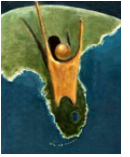




Vol. 6 No. 9, September, 2017 Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

# The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason Freethought News



## Our Democracy: This is not a Test, or is it?

The alt-right and the Religious Right might use different ideologies to justify taking away the rights of women, members of the LGBTQ community, religious minorities, non-believers and others, but at the end of the day, that would be cold comfort to the people whose rights would be crushed under an iron heel of oppression.

These are perilous times, and that's why we're all compelled to lift our voices. Get involved. It's imperative that all people of goodwill say with the loudest voice possible that our nation will rise above and, by all legal means, defeat extremists, whether secular or sectarian, who dare to assume the title of "patriots" when their very actions make a mockery of that term.

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\* TB-CoR member

## Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Calendar

[Rick O'Keefe](#)

Web site

Jim Peterson

Newsletter

[Jim Peterson](#)

Special Projects

Mark Brandt  
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event website at:

[www.evolutetampa.com](http://www.evolutetampa.com)

See the full roster of the  
Leadership board  
on Page 5.

This publication online at:

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

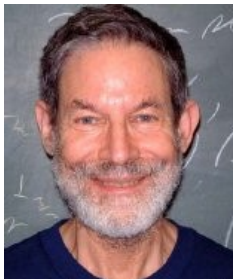
## Freethought goes on the air. (and the internet)

Atheists of Florida has announced the renewal of its live outreach talk program, the *Atheist Forum*, beginning Sunday, September 3, 2017, from 8 to 9 pm.

The program will be airing on TanTalk Radio. The broadcast will be available on the internet at [TanTalk1340.com](http://TanTalk1340.com), live streaming on the **Atheists of Florida Facebook page**, 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 will be archived on the AoF web site, [www.talk.aof.ngo](http://www.talk.aof.ngo).

Atheists of Florida is seeking guests for the *Forum* and will offer advertising on the program for other Freethought organizations to promote their special events or seek membership from listeners. Contact their production office at: [af@talk.aof.ngo](mailto:af@talk.aof.ngo).

## Herb Silverman on tour in November



Herb Silverman, Founder of the Secular Coalition for America and Distinguished Math Professor Emeritus at the College of Charleston, will speak on his new book *An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land: Selected Writings From the Bible Belt*, which contains excerpts from The Washington Post, Huffington Post, The Humanist, Free Inquiry, and other magazines and blogs. You will hear about his "support" for the Ku Klux Klan, Jerry Falwell, and why he should become Pope. He will also mention his run for Governor of South Carolina, which he wrote about in his first book, *Candidate Without a Prayer*. See more on page 4

Coming for Darwin Day, next February:

## The Evolution of Human Happiness



With **Dr. Phil Zuckerman**

# 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. 9 September, 2017

## What is Humanism?

After nearly 30 centuries, you might think that humanists have got a pretty good bead on their outlook and purpose. Not necessarily. Like all cultural pursuits, humanism no less than anything else changes over time as different issues arise in the context of our developing civilization.

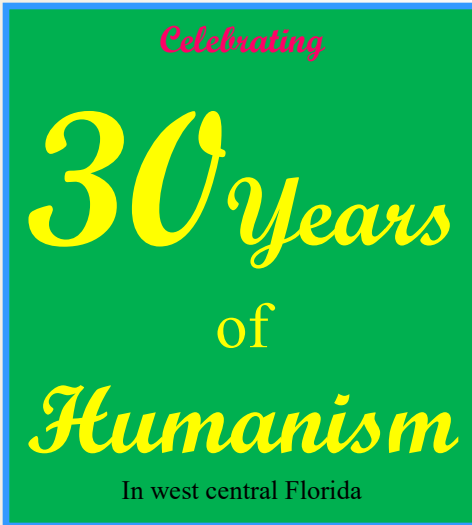
One early and continuing such issue is the prevailing belief system, or the common estimate of the nature of reality. Obviously, religion has been a major influence. But then so has superstition, tradition, and political-economic arrangements.

Humanists have often found themselves to be in an antithetical position in regard to many of these matters. Why? Mainly because humanism at its most basic level is questioning, comparing, having a locus on process and procedure in examining the forces and institutions most significant in shaping who we are. In a word, we are interested in a fundamental human characteristic: curiosity.

Doubtless it is because at some psychological level, some members of the human family are so fixed on the question, 'why' that they become the sources of unrest, insight, dissatisfaction, invention, and all that sows the seeds of our social evolution as a species.

The narrative of history provides us with a particularly strong insight into the complex and confusing puzzle of what has been called "human nature." But maybe there is no such thing. If "human nature is simply the nature of being human, then how revelatory is that? Perhaps it's little more than a meaningless tautology. Or, does the term signify the open ended potential of human society to contain seemingly infinite knowledge?

**What do you think?**



**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.  
 Life Couple -\$250.  
 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>



**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 to get the most benefit to the greatest number of people. Thanks to **Glenn Paul**, chair & Jordan Williams. Ed Note: Glenn needs assistance. See Page 17 also.  
**We need volunteers!** Write to [jim@suncoasthumanist.com](mailto:jim@suncoasthumanist.com)

### Be with us at

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

**Saturday, Sept. 2  
 at 2:00 PM**

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



*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, September 17th 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](#) & more info: <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 CYNIC'S DICTIONARY 2 09-17

**FITNESS:** Salvation through perspiration.

**FLABBERGASTED:** Appalled over how much weight you have gained.

**FLATULENCE:** Emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.

**FRISBEETARIANISM:** The belief that, when you die, your Soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.

**FLASHLIGHT:** A case for holding dead batteries.

**GARGOYLE:** Olive-flavored mouthwash.

**GOSSIP:** A person who will never tell a lie if the truth will do more damage.

**GOURMET:** A food fetishist.

**HANDKERCHIEF:** Cold Storage.

**HOOKER:** A working woman commonly despised by people who sell themselves for even less.

**IDEOLOGUE:** Generally an obscure humorless zealot who finds fulfillment by spouting the ideas of famous humorless zealots.

**INFLATION:** Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

**JEANS:** Lower half of the international uniform of youth, the upper half being the zits.

**KLEPTOMANIAC:** A thief with breeding. JP

## 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  
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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.](#)

[Cognitive Neurosciences Inc.](#)

### 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](#)

September 16th, 11 AM

Discussion Leader: **Lucas Hopegood**

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 Issac Asimov, our former 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/>

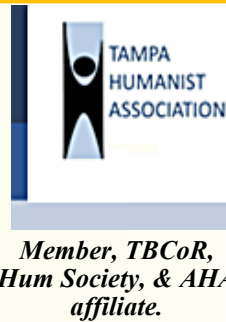


Coming in November: Professor Herb Silverman, of UC. He will talk about his new books, and lead a discussion on dealing with the new social and political realities of our country.

### Herb’s Whirlwind Schedule:

- Nov 12 Central Florida Freethought Community Orlando 1 PM
- Nov 12 Humanist Community of the Space Coast, Melbourne, evening
- Nov 13 Humanists of North Central Florida 6:30 or 7 PM
- Nov 15 Humanists of Sarasota Bay
- Nov 17 Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, Sarasota
- Nov 18 Tampa Humanist Association
- Nov 19 UU Humanists-Clearwater (12:30-1:30),

Faith is an open door to fantasies limited only by an individual's desires. A leap of faith need not lead to a just god and immortality; it could just as well lead to a Satanist madman who eats children. It won't do to simply assert that *only your own fine urges* qualify as worthy of leading to a leap of faith; any other urges are forbidden. It certainly won't do to claim that your urges are universal and indicative of a god who put them there, while other urges and desires are perversions. The fideist assumption is arbitrary and, while admittedly irrational, nonetheless absurd and repulsive on its face. Why? Because anyone who values reason must find such a position self-defeating. There can be no reasons that support the rationality of irrationality. ~ Robert T. Carroll, <http://skepdic.com/>



## AN ATHEIST STRANGER IN A STRANGE RELIGIOUS LAND



*Selected Writings from the Bible Belt*

**HERB SILVERMAN**

From Orthodox Jewish child in postwar America to mild-mannered mathematician in academia to legendary atheist activist in the heart of today’s Republican South, Herb Silverman has always been outside the mainstream of American culture, politics, and religion. From this unique vantage point, he writes about the most pressing issues of our day, including those related to war, peace, patriotism, race, gender, and church-state separation. In this entertaining and thought-provoking volume, he curates some of his best written work. Silverman may see himself as an atheist stranger in a strange religious land, but thanks in part to his work as activist and author, atheists as a whole are no longer strangers in this increasingly irreligious land. Herb’s book can be ordered from Amazon for \$10.95, or purchased from your local book monger.

### Humanist Quotes

“There are probably as many ways to think about hell as there are believers in hell. And as an atheist, I think the right way to think about hell is also the right way to think about heaven — both are nonexistent.”

**Herb Silverman**

## Why Climate Change Isn't Our Biggest Environmental Problem, and Why Technology Won't Save Us

By Richard Heinberg

Our core ecological problem is not climate change. It is overshoot, of which global warming is a symptom. Overshoot is a systemic issue. Over the past century-and-a-half, enormous amounts of cheap energy from fossil fuels enabled the rapid growth of resource extraction, manufacturing, and consumption; and these in turn led to population increase, pollution, and loss of natural habitat and hence biodiversity. The human system expanded dramatically, overshooting Earth's long-term carrying capacity for humans while upsetting the ecological systems we depend on for our survival. Until we understand and address this systemic imbalance, symptomatic treatment (doing what we can to reverse pollution dilemmas like climate change, trying to save threatened species, and hoping to feed a burgeoning population with genetically modified crops) will constitute an endlessly frustrating round of stopgap measures that are ultimately destined to fail.

The ecology movement in the 1970s benefitted from a [strong infusion of systems thinking](#), which was in vogue at the time (ecology—the study of the relationships between organisms and their environments—is an inherently systemic discipline, as opposed to studies like chemistry that focus on reducing complex phenomena to their components). As a result, many of the best environmental writers of the era framed the modern human predicament in terms that revealed the deep linkages between environmental symptoms and the way human society operates. *Limits to Growth* (1972), an outgrowth of the systems research of Jay Forrester, investigated the interactions between population growth, industrial production, food production, resource depletion, and pollution. *Overshoot* (1982), by William Catton, named our systemic problem and described its origins and development in a style any literate person could appreciate. Many more excellent books from the era could be cited.

However, in recent decades, as climate change has come to dominate environmental concerns, there has been a significant shift in the discussion. Today, most environmental reporting is focused laser-like on climate change, and systemic links between it and other worsening ecological dilemmas (such as overpopulation, species extinctions, water and air pollution, and loss of topsoil and fresh water) are seldom highlighted. It's not that climate change isn't a big deal. As a symptom, it's a real doozy. There's never been anything quite like it, and climate scientists and climate-response advocacy groups are right to ring the loudest of alarm bells. But our failure to see climate change in context may be our undoing.

Why have environmental writers and advocacy

organizations succumbed to tunnel vision? Perhaps it's simply that they assume systems thinking is beyond the capacity of policy makers. It's true: if climate scientists were to approach world leaders with the message, "We have to change everything, including our entire economic system—and fast," they might be shown the door rather rudely. A more acceptable message is, "We have identified a serious pollution problem, for which there are technical solutions." Perhaps many of the scientists who did recognize the systemic nature of our ecological crisis concluded that if we can successfully address this one make-or-break environmental crisis, we'll be able to buy time to deal with others waiting in the wings (overpopulation, species extinctions, resource depletion, and on and on).

If climate change can be framed as an isolated problem for which there is a technological solution, the minds of



An autonomous project of the Humanist Society.  
Affiliate of [PCI](#)

economists and policy makers can continue to graze in familiar pastures. Technology—in this case, solar, wind, and nuclear power generators, as well as batteries, electric cars, heat pumps, and, if all else fails, solar radiation management via atmospheric aerosols—centers our thinking on subjects like financial investment and industrial production. Discussion participants don't have to develop the ability to think systemically, nor do they need to understand the Earth system and how human systems fit into it. All they need trouble themselves with is the prospect of shifting some investments, setting tasks for engineers, and managing the resulting industrial-economic transformation so as to ensure that new jobs in green industries compensate for jobs lost in coal mines.

The strategy of buying time with a techno-fix presumes either that we will be able to institute systemic change at some unspecified point in the future even though we can't do it just now (a weak argument on its face), or that climate change and all of our other symptomatic crises will in fact be amenable to technological fixes. The latter thought-path is again a comfortable one for managers and investors. After all, everybody loves technology. It already does nearly everything for us. During the last century it solved a host of problems: it cured diseases, expanded food production, sped up transportation, and provided us with information and entertainment in quantities and varieties no one could previously have imagined. Why shouldn't it be able to solve climate change and all the rest of our problems?

.....Continued on Page 18



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

## What Does Secular Humanism Have to Say about the Hate in Charlottesville?

We believe this is a good time to explore what secular humanism, the philosophy that drives the work of the Center for Inquiry, has to say about this recent surge in white supremacist public activity.

Read it all here: <http://bit.ly/2w5kUXd>

(Ed. Note The following article illustrates the various strains of thought that permeate internal discussions within the humanist and atheist communities. In this case, the author takes a decided position in proposing that “New Atheism” is deficient in not embracing the “social justice” enthusiasms of some newer schools of thought. Read carefully: see if you agree.) JP

## From the Enlightenment to the Dark Ages: How “new atheism” slid into the alt-right

By [PHIL TORRES](#)

*A movement supposedly committed to science and reason has decayed into racism, misogyny and intolerance. I'm done.*

The “new atheist” movement emerged shortly after the 9/11 attacks with a best-selling book by Sam Harris called “[The End of Faith](#).” This was followed by engaging tomes authored by Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and the late Christopher Hitchens, among others. Avowing to champion the values of science and reason, the movement offered a growing number of unbelievers — tired of faith-based foolishness mucking up society for the rest of us — some hope for the future. For many years I was among the new atheism movement’s greatest allies.

<http://bit.ly/2umLt4A>



CFI’s all new “Point of Inquiry” Podcast  
*The flagship podcast of the Center for Inquiry is beginning a brand new chapter!*

## Hope and Hubris in Space Exploration

Loren Grush, space reporter for *The Verge*, and previously of *Popular Science*, discusses space policy in the Trump era.

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!*

## Christians are more than twice as likely to blame a person’s poverty on lack of effort

Which is generally more often to blame if a person is poor: lack of effort on their own part, or difficult circumstances beyond their control?

The Washington Post and the Kaiser Family Foundation [asked 1,686 American adults to answer that question](#) — and found that religion is a significant predictor of how Americans perceive poverty.

Christians are much more likely than non-Christians to view poverty as the result of individual failings, especially white evangelical Christians.

Read the rest here: <http://wapo.st/2uoQoC8>

## List of Fake News Websites

This is a list of [fake news sites](#). 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>



**Our Mission:** The Center for Inquiry strives to foster a secular society based on reason, science, freedom of inquiry, and humanist values.

**Our Vision:** A world where people value evidence and critical thinking, where superstition and prejudice subside, and where science and compassion guide public policy.

**Our Values:** Integrity, Courage, Innovation, Empathy, Learning, Wonder

## When Superstition Replaces Science

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

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

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

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

But, under Rome, those who exploited the human love of the marvelous and fear of the unknown made striking advances in methods, just as metal workers learned to make brass and glaziers to make windowpanes. They found that it added to their following and advanced their own power, glory, and wealth to flourish a body of sacred writings wherewith to confound the heathen; to promise lavish rewards and punishments after death, in order to right the injustices of earthly life; to set up a tightly knit, far-flung, conspiratorial organization; to expound a verbose and seemingly logical body of spiritual doctrine; to impose a fixed code of morals and tabus—some reasonable and some purely arbitrary—on their followers; and, most of all, to incite a fanatical hatred of rival groups and a grim determination to win the

world to one's own faith.

All these procedures were inventions, just as much as Heron's toy steam engine. With these new techniques, the priests, prophets, and magicians could more effectively compete for public attention and support. Credulity they redefined as "faith", and fanaticism as "zeal", while respect for laws of cause and effect was condemned as "blind materialism."

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

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

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

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



# 15 Years

## Become a Certified CFI 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.

### Why a CFI Secular Celebrant Program?

Persons who are not affiliated with any religion constitute 20% of the US population. Unfortunately, the choice of persons to conduct ceremonies for marriages, same sex commitments, memorials, and other rites of passage is usually between religious clergy and civil officials.

For a nonreligious person this can be a traumatic experience. They may be required to go through religious counseling and/or have religious references in their ceremony. They may be prevented from having their choice of music or readings as part of the ceremony. The local minister called on to conduct a funeral/memorial may preach a "come to Jesus" sermon or otherwise use religious references that are not in keeping with the worldview of the person being memorialized. Many of us have seen this done.

Additionally, civil officials are usually not available to do marriage ceremonies at the place and time of the couple's choosing, but only in a government setting such as an office or the courthouse. Furthermore, these officials are typically personally unknown to the couple. Wedding ceremonies, memorials, and other life passages are extremely important events - they are life's milestones - and people should be able to have these

ceremonies conducted in a manner and by a person of their choosing.

While some people of the secular worldview do not see a need for rituals and ceremonies of any kind, many feel that having a way of marking life passages is important. CFI feels that this is a personal choice and that secular ceremonies - and persons to conduct these ceremonies - should be available to those who want them.

By utilizing the services of a CFI-certified secular celebrant, members of the non-religious community may mark life's milestones in ways that are most personally meaningful to them. In addition, utilizing certified secular celebrants' services to perform weddings will assist CFI in bringing legal challenges to laws that allow religious officials to solemnize marriages, but unconstitutionally bar representatives of secular organizations from doing so. CFI certified Secular Celebrants may now solemnize marriages in Washington, DC and Indiana. On July 14, 2014, the 7th Circuit ruled that Secular Celebrants are legal to solemnize marriages in Indiana. Here is the link to the ruling: <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-7th-circuit/1672800.html>

### 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.
7. Pay an initial and yearly fee of \$49.

Skeptics don't do scientific research. Skeptics examine claims to see what the scientific basis for them is, marshalling critical thinking and facts with an open mind. What is not controversial among scientists in their specialties is sometimes controversial among the unknowing public. Skeptic organizations are necessary for explaining to the public. ~ Paraphrase from a video of Ron Lindsay <http://bit.ly/2+A7CPN> <http://bit.ly/1YEIUx5>

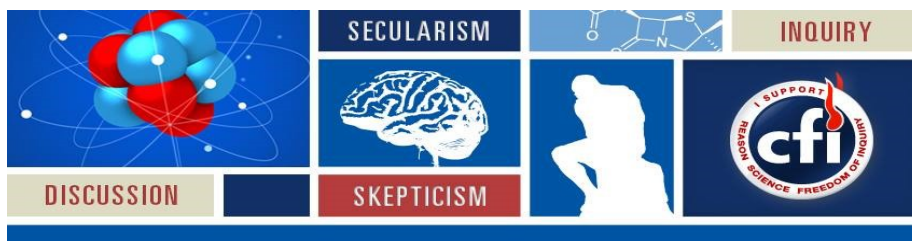
**We made it easier! Please Support CFI Tampa Bay**

New program: For CFI Tampa Bay to receive any money, members must select "donate" and *dedicate the donation to us specifically.*

Click below

**JOIN NOW**





## Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science

University of South Florida  
**Humanities Institute**

For engaging speakers & socials,  
check the calendar next Fall:  
<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!*



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

Click the Flame to learn more.



### **Doubts about religion? *You're one of many.***

In an irrational world, those who stand for reason must stand together.

We are **African Americans for Humanism**. [Learn more.](#)

African Americans may be the nation's most religious minority, but the churches and religious leaders don't speak for many of us.

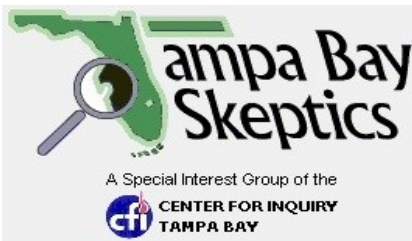
Today as in the past, many African Americans question religion and religious institutions. More and more of us stand for reason over faith. Freethought over authority. Critical thinking in place of superstition. Many of us are nonreligious; some are nontheistic.

**African Americans for Humanism** supports skeptics, doubters, humanists, and atheists in the African American community, provides forums for communication and education, and facilitates coordinated action to achieve shared objectives.

*In an irrational world, those who stand for reason must stand together.*

**African Americans for Humanism** is a program of the [Center for Inquiry](#), headquartered in Amherst, NY. It is directed by [Debbie Goddard](#) and an [Advisory Committee](#). For further information, [contact us](#).

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!](#)



## [Homeopathy is a Sham](#) – [Special Report](#) by [Nicholas Little](#), August 1, 2017

Homeopathic “remedies” have been shown repeatedly by scientific research to be at best placebos. The entire [theoretical basis of homeopathy](#)—the concepts that “like treats like” and that increasingly diluting an alleged active ingredient to untraceably small concentrations while periodically shaking the solution actually increases its potency—is laughable, and no credible research has shown it to have any validity.

Yet millions upon millions of dollars are spent each year by the American public on this snake oil. Frustrating as that may be, we at the Center for Inquiry (CFI) believe that is an adult’s right. If they want to waste their money on such nonsense, they may do so, just as they may buy “healing” crystals or visit a reiki practitioner. However, there are important caveats. We have extreme misgivings about parents eschewing science-based medicine and “treating” their children homeopathically. The denial of real medicine to those who have no say in their treatment leads to short term pain and suffering and often long term negative consequences up to and including preventable [death](#). We also believe that if adults are purchasing such products, they should be provided with true information about what they are spending money on. Homeopathic products should not be marketed in a deceptive manner.

The regulation of over the counter (OTC) drugs in the United States is shared by two main government agencies: the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FDA oversees what products may be offered for sale in this manner, and the FTC regulates how these products may be marketed. Both agencies have, in recent years, undertaken a review of their regulation of OTC homeopathic products, and CFI has contributed testimony to both.

The FDA, in response to an inquiry from CFI, noted that it will announce its regulatory regime later this year. The FTC, however, in November 2016, issued an [Enforcement Policy Statement](#) (EPS) detailing a change in its approach to the regulation of OTC homeopathic products. Noting that the Federal Trade Act “does not exempt homeopathic products from the general requirement that objective product claims be truthful and substantiated,” it continued to state that “the promotion of an OTC homeopathic product for an indication that is not substantiated by competent and reliable scientific evidence may not be deceptive if that promotion effectively communicates to customers that: (1) There is no scientific evidence that the product works and (2) the product’s claims are based only on theories of homeopathy from the 1700s that are not accepted by most medical experts.” The EPS also acknowledged that “for the vast majority of OTC homeopathic drugs ... there are no valid studies using current scientific methods showing the product’s efficacy.”

The EPS then is clear. To avoid deceptive promotion, homeopathic products being promoted as beneficial for particular ailments must display this disclaimer. However, this doesn’t appear to be happening. Homeopathic manufacturers don’t seem to have changed their packaging, and if you walk into a neighborhood drug store, you still see, for example, Boiron’s [Oscillocoquinum](#) (a “remedy” containing an infinitesimally small dilution<sup>1</sup> of the liver of a Muscovy duck) sitting alongside Tylenol on a shelf labeled “Cold and Flu.” Both the producer and the retailer are promoting this product as a treatment for the symptoms of a particular illness, there is no scientific evidence that it works for that illness, and there is no display of the required disclaimer.

So, we at CFI decided the best initial approach was to contact a retailer. We have been in communications with CVS stores through their attorneys. Our requests were, we think, reasonable. We did not ask that CVS stops selling homeopathic products, but merely that they market them, both online and in their brick and mortar stores, in a nondeceptive manner. We requested that CVS sells homeopathic products in a different section, and that this section displays clearly the required FTC disclaimer. For online sales, we requested that the disclaimer be displayed when someone added a homeopathic product to their shopping cart. CVS, after initial discussions, has failed to respond further.

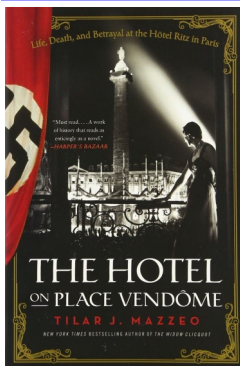
CFI’s next step, then, was to write to the FTC requesting enforcement proceedings be undertaken against CVS. [The letter can be read here](#). The ball is now in the FTC’s court. The agency has established rules for the promotion of OTC homeopathic products. They must now enforce them. If they don’t, CFI is pledged to explore ways to bring private legal action to ensure that retailers no longer participate in this fraud on the public.

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup> Oscillocoquinum is a 200C dilution—approximately 1 part duck offal in 10<sup>400</sup> parts “remedy.”

Article source: <http://bit.ly/2v24qvU>

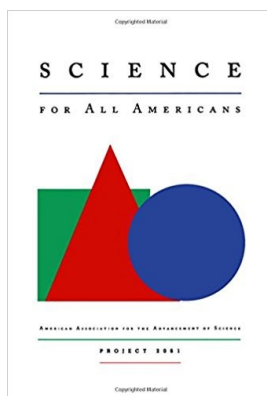
## Recommended Reading

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

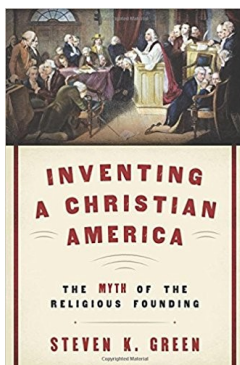


Tilar J. Mazzeo traces the history of this cultural landmark from its opening in fin de siècle Paris. At its center, *The Hotel on Place Vendôme* is an extraordinary chronicle of life at the Ritz during wartime, when the Hôtel was simultaneously headquarters to the highest-ranking German officers, such as Reichsmarshal Hermann Göring, and home to exclusive patrons, including Coco Chanel. Mazzeo takes us into the grand palace's suites, bars, dining rooms, and wine cellars, revealing a hotbed of illicit affairs and deadly intrigue, as well as stunning acts of defiance and treachery.

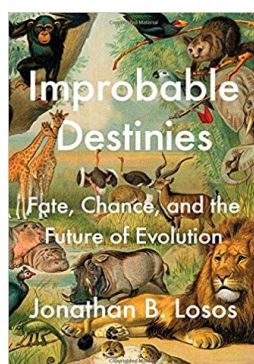
Based on Project 2061, a scientific literacy initiative sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, this wide-ranging, important volume explores what constitutes scientific literacy in a modern society; the knowledge, skills, and attitudes all students should acquire from their total school experience from kindergarten through high school; and what steps this country must take to begin reforming its system of education in science, mathematics, and technology.



Among the most enduring themes in American history is the idea that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. A pervasive narrative in everything from school textbooks to political commentary, it is central to the way in which many Americans perceive the historical legacy of their nation. Yet, as Steven K. Green shows in this illuminating new book, it is little more than a myth.



*Improbable Destinies* will change the way we think and talk about evolution. Losos's insights into natural selection and evolutionary change have far-reaching applications for protecting ecosystems, securing our food supply, and fighting off harmful viruses and bacteria. This compelling narrative offers a new understanding of ourselves and our role in the natural world and the cosmos. *Interview* <http://bit.ly/2hDnn14>



**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 Prahl'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

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 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 God.           | G. Harrison  |
| 29. Mathematics and Politics                    | Alan Taylor  |
| 30. Stealing Elections                          | John Fund  |
| 31. The God Virus                               | Darrel Ray   |
| 32. What Every American Should Know About World | Rossi  |
| 33. Imagine There's no Heaven                   | Editors of Free Inquiry                                      |
| 34. Hidden Order                                | David Friedman   |
| 35. What the Dog Saw                            | Malcom Gladwell  |
| 36. Sway  | Ori, Rom Brafman   |
| 37. The Better Angels of our Nature             | Steven Pinker  |
| 38. Letter to a Young Contrarian                | Christopher Hitchens   |
| 39. Hot, Flat, and Crowded                      | Thomas Friedman  |
| 40. Gaming the Vote                             | William Poundstone   |
| 41. Subversion Fable                            | Alexa KcKearing  |
| 43. Evolution and the Big Question              | David Stamos   |
| 44. <b>Why People Believe Weird Things</b>      | <b>Michael Shermer</b>                                       |
| 45. The World is Curved                         | David Snick  |
| 46. The Snow Ball                               | Warren Buffett   |
| 47. <b>The Moral Landscape</b>                  | <b>Sam Harris</b>  |
| 48. <b>How We Believe</b>                       | <b>Michael Shermer</b>                                       |
| 49. Full House                                  | Steven Jay Gould   |
| 50. The Origins of Political Order              | Francis Fukuyama   |
| 51. <b>Asimov's Guide to the Bible</b>          | <b>Isaac Asimov</b>  |
| 52. Autobiography of Mark Twain                 | Harriet Smith, Editor  |
| 53. Science Friction                            | Michael Shermer  |
| 54. Genius                                      | James Gleick   |
| 55. Inevitable Illusions                        | Piatrelli & Palmarini  |
| 56. Demon Haunted World                         | Carl Sagan   |
| 57. Being Right Is Not Enough                   | Paul Waldman   |
| 58. Loser Takes All                             | Mark Crispin Miller  |
| 59. Taking Back Politics                        | Cathy Allen  |
| 60. What Happened in Ohio?                      | Fitrakis, Rosenfeld & Wasserman                              |
| 61. Autobiography of Mark Twain                 | Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith                                     |
| 62. The Skeptics Annotated Bible                | Various  |
| 63. <b>12 Vol Complete Works</b>                | <b>Robert Ingersoll</b><br><b>(A gift of, Joe Reinhardt)</b> |
| 64. On Religious Liberty                        | Roger Williams & Davis                                       |
| 65. The God Makers                              | Baker & Hunt   |
| 66. Inevitable Illusions                        | M. Piattelli-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                             | Stenesh  |
| 79. <b>Thoughts of a Freethinker</b>            | <b>New Kaye</b>  |

\*  
Essential  
works

# 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*, beginning **Sunday, September 3, 2017, from 8 to 9 pm.**



The program will be airing on TanTalk Radio. The broadcast will be available **on the internet at [TanTalk1340.com](http://TanTalk1340.com)**, live streaming on the **Atheists of Florida Facebook page**, 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 will be archived on the AoF web site, [www.talk.aof.ngo](http://www.talk.aof.ngo).

Atheists of Florida is seeking guests for the *Forum* and will offer advertising on the program for other Freethought organizations to promote their special events or seek membership from listeners. Contact our production office at: [af@talk.aof.ngo](mailto:af@talk.aof.ngo).

The *Atheist Forum* continues an outreach tradition begun in 1993. It affords an opportunity for members of the freethought community, now quite numerous, to have an outlet to explain their position to a broader public, and recruit new organization members. A number of well-known guests will be interviewed and take questions on, important topics of the day and new explorations of hidden aspects of human nature and the natural world. There'll be a few chuckles along the way, and local news too. Tune in and participate; give us your ideas, opinions and arguments. Celebrate the forum's open ended possibilities for expanding our community. Now is the time to make a difference: **you** are that difference. Tune in!



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/](http://AtheistsOfFloridaInc.org/calendar/) Know what's going on around the state.



## Be a Celebrant!

Do you like to help people celebrate milestones in their life?  
Do you want to help someone when they lose a friend or family member?

Consider becoming a celebrant. An atheist celebrant.

### An Atheist Celebrant?

An Atheist celebrant officiates and assists with a secular or civil ceremony, such as a wedding, a service to welcome new family members, coming-of-age rituals, end of life services, etc. Celebrants work with people to create a secular experience intended to be uniquely personalized, deep and loving, based on the person's personal philosophy, and not the celebrant's. A celebrant may have suggestions on how to approach the occasion, and if appropriate, the venue and setting, music, and textual sharing's.

### Why do we have rituals?

According to [The Journal of Cultural Anthropology](https://culanth.org/curated_collections/4-ritual) ([https://culanth.org/curated\\_collections/4-ritual](https://culanth.org/curated_collections/4-ritual))

*"Ritual is arguably a universal feature of human social existence: just as one cannot envision a society without language or exchange, one would be equally hard-pressed to imagine a society without ritual. And while the word "ritual" commonly brings to mind exoticized images of primitive others diligently engaged in mystical activities, one can find rituals, both sacred and secular, throughout "modern" society:...."*

According to the UNESCO webpage "[Social practices, rituals and festive events](https://ich.unesco.org/en/social-practices-rituals-and-00055)" (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/social-practices-rituals-and-00055>):

*Rituals "... are significant because they reaffirm the identity of those who practice them as a group or a society and, whether performed in public or private, are closely linked to important events...."*

### Want to be an Atheist Celebrant?

If you are interested in becoming an AOF celebrant, see: [celebrants.aof.ngo](http://celebrants.aof.ngo) or contact us at 478-227-5263.

## 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"

## Tampa Bay Thinkers



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

**September 11th**

**Topic: It's 9/11! How has the world  
 changed in the past 16 years?**

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

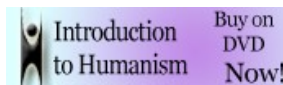
**Jennifer Hancock** started this organization several years ago. It uniquely serves Humanist families with a variety of wonderful programs throughout the year. There is a strong emphasis on creative childrearing. Here, you can make connection with other families dealing with the problems of living in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



## 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)

## Humanistic Judaism



### of Tampa Bay

Humanistic Jewish Rosh Hashanah  
 Celebration

with Rabbi Steven Cardonick

Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m.

Unity of Tampa  
 3302 W. Horatio Avenue  
 Tampa, FL 33609

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



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

**Bill Norsworthy**, is our Florida representative.

Please sign up [here](#). Volunteer activists are wanted, needed, & appreciated!



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.



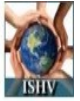
## [ACLU of Greater Tampa Bay](#)

In the wake of the 2016 outbreak of toxic algae in the St. Lucie River and Estuary and along Florida's Treasure Coast, the ACLU of Florida was asked by members in the region and several environmental organizations to investigate the state's record of transparency with regard to the dissemination of information about the potential grave danger to the public health posed by the algae flow. Specific concern was expressed about the state's performance in delivering needed information evenly to all citizens in affected areas, and whether the state understates scientific evidence of dangers to public health.

The following report was researched with the help of local residents, scientists, media sources, and those state employees who cooperated with an ACLU of Florida investigator.

[DOWNLOAD REPORT](#)

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



Genuine human progress consists largely in undoing the damage done to the world by inhumane biblical ideas and actions. Some of this progress is, ironically, initiated by progressive religionists. A very best example of this is the eradication of chattel slavery. The Bible condones life-long slavery for the captives of the Hebrew people.

In Luke 12:47-48, Ephesians, chapter 6 and numerous other passages, slavery is condoned. Abolitionists "corrected the Bible" and managed to kick slavery to the curb with human thought and human action. Yet, the Bible still condones slavery. As Twain pointed out, "The slavery text remained; the practice changed, that was all...." Christianity's main slogan could be "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em, lead 'em, and hog the glory." Indeed, this had been the case with the persecution of alleged witches. The Bible had taught that believers should not suffer a witch to live. However, rational and empathetic human beings finally discovered that persecuting and killing alleged witches is downright inhumane. However, as Twain noted again, "The witch text remains; only the practice has changed." Sadly, the text and the practice remain in some parts of the world. In nations such as Malawi, Ghana, Nigeria and other African nations, alleged witches are still being persecuted and killed in the name of God. As long as the text and the practice continue to influence the thoughts and actions of highly irrational and superstitious believers, the problem will persist.

*Norm Allen Jr.*



## [UU Humanists of Clearwater](#)

Usually every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday at 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, after UU services. We are a group of Unitarian Universalists committed to a humanistic & non-theistic worldview. For more information, E-mail us [here](#).

UUC has a strong team of lay **Pastoral Care Associates** who offer confidential, emotional support and spiritual companionship to fellow church members. You can access pastoral care by contacting Rev. Patrice Curtis at [727-531-7704 ext 5](tel:727-531-7704) or [revpatrice@uuc.org](mailto:revpatrice@uuc.org).

Please note that emails sent to the front office are not confidential; emails to Rev. Patrice are.



## **A Humanist Discussion group in East Tampa !**

## [UU Humanists of Tampa](#)

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

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



## The Secular Academy

The Secular Academy has new online classes at [SecularActivism.Org](http://SecularActivism.Org)

Dr. Richard Carrier's one-month course on [Moral Reasoning from Theory to Practice](#) is offered during June – \$69.

Dr. Jon Mills' new one-month course on [Inventing God: The Psychology of Belief](#) is offered during June – \$69.

Classes at [SecularActivism.Org](http://SecularActivism.Org) are accessible online 24/7, so you can participate at any hour of the day when you have some time. There's nothing 'live' to be missed, and you aren't using video, just text-based forums. Instructors respond individually to all questions and love extended conversations.

-- The Secular Academy is a project of Partners for Secular Activism, a 501c3 nonprofit educational organization started in 2014 by John Shook, PhD. For several years Dr. Shook worked with the founder of secular humanism, Paul Kurtz, to develop online education for the growing secular community. Take a look at his new book on [science's epic victory over religious ignorance](#).

Know someone interested in earning a master's degree? The 'Science and the Public' program from the University at Buffalo, NY, is a part-time and completely online Masters of Education degree. This is America's only entirely online program for the secular promotion of science and science-based policy - [gse.buffalo.edu/online/science](http://gse.buffalo.edu/online/science)

## 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/>**



October 20th of this year will mark the beginning of the statewide Florida Humanist Conference in Orlando.

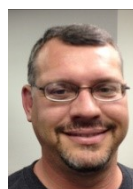
Your TB-CoR will be an exhibitor there and we expect to see a goodly contingent from our area. The event features an long list of outstanding and exciting speakers, and three (3) comedy acts! For more information and to register for the conference, go to: [www.freeflo.org/](http://www.freeflo.org/)



Bill Norsworthy,  
UUCH



Mark Brandt,  
UUCH



Chris Brown,  
MAF



Jenn Hancock,  
GTBHF



Rick O'Keefe,  
CFI, TBS



Jim Peterson,  
HSS, TBPC



Al Hann  
AoF

### TBCoR Leadership Team 2017

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

## Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – September 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	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 <i>10 paid-up CFI members.</i> <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>	

**2018 Freethought Cruise With Annie Laurie Gaylor & Dan Barker**  
Sign up now. <https://freethoughtcruise.wordpress.com/> Lvs. Port Canaveral March 3-7, 2018





## ‘Nones’ want to join Evangelicals with seat at Trump’s table

Shannon Levitt, CRUX, <http://bit.ly/2hEjLPC> August 7, 2017



Thousands of atheists and unbelievers, including Alberto Valdez from Del Rio, Texas, gathered in 2012 on the National Mall for the Reason Rally. (Credit: RNS photo by Tyrone Turner.)

There’s been a plethora of stories of late outlining how conservative Evangelical Christians have been very pleased with their relationship to President Donald Trump, and how well he has been serving their agenda.

Now, another significant and fast-growing religious constituency in America is clamoring for some of his attention: “Nones,” meaning Americans with no religious affiliation, who are now more than twenty percent of the country’s 245 million adults.

As for the Evangelicals, it’s easy to see why, despite Trump’s dwindling approval ratings overall, they remain fairly solidly in his camp.

Almost immediately upon entering office he reinstated the ‘Mexico City Policy,’ which bans using U.S. foreign aid for abortion-related activities, pleasing both Evangelicals and Catholics. Next came an executive order on religious liberty, telling the IRS to weaken enforcement of the Johnson Amendment which prohibits tax-exempt charitable organizations from political speech.

Most recently, Trump tweeted that he intended to remove all transgendered people from the U.S. armed forces. While the Department of Defense and military brass didn’t have a heads-up, leading Evangelical Christians said the idea came from them and they knew at least two weeks prior to the tweet it was in the works.

On July 28, four secularist organizations - American Atheists, the American Humanist Association, the Center for Inquiry and the Secular Coalition for America - issued a joint statement calling for “dialogue with the Trump administration.”

That day was the first time a letter they had sent to Trump on March 17, 2017 was made public. In that letter, the groups urged “President Trump to continue the Obama Administration’s policy of regularly engaging with the nontheistic community.”

The four signatory organizations urged Trump to call upon them as a resource, so they can work together to “ensure religious freedom and inclusion for all Americans throughout your tenure as President of the United States.”

A lack of response from Trump, combined with some of the anti-secular rhetoric by Attorney General Jeff Sessions calling secularists unfit for government, as well as Trump’s uncritical embrace of Evangelical Christians whom he acknowledges as his biggest supporters, have led the leaders of these organizations to challenge the White House publicly.

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

## The Critical Relevance of Scientific Atheism in the Modern World

By David Nicholls, The Atheist Foundation of Australia Inc (as suggested by Jim Peterson)

Scientific Atheism is the acceptance that there is no credible scientific or factually reliable evidence for the existence of a god, gods, or the supernatural.

Many people consider Atheism reminiscent of devil worship, communism or a state of living without ethical standards. Effective vilification, over many years, has lumbered Atheism with bad press or none at all. To be an Atheist places individuals in a socially uncomfortable slot, disallowing any perceived threat to the status quo of those with a ‘faith’.

The previously mentioned descriptions do not tell a truthful story. Atheists are people, similar to any other, with the same fears and aspirations common to all humanity. To quote Shakespeare: “If you prick us, do we not bleed?” Yes, we do, and we bleed mentally at the continual misrepresentation of our philosophy.

The history of contemporary Atheism as a way of viewing existence, although its roots are thousands of years old, developed in recent times from Deism.

Rejecting Christianity and a personal saviour is not new, with the counter an understanding that a god initiated the universe and then departed. However, Deism has given way to Atheism due to the expanding knowledge of nature. There is no longer need to accept the universe is young and created by a god, as evolutionary theory dispelled that remarkably convincingly.

The inaccurate propagandist nonsense that Hitler was an Atheist, along with Stalin and other dictators, has easy-ears believing Atheism menaces civilisation with ‘evil’ destruction. Forgotten in all of the convenient hype is the fact most dictators come from religious backgrounds. Simultaneous loss of memory regarding religious atrocities rounds off the theme suitable for the desired inaccurate negative outlook.

Tyrannies, be they religious or Atheistic, result from the pampered prejudices of populations allowing manipulative leaders access to power beyond the properly elected will. Freely chosen Atheism in democratic societies delivers rational opposition to the inherent theistic excesses ....

Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2vFeYn6>



**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.

## Climate Change Isn't Our Biggest Environmental Problem

...Continued from page 5

Of course, ignoring the systemic nature of our dilemma just means that as soon as we get one symptom corralled, another is likely to break loose. But, crucially, is climate change, taken as an isolated problem, fully treatable with technology? Color me doubtful. I say this having spent many months poring over the relevant data with David Fridley of the energy analysis program at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Our resulting book, *Our Renewable Future*, concluded that nuclear power is too expensive and risky; meanwhile, solar and wind power both suffer from intermittency, which (once these sources begin to provide a large percentage of total electrical power) will require a combination of three strategies on a grand scale: energy storage, redundant production capacity, and demand adaptation. At the same time, we in industrial nations will have to adapt most of our current energy usage (which occurs in industrial processes, building heating, and transportation) to electricity. Altogether, the energy transition promises to be an enormous undertaking, unprecedented in its requirements for investment and substitution. When David and I stepped back to assess the enormity of the task, we could see no way to maintain current quantities of global energy production during the transition, much less to increase energy supplies so as to power ongoing economic growth. The biggest transitional hurdle is scale: the world uses an enormous amount of energy currently; only if that quantity can be reduced significantly, especially in industrial nations, could we imagine a credible pathway toward a post-carbon future.

**The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, Inc.** (SPAC), has been meeting continuously since 1927. It was incorporated in 1979 as a nonprofit, tax deductible organization.



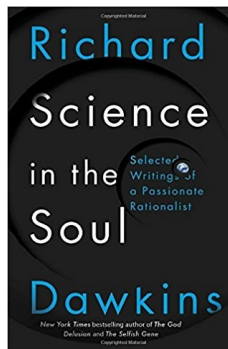
For almost 50 years SPAC has provided free educational programs for its members & the public. For additional information send your emails to:

[spaceexaminer@gmail.com](mailto: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 Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22nd Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL, at 8:00 P.M. Meetings are open to the public. [Calendar](#)

Downsizing the world's energy supplies would, effectively, also downsize industrial processes of resource extraction, manufacturing, transportation, and waste management. That's a systemic intervention, of exactly the kind called for by the ecologists of the 1970s who coined the mantra, "Reduce, reuse, and recycle." It gets to the heart of the overshoot dilemma—as does population stabilization and reduction, another necessary strategy. But it's also a notion to which technocrats, industrialists, and investors are virulently allergic.

The ecological argument is, at its core, a moral one—as I explain in more detail in a just-released manifesto replete with sidebars and graphics ("[There's No App for That: Technology and Morality in the Age of Climate Change, Overpopulation, and Biodiversity Loss](#)"). Any systems thinker who understands overshoot and prescribes powerdown as a treatment is effectively engaging in an intervention with an addictive behavior. Society is addicted to growth, and that's having terrible consequences for the planet and, increasingly, for us as well. We have to change our collective and individual behavior and give up something we depend on—power over our environment. We must restrain ourselves, like an alcoholic forswearing booze. That requires honesty and soul-searching.



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.

### M.A.R.S. – Tampa Astronomy Club

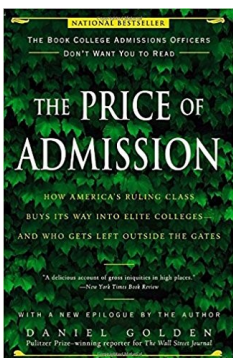
Welcome to the [Museum Astronomical Resource Society](#), also known as the M.A.R.S. astronomy club. M.A.R.S. is sponsored by the [Museum of Science & Industry \(MOSI\)](#), in Tampa, Florida. We are also members of both the [Astronomical League](#) & [Night Sky Network](#). This site provides club news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

There's only one thing the people of M.A.R.S. enjoy more than observing the heavens... that's sharing it with others! 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/>



Since Trump got elected, this book has become very popular. "In this explosive book, the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Daniel Golden exposes the corrupt admissions practices that favor the wealthy, the powerful, and the famous."