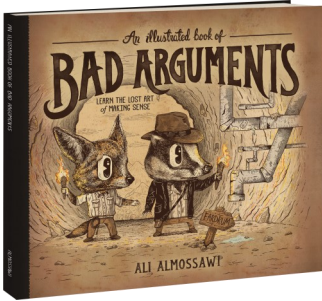
It also looks at a key element to successful debunking: [providing an alternative explanation](#). The Handbook is designed to be useful to all communicators who have to deal with misinformation (eg - not just [climate](#) myths).

[Rick recommends this site for accurate science on "Explaining climate change science & rebutting global warming misinformation".]

Scientific skepticism is healthy. Scientists should always challenge themselves to improve their understanding. Yet this isn't what happens with denialists. Do their arguments have any scientific basis? What does the peer reviewed scientific literature say?

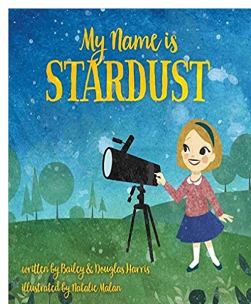
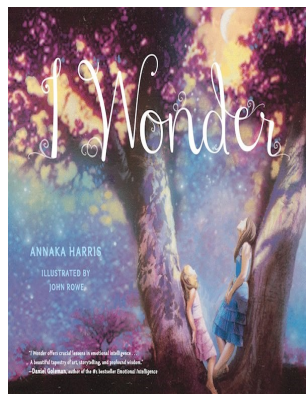
## Recommended Reading

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



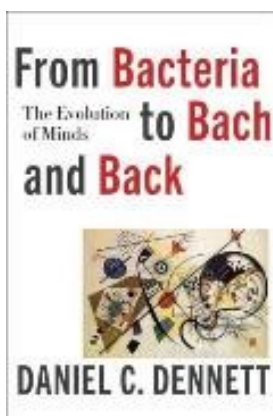
The antidote to fuzzy thinking, with furry animals! Have you read (or stumbled into) one too many irrational online debates? Ali Almossawi certainly had, so he wrote An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments! This handy guide is here to bring the internet age a much-needed dose of old-school logic (really old-school, a la Aristotle).

*"I Wonder* offers crucial lessons in emotional intelligence, starting with being secure in the face of uncertainty. Annaka Harris has woven a beautiful tapestry of art, storytelling, and profound wisdom. Any young child – and parent – will benefit from sharing this wondrous book together.”  
–Daniel Goleman,



In simple text and beautiful illustrations, My Name is Stardust elegantly captures what Neil DeGrasse Tyson called the most astounding fact-- that we are literally stardust, and that this connects us to everything that ever was and ever will be. A captivating addition to the literature of science and wonder for the youngest minds.  
--McGowan

"Dennett is always worth reading, and this latest book distills his current thinking and all he has learned over the years. It's not a book you would take to the beach for light summer reading; it challenges the reader to think seriously about a variety of subjects. But it's well written and accessible to the general reader, and it's a great way to get a better understanding of how consciousness works and how it came about." Harriet Hall, MD



**Evolve Fish is a good source for freethought goodies:** Pins, jewelry, posters, buttons, bumper stickers, t-shirts, etc.

<http://evolvefish.com/> To access more Freethought history & perspectives, you may wish to check out Frank Prah's Freethought Library. Contact [fpahl@verizon.net](mailto:fpahl@verizon.net)

## The Matt Cooper

### Humanist Lending Library

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

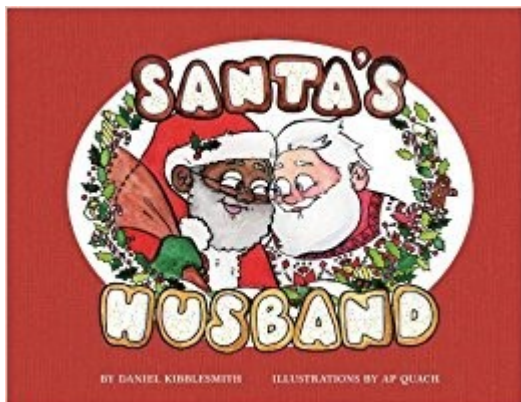
#### # TITLE

#### AUTHOR

**New!**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 80. An Atheist Stanger  | Herb Silverman  |  |
| 81. Candidate without a prayer                                    | Herb Silverman  |  |
| 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. <b>The God Delusion</b>                                       | <b>Richard Dawkins</b>  |  |
| 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. <b>Plan B</b>   | <b>Lester Brown</b>   |  |
| 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. <b>A brief History of Time</b>                                | <b>Stephen Hawking</b>  |  |
| 25. Breaking the Spell  | Daniel Dennett  |  |
| 26. <b>The Philosophy of Humanism</b>                             | <b>Corliss Lamont</b>   |  |
| 27. The Quotable Atheist  | Jack Huberman   |  |
| 28. 50 Reasons People Believe In G. G. Harrison                   | Alan Taylor   |  |
| 29. Mathematics and Politics                                      | John Fund   |  |
| 30. Stealing Elections  | Darrel Ray  |  |
| 31. The God Virus   | Malcom Gladwell   |  |
| 32. What Every American Should Know About World Rossi             | Ori, Rom Bradman  |  |
| 33. Imagine There's no Heaven                                     | Steven Pinker   |  |
| 34. Hidden Order  | Christopher Hitchens  |  |
| 35. What the Dog Saw  | Thomas Friedman   |  |
| 36. Sway  | William Poundstone  |  |
| 37. The Better Angels of our Nature                               | Alexa Kckearing   |  |
| 38. Letter to a Young Contrarian                                  | David Stamos  |  |
| 39. Hot, Flat, and Crowded  | <b>Why People Believe Weird Things</b> <b>Michael Shermer</b> |  |
| 40. Gaming the Vote   | David Snick   |  |
| 41. Subversion Fable  | Warren Buffett  |  |
| 43. Evolution and the Big Question                                | <b>Sam Harris</b>   |  |
| 44. <b>Why People Believe Weird Things</b> <b>Michael Shermer</b> | <b>Michael Shermer</b>  |  |
| 45. The World is Curved   | Steven Jay Gould  |  |
| 46. The Snow Ball   | Francis Fukuyama  |  |
| 47. <b>The Moral Landscape</b>                                    | <b>Isaac Asimov</b>   |  |
| 48. <b>How We Believe</b>   | Harriet Smith, Editor   |  |
| 49. Full House  | Michael Shermer   |  |
| 50. The Origins of Political Order                                | James Gleick  |  |
| 51. <b>Asimov's Guide to the Bible</b>                            | Piatrelli & Palmarini   |  |
| 52. Autobiography of Mark Twain                                   | Carl Sagan  |  |
| 53. Science Friction  | Paul Waldman  |  |
| 54. Genius  | Mark Crispin Miller   |  |
| 55. Inevitable Illusions  | Cathy Allen   |  |
| 56. Demon Haunted World   | Mark Lindquist (Gift by author)                               |  |
| 57. Being Right Is Not Enough                                     | Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith                                      |  |
| 58. Loser Takes All   | Various   |  |
| 59. Taking Back Politics  | <b>Robert Ingersoll</b>                                       |  |
| 60. Spiritual Common Sense  | <b>(A gift of, Joe Reinhardt)</b>                             |  |
| 61. Autobiography of Mark Twain                                   | Roger Williams & Davis  |  |
| 62. The Skeptics Annotated Bible                                  | Baker & Hunt  |  |
| 63. <b>12 Vol Complete Works</b>                                  | M. Piattelli-Palmarini  |  |
| 64. On Religious Liberty  | Peter McWilliams  |  |
| 65. The God Makers  | Mary Roach  |  |
| 66. Inevitable Illusions  | Michael J. Sandel   |  |
| 67. Ain't Nobody's business If You Do                             | Howard Shilit   |  |
| 69. Bonk  | Darrel Ray, ED.D  |  |
| 70. What Money Can't Buy  | Dave Eagers   |  |
| 71. Financial Shenanigans   | St. Clair McKelway  |  |
| 72. Sex & God   | Clements  |  |
| 73. Best American Non required Reading                            | Crugan – Phillips   |  |
| 74. Reporting at Wit's End  | Nisbett – Cohen   |  |
| 75. Corporations are not People                                   | Stenesh   |  |
| 76. Could I Vote Mormon for president?                            | Kaye  |  |
| 77. Culture of Honor  |   |  |
| 78. Rot on the Vine   |   |  |
| 79. <b>Thoughts of a Freethinker</b> <b>New</b>                   |   |  |

\*  
Essential  
works



## Santa's Husband

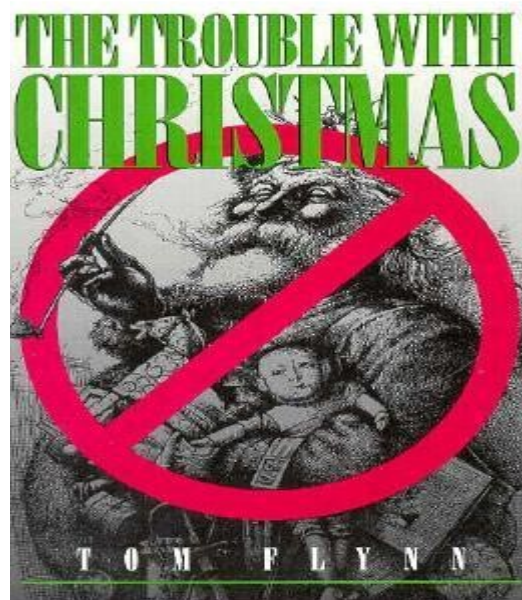
"A genuinely sweet story that depicts a sound, joyful marriage." (Vice.com);  
 "We all know that Santa is white and heterosexual, right? Oh wait, he's a magical imaginary fat dude who breaks into your house every year to leave your kids presents, he can be whatever you want him to be!" Out.com);  
 "It's the perfect gift for your racist/homophobic uncle!" (World of Wonder/WOW Report);  
 "[An] enlightened account of the Kris Kringle legend... [with] deftly rendered drawings." (Edge Media Network)

Is this in the Bible?

## The Trouble with Christmas

by Tom Flynn

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



## Five tips for a Humanist Xmas

**One** Accept that Christmas Day is what we call 25 December and you're not going to change that, any more than we humanists can rename Easter weekend, Eid, Divali, Passover... Enjoy the fact that it's the one day of the year when almost everything is shut, you can't shop, almost no one goes to work, the roads are empty... Relax.

**Two** Send a card if you want to keep in touch with friends at this time of year — as many people still prefer a hand-written card to an email. But if you think they wouldn't appreciate a physical card, send an e-card instead and give the money you would have spent on cards and postage to a worthy (secular) charity

**Three** Keep present-giving simple: give to those who need stuff, come to an agreement with those who don't (which is most people past their youth). There is nothing particularly virtuous in buying things that people don't need which will probably end up in a charity shop — you could cut out the middle-man and give the cash to charity instead.

**Four** See friends and family when it suits you and them — don't get too hung up on 25 December (remember Christmas is no big deal

for humanists). Most people have several relatives they feel obliged to visit on Christmas Day — make life easier for them by opting out of the competition for their presence and see them another time.

**Five** If you're on your own over the holiday, just think — you can eat what you like, watch what you like on television, read a book, go to bed as early or late as you like... Relax.

From **BHA**



# Atheists of Florida, Inc.



Tracy Thomas, Chair - Al Hann, Pres, Judy Adkins, VP  
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. »

Atheists of Florida is pleased to announce the renewal of its live outreach talk program, the *Atheist Forum*, every Sunday evening, from 7 to 8 pm.



The program is airing on TanTalk Radio. The broadcast is also available on the internet at [TanTalk1340.com](http://TanTalk1340.com), live streaming on smart phones using the "TuneIn" application, and on the following frequencies in the Tampa Bay area – WTAN AM 1340, WZHR AM 1400, WDCF AM 1350, WTAN FM 106.1, and WZHR FM 104.3. Listeners can call 727-441-3000, where four lines await your call in of questions and comments. All programs are being archived on the AoF web site, [www.talk.aof.ngo](http://www.talk.aof.ngo).

## 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"

## Ever wonder what Florida Freethought groups are doing?

Now you can easily know.

Atheists of Florida have a new freethought Calendar: <http://AtheistsOfFloridaInc.org/calendar/> Know what's going on around the state.



## Ultra-conservative politicians seek to dismantle state/church separation

Who ARE these people?

I am a Christian, a conservative, and a Republican, in that order," is what Vice President Mike Pence says of himself. The improbable ascension of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States has brought in appointments to the West Wing and several department heads that seem focused primarily on converting our nation to a theocracy.

In 2002, Pence delivered a speech in the House of Representatives, a passionate repudiation of evolution aimed at continuing the common rhetorical device of evolution deniers: that evolution is just a theory and should be presented as such.

Pence begins by discussing Charles Darwin talking about how he "offered a theory of the origin of species which we've come to know as evolution. Charles Darwin never thought of evolution as anything other than a theory. He hoped that someday it would be proven by the fossil record but did not live to see that, nor have we."

He bemoans the Scopes Monkey Trial saying we have "seen the consequences" in the following years, lamenting the fact the biblical story of creation is not taught in every biology class around the country alongside Darwin. It is unclear if Pence is either willfully or unknowingly misrepresenting the scientific definition of the word "theory". In scientific terms, a theory is the highest designation of know-ledge and represents something that has been rigorously tested using the scientific method. Ninety-eight percent of scientists surveyed understand that humans evolved over time, so among experts, this is not a debate anyone is having. With Pence as VP, how will this matter to the American public?

Many court battles have been fought over the fact personal religious beliefs are just that—personal—and have no business making an appearance inside a science classroom. The fact that Pence felt strongly enough to make this speech inside a house of government reveals he does not see religion and science as two separate entities. The symbolism of anti-evolution rhetoric those like Pence use undermines scientific progress, as evolution is a common thread in many National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health research programs from biology to psychology to medicine.

Meanwhile, twice-removed Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore stands ready to be elected to the vacated U.S. senate seat of Jeff Sessions who stepped down to become the nation's Attorney General. *Continued on page 17*

## Tampa Bay Thinkers



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

**December 11th**

**Topic: What Should Be The  
 Standards and Criteria For Our  
 Leaders & Politicians?**

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**

On the web at: [www.maaf.info](http://www.maaf.info)

## Humanist Families of Greater Tampa

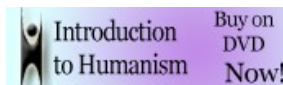
**Jennifer Hancock** started this organization several years ago. It uniquely serves Humanist families with a variety of wonderful programs throughout the year. There is a strong emphasis on creative childrearing. Here, you can make connection with other families dealing with the problems of living in 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/).

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.



## Humanistic Judaism of Tampa Bay

Visit the [Meetup](#), or email [Jeff Lipkes](mailto:Jeff Lipkes)

Get the Bank of Wisdom—**FREE**.  
 Contact [Marios Psomas](#), Librarian



## Tampa Bay Technology Center & Thinkers Salon



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

Lectures, discussions, & hands-on demonstrations of the humane use of technology. **300 S Duncan Ave. Suite 275, Clearwater, FL 33755.** [Map](#)

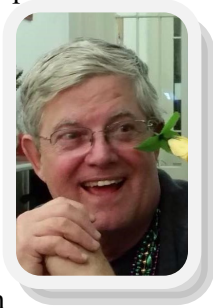
Check out *Thinker's Salon* a forum for serious social & scientific ideas & issues.

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



The mission of the [Secular Coalition for Florida](http://secularcoalitionforflorida.org) is to increase the visibility of & respect for non-theistic view-points in the State, & to protect & strengthen the secular character of our government as the best guarantee of freedom for all.

**Bill Norsworthy**, is our Florida representative. Please sign up [here](http://secularcoalitionforflorida.org). Volunteer activists are wanted, needed, & appreciated!



See page 7 for more information on our Secular Coalition activities around the National day of Reason. SC wants **you** to represent the voice of thousands of the people of reason in the halls of power.

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



## [ACLU of Greater Tampa Bay](http://aclufl.org)

Hi Friend of ACLU –

Together, we've taken the Trump Administration to court on so many issues this year – including working to protect LGBT rights, reproductive rights, immigrants' rights, privacy rights, voting rights, and more.

We couldn't have fought even half as many battles, half as fervently, without supporters like you.

[As a small way to say thank you, we're offering you 25% off in our online shop until December 1st. Just use the code THANKS25.](http://aclufl.org)

As the holidays approach, we hope you might find something you'd be proud to give as a gift or to wear yourself. Every purchase fuels our continued fight to defend and preserve civil rights for all people in our country.

We have a [list of resources you can use](http://aclufl.org), including talking points and general information on our website. You can also [contact the individual commissioners at any time to express your concerns](http://aclufl.org) through the Constitutional Revision Commission website.



<http://instituteforscienceandhumanvalues.com/index.htm>



## Norm R. Allen Jr.

### A Socratic Dialogue with the Almighty God

Recently, a religious friend of mine shared a Facebook posting about an imaginary dialogue between a disgruntled believer and God. The believer was complaining that God did not wake him up on time and apparently failed him in many

other ways. However, as it turned out, God was actually steering the believer away from many problems of which the believer was simply unaware. In the end, God tells the believer to believe in the plan He has set for him. It is a warm, fuzzy story, indeed. However, I would like to imagine such a dialogue from the viewpoint of a well meaning humanist. Here it goes:

Humanist: God, as you must know, the freethinker Robert Green Ingersoll was once asked what he would change if he were God. He said that he would have made good health catching rather than disease. Why did you not make good health catching rather than disease?

God: In the beginning, the Earth was a paradise and there was no disease. Disease came into the world due to human disobedience and Original Sin.

Humanist: That sounds like another way of saying that you permitted disease to come into the world in reaction to Original Sin. So, you chose to inflict infants, toddlers and pre-school age children with cancer and other crippling and deadly diseases because two human beings disobeyed the orders that you knew they would disobey. That sounds somewhat unfair and unreasonable. But Lord, why did you also decide to...

*Cont. on Page 17*

## UU Humanists of Clearwater

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



The speaker for the January meeting on Jan 21st will be **Dr. Ulee Choe**, the Director of the Pinellas County Health Dept. He will review with the UU Humanists of Clearwater the various activities and responsibilities of the Health Dept.

Lunch on a Dutch Treat basis after Dr. Choe's talk will take place at Carrabba's Restaurant for those who would like to go.



## A Humanist Discussion group in East Tampa !

### [UU Humanists of Tampa](http://uuhumanists.org)

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

Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa  
11400 Morris Bridge Rd. Tampa, FL 33637



## 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, **Jason Heap**.

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.net/>  
Or, <https://unitedcor.org/coalition-of-reason/tampa-bay/>

## Positive Postcard Project: A Secular, On-Site Service Initiative

by Tee Rogers

Humanist Chaplain—[BE Orlando Humanist Fellowship](#) (a Cooperating Member of the [Orlando Coalition of Reason](#))

Finding an on-site service project on a small budget can be a challenge. Here’s a meaningful solution and a resource site with everything you need to host this project at your next event, conference, or meeting! The [Positive Postcard Project](#) shares messages of human connection and love that can inspire, comfort, or uplift a recipient of any faith or non-faith perspective.

This is important. Many support card and note projects come from churches and other organizations that are biased towards theism and proselytizing. These cards often contain language that not only isn’t meaningful or relevant to non-theistic people, but can further victimize or even isolate them, thereby increasing their burden, and causing unnecessary grief and anxiety during their times of need.

People who identify as non-theistic are all around us, and they, too, are among those in need. They deserve resources, support, representation, comfort, care, and love. *Positive Postcards* engages secular communities and our secular-friendly allies by providing that support and encouragement. The project can also be hosted at public events, educating theistic faith communities about respecting the diverse perspectives of those who receive cards or letters such as these.

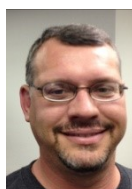
A person’s time of turmoil, challenge, or disadvantage should not be an opportunity to market religious belief or no preference. We don’t know the perspective of the person receiving the card and therefore should craft messages that speak to **any** recipient—unapologetically inclusive and loving. As non-theists, we’re empowered and emotionally intelligent to ensure that members of our shared values community are respected and supported. As Humanists, we have a responsibility to seek the means to uplift others and make the world a better place.



Bill Norsworthy,  
UUCH



Mark Brandt,  
UUCH



Chris Brown,  
MAF



Jenn Hancock,  
GTBHF



Rick O'Keefe,  
CFI, TBS



Jim Peterson,  
HSS, TBPCF  
Facilitator



Al Hann  
AoF

### TBCoR Leadership Team 2017

Editorial E-Mail: [tbcor@metrodirect.net](mailto:tbcor@metrodirect.net)



## Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – November 2017 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. *Meeting planners need this information.*  
**Check for more events + details on the Coalition of Reason Web site at: <http://www.tampabaycor.org/>**



2nd Sunday, 2 PM	BRANDON–CFI Sunday Freethought Social	Skeptical interests with critical thinkers. Click to <b>RSVP:</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup">http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup</a>
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA– Atheists of Florida, Inc.	Details & <b>RSVP:</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup">http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup</a>
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA– Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc..	Details & <b>RSVP</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/TampaBaySkeptics-Meetup">http://bit.ly/TampaBaySkeptics-Meetup</a>
1st Saturday, 2 PM see Pg. 2 3rd Sunday -Dinner see Pg. 3.	DUNEDIN– Humanist Soc. of the Suncoast	Details & <b>RSVP</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists">http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists</a>
3rd Sunday, 12:30 PM	E. CLEARWATER– UU Clearwater Humanists	Details: <a href="http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists">http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists</a>
TBA – various activities at MOSI	E. TAMPA– Museum Astronomical Resource Society (MARS) at MOSI	Details & <b>RSVP:</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/1Psc2Pi">http://bit.ly/1Psc2Pi</a> Other events: <a href="http://bit.ly/MARS-home">http://bit.ly/MARS-home</a>
TBA - numerous events—this semester	E. TAMPA– Humanities Institute at USF	See <a href="#">Web site</a> for full listing of many events & calendar. <a href="http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities">http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities</a> Locations vary! <b>Page 11.</b>
4th Monday, 6 PM	N. PINELLAS AREA– CFI Freethought Supper	<b>RSVP is required.</b> Seating is limited to 25! <i>For CFI &amp; TBS paid members.</i> <a href="http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup">http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup</a>
3rd Saturday, 11 AM	NE TAMPA – Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & <b>RSVP:</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists">http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists</a>
4th Saturday, 10:30 AM;	NW HILLSBOROUGH– CFI Readers Book Discussion	Limited to 10 paid-up CFI members. <b>RSVP is required. Must have read the book under discussion to attend.</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup">http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup</a>
3rd Monday, 7 PM	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. <b>RSVP</b> here: <a href="http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers">http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers</a>
4 <sup>th</sup> Friday, 8 PM general meeting. Many more events monthly.	ST. PETERSBURG– Astronomy Club	For several dates, locations, & details: <a href="http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Home">http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Home</a> <a href="http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Calendar">http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Calendar</a>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday plus various other times/venues	TAMPA BAY REGION– Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay	Details & <b>RSVP</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup">http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup</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>



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*Continued from page 14...*

## A Socratic Dialogue with the Almighty God

God: No. As long as human beings come first, there is no problem.

Humanist: God, why do acts of God such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tsunamis and tornadoes exist?

God: Again, the world was a paradise for human beings before the advent of Original Sin. So, I permit those things to occur.

Humanist: But isn't that pretty extreme. That's sounds a lot like child abuse.

God: Hey, when I get pissed, I really give it to 'em with both barrels.

Humanist: But why?

God: Because I can!

Humanist: Lord, why did you condone patriarchy and slavery in the Bible?

God: That's what everyone else was doing at the time.

Humanist: But God, if everyone else was jumping off a bridge, would you do it?

God: Don't be so smug!

Humanist: Lord, you supposedly performed miracles for people in biblical times. Why, in this day of deep philosophy, freethought, good science, advanced technology, higher education, widespread literacy, knowledge of magic and critical thinking, don't we see miracles of a religious nature as they supposedly occurred in biblical times?

God: Been there, done that. I'm just chillin' these days.

Humanist: Speaking of miracles, Lord, you no doubt are familiar with the book *Atheist Universe* by David Mills. He says that when Jesus supposedly walked on water, cursed a fig tree, drowned pigs, brought a dead man back to life, turned water to wine, made a blind man see, etc., this was all a magnificent waste of omnipotence. Mills wonders why Jesus did not cure cancer or heart disease, end world hunger, end illiteracy, etc. Indeed, God, why didn't Jesus cure blindness or deafness altogether or make some other major contribution to humanity?

God: Beats me. I guess he didn't wanna be a complete show off.

Humanist: Lord, Christians have been waiting for 2,000 years for the return of Jesus. But God, how much longer do they have to wait? How long is too long? Twenty-thousand years? Two hundred-thousand years? Two million years? Two hundred-million years? Two billion years?

God: I have to admit, if he doesn't return within the next two billion years, even I'm gonna be a little skeptical.

Humanist: Lord, why did you permit the Middle Passage, the Holocaust, the decimation of Native Americans and countless other onslaughts?

God: I gave human beings free will.

Humanist: Yes, Lord, but without your gift of free will, they could not have carried out these evil acts. Doesn't that make you ultimately responsible?

God: Nah!

Humanist: Just one more question Lord? Believers say "God never gives you more problems than you can handle." But God, what about those people that go insane, go on homicidal rampages, and/or commit suicide? Doesn't that mean that they had more than they could handle?

God: Aw, why don't you go to hell already?

**Norm R. Allen Jr.**

*Cont. from page 12*

*....dismantling state/church separation*

"Our rights come from God," says the 70-year-old Baptist. "The Constitution was founded upon God. It was made for moral and religious people. It is the fallen nature of man that the Constitution meant to restrain." Secretary of Education Head Betsy DeVos' opposition to public education is well documented and her determination to use taxpayer funds for private, including parochial, schools is unacceptable.

In an opinion piece published in the *New York Times* by Katherine Stewart (Dec. 13, 2016), she states that "At a 2001 gathering of conservative Christian philanthropists, DeVos singled out education reform as a way to 'advance God's kingdom.' In an interview, she and her husband, Richard DeVos Jr., said that school choice would lead to 'great kingdom gain.'"

Trump's nominee for Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, has a record antagonism to state/church separation. At the Republican National Convention, Sessions criticized Sonia Sotomayor for not being religious enough. He stated, "if you have secularization in the world and don't believe in a higher being, maybe you don't believe there is any truth."

At the conservative Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority conference last year Sessions stated this, talking about Sotomayor: "...this is a postmodern, relativistic, secular mindset and I believe it's directly contrary to the founding of our republic..." According to Right Wing Watch, he was responding to her quote of legal scholar observation that in the law 'there is no objective stance but only a series of perspectives—no neutrality, no escape from choice in judging,' an acknowledgment of the hidden assumptions and biases that all judges bring to the law."

Mr. Sessions also stated he regarded Justice Scalia as "one of the greatest justices ever to sit on the Supreme Court." This is troubling because Scalia, in a speech to Colorado Christian University said the following: "I think the main fight is to dissuade Americans from what the secularists are trying to persuade them to be true: that the separation of church and state means that the government cannot favor religion over non-religion." Scalia also stated that the worries over religion in government are "utterly absurd." According to an article in *Salon*, however, he attributed the spread of atheism to Satan, who was "getting people not to believe in him or in god. He's much more successful that way."

Ed Golly, AoF.



[The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.](#)

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*



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

**from page 5**

our commitment to human dignity calls on us to join the effort to preserve and extend democracy and take on the responsibilities that go with that privilege.

We are here, in short, to affirm the great truth that out of many differences we are one people. We are here to reaffirm our highest values and the original intentions of the Founding generation. We are here to begin work to repair and strengthen democratic institutions, procedures, and “habits of heart.” This is our Great Work—the work of patriots in the highest sense.

Now, the words above are easy to say but the work won’t be easy to do. There will be casualties and losses along the way. But democracy has never been easy. It has always had its critics. Plato thought it was the road to tyranny. Aristotle wasn’t much more sanguine. The founding fathers of our Republic were wary of it. John Adams believed that democracies always end by committing suicide. James Madison believed that with luck democracy in America might last a century, but not longer. English writer E. M. Forster could give it only two cheers, H. L. Mencken none at all, believing people incorrigibly stupid. Economist Joseph Schumpeter likewise thought voters became dumber when they entered the political arena. Robert Dahl, perhaps the greatest student of democracy in the 20th century once described himself as a “pessimist” about its future.

Winston Churchill captured our predicament in his famous observation that democracy was the worst form of

government except for all the others ever tried.

In short, democracy is everywhere and always a wager that enough people would know enough and care enough and be wise enough to participate honorably and well in the conduct of the public business. The only sure foundation of democracy is a well-educated and well-informed citizenry that is tolerant of differences, good hearted, merciful, and farsighted. Democracy is also a wager on the durability, fairness, accountability, transparency, and integrity of public institutions and the even-handed administration of justice.

Democracy, however, is a process, never a thing finished once and for all. It needs constant repair, vigilance, and revitalization. We are here to carry on that work in our time of peril. The ground rules are these:

1. Our deliberations are neither conservative nor liberal.
2. Our present situation—however you define it—is a symptom of deeper causes and of a long history that stretches back decades, perhaps centuries.
3. We are not focused on the crisis of the day, but on the work of repair and the strengthening democratic institutions, procedures, and the habits of mind and heart that undergird democracy.
4. Democracy is a wager, and I believe that we here today are unanimous in our willingness to bet on we, the people and government truly of, by, and for the people.

Political scientist Michael Sandel once wrote: “The hope of our time rests with those who can summon the conviction and restraint to make sense of our condition and repair the civic life on which democracy depends.”

That is our charge.



## 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 Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22nd Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL, 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 7:00PM to 9:00PM. Meetings are free & open to the public.

### Details & RSVP:

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

**David Orr** is the Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Senior Adviser to the President of Oberlin College. His career as a scholar, teacher, writer, speaker, and entrepreneur spans fields as diverse as environment and politics, environmental education, campus greening, green building, ecological design, and climate change. He is the author of six books, including the widely praised *Ecological Literacy* (1992) and *Earth in Mind* (1994/2004); his most recent book is *Down to the Wire: Confronting Climate Collapse*.

