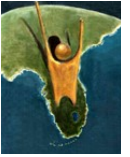


The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason



Freethought News

Vol. 7 No. 4, April, 2018
Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

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* TBCoR member

Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

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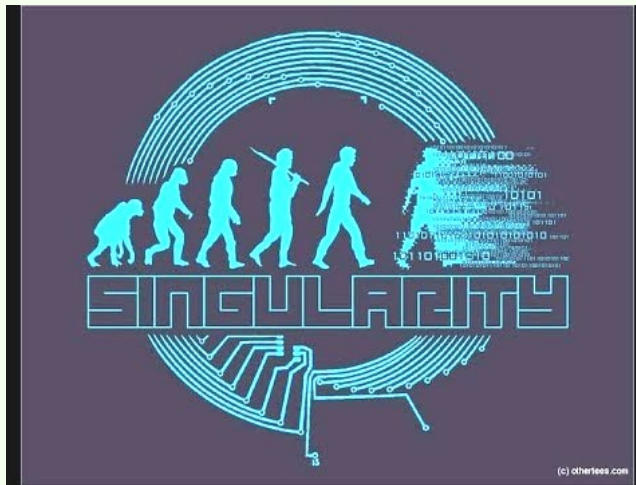
Newsletter
Jim Peterson

Special Projects
Mark Brandt
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event website at:
www.tampabaycor.net

See the full roster of the
Leadership Board
on Page 17.

This publication online at:
www.tampabaycor.net



Humanism it is a future period during which the pace of societal, scientific, economic, and technological change will be so rapid, its impact so deep, that we cannot even imagine what will happen from our present perspective, --- Because humanity will be irreversibly transformed.

Although neither utopian nor dystopian, this epoch will disrupt the concepts that we rely on to give meaning to our lives, from our business models to the cycle of human life, including death itself. This will become the epoch when humanity will become posthumanity.

Dr. Hal Hultman will draw out the Humanist Meaning of the Singularity

Dr. Hultman has degrees in Electrical and Computer Engineering, Systems Engineering/Operations Research, and Financial Economics. He is a graduate of IBM Management Schools, and served as a Nuclear Weapons Officer - U.S. Army. Hal retired as a Senior Engineer/Manager after 30 years with IBM, with numerous Invention, Corporate and Division awards. In a second career, Hal taught engineering and financial economics as a Professor at Montgomery College in the Washington D.C. area for 20 years, twice being selected for the Smithsonian Scholar Research program, and twice awarded NISOD national recognition for outstanding teaching. Hal has lectured in Eckerd OLLI programs for 11 years, including his "Meltdown and Recovery" financial economics series, his "Eureka" leading edge science series, and several biography series.

The UU Clearwater Humanist Group (see Page 13 for details.)

The UUC Humanist Group meets regularly to explore important aspects of the secular world as they relate to Unitarian Universalists and other freethinking persons in the Tampa Bay area. The group is affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association and the American Humanist Association. Locally, we are part of the Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason(TBCoR). click here. For more info.

April 15th 12:30

At 2470 Nursery Rd. in Clearwater.

The everyday English definition of Singularity is a noun that designates the quality of being one of a kind, strange, unique, remarkable or unusual. In Geometry it is considered a point where all perspective lines meet. In Physics it implies a point where a measured variable reaches unmeasurable or infinite value. In Mathematics it is defined as the value or range of values of a function for which a derivative does not exist. In Astronomy it is a point or region in spacetime in which gravitational forces cause matter to have an infinite density; associated with Black Holes. In

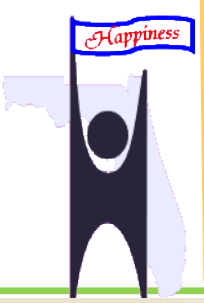
(c) otherless.com

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>

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 Be sure to call 727-441-3000, with your questions and comments. See page 14 for more.



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

Volume 31 No. 4 April, 2018

DR. RYAN CRAGUN ON..



The Freethought Movement: Organize or Die!

Dr. Cragun is the Bay area's preeminent Humanist academician. As the University of Tampa sociology department's researcher into the nature of the freethought associations throughout the country, he has taken the measure of our groups and how we function. He will offer some great insights into who we are, and how we may work better.

Join us at:



Tampa Bay Harvest

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 Thanx.

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


**Saturday, April 7
at 2:00 PM**

Many of our members meet afterward for more talk and refreshment at [Los Amigos restaurant](#) not far from the library.

It's that time of the year again!!

*Join or renew
Humanist Society of the Suncoast*

Annual Dues

- Regular -\$25
- Reg. Couple -\$30.
- Supporter -\$35/40 (With pin at )
- 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

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

Name: _____

Address -if new : _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: * _____

E-mail: _____
(Privacy respected)

Send check made out to:
"Marios Psomas"

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

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

*= optional





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, April 15th.
at 5 O'clock for good ol' cuisine from the Lone Star state, and good company too, at:

Longhorn Steakhouse

For [map](#) [Menu](#)

5375 East Bay Drive Clearwater, FL 33764
(727) 539-1536

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

Laugh Lines A Wall Street Review 4-18



It was a crazy year on Wall Street:
Helium was up, feathers were down. Paper was stationary.
Fluorescent tubing was dimmed in light trading.
Knives were up sharply.
Cows steered into a bull market.
Pencils lost a few points.
Hiking equipment was trailing.
Elevators rose, while escalators continued their slow decline.
Weights were up in heavy trading.
Light switches were off.
Mining equipment hit rock bottom.
Diapers remained unchanged.
Shipping lines stayed at an even keel.
The market for raisins dried up.
Cola fizzled.
Caterpillar stock inched up a bit.
Sun peaked at midday.
Balloon prices were inflated.
Bath Tissue touched a new bottom.
And batteries exploded in an attempt to recharge the market.

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

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](#)

April 21st, 11 AM

Leaders: *Lucas Hopegood & Jim Peterson*

This month's Issue:

Do we "Trust in God"?



With Atheists of Florida, Executive Director, **Judy Adkins**. Can we keep church and state separate? Find out why democracy and social peace demand it.

As Humanists it is our task to discover the secret world above and 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, and the one we are inventing.

Each month a new investigation thoughtfully & critically dissects a new intersection of mind and 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.

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/>



Member, TBCoR,
Hum Society, & AHA
affiliate.

Lawrence Krauss shunned by AHA



Theoretical physicist and prominent skeptic Lawrence Krauss has been accused of multiple instances of sexual misconduct and harassment by women throughout the atheist, skeptic, and scientific communities. When a number of these allegations were made public in an article published by [Buzzfeed](#) in February, the American Humanist Association (AHA) issued a prompt [statement of concern](#) and support for the women who had come forward with their stories.

In response to the AHA's recent promise not to ignore these allegations, the AHA Board of Directors has revoked his 2015 Humanist of the year award, and severed its relationship with Krauss.

~*~

For his part, Dr. Krauss has declared his innocence in these allegations, which are similar to those leveled against many males in the freethought movement by a number of anonymous accusers. See his response [here](#).

Humanist Quotes

4/18

"Do not do to others what you would not like for yourself."

– **Confucius, Analects, C 500 BCE**

"Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness."

– **John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, 1863**

"Repay injury with justice, and kindness with kindness."

– **Confucius, Analects, C 500 BCE**

"Always treat people as ends in themselves, never as means to an end."

– **Immanuel Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,**



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.



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

Ehrlich predicts Civilizational collapse

A shattering collapse of civilization is a “near certainty” in the next few decades due to humanity’s continuing destruction of the [natural world that sustains all life on Earth](#), according to biologist Prof Paul Ehrlich.

In May, it will be 50 years since the eminent biologist published his most famous and controversial book, [The Population Bomb](#). But Ehrlich remains as outspoken as ever.

The world’s optimum population is less than two billion people – 5.6 billion fewer than on the planet today, he argues, and there is an increasing toxification of the entire planet by synthetic chemicals that may be more dangerous to people and wildlife than climate change.

Ehrlich also says an unprecedented redistribution of wealth is needed to end the over-consumption of resources, but “the rich who now run the global system – that hold the annual ‘world destroyer’ [meetings in Davos](#) – are unlikely to let it happen”.

The Population Bomb, written with his wife Anne Ehrlich in 1968, predicted “hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death” in the 1970s – a fate that was avoided by [the green revolution in intensive agriculture](#).

Many details and timings of events were wrong, **Paul Ehrlich** acknowledges today, but he says the book was correct overall.

“Population growth, along with over-consumption per capita, is driving civilisation over the edge: billions of people are now hungry or micronutrient malnourished, and climate disruption is killing people.”

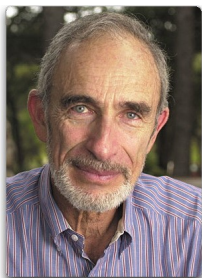
Ehrlich has been at Stanford University since 1959 and is also president of the [Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere](#), which works “to reduce the threat of a shattering collapse of civilization”.

“It is a near certainty in the next few decades, and the risk is increasing continually as long as perpetual growth of the human enterprise remains the goal of economic and political systems,” he says. “As I’ve said many times, ‘perpetual growth is the creed of the cancer cell’.”

It is the combination of high population and high consumption by the rich that is destroying the natural world, he says. Research published by Ehrlich and colleagues in 2017 concluded that this is [driving a sixth mass extinction of biodiversity](#), upon which civilization depends for clean air, water and food.

The solutions are tough, he says. “To start, make modern contraception and back-up abortion available to all and give women full equal rights, pay and opportunities with men.

“I hope that would lead to a low enough total fertility rate that the needed shrinkage of population would follow. [But]



it will take a very long time to humanely reduce total population to a size that is sustainable.”

He estimates an optimum global population size at roughly 1.5 to two billion, “But the longer humanity pursues business as usual, the smaller the sustainable society is likely to prove to be. We’re continuously harvesting the low-hanging fruit, for example by driving [fisheries stocks to extinction](#).”

Ehrlich is also concerned about chemical pollution, which has already reached the most remote corners of the globe. “The evidence we have is that toxics reduce the intelligence of children, and members of the first heavily influenced generation are now adults.”

He treats this risk with characteristic dark humor: “The first empirical evidence we are dumbing down *Homo sapiens* were the Republican debates in the US 2016 presidential elections – and the resultant [kakistocracy](#). On the other hand, toxification may solve the population problem, since [sperm counts are plunging](#).”

The book’s strength, Ehrlich says, is that it was short, direct and basically correct. “Its weaknesses were not enough on overconsumption and equity issues. It needed more on women’s rights, and explicit countering of racism – which I’ve spent much of my career and activism trying to counter.

“Too many rich people in the world is a major threat to the human future, and cultural and genetic diversity are great human resources.”

Accusations that the book lent [support to racist attitudes to population control](#) still hurt today, Ehrlich says. “Having been a co-inventor of the sit-in to desegregate restaurants in Lawrence, Kansas in the 1950s and having published books and articles on the biological ridiculousness of racism, those accusations continue to annoy me.”

But, he says: “You can’t let the possibility that ignorant people will interpret your ideas as racist keep you from discussing critical issues honestly.”

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

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/>



The mission of the Center for Inquiry is to foster a secular society based on science, reason, freedom of inquiry, & 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*

Some of April's activities are:

04/5, 7:00 PM, CLEARWATER: Howard's Skeptical Corner
 6, 5:30 PM, TAMPA: Happy Hour with ACLU of Florida - CONSTITUTION UNCORKED
 6, 9:00 PM, BRANDON: Thank Goodness for Godless Friday Nights! (Skeptics in the Pub)
 8, 2:00 PM, BRANDON: CFI Sunday Skeptics
 15, 5:00 PM, Xpost CLEARWATER: The Movable Feast w. the Humanist Society
 17, 6:45 PM, Tampa Bay Technology Center (TBTC) Monthly Meeting
 22, 11:00 AM, TAMPA: Earth Day 2018 "EcoFest" in the park
 28, Noon, NW TAMPA: CFI SHARE Book Club
To attend, RSVP here: <http://bit.ly/2DLkLHO>

Subscribe to our CFI Tampa Bay newsletter here: <http://bit.ly/2lJte9I>, Then scroll down the page until you see the red section with "Receive E-Mails".

You might like these blogs:

Freethought from the Heartland with Reba Boyd Wooden, Indianapolis, IN

Hollywood Reality Check with Jim Underdown, Hollywood, CA

A Skeptic Reads the Newspaper with Benjamin Radford, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Investigative Briefs with Joe Nickell, Amherst, NY

Advocatus Diaboli with Tom Flynn, Buffalo, NY

The Morning Heresy with Paul the Morning Heretic

Access Points with Timothy Binga, CFI Amherst

If laws should not be based on religion, what should they be based on? We hold that reason, empirical evidence, and humanist moral values are reliable guides.
 ~ Michael De Dora, Center for Inquiry



Earth Day

Sunday, April 22, is a day to celebrate that humans haven't yet managed to lay waste to all of the planet ... yet. We keep on trying, regardless of the consequences, proving over and over that we are truly monkey brains, not rational reasoning beings.

But, let us turn to this year's activities in the Bay Area, such as:

CFI Tampa Bay is tabling at Zoo Tampa at Lowry Park—Bandshell. We need volunteers from 10:30–4:30 on April 22. Let Rick know if you will **volunteer**:

tampa@CenterForInquiry.net.

Event details:
<http://bit.ly/2p8NQIq>

Earth Day around the Bay, as TBO & Tampa Bay Times report:

<http://bit.ly/2DoBCA1>

There are events in Clearwater and St. Pete.

AND, these E.D. Tips for daily living:
<http://.tampabaypostcarbon.com/todo-list.htm>

From weekly book clubs & dinner socials to major lectures with prominent speakers, CFI's grassroots groups host dozens of activities every month. For monthly branch activities, look for a group near you in these lists of **US & international** CFI Branches. Then check out their individual event calendars.



Did your CFI membership lapse? Find out—please send me an email so I can check for you. Include your current phone & address with ZIP, please. I'll look it up & let you know.

Cordially, Rick
tampa@CenterForInquiry.net



16
years in
Florida



Gee, I could use some of this, if it proves to work

Brain stimulation by tDCS is non-invasive and inexpensive. Some scientists think it increases the likelihood that neurons will fire, altering neural connections and potentially improving the cognitive skills associated with specific brain regions. Neural networks associated with attention control can be targeted to improve focus in people with attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Or people who have a hard time remembering shopping lists and phone numbers might like to target brain areas associated with short-term (also known as working) memory in order to enhance this cognitive process. However, the **effects** of tDCS are inconclusive across a wide body of peer-reviewed studies, particularly after a single session. In fact, some experts question whether enough electrical stimulation from the technique is passing through the scalp into the brain to alter connections between brain cells at all.

The article appears in [Aeon](http://bit.ly/2DK7fnz) here: <http://bit.ly/2DK7fnz>

University of South Florida Humanities Institute

For engaging speakers & socials, check the calendar at <http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities>

[Many previous lectures](#) are available on YouTube.

Monday, **April 2nd**, 2018 in the Gibbons Alumni Center - Traditions Hall A. 6:00pm - Reception and book signing to follow.

Nicole Sealey: 2018 William H. Scheuerle Distinguished Humanities Graduate Award Presentation and Reading
Sealey is the author of *Ordinary Beast* and *The Animal After Whom Other Animals Are Named*

Also:

Wednesday, April 11th — Frankenstein's Bicentennial with Elizabeth Denlinger

Monday, April 23rd — Wicked Brews Book Group: *Things We Lost in the Fire: Stories* by Mariana Enriquez



These resources are a goldmine of facts for living a healthy life: HealthyPeople.gov
healthfinder.gov health.gov

List of Fake News Websites: Before you get too excited about an item you want to share or comment about, make sure the social media item is legit.

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



CFI's all new
"Point of Inquiry"
*The flagship podcast of the
Center for Inquiry
is beginning a brand new chapter!*

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!*

Go here for: www.pointofinquiry.org/

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

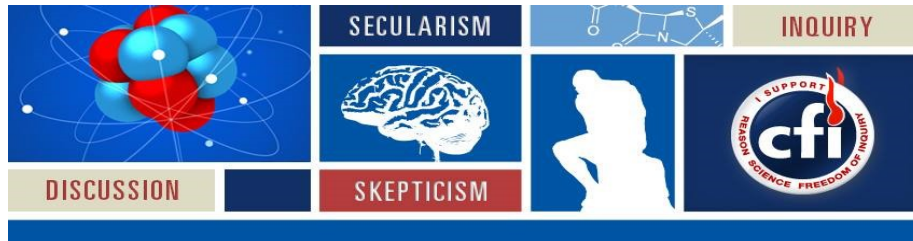
When two opposite points of view are expressed with equal intensity, the truth does not necessarily lie exactly halfway between them. It is possible for one side to be simply wrong. ~ Richard Dawkins

*Non-participation is
a negative personal choice.*

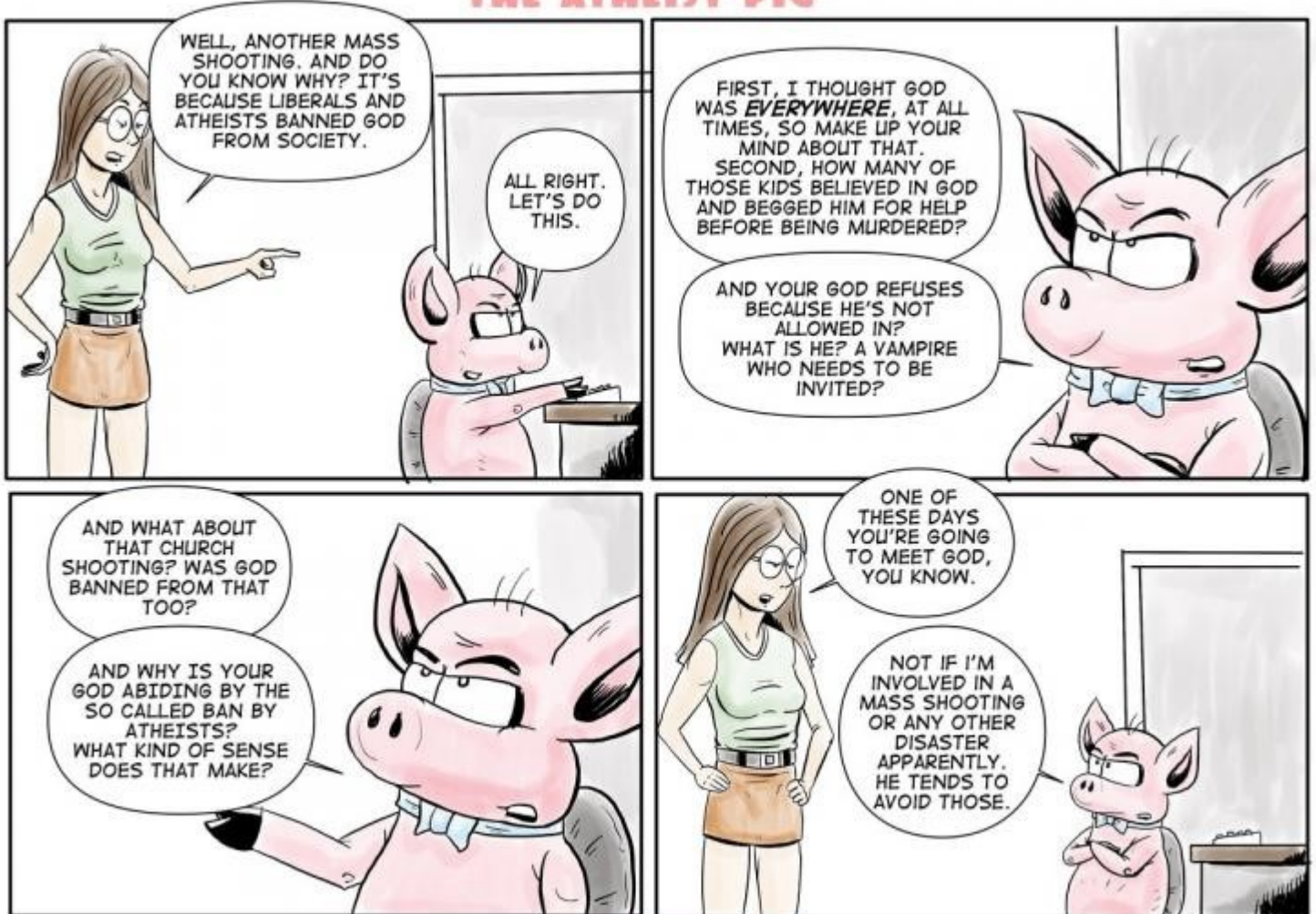


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CHURCH AND STATE

Lola Heavey, Webmaster of *Church and State*, shares “The common misconception that atheists have no moral compass”.

I think the question asked by Socrates in Euthyphro, elucidates the non-sequitur here. “Is that which is good commanded by God because it’s good, or is it good because God commands it?”

If you accept the former, that good is commanded by God because it is good, then you must accept that God is not the greatest, as he must call upon a standard of good greater than himself. This is the answer most feel acceptable, however, the philosophical implications makes for a very uncomfortable bout of cognitive dissonance.

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

READ THIS: 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!](#)



FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, in a press release earlier this month:

“As the flu continues to make people sick — and even cause deaths — **unscrupulous actors** may also be taking advantage of **unsuspecting consumers** by promoting their **fraudulent products** that *have not been reviewed by the FDA to be safe and effective*. The FDA is warning consumers to be alert, and try and steer clear of fraudulent flu products, which may be found online or in retail stores. We’re advising consumers on some of the telltale signs to look for when trying to spot flu products that may be fraudulent.

The agency offers some clues as to when a product is fake medicine:

Products sold online are fraudulent if they claim to prevent, treat or cure the flu, and have not been evaluated by the FDA for that intended use.

These flu claims may indicate that an OTC product is fraudulent:

- reduces severity and length of the flu;
- reduces severity and length of the flu;
- boosts your immunity naturally without a flu shot;
- safe and effective alternative to the flu vaccine;
- prevents catching the flu;
- effective treatment for the flu;
- faster recovery from the flu; or
- supports your body's natural immune defenses to fight off the flu”

Anyone for homeopathic quackery?

As reported in [The Morning Heresy](#).

When marketing matters more than science: And in New Zealand, because money is to be made by purveying alternative medications and techniques to the gullible public despite there being a lack of evidence for either efficacy or safety, aside from the placebo effect, NZ pharmacies may now officially dispense such quackery if the pharmacist says, “There is no evidence that this Wort works ...”:

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

More from *The Morning Heresy*:

“Unsurprisingly, Scott “Destroyer of Worlds” Pruitt doesn’t just deny climate change, he also thinks evolution is, shall we say, *lacking in substantiation*:

There aren’t sufficient scientific facts to establish the theory of evolution, and it deals with the origins of man, which is more from a philosophical standpoint than a scientific standpoint.

Yeah, where are all those pesky facts about evolution?? COME ON, SCIENTISTS!

Chief of Staff John Kelly reportedly **quashed Pruitt's fantasy** about having “red team-blue team” debates about the veracity of climate science, considering the idea “ill conceived.””

Gary Neitzel of MUFON says this is a good reason to believe in aliens visiting Earth: They were reported in the middle ages, in ancient times, and you can see different paintings that have what looks like could be UFOs in them.

IN CONVERSATION

Michael Shermer & Deepak Chopra

Shermer and Chopra attempt to define and discuss their worldviews on consciousness, the experience of reality, and the fundamental nature of existence in the YouTube video..



The Arizona Senate wants teachers to **put a sign saying “Ditat Deus” (“God enriches”)** in their public school classrooms...and because it's in *Latin*, it doesn't *count* as religious, see?



Do we have to follow the Hedonistic Imperative as a lifestyle by David Pearce?

David Pearce, Let's genetically engineer a civilization based on gradients of superhuman bliss

What does the term “hedonism” evoke in your mind? A life of drink, drugs and debauchery? Happiness that is shallow, one-dimensional and amoral? Maybe the pursuit of pleasure that is meaningless, short-lived or vaguely unsatisfying – a life of “empty hedonism”? Henry Sidgwick in *The Method of Ethics* (1874) speaks aptly of the **paradox of hedonism**, i.e. the pursuit of personal pleasure can be self-defeating. Many critics agree with Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson: **the answer to suffering is meaning, rather than eradication of suffering**.

A **technical revolution** is going to transform this debate. The past 540 million years of evolution via natural selection have been a story of **unimaginable suffering**. CRISPR genome-editing, synthetic gene drives, novel reproductive technologies, and an imminent mastery of our reward circuitry promise a hedonic revolution: a major evolutionary transition in the development of life on Earth (*cf.* **Is suffering a necessary part of the human condition?**). In theory, the hedonic floor of posthuman life can surpass the human hedonic ceiling. If the hedonic range of Darwinian life is, schematically, -10 to 0 to +10, the posthuman hedonic range may extend from, say, +90 to +100. Or if a deeper hedonic contrast is judged wise, say +70 to +100. These numbers are conventional though not arbitrary. We simply don't know how the biohappiness revolution will play out.

Life underpinned by superhuman hedonic tone is clearly “hedonistic” in one sense of the term. Yet genetically ratcheting up hedonic set-points and hedonic range has nothing to do with prescribing anyone a *lifestyle*. Perhaps, for some, **posthuman life** will be one big party, or even a multibillion-year orgy. I'm prudishly skeptical of such scenarios. But

who knows? Anyone confident in their powers of prediction would do well to study the history of **futureology**. At the other extreme, posthuman life may witness instead the triumph of Mill's “**higher pleasures**”. For example, if you are a cerebral mathematician whose greatest happiness in life is proving mathematical theorems, then a seriously enriched reward circuitry needn't change your austere lifestyle – or indeed the lifestyle of transhuman and posthuman mathematicians. Maybe (like me) you'd rather gaze at cute snaggle-toothed bunny rabbits than contemplate Euler's identity (*cf.* **After an irreversible transition to a blissful existence with boundless cognitive, physical and transcendental euphoria, what would you do?**). Even if so, the point still stands. Radically enriched hedonic tone can leave your core values, preference architecture and lifestyle optionally intact. In practice, life and society will be revolutionised as the biohappiness revolution unfolds. Hedonic recalibration and enhancement shouldn't be viewed as somehow coercive. **Transhumanists** aim to **abolish** involuntary suffering and give everyone the opportunity to lead perpetually **youthful** lives of **intelligent** well-being. We aren't selling a lifestyle, or promoting a utopian vision of a perfect world.

So why the hedonistic “**imperative**”? Do we have an obligation to maximize the cosmic abundance of pleasure? Isn't mitigating and preventing suffering what matters ethically?

I'm personally a **negative utilitarian**. After intelligent moral agents have phased out the biology of suffering, then I think we will have discharged all our *ethical* responsibilities – beyond ensuring that experience below “hedonic zero” never recurs in our forward light-cone. Yet this wonderful, merciful, magical-sounding outcome – *if* it comes to pass – doesn't mean that post-Darwinian life will be uniformly sublime. Presumably, some posthuman experiences will **empirically** be even more valuable than others. The pleasure principle still rules. There can be bad hair days even in paradise. Not least, information-sensitive **gradients** of bliss are vital to preserving critical insight. Whether the uppermost peaks of bliss will *really* be more valuable, or merely *seem* to be more valuable, depends on your **theory of value**. Alas, for **billions** of suffering beings alive today, such speculations are academic. **Let's turn theory into action.**

Quoted from Quora <http://bit.ly/2GyoJGy>



Religious liberty is not a license to discriminate and harm. Yet Trump's Department of Health and Human Services wants to let health care providers use their religious beliefs to justify turning away patients in need. This is a betrayal of the department's own mission, and it could have disastrous consequences – particularly for women and LGBT patients.

The department is taking public comments on this proposed rule – which means they must consider and respond to our opinions. We have a short window to mount overwhelming opposition to this rule and stop it from taking effect.

[Raise your voice loud and clear: Leave a public comment and tell Health and Human Services not to put religion over medical standards.](#)

This proposed rule, if it were adopted, could have serious repercussions for patients seeking treatment like abortions, HIV treatment, or gender-confirming surgery to which some people – like extremist Vice President Mike Pence – might object. Here are just some of the ways the proposed rule could hurt patients:

- Pregnant women experiencing miscarriages or other serious pregnancy complications could be refused abortion care **even when the woman's life is at risk**, and even when the fetus has no chance of survival.
- Health providers could discriminate against transgender patients seeking medically necessary care.
- Hospital staff could refuse to sign in patients seeking abortions, to assist patients in any way before getting sterilizations, or even provide any information about medical conditions and treatment options.

[Submit a public comment now and we'll deliver it to the Department of Health and Human Services.](#)

The Department of Health and Human Services should be protecting our health, not proposing rules that could hurt the health and lives of women, trans people, LGB people, people living with HIV, and others seeking critical care.

We've already taken legal action for patients hurt by similar discriminatory policies – and **if this rule goes into effect, then we'll see the Trump administration in court.** But let's get to work now to stop this license to discriminate in its tracks.

[Submit your comment now. We won't accept a discriminatory regulation that threatens our health and undermines the principles of religious liberty – and we need your help to stop it.](#)

Thanks for taking action,

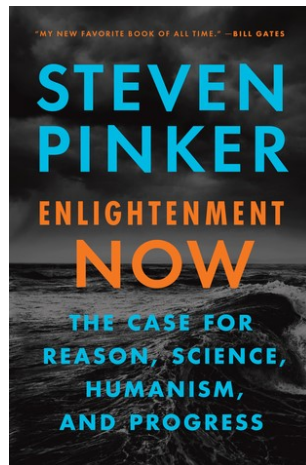
Louise Melling
ACLU Deputy Legal Director, fighting against discrimination



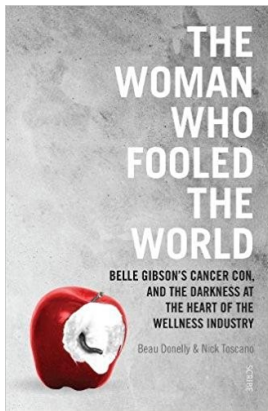
Recommended Reading

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

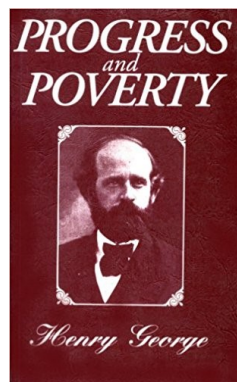
“The Enlightenment Is Working—Don’t listen to the gloom-sayers. The world has improved by every measure of human flourishing over the past two centuries, and the progress continues,” writes Steven Pinker. Humanism + Science continue lifting humans up.



Belle Gibson convinced the world she had healed herself of terminal brain cancer by eating a healthy diet. She built a global business based on her story. There was just one problem: she never had cancer in the first place. In 2015, journalists uncovered the truth behind Gibson's lies.



This is the seminal study that answered, “Why in a land so bountifully blest, with enough and more than enough for all, should there be such inequality of conditions? Such heaped wealth interlocked with such deep and debasing want? Why, amid such super-abundance, should strong men vainly look for work?” It is as powerful today as ever.



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 fprahl@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 Then pick it up at the next meeting.

Be sure to return it!
Donations appreciated.

TITLE

80. **An Atheist Stanger**
81. **Candidate without a prayer**

1. The Expanding Circle
2. In Gods we Trust
3. Why Evolution is True
4. The Second World
5. Denialism
6. The Selfish Gene
7. Democracy Incorporated
8. The Upside Irrationality
9. The End of Growth
10. **The God Delusion**
11. All That We Share
12. Sex, Time, and Power
13. Sex at Dawn
14. What liberal Media
15. The End of Faith
16. **Plan B**

17. The Portable Atheist
18. Open Society
19. Non Believer Nation
20. God on Trial
21. Natural Experiments of History
22. The Missionary Position
23. Life Inc
24. **A brief History of Time**
25. Breaking the Spell
26. **The Philosophy of Humanism**
27. The Quotable Atheist
28. 50 Reasons People Believe In G.G. Harrison
29. Mathematics and Politics
30. Stealing Elections
31. The God Virus
32. What Every American Should Know About World Rossi
33. Imagine There's no Heaven
34. Hidden Order
35. What the Dog Saw
36. Sway
37. The Better Angels of our Nature
38. Letter to a Young Contrarian
39. Hot, Flat, and Crowded
40. Gaming the Vote
41. Subversion Fable
43. Evolution and the Big Question
44. **Why People Believe Weird Things**
45. The World is Curved
46. The Snow Ball
47. **The Moral Landscape**
48. **How We Believe**
49. Full House
50. The Origins of Political Order
51. **Asimov's Guide to the Bible**
52. Autobiography of Mark Twain
53. Science Friction
54. Genius
55. Inevitable Illusions
56. Demon Haunted World
57. Being Right Is Not Enough
58. Loser Takes All
59. Taking Back Politics
60. Spiritual Common Sense
61. Autobiography of Mark Twain
62. The Skeptics Annotated Bible
63. **12 Vol Complete Works**
64. On Religious Liberty
65. The God Makers
66. Inevitable Illusions
67. Ain't Nobody's business If You Do
69. Bonk
70. What Money Can't Buy
71. Financial Shenanigans
72. Sex & God
73. Best American Non required Reading
74. Reporting at Wit's End
75. Corporations are not People
76. Could I Vote Mormon for president?
77. Culture of Honor
78. Rot on the Vine
79. **Thoughts of a Freethinker**

AUTHOR

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Cathy Allen
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Various
Robert Ingersoll
Roger Williams & Davis
Baker & Hunt
M. Piattelli-Palmarini
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Darrel Ray, ED.D
Dave Eagers
St. Clair McKelway
Clements
Cragun – Phillips
Nisbett – Cohen
Stenesh
Kaye



* Essential works

Keeping up with Jennifer...



1. What steps can a women take to prove sexual harassment at work?

The number 1 thing is to document all interactions that are inappropriate.

Date, time, location, any witnesses, any proof and a very specific description of what happened exactly. Not – I was harassed, but on this date at this time in this location he said this and put his hand on my shoulder. Don't talk about how it made you feel – just what can be validated.

Harassment is a pattern of behavior so what you are trying to prove is a pattern of behavior. Don't omit anything. Small snide remarks, go into the pattern. They aren't worth mentioning on their own – but in the context of a pattern of behavior – they become important.

2) What steps should they take if they want to report it?

Once you have documentation in place, you take a good look at the power structure. Are there any allies you can recruit higher up than the person harassing you? Get the lined up. Report according to the proper channels. It is important to realize that this – won't stop the harassment. You do this to set up the conditions to seek monetary damages if the employer fails to protect you. You give them the opportunity to protect you – use the system they set up. Only after that fails, can you sue.

If your main goal is to get the harassment to stop, you need to retrain the harasser to make them stop. You can use reporting and documentation to do that – but that is separate and apart from the reporting process itself. Again – you have to view this as you helping your employer so that they can put pressure on the harasser to stop. But don't be surprised if this fails or results in escalation of behavior or retaliation. The behavioral extinction process will play out and that means – there will be an escalation of behavior as that is predicted to occur. There are ways to plan and manage this and reporting is part of that – but not the only part.

3) What if it is a he said/she said situation?

Document anyway. Every interaction. Make sure your response to these interactions deny the abuser their reward and report – every single incident. Once you start reporting – you have to report everything. Consistently. Over time. This is the only way to make it stop. Also, this will help the company understand just how prevalent something is. What you are doing is triggering the extinction process by denying the reward. You keep denying and reporting and the abuser escalates. You keep denying them the reward and eventually – they either stop or they blow out – spectacularly. Your goal as the victim is to get that to happen as quickly as possible so – relentless consistency in denial of reward and reporting to increase cost of behavior. What normally happens is that as the abuser's behavior worsens, it becomes easier for everyone else to see it more clearly. You just have to remain calm and

professional and allow them to blow out.

4) Why do women, even high-ranking execs, tend not to report harassment

Because most of the stuff we encounter is not actually physically threatening we just deal with it. If we raised a fuss at every single thing that happened, we would be doing nothing but that. It's only really worth it if the behavior is aggressive and dangerous. And even then – it's easier to extract ourselves then to fight. But we need to because – abusers always have other victims and if we aren't going to do this for ourselves, we need to do it so that there isn't a next victim.

If you want to learn more about how to end harassment & retaliation in the workplace - take my online course or streaming video.

<https://humanistlearning.com/retaliation1/>

Thanks and take care.

Jennifer Hancock



UU Humanists of Clearwater

Usually every 3rd Sunday at 12:30 to 1:30 pm, after UU services, at 2470 Nursery Rd. in Clearwater.

April 15th **Professor Hal Huldman**
On "The Singularity"

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

Daniel Schultz, a pastor with the United Church of Christ, says that "thoughts and prayers" doesn't have to be an empty, cynical gesture, **but too often, it is:**

"Thoughts that don't lead to new things aren't very deep thoughts. Prayers that don't change those who worship aren't really prayers. Giving thought to the problems of gun control, police killing, sexual violence, is worthless without thinking about how things could be different. Praying for victims of violence and injustice without being changed by their grief is shit.

"In sum, offering thoughts and prayers without listening for the new world that is coming into being is worse than useless. It's pathetic, an empty shell of faith, like a firework launched high into the sky only to fall back to earth unconsummated."

Atheists of Florida, Inc.



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

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

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



The Atheist Forum



Sunday 7 to 8 pm.

The broadcast is available **on the internet** at 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.

- ? ? Do you have something to say
- ? ? Have a topic you'd like to hear about
- ? ? Know someone you'd like to suggest to be a guest on our show?

Contact us: info@atheistsoffloridainc.org



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.



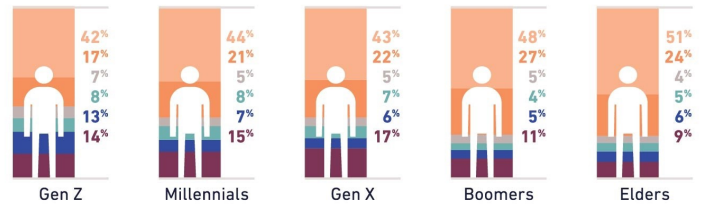
Help us create a poster for the new requirement imposed by the state legislature that Florida School Boards post the state motto in all buildings used by the school board. The survey is available from 3/23/2018 until midnight April 30, 2018.

[Please click here, or go to Free2Think.org](#)

U.S. Religious Identity 2018

Which of the following best describes your religious faith?

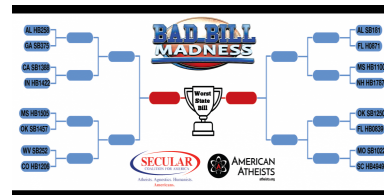
- Christian (non-Catholic)
- Catholic
- Other faith
- Agnostic
- Atheist
- None of these



U.S. teens ages 13-18, n=1,490, Nov. 4-16, 2016. U.S. adults 19 and older, n=1,517, Nov. 4-16, 2016. © 2018 | barna.com

Fill Out Your Bracket for the Most Anti-Church/State Separation Bill in America

Click the image to take the survey or go to <https://t.co/AvxrvHJ3rc>



March for Science
April 14, 2018



<https://www.marchforscience.com/home>



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

Monday, May 14, 2018

Topic: Cryptocurrency: What is it?

See our Meetup site: www.meetup.com/tampa-bay-thinkers/ for more 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**.

The Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers



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

Local Contact: Chris
 (@christbrown@yahoo.com)

MSgt, USAF (Retired)

Co-Organizer:

MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB

On the web at: www.maaf.info



USF Freethinkers

Join Freethinkers@USF for genuine, conversational

discourse & a communal atmosphere.

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

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FreethinkersUSF/> for more information.



Humanistic Judaism of Tampa Bay

Visit the **Meetup**, or email Jeff Lipkes



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.

Get the Bank of Wisdom—**FREE**.
 Contact Marios Psomas, Librarian

Find us at:
www.tampa-bay.org



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.



The Institute for Science and Human Values
Inspired by Empathy and Creativity, guided by Reason Paul Kurtz, Founder • Jonathan Kurtz, Chairman
<http://instituteforscienceandhumanvalues.com/index.htm>



Finding your Way By Norm R. Allen Jr.

Some people are always criticizing other people's missions. For example, someone who is passionate about environmentalism might criticize others for not concluding that there is nothing more important than dealing with climate change. This critic might believe that unless we all work together to address the challenge of climate change, all other missions are pretty much a waste of time. In reality, however, activists that commit their lives to a mission do not necessarily do so because they believe it is the most important cause in the world. Rather, they pursue their favorite interest because they are passionate about it. Indeed, if one is not passionate about a cause, she is not likely to do it much good. If she is not passionate about the environment, she will probably only be of limited value in committing her life to environmentalism. Therefore, considering how much work needs to be done to improve the world, one should never apologize for doing her part in an area she feels passionately about.

Someone once said that "every problem could have been solved when it was small." Yet many people believe that we should only give the bulk of our attention to large problems, regardless of how little enthusiasm we might have for tackling them. However, we should applaud people that are working on little problems before they get a chance to grow into major catastrophes.

Make the world a better place in your own way; and if and when you have had enough, do not hesitate to follow another passion. Live your life to the fullest on your own terms, or you may never know what true happiness is.



[ACLU of Greater Tampa Bay](#)



We're headed to Tampa for our next Constitution Uncorked happy hour and we would love to have you join us! Meet ACLU of Florida Executive Director **Howard Simon** and eat, drink, and mingle with the **Greater Tampa Chapter of the ACLU of Florida** along with other ACLU supporters and friends on **Friday, April 6**.

Happy hour food and drink specials will be available. Admission is free (suggested donation of \$25 at the door). [Please RSVP on Eventbrite \(must be 21+ to attend\)](#). See you there!

St Pete Atheists // Freethought Group Moderated by: Gary Thompson

Contact: easy8@tampabay.rr.com

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

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

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

Make for thyself a definition or description of the thing which is presented to thee, so as to see distinctly what kind of a thing it is, in its substance, in its nudity, in its complete entirety, and tell thyself its proper name, and the names of the things of which it has been compounded, and into which it will be resolved. For nothing is so productive of elevation of mind as to be able to examine methodically and truly every object which is presented to thee in life, and always to look at things so as to see at the same time what kind of universe this is, and what kind of use everything performs in it, and what value everything has with reference to the whole, and what with reference to man, who is a citizen of the highest city, of which all other cities are like families; what each thing is, and of what it is composed, and how long it is the nature of this thing to endure.

~ *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*

Healthy Web Surfing... *Continued from page 20*

◆ Who pays for the site?

Check to see if the site is supported by public funds, donations or by commercial advertising.

- ◆ ◆ Advertisements should be labeled. They should say "Advertisement" or "From our Sponsor."

Look at a page on the site, and see if it is clear when content is coming from a non-commercial source and when an advertiser provides it. For example, if a page about treatment of depression recommends one drug by name, see if you can tell if the company that manufactures the drug provides that information. If it does, you should consult other sources to see what they say about the same drug.

- ◆ ◆ Protect your privacy--Health information should be confidential

Does the site have a privacy policy and tell you what information they collect?

There should be a link saying "Privacy" or "Privacy Policy." Read the privacy policy to see if your privacy is really being protected. For example, if the site says "We share information with companies that can provide you with useful products," then your information isn't private.

- ◆ ◆ If there is a registration form, notice what types of questions you must answer before you can view content. If you must provide personal information (such as name, address, date of birth, gender, mother's maiden name, credit card number) you should refer to their privacy policy to see what they can do with your information.

Consult with your health professional--Patient/provider partnerships lead to the best medical decisions. For further information: Visit the MedlinePlus page on [Evaluating Health Information](#) and [Evaluating Internet Health Information: A Tutorial from the National Library of Medicine](#).



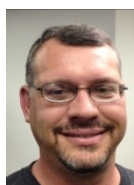
Al Hann
AoF



Bill Norsworthy,
UUCH



Mark Brandt,
UUCH



Chris Brown,
MAF



Jenn Hancock,
GTBHF



Rick O'Keefe,
CFI, TBS



Jim Peterson
HSS, TBPC
CoR Facilitator

TBCoR Leadership Team 2018

Editorial E-Mail: tbcor@metrodirect.net



Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – April 2018 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.net/>



2nd Sunday, 2 PM	BRANDON–CFI Sunday Freethought Social	Skeptical interests with critical thinkers. Click to RSVP: http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup	
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA– Atheists of Florida, Inc.	Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup	
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA– Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc..	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/TampaBaySkeptics-Meetup	
1st Saturday, 2 PM see Pg. 2 3rd Sunday -Dinner see Pg. 3.	DUNEDIN– Humanist Soc. of the Suncoast	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists	
3rd Sunday, 12:30 PM	E. CLEARWATER– UU Clearwater Humanists	Details: http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists	
TBA – various activities at MOSI	E. TAMPA– Museum Astronomical Resource Society (MARS) at MOSI	Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/1Psc2Pi Other events: http://bit.ly/MARS-home	
TBA - numerous events— this semester	E. TAMPA– Humanities Institute at USF	See Web site for full listing of many events & calendar. http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities Locations vary! Page 11.	
4th Monday, 6 PM	N. PINELLAS AREA– CFI Freethought Supper	RSVP is required. Seating is limited to 25! <i>For CFI & TBS paid members.</i> http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup	
3rd Saturday, 11 AM	NE TAMPA – Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists	
4th Saturday, 10:30 AM;	NW HILLSBOROUGH– CFI Readers Book Discussion	Limited to <i>10 paid-up CFI members.</i> RSVP is required. Must have read the book under discussion to attend. http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup	
3rd Monday, 7 PM	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. RSVP here: http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers	
4 th Friday, 8 PM general meeting. Many more events monthly.	ST. PETERSBURG– Astronomy Club	For several dates, locations, & details: http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Home http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Calendar	
2 nd Saturday plus various other times/venues	TAMPA BAY REGION– Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup	
TBA – various activities	TAMPA BAY REGION– Humanist Families	RSVP here: Family outings & other activities. Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN	

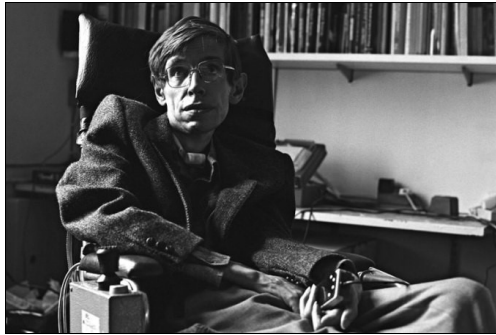
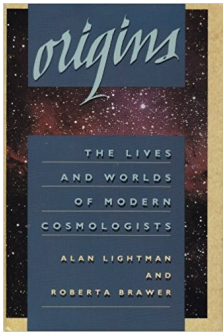
2019 Freethought Cruise

Possible Cuba itinerary. Watch for more details here soon. Departs Florida March, 2019



Stephen Hawking on the Meaning of the Universe

At twenty-two, **Stephen Hawking** (January 8, 1942–March 14, 2018) was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis — a rare motor disease — and given a few years to live. He lived for more than half a century thereafter. Despite the increasing bodily limitations inflicted by the incurable disease, he went on to soar with a limitless mind that has impacted the course of modern physics perhaps more profoundly than any scientist since Albert Einstein. His theory of what is now known as Hawking radiation — the thermal electromagnetic radiation which quantum phenomena on the event horizon cause a black hole to emit — revolutionized our understanding of the most powerful objects in the known universe and, **in consequence**, of the universe itself. His pursuit of a “**theory of everything**” adrenalized the scientific community and his landmark 1988 book *A Brief History of Time* awakened generations of lay readers to the splendor of physics, welding science to the rest of culture.



Stephen Hawking (Photograph: Gemma Levine)

A different, complementary, more existential side of Hawking comes alive in an interview conducted shortly after the release of *A Brief History of Time* and found in the out-of-print treasure *Origins: The Lives and Worlds of Modern Cosmologists* (*public library*) — the 1990 collection of interviews by **Alan Lightman** and Roberta Brawer, exploring “the ways in which personal, philosophical, and social factors enter the scientific process,” which also gave us pioneering astronomer Vera Rubin on **women in science, dark matter, and**

When asked how he would design the universe if he could design it any way he wanted, Hawking, beloved for his dry humor, answers:

“It is like the anthropic argument: If I had designed it differently, it wouldn’t have produced me. So that is a meaningless question. I’m prepared to make do with the universe we have, and try to find out what it is like.”

Turning over the question of meaning to Nobel-winning physicist Steven Weinberg’s famous assertion that “**the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless**,” Hawking offers a laconic yet spirited counterpoint: I don’t feel like that. I think that human intellectual history is a record of how we have come nearer and nearer to an understanding of the order in the universe. I’m proud of our achievement.

Complement with Errol Morris’s **documentary about Hawking’s life**, Hawking’s “theory of everything” **animated in 150 seconds**, and his lovely **children’s book about time travel**, co-written with his own daughter, then revisit another culture-shifting, Nobel-winning physicist — Richard Feynman — **on the meaning of life**.

*This article comes from the excellent and highly recommended weekly email digest of **brainpickings.org** by Maria Popova. The Facebook page: <http://bit.ly/2DCx74L> And on Twitter: <http://bit.ly/2DD38cS>*

Then there’s this: **Press Release–Politics: Rick Perry Apologizes For Trying To Outdo Fellow Cabinet Members By Using \$72 Million Of Taxpayer Funds On Lampshade** — WASHINGTON—Admitting that his competitive spirit got the best of him, Secretary of Energy Rick Perry apologized Friday for trying to outdo his fellow cabinet members by spending \$72 million of taxpayer money on a lampshade. “I deeply and sincerely regret becoming swept up in the office-decorating fervor of my colleagues and subsequently allocating over \$70 million of my department’s budget for this lampshade,” said Perry, who admitted he ordered the shade from an antiques agent in Paris’ Porte de Clignancourt district to impress other cabinet members after seeing Ryan Zinke’s cocobolo-and-stingray-leather office door and the lavish Moroccan tapestries hung throughout the waiting area of Ben Carson’s “Desert Caravan”-themed office. “American citizens should not have to shoulder the cost of paying for a lampshade woven from vucana silk, hand-stitched with contrasting saffron-spider thread, and crowned by the world’s seventh-largest ruby, so I will be returning the lampshade in its lacquered presentation box as soon as a Learjet can be chartered to convey it.” Despite parting with the lampshade, Perry will keep the the lamp itself, which his grandfather fashioned from a football-shaped Jim Beam decanter commemorating the 1964 Cotton Bowl.

MedlinePlus Guide to Healthy Web Surfing

What should you look for when evaluating the quality of health information on Web sites? Here are some suggestions based on our experience. <http://bit.ly/2DF21tv>

- ◆ Consider the source -- Use recognized authorities. Know who is responsible for the content.
 - Look for an "about us" page. Check to see who runs the site: is it a branch of the Federal Government, a non-profit institution, a professional organization, a health system, a commercial organization or an individual.
 - There is a big difference between a site that says, "I developed this site after my heart attack" and one that says, "This page on heart attack was developed by health professionals at the American Heart Association."
 - Web sites should have a way to contact the organization or webmaster. If the site provides no contact information, or if you can't easily find out who runs the site, use caution.
 - Focus on quality--All Web sites are not created equal

- ◆ Does the site have an editorial board? Is the information reviewed before it is posted?
 - This information is often on the "about us" page, or it may be under the organization's mission statement, or part of the annual report.
 - See if the board members are experts in the subject of the site. For example, a site on osteoporosis whose medical advisory board is composed of attorneys and accountants is not medically authoritative.
 - Look for a description of the process of selecting or approving information on the site. It is usually in the "about us" section and may be called "editorial policy" or "selection policy" or "review policy."
 - Sometimes the site will have information "about our writers" or "about our authors" instead of an editorial policy. Review this section to find out who has written the information.
 - Be a cyberskeptic--Quackery abounds on the Web

- ◆ Does the site make health claims that seem too good to be true? Does the information use deliberately obscure, "scientific" sounding language? Does it promise quick, dramatic, miraculous results? Is this the only site making these claims?
 - Beware of claims that one remedy will cure a variety of illnesses, that it is a "breakthrough," or that it relies on a "secret ingredient."
 - Use caution if the site uses a sensational writing style (lots of exclamation points, for example.)
 - A health Web site for consumers should use simple language, not technical jargon.
 - Get a second opinion! Check more than one site.
 - Look for the evidence--Rely on medical research, not opinion

- ◆ Does the site identify the author? Does it rely on testimonials?
 - Look for the author of the information, either an individual or an organization. Good examples are "Written by Jane Smith, R.N.," or "Copyright 2013, American Cancer Society."
 - If there are case histories or testimonials on the Web site, look for contact information such as an email address or telephone number. If the testimonials are anonymous or hard to track down ("Jane from California"), use caution.

- ◆ Check for currency--Look for the latest information
 - Is the information current?
 - Look for dates on documents. A document on coping with the loss of a loved one doesn't need to be current, but a document on the latest treatment of AIDS needs to be current.
 - Click on a few links on the site. If there are a lot of broken links, the site may not be kept up-to-date.
 - Beware of bias--What is the purpose? Who is providing the funding?