



The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason



Freethought News

Vol. 7 No. 11, November, 2018
Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

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* TBCoR member

Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

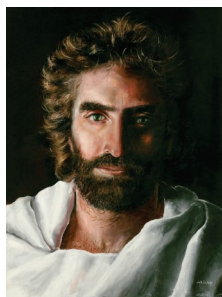
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Newsletter
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Special Projects
Mark Brandt
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event websites at:
www.tampabaycor.net &
www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason

This publication online at:
www.tampabaycor.net

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

Jesus never said...



“Vote

”
... as if your life depended on it.

He couldn't. He never heard of democracy, or freedom, or most of the values we Americans have embraced. But you have the power to order our priorities, and recreate the world in a way he never did. And, it's a simple thing.

First, be informed.
Second, vote.

Now that wasn't so hard, was it? JP

A message (more of a plea, actually) from your editors, *Jim & Rick*

Be there.



Seth Andrews

Author, radio personality, former minister, now atheist. He is being sponsored by a number of CoR organizations for his appearance this coming November 10th, 1 PM at the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Clearwater.

See more information on page [2](#)

Listen to Freethought Radio Friday Afternoons at 2 PM

Atheists of Florida produces *Atheist Forum*, every **week** for your dining and dancing pleasure.

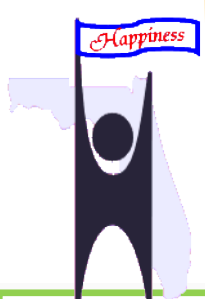
You will find a variety of subjects discussed, from atheism (of course) to science, politics, ethics, art and social culture.

The broadcast is available on WTAN-1340 and on the internet at TanTalk1340.com

Be sure to **call-in** 727-441-3000, with your questions and comments. See page [14](#) for more.

Check out twenty years worth of past programs of the Atheist Forum on our website www.aof.ngo And check our channel at www.youtube.com for more.

See page [12](#) for **Jordan Williams'** Cosmology talk!



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. 11 November, 2018

Join or renew
Humanist Society of the Suncoast

Annual Dues

- Regular -\$25
- Reg. Couple -\$30.
- Supporter -\$35/40 (With pin above)
- Life -\$200. (Pin)
- Life Couple -\$250. (Pin)
- Associate -\$10



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

If you have questions concerning your dues or status, contact our 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 _____

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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

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>



Clearwater, Florida



The Organizations of the Tampa Bay
Coalition of Reason present...

Seth Andrews

Saturday, November 10th
At 1 PM at the
UUC

2470 Nursery Road,
Clearwater, FL 33764
\$5 donation requested.

This presentation will replace the regular
meeting of the Humanist Society.

Seth Andrews is a broadcaster,
storyteller, author, activist, and public
speaker best known as host of the
popular website, podcast, and online
community, **The Thinking Atheist**.
www.thethinkingatheist.com. Seth's motto:

**Assume nothing. Question
everything. And start thinking!**

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.

Seth is an advocate, not for religion, but
for people, and while he - as a storyteller -
loves the distraction of supernatural fiction
(like the annual Halloween "Ghost Stories"
broadcast and new audiobook), he
ultimately encourages everyone to root
their pursuit of the truth in reason and
evidence, and to pursue a Personal
Relationship With Reality.

Seth lives in Oklahoma with his wife
Natalie and his unofficial mascots, Rat
Dog, Henry, and Kat. He enjoys movies,
sushi (no tentacles), tennis, referencing
"Hitchhiker's Guide," casual gaming, 80s
music, piano by ear, and constantly
flipping his pillow to the cool side.

**Please
Join us in:**



NB this time at the
Clearwater UUC
Octagon ... Nursery
Rd. Clearwater ([map](#))

**Saturday, Nov 10
at 1:00 PM**

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





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

What is the Humanist Way?

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

The Movable Feast

the Humanist Society's monthly social Dinner

Join us Nov. 18 at Applebee's at 5 O'clock for American style cooking, and decidedly the best company:

Applebees

For map Menu

5110 E Bay Dr, Largo, FL 33771

Phone: (727) 539-6388

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

Laugh Lines From the olde Dictionary 11-18

EXPERIENCE: In the working world, something you can't get unless you've already got it, in which case you probably don't want any more of it.

FITNESS: Salvation through perspiration.

FLABBERGASTED: Appalled over how much weight you have gained.

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

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

FLASHLIGHT: A case for holding dead batteries.

GARGOYLE: Olive-flavored Mouth wash.

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

GOURMET: A food fetishist.

HANDKERCHIEF: Cold Storage.

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

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

INFLATION: Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

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

KLEPTOMANIAC: A thief with breeding.

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,
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~*~*~*~*

Jordan Williams, mail Publisher

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

Need Psychological Counseling?

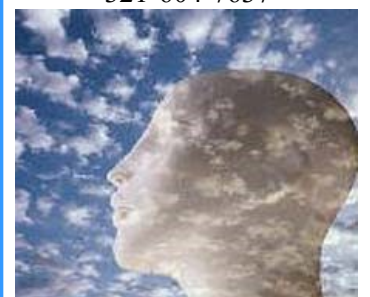
For a secular therapist,
click:

[Secular Therapy Org.](http://seculartherapy.org)
[Cognitive Neurosciences](http://cognitive-neurosciences.org)

Or call:

Lynda Gurvitz,
<http://fampsy.org/member/lynda-gurvitz/>
(727) 725-8820

Joel Schmidt
www.floatoncounseling.com
321-604-7637



Tampa Bay Times FESTIVAL OF READING

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NOVEMBER 17 Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA, ST PETE

140 7th Ave South, St. Petersburg, FL

The greatest Celebration of intellect in the Southeast US. Hundreds of authors and booths, some of them by freethought organizations and individuals.

Remember...

M_{arch}

Is

M_{ehta}

M_{onth}

Details upcoming!

Tampa Humanist Association

Meets every third Saturday at, 11:00 AM

North Tampa Public Library

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

Participants at our October meeting decided to preempt our regular November 17th, 11 AM meeting for the presentation of Seth Andrews on Sat. Nov. 10th at 1 PM. See page 2 for more details.

Leaders: **Lucas Hopegood & Jim Peterson**

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 novel 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. JP

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



Member, TBCoR,
Hum Society, &
AHA affiliate.

Humanist Quotes

11/18

“Do you say that religion is still needed? Then I answer that Work, Study, Health and Love constitute religion. . . . Most formal religions have pronounced the love of man for woman and woman for man an evil thing. . . . They have said that sickness was sent from God. . . . Now we deny it all, and again proclaim that these will bring you all the good there is: Health, Work, Study – Love!”

Elbert Hubbard

“Laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. . . . We might as well require a man to wear the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain forever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.”

Thomas Jefferson

“Happiness is the only good. The place to be happy is here. The time to be happy is now. The way to be happy is to help make others so.”

Robert Ingersoll



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

When it comes to Sustainability, we are a Society of Distracted Drivers

By *Richard Heinberg*



Driving is dangerous. In fact, it's about the riskiest activity most of us engage in routinely. It requires one's full attention—and even then, things can sometimes go horribly awry. The brakes fail. Weather turns roads to ice. A driver in the oncoming lane falls asleep. Tragedy ensues. But if we're asleep at the wheel, the likelihood of calamity skyrockets. That's why distracted driving is legally discouraged: no cell phones, no reading newspapers or books, no hanky-panky with the front-seat passenger. If you're caught, there's a hefty fine.

If you think you hear a metaphor coming, you're right. We human beings are all, in effect, driving this planet. We're largely responsible for whether it continues more or less as it is for another few thousand (maybe a few million) years, or tips rapidly into a condition that may not support human life, nor permit the survival of myriads of other creatures. But we're not paying attention to the road in front of us. Instead, we're distracted.

Our personal distractions are often compelling. Most of us need to make a living. We like to make time for family and friends. We enjoy a wide range of entertainment options.

Our collective distractions seem just as important. We want the economy to grow so that there are more jobs and higher returns on investments. We want our leaders to avert acts of terrorism, and if there are military conflicts we want our side to win. We have our political heroes and villains, and we spend time and money cheering our respective "teams."

Thing is, if we collectively veer off the road and crash the planet, none of that matters. The text message we receive while at the wheel of a car may be really interesting, but reading it isn't worth the risk of life and limb. Similarly, the economy, entertainment,

jobs, sports, and politics are all fine and suitable objects of attention—as long as we first ensure that society's speed and direction are safe and sane.

In fact, a few people are indeed paying attention to the road ahead. Ecologists, climate scientists, and system dynamics analysts have been monitoring society's direction for a few decades now and have been issuing increasingly dire warnings (two of the most recent ones: [the Scientists Warning](#) and the latest [IPCC climate report](#)). What lies ahead if we don't change direction? Rising seas. Crazy weather, including worsening storms, droughts, and floods. Massive species extinctions. Threats to agriculture. Economic ruin. In short, a high-speed crash. But the experts' urgent calls for change are largely being ignored.

If we were indeed paying attention, what would we do differently? We would make sustainability—real sustainability, not just eco-groovy gestures—our first priority. Conserve and reuse non-renewable resources. Use renewable resources only up to their regrowth rates. Protect natural systems from pollution. Conserve biodiversity. We would aim for a truly [circular and regenerative economy](#). If it turned out that the economy were just too big to operate within those guidelines, we would shrink it (taking some time to identify ways that cause the least harm and create the greatest benefit, and ensuring that those who have gained least from our centuries-long growth bonanza get an equitable share of our reduced budget). Continued on page [17](#)

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, Inc.

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



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

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

Calendar See page [12](#) for [Jordan Williams](#) Cosmology talk!

M.A.R.S. – Tampa Astronomy Club

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

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

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

Details & RSVP:

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



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 November's activities are:

- Brandon Lecture & Lunch
- Howard's Skeptics Corner–Oct. 4
- 2+ astronomy clubs' meetings
- N. Pinellas CFI Supper Club
- CFI SHARE Book Club
- Thank Goodness 4 Godless Friday Nights
- CFI Sunday Skeptics Brunch
- Tampa Bay Tech Center many activities

And more at <http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l>

Subscribe to our CFI Tampa Bay newsletter here: <http://bit.ly/2ljTe9l>, Then scroll down the page until you see the red section with "Receive E-Mails".

10 Commandments Under Fire

By [Jim Underdown](#)

The 10 Commandments have been a fixture of Christian moral standards for centuries. How do the 30 million+ atheists in the U.S. see these pillars of Godly behavior? Here's one perspective...<http://bit.ly/2NG5w7L>

"Remember that religion taps into lots of notions that feed easily into our biology. We humans...

Are cause and effect oriented; Are authority oriented; Have a hardwired desire to live on — which makes afterlife attractive; Are social, group oriented creatures.

"All that together sends people to Jesus' arms in droves, and you can't blame them too much for succumbing to their own biology. I know people smarter than I who are believers, but can't see the folly of their beliefs. Try to cut them some slack." ~ [Jim Underdown](#)

Voters with no religious affiliation hold power to sway direction of country

By Annie Laurie Gaylor

Secular voters could very well determine the outcome of the upcoming midterm elections.

The ranks of atheists, agnostics and those with no religious affiliation – "the Nones" – have increased by 19 million since Barack Obama was first elected president, making them the fastest-growing group by religious identification in America. In 2004, the Nones comprised just 16 percent of all American adults, but have now grown to represent roughly a quarter of all adults and a third of millennials.

Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2PTnJ3u>

It's Always Been A Matter Of Trust: Tokens Of Efficacy At CSICON 2018

By Paul Fidalgo

Who do you trust? I suppose the default response of a skeptic could be "no one," at least until particular claims can be verified. I may go without saying, however, that the answer "no one" also applies to conspiracy theorists and others who buy into various forms of pseudoscience. They also probably think that they are ready to trust someone once their claims have been verified. We just have different ideas as to what constitutes "verified."

As we heard today from political science professor Joseph Uscinski, conspiracy thinking has become a major component of our public discourse, which is not news. But what might be news is his observation that conspiracy thinking cuts evenly across all categories: gender, age, class, what have you. One need not don the red MAGA chapeau in order to be a conspiracy believer. Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2CXD2FU>



Are you really a member of Center for Inquiry?

If you have your member-ship card, great. Bring it to our activities for applicable benefits. OR, 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 & get it replaced.

Cordially, Rick
Email: bit.ly/2I9uaLr



16
years in
Florida



Point of Inquiry is the Center for Inquiry's flagship podcast, where the brightest minds of our time engage in deep conversation about the big questions in science, religion, politics, and culture.



The Morning Heresy is your daily digest of news and links relevant to the secular and skeptic communities. What you wouldn't otherwise know.



Founded in 2006, the foundation's mission is to realize Richard's vision to remove the influence of religion in science education and public policy, and eliminate the stigma that surrounds atheism and non-belief.

~ See the latest from Richard & ~ See the latest News

This should interest you:

"Why does life have to have a point? If there were a point, then whatever makes the point would itself need a point. If whatever makes the point has a point, then whatever makes that point would have no point in itself. And so on. Eventually, we have to come to a place where we stop asking, "What is the point?" and just start accepting life for what it is. If there is a god, he (she/it) would be in the same situation. He would have to say something like, "My life is my life, and that is that," with no further explanation, no ultimate meaning. Why can't we do the same thing, simply accepting the good fortune of being alive? Life is not only beside the point, it is above and beyond the point. It is precisely when we realize that there is no point, that we should not want there to be a point, that we can smile and say: 'Life is life.'" –Dan Barker, *Life Driven Purpose*, pg 168



CFI in Action: Secular Rescue

CFI is proud to operate [Secular Rescue](#), a program that has saved more than fifty-five secularists, atheists, and nonbelievers from persecution and violence. In many countries, expressions of nonbelief are punished by government repression, vigilante violence, or both. In April 2013, secular activist Avijit Roy requested CFI's assistance to oppose the imprisonment of four secular bloggers in Bangladesh who made statements critical of religion's role in government. CFI quickly organized efforts that contributed to their release.

Two years later, Roy was murdered by religious extremists. Soon after, CFI created Secular Rescue in response to the escalating danger to secularists in Bangladesh and other countries. Secular Rescue provides funding, advice, government liaison, and logistical support to assist nonbelievers in relocating to relative safety, which can often only be found outside their country of residence.

Welcome to The Clergy Project

Are you a religious professional who no longer believes in the supernatural? Have you remained in vocational ministry, secretly hiding away your non-belief? Are you struggling over where to go from here with your life and career?

- ◆ Maybe you've been out for some time, out of the ministry and maybe even publicly out as a non-believer...
- ◆ Maybe you've found that the challenges continue to come with your new life and you're in need of some good community with people who understand the issues you face...
- ◆ Maybe you'd simply love to connect with other religious professionals who have likewise left belief behind...

If this is *you*, we invite you to [join The Clergy Project](#)!

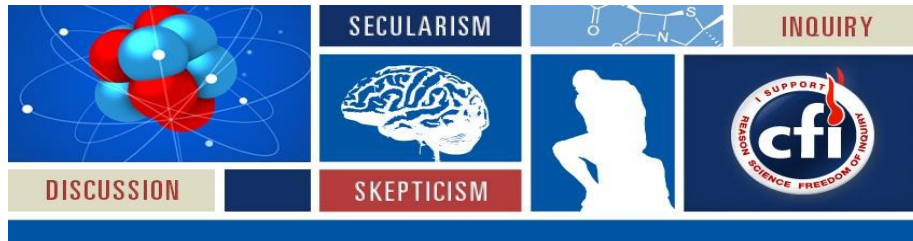
Keep up on all current events at: <https://CFITampaBay.org>

BEING ALL-VOLUNTEER MEANS WE NEED VOLUNTEERS, MEMBERS, AND DONORS. MIGHT YOU BECOME ONE?



Click below

JOIN NOW



*Special freethought days in November:
Church State Separation Week, Nov. 24 ...*

Trying Times: AU's New Timeline Tracks The Trump-Pence Administration's Relentless Attacks On Church-State Separation

Religious freedom has been under constant threat by the Trump-Pence administration, which continues to chip away at the separation of church and state.

President Donald Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20, 2017, set the tone by including prayers and speeches by six religious leaders, most conservative Christians. Since then, Trump has aggressively pandered to the Religious Right, which has a far-reaching agenda to reshape American law according to its narrow worldview.

While conducting research about the influence of Trump's Evangelical Advisory Board, Americans United built a timeline of administration attacks on church-state separation. The version being published here is condensed, but a full, interactive version can be viewed at [AU's website](#).

In modern science, the term *Theory* refers to scientific theories, a **well-confirmed type of explanation of nature**, made in a way consistent with scientific method, and fulfilling the criteria required by modern science. Such theories are described in such a way that scientific tests should be able to provide empirical support for, or empirically contradict ("falsify") it. **Scientific theories are the most reliable, rigorous, and comprehensive form of scientific knowledge**, in contrast to more common uses of the word "theory" that imply that something is unproven or speculative (which is better characterized by the word hypothesis). Scientific theories are distinguished from **hypotheses**, which are individual empirically testable conjectures, and from **scientific laws**, which are descriptive accounts of how nature behaves under certain conditions. —

[Theory - Wikipedia](#)

CHURCH AND STATE

**The Right-Wing Doesn't Want to Talk
About Christian Atrocities,
So Let's Talk About Christian Atrocities**

Josh Kilburn writes, The right-wing's been freaking about Obama bringing up the crusades and the Inquisition, to show that Christianity doesn't have a blood-free history. Whether it's posting videos with skewed definitions of the Crusades or claiming Islam is still worse because *reasons*, they're in a blind rush to defend the tribe and, in the process, they're not orchestrating a very effective defense.

History is full of atrocities committed by Christians for Christ, against not just other religions but against Christians themselves. Let's take a [look at some of them](#), shall we?

... Read the rest and much more news here: <http://bit.ly/2FQVO3t>

READ THIS: TB-CoR's [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. So, sign up if you aren't already participating.



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

Big Bang, Big Claim: Why This Bold Idea Is Right

By Paul Sutter, Astrophysicist

At 13.8 billion years ago, our entire observable universe was the size of a peach and had a temperature of over a trillion degrees.

That's a pretty simple, but very bold statement to make, and it's not a statement that's made lightly or easily. Indeed, even a hundred years ago, it would've sounded downright preposterous, but here we are, saying it like it's no big deal. But as with anything in science, simple statements like this are built from mountains of multiple independent lines of evidence that all point toward the same conclusion — in this case, the Big Bang, our model of the history of our universe. [[The Universe: Big Bang to Now in 10 Easy Steps](#)]

But, as they say, don't take my word for it. Here are five pieces of evidence for the Big Bang: <http://bit.ly/2Ch0mNn>

US votes against UN resolution condemning gay sex death penalty, joining Iraq and Saudi Arabia

By Tom Embury-Dennis

The US is one of just 13 countries to have voted against a United Nations resolution condemning the death penalty for having gay sex.

Although the vote passed, America joined countries such as China, Iraq and Saudi Arabia in opposing the move.

The Human Rights Council resolution condemned the “imposition of the death penalty as a sanction for specific forms of conduct, such as apostasy, blasphemy, adultery and consensual same-sex relations”.

It attacked the use of execution against persons with “mental or intellectual disabilities, persons below 18 years of age at the time of the commission of the crime, and pregnant women”.

Read the rest here: <https://ind.pn/2Alj2KM>

Has Evangelical Christianity Become Sociopathic?

By Tim Rymel, M.Ed. | 11 May 2017 | [The Huffington Post](#)

Since Evangelical Christianity began infiltrating politics, officially in the late 1970s, there has been a disturbing trend to limit or remove rights from those who don't meet the conservative idea of an American. Many of these initiatives come in the form of “religious freedom” laws, which empower discrimination, while other legislation targets immigrants who believe differently. The result has been a sharp division in American culture, and the redefinition of Christian theology.

Evangelical speaker, author, and university professor, Tony Campolo, [said](#) Christianity was redefined in the mid-70s by positions of “pro-life” and opposing gay marriage. “Suddenly

theology fell to the background,” he said. And somewhere in the middle of all the change, Evangelical Christianity crossed the line of faith and belief to hatred and abuse. Those who cruelly implement the actions of their faith are oblivious to the destruction they cause to their religion, or the people their beliefs impact. Is it fair to call it sociopathic?

[Psychology Today](#) listed sixteen characteristics of sociopathic behaviors, which include: Untruthfulness and insincerity, superficial charm and good intelligence, lack of remorse or shame, poor judgment and failure to learn by experience, pathologic egocentricity and incapacity for love, unresponsiveness in general interpersonal relations, specific loss of insight, and general poverty in major affective reactions (in other words, appropriate emotional responses).

We see examples of these kinds of behaviors in church leaders and followers. Franklin Graham, for example, [stated](#) that immigration was “not a Bible issue.” His stand fits well with his conservative politics and [vocal support of Donald Trump](#), but his callousness toward immigrants and those seeking asylum in the United States goes against everything he says he believes (Lev. 19:33-34, Mark 12:30-31). Yet, Graham doesn't see one bit of irony between his political stance and his religious belief. Nor does he seem to notice the horrific casualties in war-torn countries these immigrants are desperately trying to flee.

Pastor Roger Jimenez of Verity Baptist Church in Sacramento [said](#) after the Orlando, Florida terrorist attack on a gay nightclub, “The tragedy is that more of them didn't die. The tragedy is — I'm kind of upset that he didn't finish the job!”

Read the rest here:

<http://bit.ly/2D0k412>



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!](#)



Appropriately, TBS answers a newspaper article titled **“Lottery guides aim toward winning tips”**. This article is from the Saturday, March 31, 1990 *St. Petersburg Times*. In effect, the article is a free advertisement. The engineer who created his rules for picking numbers studied the statistics, concluding that the lottery is truly random, but “some numbers have hot streaks and others disappear for periods of times.” Buy his guide and see what (was) “hot” . . .

As Gary Posner’s letter to the Times says, “Although the pervasiveness of *illiteracy* in this country is well documented, the problem of *innumeracy* (even among the literate, including reporters and their editors) is largely unappreciated and unaddressed.” The problem has gotten worse.

Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2CXm2PQ>

Tallahassee’s ‘Witch’s Grave’

by Joe Nickell

Investigative Files, A Study in Superstition and Ignorance

In Tallahassee’s Old City Cemetery stands an imposing monument that—many people insist—denotes the grave of a witch. Curious symbols atop the marker and a cryptic verse, together with other factors—notably the monument’s facing west rather than the traditional east—are cited as evidence in the identification. But was “BESSIE,” as her name is boldly incised, truly a witch, or can [we unlock the secrets](#) of this mysterious grave?

On the Set of Cosmos’s Season Two

Special Report By *Kendrick Frazier*

SKEPTICAL INQUIRER Vol. 42.5, September / October 2018

How might the **2019 *Cosmos*** differ from the 2014 series? “It’s much more ambitious,” she says. “It is a much bigger production.” She adds, “I think it will be way more inspiring. I hope so.” She says she expects it to be “more emotional”—not the science, she quickly reassures us, but the human stories will be “more heart-based” with a strong emphasis on “a hopeful future.” She worries, as do I, that young people today lack inspiration and hope about the future, and she wants to restore those things.

More than likely I think you can expect that next year millions of us worldwide will be watching evocative stories of human discovery, past and present, some much-needed celebrations of science and reason, and an altogether new and inspiring glimpse of our cosmos.

Special thanks to Dr. Gary Posner for undertaking the arduous task of scanning all the printed news articles about Tampa Bay Skeptics that have appeared in various newspapers and magazines since Gutenberg. Or, at least 1984. These efforts appear on our Web site here: http://www.tampabayskeptics.org/news_articles_letters.html. New scans are posted frequently.

Many useful links appear at the bottom of the page here: <http://www.tampabayskeptics.org/>.

Just click the links for a good read.

An Old Scam Flourishes—MLM

If you’ve been around social media lately, you’ll have come across a friend who suddenly is posting about makeup, diet shakes, essential oils, shampoo, or even insurance. Their personality seems somehow different. And they want to “catch up for a coffee”—with an agenda.

More and more people are being lured into the glittering promises that are multi-level marketing (MLM) companies. Social media provide rich hunting grounds. MLMs are proliferating. They are aggressive recruiters, with trained workforces using influence techniques to reel in new members. Once signed up, they exploit their members ruthlessly. This isn’t an issue we can afford to ignore—we’re not safe.

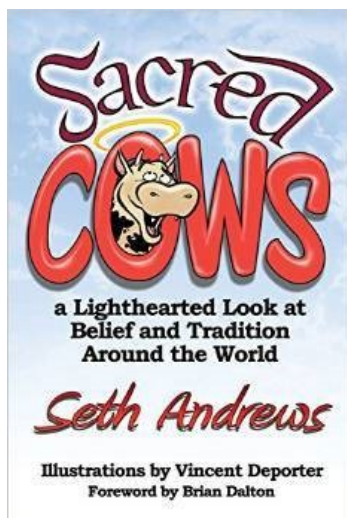
Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2CXMLfo>

The **Committee for Skeptical Inquiry** promotes science and scientific inquiry, critical thinking, science education, and the use of reason in examining important issues. It encourages the critical investigation of controversial or extraordinary claims from a responsible, scientific point of view and disseminates factual information about the results of such inquiries to the scientific community, the media, and the public.



Recommended Reading

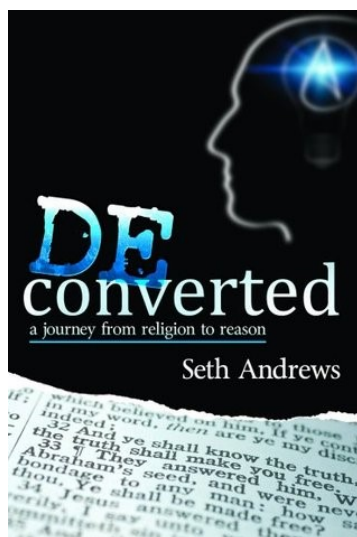
Click on the book's **image** for more info



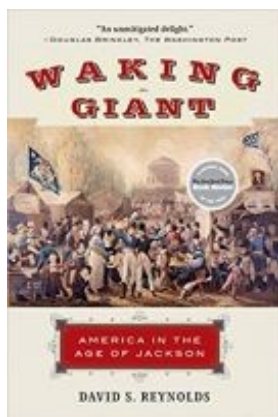
In June 2015 Seth Andrews self-published his second book, *Sacred Cows*. In a review for *Skeptical Magazine*, Donald Prothero wrote: "Taking a gently incredulous tone, Andrews reviews a long litany of the strange things people believe and do. In most cases, he tries to be sympathetic and understanding. He always tries to keep things in perspective and remind his readers that he once accepted beliefs that seem odd to him now. But in other cases, it's impossible not to adopt a note of sarcasm and mockery at beliefs that are clearly bonkers."

In this 190-page autobiography, Seth Andrews (host of The Thinking Atheist) recounts his religious upbringing, his years in Christian schools, his decade as a Christian broadcaster, his ultimate apostasy, and how a 30-year believer could one day come to create one of the most popular atheist communities on the internet.

This book helps to give an inside-out look at the protestant Christian culture in the United States, and it will hopefully encourage others as they deal with the difficult questions in their own journeys toward truth.



Waking Giant is a brilliant, definitive history of America's vibrant & tumultuous rise during the Jacksonian era from David S. Reynolds, the Bancroft Prize-winning author. Casting fresh light on Andrew Jackson, who redefined the presidency, along with John Quincy Adams & James K. Polk, who expanded the nation's territory & strengthened its position internationally, Reynolds captures the turbulence of a democracy caught in the throes of the controversy over slavery, the rise of capitalism, and the birth of urbanization.



Evolve Fish is a good source for freethought paraphernalia:

<http://evolvefish.com/>

To access more Freethought history & perspectives,
Frank Prahl's Freethought Library
fpahl77@gmail.com

The Matt Cooper

Humanist Lending Library

Humanist Society members can select the number of the book you wish to borrow, and send it to marios_psomas@hotmail.com. Then pick it up at the next meeting. **Be sure to return it!** Donations appreciated.

TITLE AUTHOR

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



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!

SC wants *you* to represent the voice of thousands of people of reason in the halls of power.

As our government undergoes its seemingly perpetual crises, 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.



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"



**FOUNDATION
BEYOND BELIEF**

AOF is joining with other FBB teams to collect funds to help the Foundation make grants to address the needs of the children separated from their parents.



Help us

Help Children

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Go to

<http://bit.ly/AOFHelp>

UU Humanists of Clearwater

at 2470 Nursery Rd. in Clearwater.

See **Jordan Williams** give a stellar talk on the size of the universe, and what it means to us.



On Science Sunday,
October 28th, at 12:30 p.m.
in the Octagon .



University of South Florida Humanities Institute

• Frankenreads.

USF will participate in a global read-a-thon of the entire novel on Halloween. Oct. 31 8am - apx. 5pm.
USF Bookstore Café

- ♦ Wicked Brews Book Club will be exploring misunderstood characters
- ♦ Both Humanities & Hops will feature topics drawn from *Frankenstein*
- ♦ Follow the Humanities Institute on social media to stay up to date on all events with our handle @USFHuman. This series was possible by a grant from the Florida Humanities Council

<http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities> Many previous lectures are available on YouTube.



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 above.

The Hotline Project



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www.thetravelsuperhero.com](https://www.thetravelsuperhero.com)

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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

Atheists of Florida,



**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



Fridays 2 to 3 pm.

The broadcast is available **on the internet** at TanTalk1340.com, live streaming on smart phones using the "TuneIn" application, www.youtube.com/atheistforum 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.

Subscribe to our

You Tube Channel



Contact us: info@atheistsoffloridainc.org



November Events

[Find details by clicking here](#)

Nov 10

Dinner meet
Chk meetup
for place and
time.

meetup

Be sure to check for
changes and RSVP!

Nov. 17th

Festival of
Reading 10-5
USF - SP

Nov 18

Applebees
Largo 5 PM

What is Religious Freedom in the age of Trump?

We know the first amendment says everyone has the right to practice her or his own religion, or no religion at all. But what does that mean now? With Republicans promoting "exemptions" for everything, any conservative Christian religious group finds offensive, not only are republicans set to define gender as limited to the biological sex assigned at birth (what to do about hermaphroditic people?), but they are also expanding the exemption for employer health insurance plans to not have to cover birth control. If a company objects to it for "religious or moral reasons," the conservative view of "religious liberty" is satisfied.

Religious liberty now seems only to be for conservative Christians who support the Republicans. With the hope of being able to get taxpayer money to be used to support their views and only their views, Christian nationalist are making great headway. Religious liberty is now a shield for Christian business owners who refuse service to LGBT people. And now there is a case where a group that provides foster care for children don't want to allow non-protestants (Catholic, Jews, Muslims, gays, etc.) to be foster parents.

We once viewed "religious liberty" as supporting inclusive pluralism, where everyone was free to believe, or not. It is up to us to make sure this view gets re-instated. Only by uniting together, can we overcome this bastardization of the first amendment?

Work to stop this redefinition of religious liberty from being the norm. Take a stand, join a group, make your voice heard. **JMA**

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with cables. My price: **\$49**, Tx inc.

New, inc. factory Warranty. **Contact Joe Reinhardt at (727) 544-0414, or Email: wjr22@hotmail** Proceeds help support AoF! (you can too!)



Humanism & Death

The fact that each and every one of us will eventually die is the most brutal fact of all. So it behooves us to talk openly and honestly about it. We don't do that enough.

It's something I've been thinking about a lot over the last three years, ever since I lost my beloved brother, David, to cancer on New Year's Day 2015. I can't say it was a good death; at least it was a fast death, which was a mercy, given the degree of pain he was in. It didn't have to be that way. Watching his suffering compelled me to give serious consideration to how his death—indeed, any death—could be made just a little bit better. Sometimes it takes a bad death to show us what needs to change.

First, I would say to doctors and other medical personnel: please *be honest* about a patient's prognosis and don't hide behind euphemisms and platitudes. When I interviewed a cancer researcher a year or so after David died, he summed up the outlook thusly: "Stages 1, 2, 3: patient can live. Stage 4: patient will die." His bluntness was refreshing. Even online resources are more coy about the brutal reality than they should be. But most medical personnel are reluctant to be so forthright with their patients, even when they know the news is very bad. It doesn't help patients prepare for the inevitable to be anything less than 100 percent clear.

David would have made very different choices about his care if he'd been told frankly that Stage 4 stomach/esophageal cancer was incurable, and all the chemo and radiation would at best buy him a bit more time. In the end I was the one to tell him the brutal truth—that the outlook was much worse than he had been led to believe, that he should assume this would be his last Christmas, and choose his options accordingly. And then we sat in silence for a bit while he absorbed the news. He looked up pictures on the internet of the Laura Ingalls Wilder house in Mansfield, Missouri, where he had wanted to take his fiancée for their honeymoon, dropping a single, solitary tear as he realized he would never be able to give that to her. It was one of the hardest things I have ever done. But I owed him honesty, and he thanked me for it, hard though it was for him to hear.

“Humanists are committed to facing the facts. That each and every one of us will eventually die is the most brutal fact of all. So it behooves us to talk openly and honestly about it. We don't do that enough.”

Second, we need much more research and resources directed toward pain management. I was shocked at how little doctors and nurses know about pain and how best to manage it—and just how difficult managing it can be. Watching my brother suffer completely reset my scale for assessing pain: his cancer had spread to the bone—one of the most painful kinds of cancer—and he experienced a constant throbbing ache punctuated with regular bouts of excruciating spasms that lasted several minutes and left him blanched in the face, gasping, and near shock. (He would keep saying, “Oh my goodness... oh my goodness...” because he

tried not to swear.) Being even a few minutes late with the next dose was disastrous as it would then take several hours of carefully managed doses to get ahead of the pain again. When I talked to a pain researcher at the Mayo Clinic months later and described my brother's case, she got very quiet and just said, “I am so sorry. We really don't know how to manage that kind of pain.” People who are facing death shouldn't suffer needless pain on top of it.

Third, right-to-die legislation needs to be implemented in every state, and in those states where it is legal, the process has got to be streamlined. I realize it's controversial. But this experience convinced me that we all should have the right to choose when and how we shuffle off this mortal coil. Ultimately David decided to forego any further treatment because he didn't want to prolong the inevitable, and his own suffering. By that time he was in near-constant, excruciating pain (only partially controlled by meds), unable to move much or even lie down to sleep because of a massive tumor eating away at his sternum (he slept sitting up in a lounge chair). Three-quarters of his stomach was tumor, so he couldn't eat, and the nutritional IV he was on caused massive bloating and swelling, especially in his legs and feet.

Washington State (where he lived) had only just approved right-to-die legislation. David was very interested in this option, but his regular doctor was opposed on moral grounds, so he would have had to find a new primary caregiver. In the end, he just went off his IV meals completely and literally starved himself to death. **THIS SHOULD NOT BE THE FALLBACK OPTION.** It's inhumane and indecent. He suffered needlessly for an extra two weeks when he could have died peacefully at home with his fiancée.

Finally, to families and loved ones: deal with your denial already. I know it's painful and scary to face losing someone you love; now imagine how difficult it is for them. You're not doing your loved one any favors by not acknowledging the reality of the situation. David was really scared about his impending death—who wouldn't be? But my evangelical Christian parents refused to admit that he was going to die. They had decided that Jesus was going to miraculously heal him, and any admission of the actual reality was akin to not having faith in their god's power and greatness. This hurt David very deeply because he couldn't talk to them about his feelings and what was happening to him.

Humanists might appear to have a huge disadvantage when it comes to death and dying. We don't have a rosy afterlife to point to, a reward in heaven to make up for all the suffering here on earth. Death is so very final. David's loss was hard for me because I knew that everything he was—his thoughts, feelings, memories, personal quirks, his loyal, loving nature—would die along with his physical body. But there is strength in facing that truth unflinchingly. Ironically, the humanists in the family dealt with David's death far better than the devoutly religious members, precisely because we were willing to face the facts and grapple openly with a great personal loss.

This all-too-short life is all we have; it's the performance, not a dress rehearsal. So what we say and do, how we choose to live our lives, matters tremendously. And as for losing the ones we love—there is one place they can live on: in our memories, and in our hearts. Perhaps that's small comfort compared to an eternal afterlife. But it's reality, and that's good enough for me.

Jennifer Ouellette

2018 HUMANIST OF THE YEAR

Tampa Bay Thinkers



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

Monday, November 12, 2018

Topic: TBA

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](https://www.facebook.com/HumanistFamiliesTampa/).

See more at: <http://www.Jen-Hancock.com>.



USF Freethinkers

Join Freethinkers@USF for

genuine, conversational discourse & a communal atmosphere.

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

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

contact: fadibitar@mail.usf

TB-CoR Welcomes

Ethical Humanism

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

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



Tampa Bay Technology Center & Thinkers Salon



We repair our member's computers - Free!

Lectures, discussions, & hands-on demonstrations of the humane use of technology. Our new address is 2189 Cleveland Street, Suite 229, Clearwater FL 33765. [Map](#)

Check out [Thinker's Salon](#) a forum for serious social & scientific ideas & issues.

Find us at:

www.tampa-bay.org

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

Tampa Bay CoR

TAMPA BAY COALITION OF REASON

Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

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

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

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

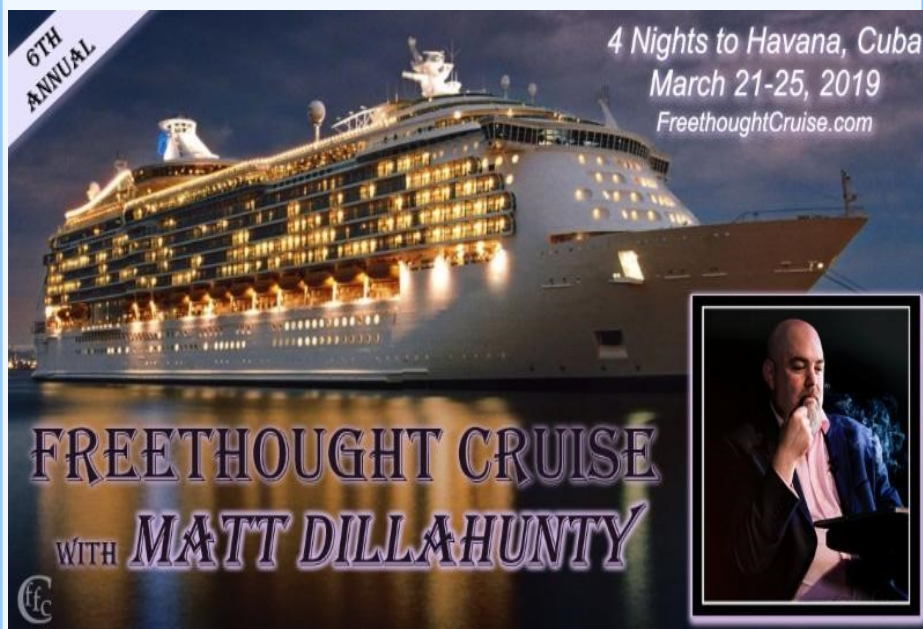
We are especially grateful to the national office of the United Coalition of Reason & its director, Sarah Levin.

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

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

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

Contact: tbcor@metrodirect.net
Or see, <http://tampabaycor.org/>
Or, <https://unitedcor.org/coalition-of-reason/tampa-bay/>



Mar 21-25, 2019

Freethought Cruise to Cuba with Matt Dillahunty

Enjoy a cruise aboard the Royal Caribbean's Majesty of the Seas.

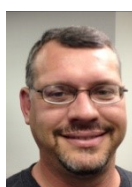
Two ports of call offer opportunities to enjoy the intrigue of Havana, Cuba and the culture and coastline of Nassau, Bahamas. Each night on board you can enjoy dinner as well as numerous entertainment options.

Refurbished in 2018, the ship boasts a rock climbing wall, original theater productions, Splashaway Bay for kids, outdoor movies and sports for the whole family, live bands and other musicians, Vegas-style casino. There are opportunities for entertainment or you can find a quiet place to sunbathe, read, or enjoy a philosophical discussion with your new freethinking friends. [RSVP on Meetup](#)

CRUISE DETAILS

- From: Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Ship: Majesty of the Seas, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line
- Dates: March 21st - 25th, 2019
- Ports of Call: Havana, Cuba and Nassau, Bahamas
- Itinerary and much more at freethoughtcruise.com

Sponsored by *Central Florida Freethought Community*



TBCoR Leadership Team 2018

Al Hann
AoF

Bill Norsworthy,
UUCH

Mark Brandt,
UUCH

Chris Brown,
MAF

Jenn Hancock,
GTBHF

Rick O'Keefe,
CFI, TBS

Jim Peterson
HSS, TBPCC

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

Distracted Drivers continued from page 5

And if the human population were too big, we would shrink that too (again, taking time to minimize bads and maximize goods).

Yes, all of this would have personal implications. We would think about population levels when deciding whether to reproduce. We would refuse any career option that undermines the survival chances of future generations. We would refrain from investing in the extractive economy. We would think about all our daily choices—transportation, meals, clothing, housing—in terms of environmental impact.

What's so hard about that? Really, the most difficult aspect of this shift is the initial decision to make it. And once that decision has been made, plenty of improvements to daily life would likely accompany any sacrifices we'd have to make. For example, imagine how a more mindful economy would allow people to pursue their callings instead of just chasing jobs. Or consider how leading less busy lives would allow more time to spend with loved ones. We could put health and happiness on an upward trajectory, rather than consumption of throw-away consumer goods.

Rather than sharing the distractions now capturing the attention of other drivers, we must each retrain ourselves to pay attention to the instrument panel and the road ahead of us. Abandoning old habits and making new ones requires effort. But some habits are so unwise that changing them is a life-or-death affair.

Are our distractions really so important that we'd rather risk literally everything than shift our gaze toward what really matters?



Get Your Shingle Shots Now!

The Food and Drug Administration in 2017 approved the much more effective, **Shingrix** as the preferred alternative to Zostavax, which was approved in 2006.

Both **vaccines** are approved for adults age 50 and older for the prevention of **shingles** and related complications, whether they've already had **shingles** or not. If you have already had the first vaccine, get the second.

Also, don't forget your Flu Shot!

Here's where We Stand on Three Ballot Amendments



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Amendment 4 - Vote YES: Florida is one of four states that still has a system that prevents people from earning back the eligibility to vote for life, and our current system for restoring a person's ability to vote is broken. Voting Restoration Amendment 4 would give 1.4 million Floridians the chance to fully participate in our democracy again.

Amendment 6 - Vote NO: Amendment 6 deletes current constitutional protections for the accused and creates new constitutional rights for corporations. It misleadingly states that it creates constitutional rights for victims. However, Florida's Constitution already has explicit constitutional rights for victims, including the right to be informed, to be present, and to be heard at all crucial criminal justice proceedings.

Amendment 11 - Vote YES: Amendment 11 deletes a discriminatory, anti-immigrant provision from our constitution and would address mass incarceration by allowing ameliorative criminal justice reforms to apply retroactively.

There's a lot at stake in this election. Besides choosing our future leaders, Floridians will vote on statewide initiatives that will strongly impact our civil liberties and civil rights.

[Download a printable pdf of our ballot positions to bring with you to the polls.](#) And, if you plan to vote early, [check out our tips for voters](#) including when early voting begins and ends in your county on aclufloridavoter.com.

Keeping up with Jennifer... Thinking Freely Speaking Out



Humanist Bible Study?

Humanist Bible Study. The purpose is to figure out what the morality of the Bible really is by reading the book as literature, not as a divinely inspired text.

What is Humanism? Humanism is a highly effective approach to human development. It is as much concerned with personal development as it is with social responsibility. It is probably the most humane and holistic approach to ethical philosophy humanity has ever devised. join in on the discussion at:

<http://humanistbible.blogspot.com/>

My courses are online at: <https://humanistlearning.com>

Thanks and take care. *Jennifer Hancock*



Humanists of Sarasota Bay, Inc.
Sarasota, Florida

Monday, November 5--Grissim Walker, ACLU, discusses racially biased mass incarceration in our prisons.

All lectures are at The Center for Arts and Humanity, 1226 N. Tamiami Trail, unless specified otherwise.



Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – November 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.
See our Meetup site for more: www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason



Various Sunday, 2 PM; & Friday night	BRANDON–CFI Sunday Freethought Social & Godless Friday Night	Skeptical interests with critical thinkers. Click to RSVP : http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I	
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/2ljTe9I	
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/2ljTe9I	
3rd Saturday, 11 AM	NE TAMPA – Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & RSVP : http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists	
4th Saturday, 10:30 AM;	CLEARWATER – CFI Readers Book Discussion	Limited to 10 paid-up CFI members. RSVP is required. Must have read the book under discussion to attend. http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I	
3rd Monday, 7 PM	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. RSVP here: http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers	
4 th Friday, 8 PM general meeting. Many more events monthly.	ST. PETERSBURG– Astronomy Club	For several dates, locations, & details: http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Home http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Calendar	
2 nd Saturday plus various other times/venues	TAMPA BAY REGION– Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I	
TBA – various activities	TAMPA BAY REGION– Humanist Families	RSVP here: Family outings & other activities. Details & RSVP : http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN	



2019 Freethought Cruise

Nassau-Cuba itinerary. For more details: freethoughtcruise.com. Departs Florida March, 2019

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



A special opinion piece and commentary from Tampa Bay Skeptics RO

A Unique Perspective on the Senate's Recent "Supremely" Sick Spectacle

by **Gary P. Posner, M.D.**

The terror of suffering a sexual assault is almost unfathomable, and merely hearing tell of such an experience years later can bring tears to even the most jaundiced of eyes. But analyzing all sorts of sensational claims from a rational, dispassionate approach has been my primary avocation for nearly four decades, most of that time as Executive Director of Tampa Bay Skeptics, so I wish to offer my unique perspective on the recent Supreme Court confirmation debacle.

The writings of the late UFO skeptic Philip J. Klass, and more recently of *Skeptical Inquirer's* Joe Nickell, make clear that "UFO abductees," also known as "experiencers," are generally honest (though clearly troubled) souls whose accounts — a great many of which involve sexual invasion — are certainly deserving of empathetic consideration. But though thousands of such narratives have been declared genuine by therapists, including the late Harvard psychiatrist Dr. John Mack, Klass' and Nickell's "fantasy-prone personality" explanation rings far truer when sensationalism and emotion are supplanted by cold, calm reason.

As I recently re-watched Justice Brett Kavanaugh's accuser, Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, answering the Republicans' questions (at tinyurl.com/Ford-Answering-Questions), I was mesmerized by her childlike (literally, not pejoratively) speech pattern and other curious mannerisms and found myself wondering where she resides along the fantasy-proneness spectrum. But I acknowledge my prejudice. I could not wipe from my memory the many gaps, contradictions and improbabilities that had been gently elicited (tinyurl.com/Ford-Facts-Elicited) days earlier by that questioner — herself a victims' rights advocate whose profession is prosecuting sexual offenders (tinyurl.com/Mitchell-Advocate).

However, suppose all one knew of Dr. Ford's account were the bare bones: Four boys and two girls (Ford and her best friend, Leland Keyser) were partying on the first floor of a two-story house. Ford walked upstairs, heading to the bathroom, when Kavanaugh and a buddy pushed her into an adjacent bedroom. The attack occurred, Ford escaped into the bathroom, and after it sounded like the boys were no longer upstairs she walked down and out of the house without pausing to say good-bye to anyone. With all of her named witnesses denying under penalty of perjury any recollection of any such party (and Keyser further denying ever having known Kavanaugh), can applying logic alone assist in establishing, perhaps even beyond a *reasonable* doubt, the reality or falsity of Ford's uncorroborated narrative?

Fortunately, there is a solitary additional bone that *has* been corroborated and may hold the key to the puzzle's solution. As Ford acknowledges, Keyser did not call her that night, the next day, or otherwise ever follow up as to why *her best friend* — *the only other girl there* — had suddenly disappeared, and how she managed to get home (Ford did not yet drive, and lived an estimated seven-plus miles away)! This commonsense clue alone seems so dispositive as to justify contemplating whether — if telling what she believes to be the truth — Ford may be more akin to a UFO-abduction "experiencer" than a sexual-assault (at least by Kavanaugh) survivor.

As with so many good intentions carried to their illogical extremes, in today's #metoo climate, gaping holes in a female accuser's story must be ignored, and a privileged white male's protestations of innocence must be shouted down. Failure to accede to this dogma is a capital offense, though fortunately (at least as of this writing) no terminal street justice has yet been meted out. And while in the process of defending one's life against an accusation of attempted rape — and, let's not forget, of participating in the drugging and gang-raping of other girls at weekly parties — if one's comportment fails to mimic the composure of a judge presiding over a court case, that alone is disqualifying.

Please convey my apologies for this belated trigger warning to anyone you know who, in the course of reading this essay, retreated in horror to a safe space. For those still here, in conclusion I refer you to Senator Susan Collins' October 6 tour de force (tinyurl.com/Collins-Speech-Video), for which she now requires protection against the many resulting death threats. Where is *her* safe space?

The following related commentary is offered by Terry Smiljanich, an attorney and Chairman Emeritus of Tampa Bay Skeptics:

I really cannot disagree with what Gary has to say about accusers, evidence, or his logical analysis. In my opinion, from both a skeptical/rational and legal/fairness vantage point, his essay deserves reflection and discussion.

The Ford-Kavanaugh spectacle was certainly a travesty and an embarrassment. However, there were other reasons why I did not support Kavanaugh's nomination — I do not find his judicial philosophy, as reflected in his past rulings, to be sufficiently moderate. But, as the saying goes, "Elections have consequences," and in 2016 my party lost. Yet the behavior displayed by too many of the Democratic senators during Kavanaugh's confirmation process was in disregard of not only that saying but of our nation's bedrock principles of presumption of innocence and burden of proof. Of course, though they used the so-called "Biden rule" as their excuse (see tinyurl.com/Biden-Rule-Excuse), Republicans had not given Merrick Garland, President Obama's nominee to fill the vacancy created by Antonin Scalia's death, even the courtesy of an interview or hearing for almost eight months, waiting instead to see how the 2016 election turned out.

What did the controversial Garland (liberal) and Kavanaugh (conservative) nominations have in common? Simple. Justice Scalia, a conservative, was going to be replaced by a liberal chosen by a Democratic president. And Justice Kennedy, a centrist who leaned slightly left, was going to be replaced by a Republican president's conservative selection. But the former

plan was foiled and the latter succeeded, thus shifting the Court's ideological alignment 5-4 to the right, whereas President Trump's prior conservative-for-conservative replacement of Neil Gorsuch (instead of Garland) for Scalia had resulted in no such shift.

The crucial flaw in the process lies in a recent change in Senate rules regarding filibusters. When for over a hundred years there had been a 60-40 "supermajority" vote requirement to override a filibuster, nominees had to be somewhat moderate in order to appeal to enough members of the opposite persuasion. When Democrats began filibustering George W. Bush's judicial nominees, the Republicans talked of changing the rule to require only 51 votes to end a filibuster, but dropped their idea in 2004 →

after gaining a larger Republican majority.

When Republican filibustering in turn created a huge backlog of Obama lower-court judicial nominees, Democratic Majority Leader Reid, over Republican objections, changed the rule to require only 51 votes, though keeping the 60-vote requirement for Supreme Court selections. But after President Trump's election, Republican Majority Leader McConnell changed the rule again such that 51 was now sufficient to end filibustering of a Supreme Court nominee as well, which allowed Kavanaugh's name to proceed to a final confirmation vote, and it was the Democratic Party's turn to fume. Outrage in Washington is directly proportional to "who's ox is being gored," and we have Senators Reid and McConnell both to thank for making the appointment of moderate judicial candidates less likely.

Though Gary and I do not always see eye to eye with regard to political matters, we do agree that both sides of the spectrum have been guilty of more than their fair share of immoderation, and that the nation would be far better served by a lowering of the temperature throughout all three branches of our federal government, as well as among the general populace.

For information about the authors, go to the bottom of the [TBS home page](http://bit.ly/1ZZ5LPU), where you can click on their names. <http://bit.ly/1ZZ5LPU> TampaBaySkeptics

Playing Gracefully With Ideas: Stephen Fry, Evolution, And DaVinci At CSICon 2018

By Paul Fidalgo

Massimo Polidoro described a certain someone as "a precious jewel" of a person, someone whose company and insights were sought by the wisest of leaders. This person "swam upstream," eschewing fads and seeking to discover the truths and communicate those truths to others. This incredible human being exemplifies the term "Renaissance person."

Now, Polidoro was talking about Leonardo Da Vinci, but he could easily have been talking about two of the speakers in the Saturday afternoon presentations at CSICon 2018.

First there is the educational powerhouse **Bertha Vasquez**, whose secret identity is that of a mild-mannered middle school science teacher, but whose superhero persona is that of the director of CFI's [Teacher Institute for Evolutionary Science](http://bit.ly/1ZZ5LPU) (TIES).

"Teachers teaching teachers how to teach Evolution."

Read the rest here:

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

