



The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Freethought News

Vol. 4 No. 11 November 2015 Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

Sponsored by the Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

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Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

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Jim Peterson

Newsletter
[Jim Peterson](#)

Special Projects

Mark Brandt, Judy Adkins,
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event website at:

www.evolvetampa.com

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

A Brief Candle in the Dark Sparks a Warm Glow



Dr. Richard Dawkins

The book tour presentation of famed biologist, Richard Dawkins and his friend, mathematician, Herb Silverman has ignited the freethought community with renewed interest in the interface of science and its approach to reality and the problems of our evolving human culture. In particular, the ever present question of the lingering influence of religious opinion on public policy, especially educational policy.

The discussion touched upon many area's of Dawkins life; from the

personal to the profound insights into the genetic process that is deeply implicated in all facets of our existence. The book they discussed is Dawkins' memoir of his life as a scientist and writer, *A Brief Candle in the Dark..* But in addition to illuminating the scientific matters that are Dawkins' central concern, it becomes quickly evident that he is a participant in the very heart of the intellectual life of our time, and deeply involved in some of its most poignant controversies. His success as a writer enabled him to found the Dawkins Foundation which continues to take a leading role in the great roiling debates over such topics as evolution, atheism, and the enormous environmental challenges that shape our time. Many local groups continue to carry on with these issues.



JP

Darwin Day 2016

Saturday, February 6th

Frans DeWaal & Deby Cassill



In 2007 Time magazine listed Frans DeWaal as one of the 100 most influential people of the century. His insights into the origins of human behavior gained from his status as one of the best primatological scientists of our time enable us to fully appreciate the meaning of being human.

Deby Cassill earned her doctorate in the study of ant behavior, and finding in it some unique connections to the underlying social life of humans and other cooperative forms of life.

Go to www.evolvetampa.com to learn more, and to order tickets . Early bird rates in effect for the next month. Rebate for Humanist Society Members.

TB-CoR presents:

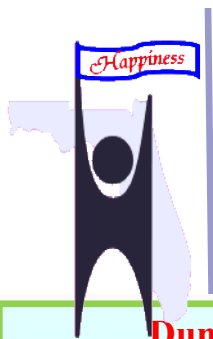
Human light / Winterfest Potluck
Saturday, December 5th at 4 to 7 PM
At the Social Hall of UU Clearwater.



Hundreds of us will once again bring together our finest dishes for 10 or more, to share in the celebration of past successes and the anticipation of another successful year. Always something special. Beer & wine available. Be sure to label your dishes with your name. We ask a nominal \$5.00 to cover some of the expenses at the door. Volunteers appreciated.

FreeFlo Florida Humanist Conference

Three days to remember in Orlando - many special speakers. November 6-8, See [page 9](#).



The Humanist Society² 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, and CSH Find us at www.suncoasthumanist.com

Dunedin Public Library 223 Douglas Ave, Dunedin, FL ([map](#))

Volume 23 No. 11 November, 2015

~ **Join or Renew** ~

Your Humanist Society of the Suncoast

Annual Dues.

Trial -3 month- free news

Regular -\$25

Reg. Couple -\$30.

Supporter -\$35/45 (W/ pin above)

Life -\$200.

Life Couple -\$250.

Associate -\$10



Your membership helps keep Humanism alive and 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 and enables us to support larger and 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 and any changes from our previous information. Thanks!

Name: _____

Address -if new : _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: * _____

E-mail: _____

(Privacy respected)

Send tax deductible (501c3) dues to:

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

* = optional



Florida is one of top three Human Trafficking Destinations in U.S.

Human trafficking is the no. 2 illegal business in the world, second only to drug trafficking. 1.2 Million people globally become victims of human trafficking every year, according to estimates provided by the United Nations children's fund (unicef). Most of the victims are women and children used for cheap labor and sexual services by organized multinational criminal groups, according to a European commission report.

Human Trafficking is modern day slavery. Criminalized under both federal and Florida law, it is defined as the transporting, soliciting, recruiting, harboring, providing, or obtaining of another person for transport; for the purposes of forced labor; domestic servitude or sexual exploitation using force, fraud and/or coercion. If the sex trafficking victim is under the age of 18, it is human trafficking regardless of whether force, fraud and/or coercion exist.

Presented by **Giselle Rodriguez**
State Outreach Coordinator for the

**Florida Coalition against
Human Trafficking**



Tampa Bay Harvest

Food: the first kindness and the measure of our Hospitality
Humanists aspire to true friendship with our fellow human beings. An important measure of this concern is care for the physical well being of others. Thanks to **Glenn Paul**, chair.
Ed Note: Glenn needs assistance. **We need volunteers!** See a board member. Or write to jim@suncoasthumanist.com Thanx.

**Please join us at
2 PM Nov. 7th
in**

**The Dunedin
Public Library at
223 Douglas Ave.
in Dunedin.**

Many members go to dinner afterwards at:
Marguerites Cafe.
Directly across from the Library.



Got a letter, comment, suggestion or editorial contribution? Write to us at:
tbcor@metrodirect.net



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

What is the Humanist Way?

1. To extend a human centered approach to the critical problems of life and society.
2. To encourage attitudes of kindness, compassion, tolerance and a loving generosity in human relationships, and in our treatment of all life. These attitudes help us to see ourselves in the lives of others, and encourage appreciation for the remarkable diversity of human culture and experience.
3. To develop and popularize the skills of creative and critical thinking that empower people to challenge prejudice, superstition and irrationality in every area of life. Such empowerment enables the individual to reach the highest levels of achievement.
4. To exalt those artistic and imaginative expressions of life which have been the source of the greatest pleasure and enlightenment, and which reflect compelling human truths. Through music, literature, art, dance, and other expressions, we embrace the essence of what it means to be human.
5. To explore the grounds of ethics and 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 monthly social Dinner
For November, is at ...

Kumba Island

1800 Gulf-To-Bay Blvd Clearwater
(N.E. Corner of G-T-B & Keene)

We're changing our approach. Now its just open. No RSVP required. Trundle on down for the fine food and fastidiously fabulous fellowship!

Be there on Sunday Nov. 15th by **5 O'clock** for Early bird specials. As always, this is a self treated dinner. Ask to be seated with "the humanists." We need a coordinator for this!... Maybe you?

~ Only the best people eat here when we do. ~

Laugh Lines *Cynics Dictionary* 11-15

Bar-be-que

(bar•buh•Q) n. You bought the groceries, washed the lettuce, chopped the tomatoes, diced the onions, marinated the meat and cleaned everything up—for the dinner he made for his friends."

Cantaloupe

(kant•e•lope) n. Gotta get married in a church.

Clothes dryer

(kloze drl•yer) n. An appliance designed to eat socks.

Diet soda

(dl•it so•duh) n. A drink you buy at a convenience store to go with a half pound bag of peanut M&Ms.

Diamond

(dl•mun) n. Something you think should be on your finger but he can only see in a baseball park.

Eternity

(e•ter•ni•tee) n. The last two minutes of a football game.

Exercise

(ex•er•siz) v. Walking up and down a mall, occasionally resting to make a purchase.

First Installemnt More to come...

HUMANIST SOCIETY OF THE SUNCOAST

A chapter of the American Humanist Assoc.
The Association of Secular Humanist Societies

Board of Directors.

Meets Sept., December, April

Jay Alexander,
Steve Brown,
Lois Fries, Secretary
Dave Kovar, Vice President
Beth Maxie,
Jim Peterson, President
Frank Prah,
Marios Psomas, treasurer
Jordan Williams.

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Jon Green, Mark Kligman, Jerry Moore,
Mark Winterbottom, Sidney Goetz
Dec. Bob Collette, Glenn Paul, Don
Acenbrack Dec., Rob Byrch, Dec. Jackie
Jordan, Brent Yaciw, Mike Hubbard,
Matt Cooper Dec, Jim Butler

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Jordan Williams, mail Publisher

Jim Peterson, Editor

E-Mail us at:
jim@suncoasthumanist.com

Need Psychological Counseling?

For a secular therapist,
click:

[Cognitive Neurosciences
Inc. or,](#)

[The Therapist Project,](#)

or,
[Lynda Gurvitz,](#)

(727) 725-8820

or [Patricia Walters,](#)

(813) 988-5977

Also, For Addiction
Problems, see: [Life Ring
Secular Recovery Meetings](#)
11485 Oakhurst Road
Waters Edge Club House
Largo, Florida



Tampa Humanist Association

Meets every third Saturday at, 11:00 AM in
The North Tampa Public Library
8916 North Blvd. Tampa, FL 33604 [Map](#)



Join the Tampa Humanist Association!

More information and RSVP at: www.meetup.com/Tampa-Humanist-Association/
Meets November 21st.

The Brilliance of Other Stars

An examination of the probability of life on other worlds and its effect on human society

At the present state of Scientific knowledge it seems very likely that there is life in other places in the universe. Moreover, the likelihood of intelligent and civilized life seems very probable as well.

It is good to remember that while probabilities are high, no concrete evidence of such life, even in a simple and primitive form has ever been discovered. Though this is true, the imagination will not be stilled, and for over 200 years, the literary world is the experimental field where encounters with aliens of many kinds have enabled us to deal with some of our own problems by removing them to the realm of the fantastic.

But now we are moving closer to a possible reality of such an event. Are we ready? Will our traditional culture be so easily turned inside out as to be able to countenance the idea of other selves, possibly familiar, yet perhaps fearfully alien?

JP

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



Show off your commitment to Science and Reason!

Tampa CFI is offering these elegant license plate surrounds. Legal, sturdy, fits all US plates - easy to install.

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Tampa Bay CoR
TAMPA BAY COALITION OF REASON

Tampa Bay CoR

9654 W. Linebaugh Ave. PMB #110
Tampa, FL 33626

Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

Join the Freethought Organizations of the Tampa Bay Area: Center for Inquiry-TampaBay, Tampa Humanist Association, Institute for Science and Human Values, Humanist Society of the Suncoast, UU Humanists Clearwater, Atheists of Florida, UU Humanists Tampa,* Freethinkers @ USF,* Plus numerous Meetup organizations that promote what are essentially Freethought principles (*= not currently members of the Coalition)

Thus substantive and exciting new activities are offered to the Tampa Bay area that were not possible for most organizations before.

We are especially grateful to the national office of the United Coalition of Reason and its director, Jason Heap. You may recall that UCoR was the major impetus to getting a large number of billboards erected in Tampa Bay and across the nation with such messages as "You can be good without God. Millions are!"

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

As this momentum continues to grow, we will keep you informed of developments. JP
Contact: tbcor@metrodirect.net: <http://unitedcor.org/coalition-of-reason/tampa-bay/>

A Humanist Discussion group in east Tampa ! 4

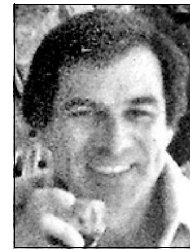
UU Humanists of Tampa -

Public Discussion, 2nd Wed. eve from 7 -9 PM

and on the 4th Sun. Morning 9:45 - 10:45.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa
11400 Morris Bridge Rd. Tampa, FL 33637
More information can be found at :

<http://uutampa.org/unitarian-universalist-humanist-of-tampa/>



Bob Cummins, longtime humanist and activist for medical service for those unable to afford access to it otherwise, has died. He was 84.

For many years, our group had the use of his Indian Rocks home for our annual year-end Humanlight party. In his life he typified the kindness and generosity to which humanist aspire. More details on his life can be found [here](#).



The mission of the [Secular Coalition for Florida](#) is to increase the visibility of and respect for non-theistic viewpoints in the State, and to protect and strengthen the secular character of our government as the best guarantee of freedom for all.

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

Humanist Quotes

“Take the risk of thinking for yourself; much more happiness, truth, beauty, and wisdom will come to you that way.”

Christopher Hitchens 11-15



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

Difficult Prognostications

We do have a way to “see it coming,” whether it’s environmental tipping points or financial ones. It’s science. The whole point of science is to penetrate the fog of human senses, including common sense. Ingenious experiments and elegant equations act as extensions of senses that allow us to see farther and more precisely—beyond the horizons of what we think we know. Calculations predict possible futures, find clear signals in the almost constant noise.

Science predicted that massive stars would implode, nuclear bombs would explode, and humans could well destroy their own habitat (if they didn’t begin to take seriously problems like overpopulation and resource depletion).

Sometimes science requires us to accept the unacceptable, certainly the unpalatable: What? Drive smaller cars? Give up my lawn? Be satisfied with a small house?

It’s not always fun to see what’s coming, especially when easy solutions are nowhere in sight. It takes courage to admit we’ve been clueless.

Then again, we really have no choice. Bartlett called people who refused to accept they lived in a closed off Coke-bottle-like world the “flat earth society”—because on a flat earth, space could be infinite. There’d be endless amounts of land for farming or garbage dumps, endless supplies of water and fuel, no limit to the amount of toxins we could pump into an infinite atmosphere.

Alas, we live on a sphere. Eratosthenes figured this out thousands of years ago, and no one liked it much then either. But he certainly saw it coming.

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 and 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 and 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.

Clearwater UU Humanists

We are a group of Unitarian Universalists committed to a humanistic and non-theistic worldview. Currently, meetings are scheduled once a month and are usually held on the third Sunday of most months from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, after UU services.

The UU Humanists are open to all aspects of humanism, including investigation of religious humanism. However, the focus of the group is on the secular aspects of humanism.



Clearwater, Florida

Hear Dr. Ryan Cragun of the University of Tampa speak on “How to Defeat Religion” November 15th at 12:30 .

The Humanities Institute at USF

<http://humanities-institute.usf.edu> Tuesday, Nov. 3 CWY 206 6:00 pm, reception to follow

Are You A Thing or A Process? And Why It Matters, with John Dupré. Did the Early Christians Forget Jesus? Faulty, Frail, and False Memories of the Messiah, with Bart Ehrman [u/about/](#)

This semester's Distinguished Scholar-In-Residence program brings John Dupré, an internationally renowned philosopher from the University of Exeter, U.K. where he serves as a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Philosophy, and Director of Egenis, the Centre for the Study of Life Sciences. At USF John Dupré's talk will argue that how we conceive of the nature of life has profound, real-world consequences. He notes that, "philosophers, and perhaps the rest of us, generally think of the world as composed of things. Big things are made of little things, and the arrangement of these things - atoms into molecules, molecules into living cells, cells into multicellular organisms, and so on - produces the behavior of big, complex things."



TBCoR Leadership Team 2015

Toni Van Pelt
~ ISHV

Bill Norsworthy
UUCH

Beth Maxi
HoTA

Mark Brandt,
UUCH

Chris Brown,
MAF

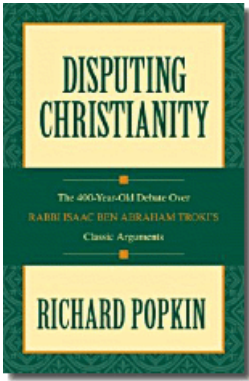
Jenn Hancock,
TBHF

Rick O'Keefe,
CFI, TBS

Jim Peterson,
HSS, TBPC

Tracy Thomas
AoF ~

Meaningful Books

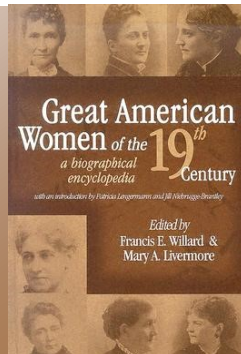


Anyone interested in philosophy of religion or the history of dialogue between Christians and Jews will find this work to be of great value. "... over the centuries [this classic] has had an impact in Christian and Jewish circles that far exceeds what might have been predicted based on its obscure origins."

<http://bit.ly/20agyEw>

Containing 1,500 biographies and more than 1,400 photographs or portraits, this extraordinary encyclopedia, originally published in 1897, documents the lives and achievements of remarkable [white] American women who lived during the nineteenth century. "A fascinating glimps of womens' status, opportunities, and struggles."

<http://bit.ly/20ahAk3>

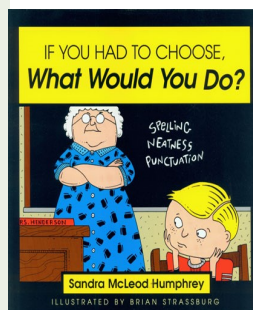


Thoughts of a Freethinker is the second book of local Humanist writer, *Michael Kaye*. Pensive considerations from an unencumbered mind lurking in the fresh air just outside the box. Order it from Amazon, or at your local book monger.

"Is it wrong to sneak into the movies if your big brother says it's okay? If "everybody" is cheating on the math test, shouldn't you, too? What if telling the truth gets your best friend in trouble?"

"It's never too early for us to begin talking to our children about values and helping them define and clarify their code of moral conduct."

<http://bit.ly/20aia0Z>



Bank of Wisdom

Electronic publishing to make the world better

Make digital withdrawals from the bank, free! See Humanist Society Librarian, Marios Psomas for details.

Evolve Fish is a good source for your freethought goodies:

Pins, jewelry, posters, buttons, bumper stickers, t-shirts, etc

<http://evolvefish.com/>

The Matt Cooper

Memorial 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

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 Give for Believing In
29. Mathematics and Politics
30. Stealing Elections
31. The God Virus
32. What Every American Should Know About World
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. Sex & God
57. Being Right Is Not Enough
58. Loser Takes All
59. Taking Back Politics
60. What Happened in Ohio?
61. Autobiography of Mark Twain
62. The Skeptics Annotated Bible
63. Database Systems (Complete Ver.)
64. Reluctant Database Administrators
65. Asimov's Guide to the Bible
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** **New!**

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Clements
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Nisbett – Cohen
Stenesh
Kaye

For even more access to Freethought history and perspectives, you may wish to check out Frank Prahl's Freethought Library. Contact fpahl@verizon.net

Florida Atheists



Chair, Tracy Thomas, President, Judy Adkins

Join members of our Tampa chapter to explore our new headquarters / Studio Building

Saturday, November 15th See [AoF Meetup](#) for details.

AoF is a comfortable and safe place in which to find rewarding new friendships, to discover hidden potentials, and 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 and powerful criticism of the philosophical worldview 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 and changeless narrative of unexamined traditional beliefs. JP

The latest news from Tampa AoF:

The board of directors decided it was just too impractical to use the West Shore facility for meetings and video productions because of the hassle of setting everything up and putting it all away for each meeting. So following a rather diligent month-long search for a new location and evaluating numerous options, we decided on a storefront space located at 5004 South MacDill. This facility will serve primarily as a video production studio and meeting space with ample parking and several fun restaurants nearby. We hope the location will be convenient to members from Pinellas County to East Hillsborough.

With our own facility we will be able to schedule our video productions to coincide with the availability of the volunteer staff members who will run the production. Besides being posted on our Web site, we are working with Atheist TV, a Roku channel, to make our recordings available nationwide. Some of our chapter meetings will also involve audience participation.

We will be able to make both meeting space and the video production facility available to other non profit organizations for a reasonable fee. We are also asking our members and friends to help support our rental of the facility by committing regular donations to A of F.

Our November 15 meeting will be a housewarming event for the new space allowing members to inspect the facility and learn about the new events we have planned. A board meeting is scheduled earlier that day and as always, paid members are welcome to attend and submit any thoughts they have about the organization to the directors.

[Open House of the new facilities](#) will be on November 15th from 1:30 to 3:30 PM



St Pete Atheists // Freethought Group

Moderated by: Gary Thompson
Monthly Meetup Day: Third Tuesday at 7 PM
Contact: easy8@tampabay.rr.com
On the web: <http://atheists.meetup.com/209>

Save the date...

FREEELO

November 6 - 8, 2015

[Holiday Inn Orlando-International- Airport](#),
5750 T.G. Lee Blvd, Orlando, FL ([map](#))

Speakers (subject to change, more info and descriptions below taken from: <http://www.floridahumanist.org/>):

- **Dan Barker**, Keynote, Author of "Life Driven Purpose", Co-president, Freedom From Religion Foundation
- **Matt Dillahunty**, Host of the Atheist Experience
- **Katherine Stewart**, Author of The Good News Club
- **Seth Andrews**, Host of The Thinking Atheist
- **Anthony Pinn**, Author, professor and Director of the Institute of Humanist Studies
- **Sarah Morehead**, Executive Director of Recovering from Religion
- **Ryan Cragun**, Professor, researcher and author of How to Defeat Religion In 10 Easy Steps
- **Andrew Seidel**, Constitutional Attorney for the FFRF
- **Bo Bennet**, Co-Host of the Humanist Hour Podcast
- **David Tamayo**, President of the Hispanic American Freethinkers
- **Reginald Finley**, former host of The Infidel Guy
- **Sarah Haider**, Director of Ex-Muslims of North America
- **Dr. Jason Heap**, National Coordinator, United Coalition of Reason
- **Dave Churvis**, Program Manager, Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science
- **Stewart Huff**, Comedian

FLORIDA HUMANIST ASSOCIATION
GOOD WITHOUT A GOD

FLORIDA REPORT
Civil liberties news in the Sunshine State



Connect with the
ACLU of Florida
<https://aclufl.org>

BECAUSE FREEDOM CAN'T
PROTECT ITSELF
JOIN THE ACLU

Tampa Bay Thinkers



Thinking deep thoughts about serious matters since 2008. Carrollwood Cultural Center, Tampa, every 3rd Monday, monthly at 7 PM. November 16th: Topic: TBA

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

The Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers



Nontheistic service members serve honorably throughout the world—always have; always will. However, nontheists are the last unprotected minority. The nontheistic, whether an atheist, humanist, agnostic, freethinker, or other secular minority, have a strong community.

Jason Torpy, a West Point graduate, serves as president of MAAF. He also holds seats on the boards of the Secular Coalition for America and the American Humanist Assoc.

On the web at: www.maaf.info

Contact: Chris (christbrown@yahoo.com) MSgt, USAF (Retired) Co-Organizer: MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB, FL

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*, and her latest book, *The Bully Vaccine*.

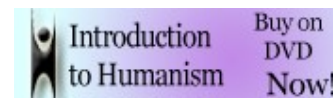


Humanist Families organizes social outings every month. These are opportunities to do something fun, socialize and enjoy each other's company. Sometimes we go to a park, sometimes a museum, sometimes we go swimming. Our group has grown over the past year to the point we now organize Tampa area outings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

Thank you! **Jennifer Hancock**



Freethinkers@USF is a multi-cultural, interdisciplinary student society which welcomes USF students who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics, skeptics, freethinkers, humanists, or religiously open-minded

who seek to promote reason, compassion, tolerance, and free inquiry on campus. We hope to contribute opportunity for interdisciplinary dialog to the USF community, and build scientific literacy for all to enable objective and rational interpretations of issues affecting our lives.

The organization is open to anyone of any religious persuasion or personal beliefs.

Write **Rodrick Colbert** at: freethinkersusf@gmail.com.



Tampa Bay Computer Society & Doc's Café

Lectures, discussions, and hands-on demonstrations of the humane use of technology. Visit our *new* facility on 300 S Duncan Ave Suite 275, Clearwater, FL 33755. [Map](#) Dave 'Doc' Dockery, President. Be sure to check out *Doc's Café* to discuss serious issues. Find us at: www.tampabay.org *We repair our member's computers for Free!*



The Institute for Science and Human Values

Various presentations throughout the year in the Tampa Bay area on significant matters of human concern. Watch this space for future announcements.

Toni Van Pelt President and Public Policy Director
Institute for Science and Human Values, Inc. Mailing address: 11280 Freedom Ct., Seminole, FL 33772 Email: tvanpelt@ishv.net Web: www.ishv.net



CENTER FOR INQUIRY

Tampa Bay

The mission of the Center for Inquiry is to foster a secular society based on science, reason, freedom of inquiry, and humanist values.



Rick O'Keefe

CFI's Camp Inquiry Closes But its Impact remains

It is with genuine sadness that we are announcing that the Center for Inquiry is discontinuing [Camp Inquiry](#), our annual weeklong program of education, investigation, and adventure for kids. The camp has been held each summer since 2006 in Holland, New York.

For organizations of all kinds, deciding how to allocate resources to various projects and programs can be extremely difficult. This is especially true for CFI, which maintains a variety of different programs, including publications, local branches, campus outreach, support for humanist affiliates in other countries, public policy advocacy, and litigation relating to our mission. Various factors had a role in the CFI board's decision to end our camp program. One relevant factor was the fact that the camp operated at a deficit most years. Another factor was the need to focus available resources on those programs more central to CFI's mission.

We recognize that many of our supporters may take issue with CFI's decision. We're not especially happy about the decision either. Camp Inquiry provided a uniquely rewarding learning and social experience for many children, and it has been a central point of pride for all of us at CFI.

However, as critical thinkers we also understand the importance of fiscal responsibility and the need to be careful stewards of our supporters' donations. Even though Camp Inquiry is coming to an end, we are confident it will have a lasting impact on the lives of former campers: kids who can share with their friends and family a love of science, curiosity about our world, and an appreciation for reason and critical thinking.

Thank you for your support of Camp Inquiry. If your children have been campers with us, you have our deepest gratitude for allowing us the privilege to get to know them, and to be inspired by them.

One final note: although Camp Inquiry did offer a unique experience, [Camp Quest](#) does provide programming for those interested in a secular camp environment. For those interested in the science education aspects of Camp Inquiry, there are many different camps focused on science education, [some of which are listed here](#).

Support CFI-Tampa Bay, Join now to keep informed about our activities, participate in our programs, and become a member!

JOIN NOW

Click the **Join Now** button above to join or renew your membership. When you make a donation to CFI-Tampa Bay you become a member of a local and worldwide movement of humanists, skeptics, atheists, and free-thinkers, all working together to give voice to your values.

Why do we ask for your RSVP when we post an activity? We do like to know who is coming and who isn't. We also like to be able to plan for adequate seating or space, sometimes for reduced admission pricing.

So, please look at the calendar on the last page. It lists the links for you to click to RSVP, and to get updates to an event (such as "cancelled due to insufficient interest—too few RSVP's; or the venue cancelled, or the speaker can't make it, or the restaurant will be closed ...). If you aren't on the group's Meetup, then you won't be able to RSVP. Meetup is easy and free to join, then choose whichever group(s) you prefer. You will receive notice of each activity.

<http://www.meetup.com/>



Cause & Effect is the biweekly newsletter of the Center for Inquiry community, covering the wide range of work that you help make possible.

Applying investigation and reason to current issues, the most widely read publication, *Skeptical Inquirer*, keeps thinkers informed.

The Secular Humanist magazine, *Free Inquiry*, delves into all facets of humanity. Nothing is off limits.

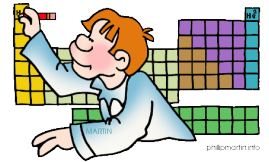
Fortnightly CFI updates not enough? Of course they're not! • Follow CFI on [Twitter](#);

• Like us on [Facebook](#); • Encircle us on [Google+](#); • Subscribe to our [YouTube](#) channel.

For I have done your bidding. I have slain mine enemies in your name. I have put women and children to death in your honor. I have caused great pain among them for your glory. — Psalms, 5:4-1

Desired Characteristics of a Scientific Theory

By Jack Robinson, Ph.D.



There is a very nice discussion of "The Nature of Theory in the Physical Sciences" by Julian Ripley, Jr. in his book *Elements and Structure of the Physical Sciences*. Statements one through ten constitute a summary of Ripley's main ideas.

- (1) Every law of science and presumably every theory must be *in accord with the facts*.
- (2) The theoretical or logical relationships involved must be *free from any inconsistency*; especially every theory must be free from self-contradiction.
- (3) Between two competing theories, both of which are validated by the facts, the *more general* theory is preferred.
- (4) Sometimes *simplicity* is the basis for preferring one theory to another. "Simplicity" however is hard to define and is to some extent an aesthetic quality.
- (5) *No* theory should introduce *ad hoc assumptions* (assumptions brought in arbitrarily just to make the theory fit the facts or to make it satisfy a preconceived purpose).
- (6) In addition to explaining facts presently known, a good theory *enables us to make predictions* about phenomena not presently observed.
- (7) It is highly desirable that a theory be *expressed in quantitative terms*; then the theory can be more rigorously tested—to see if it predicts not only what will happen but to what extent.
- (8) A theory *should be vulnerable*; that is, it should have specifically stated consequences that can be tested. If a theory is untestable, it is not a scientific theory.
- (9) It is advantageous (though not necessary) that a theory can be *visualized in terms of some model* that is familiar to common sense.
- (10) Scientists (and mathematicians) prefer theories that have *aesthetic quality*, which they sometimes describe as "elegance".

All of the above characteristics are important, but number five is particularly worthy of further discussion. It is frequently referred to as Ockham's razor. As originally advocated by William of Ockham, it read "Entities are not to be multiplied without necessity." A more clear and explicit statement of this principal was given by Isaac Newton: "We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances."

Two of the main differences between true science and pseudoscience are: (1) pseudoscientists do not appreciate the principle of Ockham's razor: they are willing to advocate unnecessary hypotheses in order to promote a preconceived purpose (as in their argument for "intelligent design"); and (2) when pseudoscientists develop a hypothesis they like, they don't test it properly—they just look for supporting evidence and ignore evidence to the contrary (as is the case with astrology). **Dr. Jack Robinson** is Emeritus Professor of Astronomy, USF, and a member of the Humanist Society of the Suncoast.



Jackie Jordan wants to remind us that this most worthy cause, in which she is deeply involved is much in need of support. Learn more at our Nov. 7th Humanist Soc. Meeting, or www.vetdogs.org



Florida NOW
[http://www.flnow.org/](http://www.flnow.org)

NOW is a multi-issue political organization. NOW's self-defined role has been to initiate change for the benefit of the greatest number of people, to affect the legal and institutional structures of the society in a way that systematically expands the choices and possibilities available to all women. In this way, NOW takes action to bring women, as a class, into the mainstream of society, rather than offering aid to individual women in achieving personal solutions or temporary relief from oppression.

Ever wonder what other Florida Freethought groups are doing?



Now you can easily know. Atheists of Florida have a new Calendar: <http://atheistsoffloridainc.org/calendar/> which enables everyone to know what's going on around the entire state.

Napoleon: You have written this huge book on the system of the world without once mentioning the author of the universe.
Laplace: Sire, I had no need of that hypothesis.
Quoted in A De Morgan *Budget of Paradoxes*. JR

Rules Are for Schmucks: Religion and Child Marriage

A [New York Times](#) op-ed piece recently shined some light into the one of the darkest corners of our society: the practice of forcing children into marriage. [United Nations](#) data indicate that some 37,000 girls under eighteen get married *every day* somewhere around the world. But if you think that child marriage is only an issue in backwards lands, far away, you are mistaken. According to a [report](#) of the Centers for Disease Control, four percent of American women and one percent of men who married in the 2006-2010 period were under age eighteen. If you want depressing statistics on all the scarring for life this causes, there are plenty to be found in the National Institutes of Health reports with titles like [Child Marriage in the United States and Its Association With Mental Health in Women](#).

What the *Times* article carefully avoids doing is blaming religion for any of this. Perhaps the author doesn't want to be branded as a religion biter or (worse yet) Islamophobic. Since I don't care about that, let me fill in what she skipped.

Islam is the biggest, though not the only, driving force behind child marriage. The [Qur'an](#), which is supposed to be the word of God, explicitly permits marriage shortly after the onset of menstruation. The current [Grand Mufti](#) of Saudi Arabia, the closest thing modern Islam has to a pope, is equally clear: "It is incorrect to say that it's not permitted to marry off girls who are fifteen and younger. A girl aged ten or twelve can be married. Those who think she's too young are wrong and they are being unfair to her."

When you look at the [list of countries](#) where marriage under age eighteen is most common, you find at the top countries that are heavily Islamic, like Niger, Chad, Guinea, and Bangladesh. Thousands of [Saudi Arabian](#) girls have been married off before their thirteenth birthdays to men at least twenty-five years older. In heavily Muslim northern [Nigeria](#), where nearly half of all girls are married by age fifteen, the rise of [Boko Haram](#) has made the pressure for child marriage even more intense. Even in relatively westernized [Turkey](#), thirty-nine percent of all married women in one province studied were under seventeen on their wedding day.

Islam may be the biggest religious source of child marriage, but not the only one. Jewish [halakhah](#) sets the minimum age for marriage at thirteen for boys and twelve for girls. A 2013 article in the [Jerusalem Post](#) points out that "Each year 4,500 children below the age of eighteen marry in Israel, two thirds Muslim, one third Jewish." To its credit, the Israeli Knesset recently changed the law to set an eighteen-year-old minimum marriage age, but allowing exceptions with judicial approval. Who opposed this change? The ultra-Orthodox God experts, making the same tiresome religious privilege arguments we get in America on everything from contraceptives in healthcare plans to county clerks needing to do their jobs. Who will be besieging the Israeli courts with demands for exceptions? You only get one guess.

[Conservative Christians](#) also push their children into marriage, in order to prevent them from engaging in "sexual immorality." Catholic [canon law](#) permits marriage at sixteen for boys, and fourteen for girls. Not all underage marriages are forced by adults. Not all of them are related to religion. Some of them simply involve teenagers, sometimes referred to as "idiots," who are certain they've met the perfect life-mate. If they truly have, then waiting to marry until eighteen won't hurt them. But if they haven't, then taking an action intended to be permanent most definitely will. Whether an under-age marriage is coerced by religious parents or sought by hormone-crazed teenagers, it's a bad idea.

The law draws arbitrary lines all the time: speed limits, tax rates, building codes, etc. We can all agree that a one-year-old should not be able to marry or make other binding decisions; a thirty-year-old should be able to do so. Reasonable people can quibble about whether eighteen is the best possible place to draw the line for marriage, as the vast majority of [countries](#) do, but it isn't terrible. Eighteen is also used for other purposes, like voting, and entering into binding contracts. So a seventeen-year-old isn't thought competent to choose between Tweedledum and Tweedledee in the voting booth, whether or not his or her parents consent, but in most places can get married with their consent. A seventeen-year old cannot enter into a permanently [binding contract](#) to buy a motorcycle, with or without parental consent, but can enter into a "forever" marriage.

The minimum marriage age in most American states is eighteen, but every state allows exceptions, with the most common being "parental consent." But as the *Times* article points out, "one person's 'parental consent' can be another's 'parental coercion,' but state laws typically do not call for anyone to investigate whether a child is marrying willingly." A 2011 survey by the [Tahirih Justice Center](#) found 3,000 known or suspected cases in the previous two years alone of girls in the US as young as fifteen who were forced to marry under threats of death, beatings or ostracism. The whole notion of parental consent to marriage treats children as though they are objects belonging to their parents, to be disposed of as the parents wish.

Another common exception is for underage marriage with "judicial approval." How well does this work? A study in New Jersey found cases of judges approving the marriage of a ten-year-old boy to an eighteen-year-old woman, and of a twelve-year-old girl to a twenty-five-year-old man. In New York State, in 2011 alone, a fourteen-year-old married a twenty-six-year-old, a fifteen-year-old was wed to a twenty-eight-year-old, another fifteen-year-old was wed to a twenty-five-year-old, and a fifteen-year-old married someone age "thirty-five to thirty-nine." All of those marriages were approved by New York judges. A track record like that indicates that their power to make exceptions ought to be taken away. Judges, far too often, are politicians all too willing to cave in to religious pressure. The situation cries out for a simple rule, with no exceptions, ever.

During the long national debate on same-sex marriage, opponents kept arguing that allowing same-sex marriage demeans and weakens the institution of marriage itself, thereby harming traditional opposite-sex marriage as well. I never bought that. I do believe, though, that permitting underage marriage has exactly this effect. Marriage ought to be strictly viewable as two people making a careful choice to be with one another forever. Not a parent, not a judge, not a God expert. Just the two people who are going to be most affected by the decision, making it themselves, when they are capable of doing so, utterly free from any coercion. Anything less than that cheapens the institution that truly does form the bedrock of society.

Finally, one pitfall that US opponents of child marriage need to watch out for is RFRA, the "Religious Freedom Restoration Act" in effect in twenty-one states and the District of Columbia. Suppose they fight the good fight and win, getting a legislature to enact a no-exceptions minimum marriage age of eighteen. If that happens to be a RFRA state, it would be quite easy for a parent to show up in court claiming that "My religion says my daughter can marry at sixteen, and she and I want her to do exactly that. It would be a substantial burden on our exercise of our religious beliefs to stop her, so you have to make an exception for us." I think there is an excellent chance the parent wins that case, unless the bill drafters take care to specify that the minimum marriage age overrides the state RFRA.

Luis Granados is the director of [Humanist Press](#), the publishing house of the American Humanist Association, and the author of *Damned Good Company: Twenty Rebels Who Bucked the God Experts*. He writes the [Rules Are for Schmucks](#) column for TheHumanist.com.

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Tampa Bay Coalition – November, 2015 Calendar of Reason

This is produced from preliminary information. Check the individual Web sites to insure the event is being held, when and where We are not liable for changes, errors, or omissions. Compiled by Rick O'Keefe & Jim Peterson.

Organizers of these events will be most grateful to all who have the courtesy to RSVP for those events that require it.

Check for more events + details: <http://tampabay.unitedcor.org/tampabay/> or www.evolvetampa.com



11-15 5 PM	PINELLAS COUNTY Humanist Society Dinner	This month's venue: Rumba Island, see page 3 http://www.meetup.com/SuncoastHumanist/	
11-none scheduled	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. RSVP here: http://www.meetup.com/tampa-bay-thinkers/	
11-03, 10, & 18	E. TAMPA– Humanities Inst. at USF	See Web site for full listing of many great events and calendar. http://humanities-institute.usf.edu/events/	
11-22, Sunday, 9:45-10:45 AM 4 th Sunday; & 2 nd & 4 th Wednesday at 7:00 PM	TEMPLE TERRACE– UU Tampa Humanists	Details: http://uutampa.org/shaag-discussion-topics/	
11-01 & 15	BRADENTON/SARASOTA– Humanist Families	RSVP here: Family outings and other activities. Details & RSVP : http://www.meetup.com/Humanist-Families-of-Greater-Tampa-Bay/	
11-06 thru 8, Friday, 6 PM –thru Sunday 4 PM	ORLANDO– Fl. Humanists Annual MeetingCFI-Tampa Bay	Lecture, discussion, supper. Topic & RSVP http://www.meetup.com/CFI-Tampa-Bay/	
11-07, Saturday 2 PM	DUNEDIN– Humanist Soc. - Suncoast	Lecture, discussion, supper. Topic & RSVP http://www.meetup.com/SuncoastHumanist/	
11-08, BOD – Paid Members Only	CLEARWATER– Atheists of Florida, Inc.	Details & RSVP : http://www.meetup.com/Atheists-of-Florida-Tampabay/	
11-13 & 14	E. TAMPA– M.A.R.S. Astronomy Club at MOSI	Details & other events RSVP : http://www.meetup.com/MARS-astronomy-club-at-MOSI/	
11-15, Sunday, 12:30 PM	E. CLEARWATER– UU Humanists	Details: http://www.uuc.org/	
11-21, Saturday, 11 AM	CENTRAL TAMPA– Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & RSVP : http://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Humanist-Association/	
11-22 Sunday, 2 PM	BRANDON–CFI Sunday Social & Tampa Bay Skeptics	Skeptical interests & critical thinking. Click to RSVP : http://www.meetup.com/CFI-Tampa-Bay/	
11-23, Friday, 8 PM gen'l.. mtg. Plus other events!	ST. PETERSBURG– Astronomy Club	For several dates, locations, & details: http://www.stpeteastronomyclub.org/index.php	
11-28, Saturday, 10:30 AM; <i>Must have read the book to attend</i>	NW HILLSBOROUGH– CFI Readers Book Discussion (Limit 12)	Book lovers discuss books we've read. Limited to 12 <i>paid-up CFI members</i> . RSVP is required . http://www.meetup.com/CFI-Tampa-Bay/	
11-30, Monday, 6 PM	N. PINELLAS AREA– CFI Freethought Supper	RSVP is required if you are coming. Seating is limited to 25! Click here <i>before</i> midnight, Sunday the 29 th . For CFI paid members. http://www.meetup.com/CFI-Tampa-Bay/	