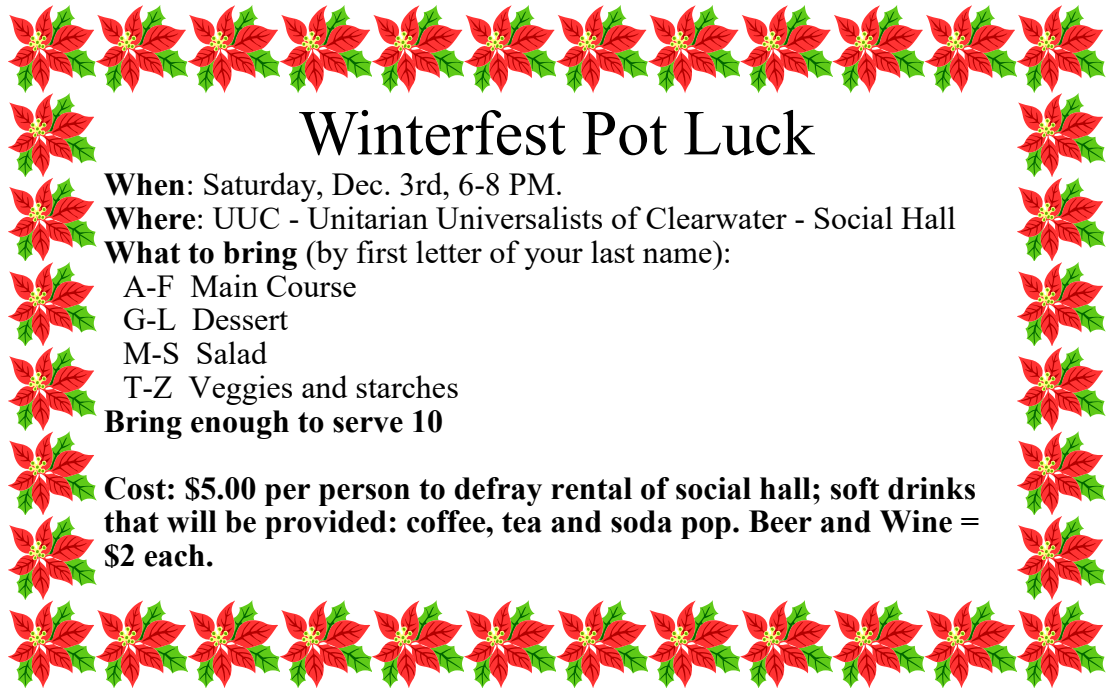


Freethought News

Vol. 5 No. 12, December 2016 Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

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Winterfest Pot Luck

When: Saturday, Dec. 3rd, 6-8 PM.

Where: UUC - Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater - Social Hall

What to bring (by first letter of your last name):

A-F Main Course

G-L Dessert

M-S Salad

T-Z Veggies and starches

Bring enough to serve 10

Cost: \$5.00 per person to defray rental of social hall; soft drinks that will be provided: coffee, tea and soda pop. Beer and Wine = \$2 each.



Coming
February 5th,
Tom Flynn

Tom Flynn is the Center for Inquiry's vice president for media and director of Inquiry Media Productions. He is also executive director of the Council for Secular Humanism and editor of its flagship magazine, *Free Inquiry*. He designed and directs the Council's museum at the Dresden, N.Y., birthplace of 19th century agnostic orator Robert Green Ingersoll. He has written or edited eight books, including *The New Encyclopedia of Unbelief* (Prometheus, 2007). Presented by Center for Inquiry-Tampa Bay & Tampa Bay Skeptics.

Coming
on January 14th
SkeptiCamp2

See [Page 7](#) for more info.

SkeptiCamp is like a science conference, in that its content is provided by experts, and subject to question by the attendees themselves.

Our distinguished presenters will talk about a number of popular beliefs and approaches to looking at them with a skeptical eye. The advantages of skepticism as a defense against the acceptance of nonsense and its consequences may be quite useful.

Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Calendar

[Rick O'Keefe](#)

Web site

Jim Peterson

Newsletter

[Jim Peterson](#)

Special Projects

Mark Brandt
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event website at:

www.tampabaycor.net

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

This publication online at:

www.tampabaycor.net

Happiness

Our 29th Year

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](#), and [CSH](#) Find us at www.suncoasthumanist.com

Dunedin Public Library 223 Douglas Ave, Dunedin, FL
There is no regular meeting in December.

Join us for the regional TB-CoR Winterfest Holiday party on Dec 3rd, then on January 7th for our regular meeting, and in February as part of the Darwin Day event with TBCOR.



A Thought for **this** holiday season:

At this time of the year, we are inundated with requests for money. This year in particular, with the accession of a person of limited experience and ability to high office, a great deal of fear and apprehension has been generated.

This outcome should not have surprised us. Yet it is the basis for sometimes a near hysterical reaction. Notwithstanding the probability that many of the new administration's policies will be just as irrational and destructive as presently understood, we should not be surprised. It's been creeping up on us for decades. With the rise of the reactionary religious right, the main trend of popular culture has rested on a ground of unexamined propositions and highly conditioned sentiment. This has proven to be as insubstantial as the wispy dream of job security and the "good life" presented as the American dream.

Those aforementioned requests for money (also known as "Send Money Quick" letters) should be seen in the light of how well the proposed activity will bring about the sustained questioning of those twin pillars supporting stagnation, frustration, and discontent, known as religion and politics. While the relief of suffering is indisputably a worthy and moral act, challenging the source of such corruption and deprivation is by far, the best thing to do. Even better; contribute your time and energy. For humanists, the time has come to shine the light of reason into the dark caverns of humanity's greatest fears. jp



Food: the first kindness and the measure of our Hospitality.
Humanists aspire to true friendship with our fellow human beings.
 Money is more effective than cans to get the most benefit to the greatest number of people. Thanks to **Glenn Paul**, chair, and Jordan Williams. Ed Note: Glenn needs assistance. **We need volunteers!** Write to jim@suncoasthumanist.com Thanx.

Volume 24 No. 12 December, 2016

Join or renew the Humanist Society of the Suncoast

Annual Dues.

- E-mail news -Free
- Regular -\$25**
- Reg. Couple -\$30.
- Supporter -\$35/40 (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) check made out to:
"Marios Psomas"
 Memo line: "Humanist Society Dues"
Humanist Society of the Suncoast, AHA
 1013 Connecticut Rd
 Tarpon Springs, FL 34689
 * = optional



Kay and Glenn Paul are both spending some recuperation time after unfortunate medical misadventures. Give them a little call to help let them know that they are appreciated. Reach them at 727. 595-3347.



Humanists work to build a world in which happiness is the enduring criterion of all 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's monthly social Dinner for December is at the

ACROPOLE

1170 Starkey Rd, Largo, FL 33771, Largo
(Southern Extension of Keene)

We're changing our approach. Now its just open. No RSVP required. Trundle on down for the fine food and fastidiously fabulous fellowship! See [Menu](#).

Sunday, November 20th by 5 O'clock
to meet with our friends.

As always, this is a self treated dinner.
Ask to be seated with "the humanists."

We need a coordinator for this!... Maybe you?

Laugh Lines 12-16

Psychiatry students were in their Emotional Extremes class. "Let's set some parameters," the professor said. "What's the opposite of joy?" he asked one student.

"Sadness," he replied.

"The opposite of depression?" he asked another student.

"Elation," he replied.

"The opposite of woe?" the prof asked a young woman from Texas.

The Texan replied, "Sir, I believe that would be giddyup."

Squirrels had overrun three churches in town. After much prayer, the elders of the first church determined that the animals were predestined to be there. Who were they to interfere with God's will? they reasoned. Soon, the squirrels multiplied.

The elders of the second church, deciding that they could not harm any of God's creatures, humanely trapped the squirrels and set them free outside of town. Three days later, the squirrels were back.

It was only the third church that succeeded in keeping the pests away. The elders baptized the squirrels and registered them as members of the church. Now they only see them on Christmas and Easter.

Humanist society

of the Suncoast

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

Board of Directors.

Meets Sept., December, April

Jay Alexander,
Steve Brown,
Lois Fries, Secretary
Dave Kovar, Vice President
Jim Peterson, President
Frank Prahl,

Marios Psomas, treasurer
Jordan Williams.

Emeritus members: Terry Eckstein, Dr. Jon Green, Mark Kligman, Dr. Jack Robinson, Jerry Moore, Anita Garcia, 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:

[Secular Therapy Org.](#)

[Cognitive Neurosciences
Inc.](#)

Or call:

Lynda Gurvitz,
(727) 725-8820

Patricia Walters,
(813) 452-6547



Tampa Humanist Association

Meets every third Saturday at, 11:00 AM

North Tampa Public Library

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

December 17th, 11 AM

Discussion Leader: *Lucas Hopegood*

As Humanists it is our task to discover the secret world above and within the level of conscious recognition. Using the instruments of reason, and 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 and critically dissects a new intersection of mind and matter. Be part of it.

This month's subject: Humanism, love, and sex

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



Member, TBCoR,
Hum Society, & AHA
affiliate.



The mission of the [Secular Coalition](#) is to increase the visibility of and respect for non-theistic view-points in the State, and to protect and 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, and appreciated!



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

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

Show off your commitment to Science and Reason!



CFI-Tampa Bay is offering these elegant license plate surrounds Legal, sturdy, fits all US plates - easy to install. Only \$10.

Order from [Rick O'Keefe](#)



Tampa Bay CoR
6814 Charlotte Harbor Way
Tampa, FL 33625
E-mail: tbcor@metrodirect.net

Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

Join the Freethought Organizations of the Tampa Bay Area: Center for Inquiry-Tampa Bay, 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 serious secular discussion and activity about important issues in our area and beyond.

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 secular / freethought / Humanist /Atheist movement .

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

Contact: tbcor@metrodirect.net <http://www.tampabaycor.net>

A Humanist Discussion group in east Tampa !

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/>

Humanist Quotes

There is no room for play in Islam. It is deadly serious about everything. ~ Ayatollah Khomeini

God is the immemorial refuge of the incompetent, the helpless, the miserable. They not only find sanctuary in His arms, but also a kind of superiority, soothing to their macerated ego; He will set them above their betters. ~ H.L. Mencken



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

What if the “Shale Revolution” is really just a “Shale Bubble?”

In the seven years since hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) has brought a surge of new oil and natural gas production to the United States, our nation’s public conversation about energy has stalled. Politicians, business leaders, pundits, and even some environmental groups now repeat the same conventional wisdom: The risks of fracking for tight oil and shale gas are far outweighed by the decades of abundant, affordable domestic energy we’re getting in return.

Based on optimistic U.S. Department of Energy forecasts and industry rhetoric, this conventional wisdom has had major implications on federal, state, and local energy and climate policy — including the push to fast-track Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and lift the oil export ban, shut down coal-fired power plants, transition vehicle fleets, and more. These may sound great in theory, but what if they are based on a false premise?

Since 2011, Post Carbon Institute has been the primary national voice questioning the prevailing view of the “shale revolution.” We’ve released groundbreaking reports, held public and policymaker briefings, interviewed with media, produced creative messaging campaigns, and partnered with other organizations concerned about the rush to develop unconventional oil and gas resources.

[Vists ShaleBubble.org](http://VistsShaleBubble.org)



TBCoR Leadership Team 2016

- Toni Van Pelt,
ISHV*
- Bill Norsworthy,
UUCH*
- Mark Brandt,
UUCH*
- Chris Brown,
MAF*
- Jenn Hancock,
GTBHF*
- Rick O’Keefe,
CFI, TBS*
- Jim Peterson,
HSS, TBPC*
- Al Hann
AoF*

USF Freethinkers

Join Freethinkers@USF for genuine, conversational discourse and a communal atmosphere. Freethinkers@USF is a cosmopolitan collective of USF students promoting critical thinking and pluralism through dialogue and reasonable inquiry. Join the official group and vote on upcoming discussions: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FreethinkersUSF/>

For more information contact: fadibitar@mail.usf

M.A.R.S. – Tampa Astronomy Club Annual Dinner Meeting & Social

Details: <https://goo.gl/cVmoH2>
 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 and Industry \(MOSI\)](#), in Tampa, Florida. We are also members of both the [Astronomical League](#) and [Night Sky Network](#). This site provides club news and astronomical information to our membership and to the public.

There's only one thing the people of M.A.R.S. enjoy more than observing the heavens... that's sharing it with others! Whether you are new to astronomy and 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, and take place on the 2nd Friday of each month from 7:00PM to 9:00PM. Meetings are free and open to the public.

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, Inc.



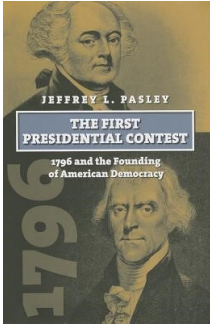
(SPAC), has been meeting continuously since 1927. It was incorporated in 1979 as a nonprofit, tax deductible organization.

For almost 50 years SPAC has provided free educational programs for its members and the public. For additional information send your emails to: spacexaminer@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. [Calendar](#)

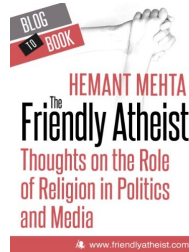
Recommended Reading

Click on the image for more info

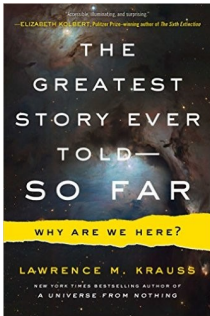


This is the first study in half a century to focus on the election of 1796. The **Electoral College** was perhaps the least successful element of the U.S. Constitution. (And not unexpectedly, modifications to the Electoral College process came quickly). The Founders did not want the public to directly elect the President, since previous experiments in direct elections at the state level had reinforced the conclusion that pure democracy was too dangerous.

These are the issues that have taken up the bulk of my writing in the years since I began covering atheism-related news. If you want to get a fuller picture of what atheists are talking about, what our activism involves, and what our future looks like, no single writer can do that for you, just as no single study guide will prepare you for a final exam.



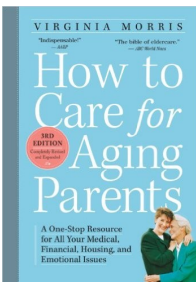
Lawrence Krauss tells the dramatic story of the discovery of the hidden world of reality—a grand poetic vision of nature—and how we find our place within it. "A masterful blend of history, modern physics, and cosmic perspective that empowers the reader to not only embrace our understanding of the universe, but also revel in what remains to be discovered." — Neil deGrasse Tyson



The spread of hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") has temporarily boosted US natural gas & oil production... sparking a massive environmental backlash. The fossil fuel industry is trying to sell fracking as the biggest energy development of the century, with slick promises of American energy independence. SNAKE OIL casts a critical eye on the oil-industry hype that has hijacked America's energy conversation. This is the first book to look at fracking from both economic and environmental perspectives.



This guide, aimed at the "Sandwich Generation," provides a road map to assist adult children in caring for their aging parents. Combining personal experience with expertise in healthcare and social and political issues, Morris has produced a thoroughly researched, well-organized, and comprehensive manual. [Your kids need to read this.]



Evolve Fish is a good source for 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	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 Wallgasper
12.	Sex, Time, and Power	Leonard Shlain
13.	Sex at Dawn	C. Ryan, & C. Jetha
14.	What liberal Media	Eric Alderman
15.	The End of Faith	Sam Harris
16.	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 Give for Believing in God.	G. Harrison
29.	Mathematics and Politics	Alan Taylor
30.	Stealing Elections	John Fund
31.	The God Virus	Darrel Ray
32.	What Every American Should Know About World	Rossi
33.	Imagine There's no Heaven	Editors of Free Inquiry
34.	Hidden Order	David Friedman
35.	What the Dog Saw	Malcom Gladwell
36.	Sway	Ori, Rom Brafman
37.	The Better Angels of our Nature	Steven Pinker
38.	Letter to a Young Contrarian	Christopher Hitchens
39.	Hot, Flat, and Crowded	Thomas Friedman
40.	Gaming the Vote	William Poundstone
41.	Subversion Fable	Alexa KcKearing
43.	Evolution and the Big Question	David Stamos
44.	Why People Believe Weird Things	Michael Shermer
45.	The World is Curved	David Snick
46.	The Snow Ball	Warren Buffett
47.	The Moral Landscape	Sam Harris
48.	How We Believe	Michael Shermer
49.	Full House	Steven Jay Gould
50.	The Origins of Political Order	Francis Fukuyama
51.	Asimov's Guide to the Bible	Isaac Asimov
52.	Autobiography of Mark Twain	Harriet Smith, Editor
53.	Science Friction	Michael Shermer
54.	Genius	James Gleick
55.	Inevitable Illusions	Piatrelli & Palmarini
56.	Sex & God	Darryl Ray
57.	Being Right Is Not Enough	Paul Waldman
58.	Loser Takes All	Mark Crispin Miller
59.	Taking Back Politics	Cathy Allen
60.	What Happened in Ohio?	Fitrikis, Rosenfeld & Wasserman
61.	Autobiography of Mark Twain	Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith
62.	The Skeptics Annotated Bible	
63.	Database Systems (Complete Ver.)	Kifer, Bernstein, & Lewis
64.	Reluctant Database Administrators	Josef Finsel
65.	Asimov's Guide to the Bible	Isaac Asimov
66.	Inevitable Illusions	M. Piattelli-Palmarini
67.	Ain't Nobody's business If You Do	Peter McWilliams
69.	Bonk	Mary Roach
70.	What Money Can't Buy	Michael J. Sandel
71.	Financial Shenanigans	Howard Shilit
72.	Sex & God	Darrel Ray, ED.D
73.	Best American Non required Reading	Dave Eggers
74.	Reporting at Wit's End	St. Clair McKelway
75.	Corporations are not People	Clements
76.	Could I Vote Mormon for president?	Cragun – Phillips
77.	Culture of Honor	Nisbett – Cohen
78.	Rot on the Vine	Stenesh
79.	Thoughts of a Freethinker	New! Kaye

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

Atheists of Florida, Inc.



Tracy Thomas; President pro-tem, Al Hann

Join members of our Tampa chapter at our headquarters / Studio Building on So. Westshore.

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

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

For information on current activities for this month, see our comprehensive web site:

[Http://aof.ngo](http://aof.ngo)

St Pete Atheists // Freethought Group

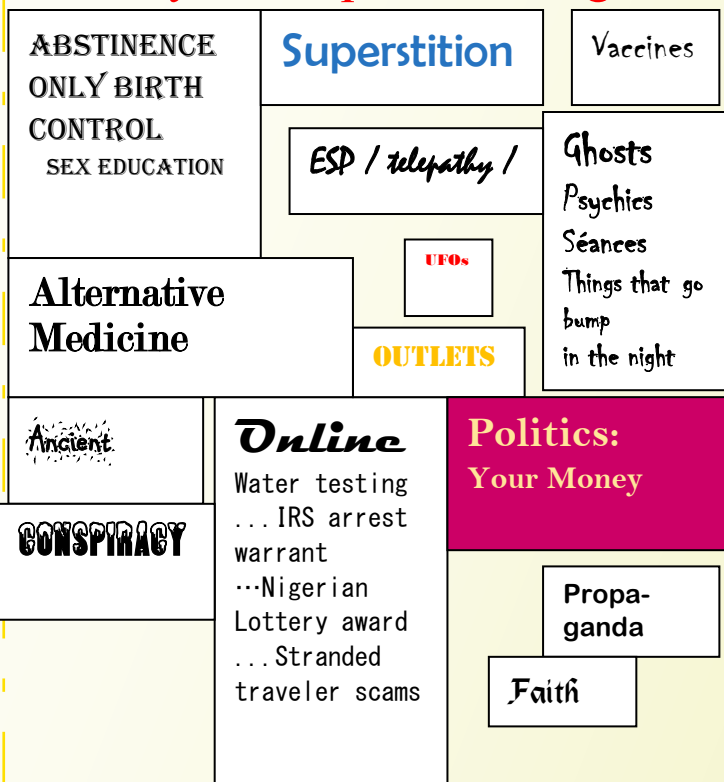
Moderated by: Gary Thompson

Contact: easy8@tampabay.rr.com

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

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

A "Don't Miss Event" Are you Skeptical Enough?



Are these Valuable Insights, or Costly Wastes of Time?

Our panel of experts including: Dave Dockery, Ryan Cragun & other surprise guests will lead an interactive learning experience about the ways of critical thinking. ~Skepticamp -2 is a project of Atheists of Florida~

January 14th 2017

at UU Clearwater Social Hall, 2470 Nursery Rd. Clearwater

1pm – 5pm (doors open at 12:30pm)

Light Refreshments will be available

Admission

Info & Tickets available online at:
aof.ngo til January 7th 2017

\$10 for non AOF members; or \$7.50 when purchased at Winterfest

\$5 for paid AOF Members (Meetup doesn't qualify);

\$15 at the event door (for all not prepaid as above)

Tampa Bay Thinkers



Discussing serious matters since 2008.
Carrollwood Cultural Center, Tampa,
every 3rd Monday, monthly at 7 PM.

November 21st

Topic: tba

See our Meetup site:

www.meetup.com/tampa-bay-thinkers/
for more information.

Humanist Families of Greater Tampa

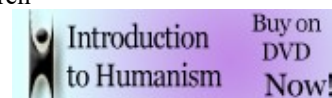
Jennifer Hancock started this organization several years ago. It uniquely serves Humanist families with a variety of wonderful programs throughout the year. There is a strong emphasis on creative childrearing. Here, you can make connection with other families dealing with the problems of living in a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



The Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers



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

Local Contact: Chris
(christbrown@yahoo.com)

MSgt, USAF (Retired)

Co-Organizer:

MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB

On the web at: www.maaf.info

RECALL NOTICE!

The FDA today ordered the removal of all homeopathic products manufactured by Phlegm & Koff of New Jersey. When P&K refused to comply with new FDA regulations requiring independent proof of safety and efficacy, the FDA sued. After a rancorous three days of arguments of science versus pseudo-science, Judge Phineas T. Bascombe of the Ninth Judicial District accepted the argument of the manufacturer, astounding the prosecution. However, the judge might have had the last laugh when he ordered P&K to recall and destroy all of their products because, if "water has memory, so that the lack of any detectable ingredients beyond water is not a reason to disqualify the proven value of homeopathic cures, then on sanitary grounds alone said products must contain all manner of unacceptable, toxic, and purely repellant memories. So ordered."

Lawyers for Phlegm & Koff will appeal when the Republican administration deregulates over the counter products.

Consumers with proof of purchase claiming injury, please contact Abactor, Barmy, and Mulct, Esq., P.A.



Tampa Bay Computer Society & Doc's Café



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

Activism is the rent I pay for living on the planet. ~ Alice Walker



Eupraxsophy

Paul Kurtz, the philosopher who created Center For Inquiry (US) in 1991, also coined the term “Eupraxsophy” and presented it in his book *Living Without Religion: Eupraxsophy* in 1994. According to Kurtz, there was at the time no word to adequately describe what humanism “is”. Kurtz argued that humanism involved “a method of inquiry, a cosmic world view, a life stance and a set of social values”.

Kurtz felt the *best approach is to combine Greek roots. I have come up with the term eupraxsophy, which means “good practical wisdom”. Eupraxsophy is derived from the following roots: eu-, praxis, and Sophia. Eu - is a prefix which means “good”, “well”, advantageous. It is combined in words such as eudeaeomonia, which means “well-being” or “happiness”; it is also used in euthanasia, eulogy, euphoria, etc. Praxis (or prasstein) refers to “action, doing or practice” Eupraxia means “right action” or “good conduct”. The suffix sophia is derived from Sophos (“wise”) and means “wisdom”. This suffix appears in the term philosophy, combining “philos” (“loving”) and sophia (“wisdom”) to mean “love of wisdom”.*

According to Kurtz:

- unlike philosophy or science, Eupraxsophy does not focus on one specialized field or knowledge.
 - It is keenly aware of the need for fallibilism, and agnosticism about what we do and do not know
 - the primary task of eupraxsophy is to understand nature and life and to draw concrete normative prescriptions from this knowledge
 - In the Greek and Roman world, Epicureanism, Stoicism and skepticism were eupraxsophies
 - utilitarianism, Marxism, existentialism, pragmatism were eupraxsophies
- Eupraxsophy is Kurtz’ proposal for a non-theistic term to define methods and tools to be used to pursue “good practical wisdom”.

About atheism, agnosticism ... read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2fFqyYI>

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

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2017 Freethought Cruise with Hemant Mehta Ad

<https://freethoughtcruise.wordpress.com/> March 16-20, 2017



Do cars really roll up "Spook Hill"? by Dr. Gary P. Posner

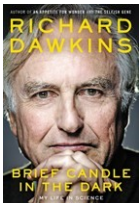
Spook Hill, where cars seem to drift uphill, received national press in a front-page *Wall Street Journal* article on October 25, 1990, and in a November 5 segment on the CBS Morning News with Charles Osgood. This "piney pitstop of the paranormal," as it is referred to in the *WSJ* piece, lies 50 miles to the south of Orlando, in the town of Lake Wales.

The *WSJ* reported that the Spook Hill Beautification Committee has convinced state and local legislators to provide \$32,000 for "new signs, a tourist information center and a parking lot." Arch Abernathy, City Editor of the *Lake Wales Daily Highlander* and a member of the Committee, tells *TBS Report* that, in his opinion, the hill is simply "an optical illusion." Says Abernathy, "It's a free attraction. We have a lot of fun with the [ghost] legends, and just enjoy people coming over."

Addressing the concern that Spook Hill might become a profit-making venture, Abernathy assured *TBS Report* that, "There will be nothing of that sort in our lifetime." The money, he says, is for necessary improvements so that hundreds of cars per weekend will not continue to clog the narrow roadway.

TBS member Guss Wilder reports that the contours of the approach road and surrounding land create the *illusion* of a small dip that should cause cars to drift *forward* from the designated "stop point," but from which cars instead drift *backward*, seemingly uphill (see [Fig. 1](#)). From other vantage points, however, it was apparent that the true low point is actually *behind* the "stop point," adjacent to an appropriately placed storm drain, and that the cars do indeed drift *downhill*. (see [Fig. 2](#)).

A version of this article appeared in the Winter 1990-91 *Tampa Bay Skeptics Report*. Guss Wilder wrote an article on Spook Hill for the Fall 1991 *Skeptical Inquirer*, and [highlights from that article](#) can be found in the Jan/Feb 1992 issue of *Science Frontiers*.



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Ever wonder what Florida Freethought groups are doing?



Now you can easily know. Atheists of Florida have a new freethought Calendar:

<http://AtheistsOfFloridaInc.org/calendar/>

Know what's going on around the entire state.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL WE CAN SING

From PIQUE, Newsletter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York December, 2013

(Transcribed from a YouTube video by The Second City Network, and forwarded by Aidan Rafferty)

Merry Christmas, neighbors,
although we don't believe in Jesus Christ
or God above, which frankly seems naïve.

And though that may sound harsh,
we can't change how we feel.
So what we'll do this holiday
is pretend that God is real.

And at your Christmas dinner
we'll act like we are praying,
while deep inside our conscious minds
we're bemused by what you're saying.

'Cause if God could answer prayers
there'd be no famine, greed, or war.
But we'll buy your bulls**t for one day,
'cause that's what friends are for.

We'll recognize your ancient laws as
we gather every year.

It's better to be loved than to make a point,
and enjoy some f**king Christmas cheer.

So we'll pretend that God is real
in the spirit of the season.

Soon you'll return to judging us
and we'll go back to being heathen.

Humanistic Judaism of Tampa Bay

Visit their [Meetup](#) or [email to Jeff Lipkes](#)

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Founded in 1988 by [Gary P. Posner, M.D.](#), Tampa Bay Skeptics is a nonprofit educational and scientific organization devoted to the critical examination of paranormal and fringe-science claims, and the dissemination of factual information about such claims. [Read More!](#)

Scientific Reasoning at the USAF Academy: An Examination into Titanium-Treated Necklaces

by Craig A. Foster, Christopher K. McClernon, and Richard F. Reich, *Skeptical Inquirer* · Feature · Volume 40.3

We used a classroom experiment at the United States Air Force Academy to examine whether [SEP] necklaces infused with microscopic-particle titanium, such as those sold by Phiten Corporation, [SEP] improve emotional well-being.

The Screening Test that Caused an Epidemic

by Harriet Hall, *Special Articles* · *SkepDoc's Corner*

October 21, 2016

Just because you *can* screen for a disease doesn't mean you *should*.

Stick It In Your Ear! How Not To Do Science

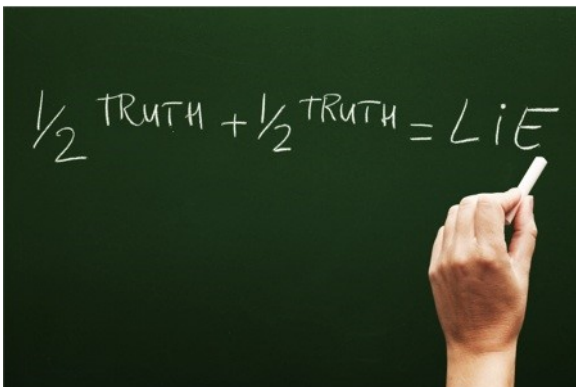
by Harriet Hall, *Skeptical Inquirer* · Feature · Volume 40.3

Ear acupuncture claims to relieve sore throats. A new study seeming to support that idea is so poorly done that it provides a textbook example of how to distinguish between good and bad science.

Gallows Ghosts? Mystery at Brisbane's Tower Mill, by

Joe Nickell, *Skeptical Inquirer* · Investigative Files · Volume 40.3

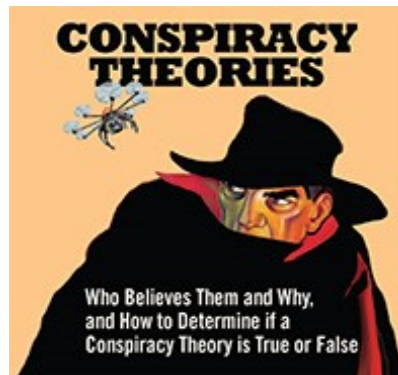
Residents in the neighborhood in the mid-twentieth century reported that "sometimes when they looked up at the small window facing the street they could see a faint glow and a figure inside the tower, swinging gently from side to side."



The Top Ten Strangest Beliefs

Michael Shermer has compiled a list of the top 10 strangest beliefs that he has encountered in his quarter century as a professional skeptic.

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Who believes them? Why? How can you tell if they're true?

What is a conspiracy theory, why do people believe in them, and why do they tend to proliferate? Why does belief in one conspiracy correlate to belief in others? What are the triggers of belief, and how does group identity factor into it? How can one tell the difference between a true conspiracy and a false one?

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It is inaccurate to say that I hate everything. I am strongly in favor of common sense, common honesty, and common decency. This makes me forever ineligible for public office. ~ H. L. Mencklen

We are here and it is now. Further than that, all human knowledge is moonshine. ~ H. L. Mencklen



Kevin Markwell writes: “When someone presumes I am a believer or challenges my disbelief, I will occasionally attempt a good-natured tactic” (below):

Me: Well, you know, after a lot of thought, I’m not so sure about a God, but I believe in Santa Claus.

Believer: What?!

Me: Yeah. Look at how well-accepted he is over so much of the world. And look at how much harmony and happiness he brings to so many.

Believer: But you know there’s no Santa Claus!

Me: You can’t prove that. Maybe he doesn’t reveal himself in any verifiable way, but I think he exists behind the scenes, instilling all the warmth, generosity, and good cheer of the season. The glowing face of a child with the faith that he is coming is pretty good evidence for me. He works in strange ways, but he usually gets the job done. Furthermore, his ability to see all, and his promise of rewarding good behavior is an irreplaceable motivator that improves the lives of families everywhere.

Believer: But he is an invention of the adults for the children.

Me: Do you really think that the universality and consistency of the story could be possible if there wasn’t some factual basis? I think in the old days he really did go to every house and magically popped down every chimney. But when the world got more populated and complicated he either couldn’t manage enough miracles or he just got tired of it, so he lets the parents take care of all the practical matters. Also, that way if they screw up the gifts on the lists, it’s not his fault.

Believer: But if you can believe in Santa Claus, why don’t you believe in God?

Me: I give Santa credit for doing a fairly good job of establishing and promoting the pervasive gift giving of the Christmas tradition. The only downside to the concept of Santa Claus is that some kids with parents who can’t afford to support the myth are disappointed. Otherwise it strikes me as a positive phenomenon. On the other hand, throughout the ages, throughout the world, the concept of God has created intractable hatreds, unprovoked persecutions, and all-out warfare. It seems that if there truly were a God capable of creating this magnificent universe, he would have prioritized peace and understanding a little higher in the scheme of things. So Santa Claus just makes more sense to me.

AXIAL TILT IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!

Wishing you peace and prosperity on this next trip 'round the sun.



ACLU of Greater Tampa Bay

Since the election, National ACLU went from 700,000 Facebook fans to more than

a million. Thank you to all of our supporters, new and old.

We would not be able to do the work we have ahead without you.

Will you join with us? <https://tampa.aclufl.org/>

We’re on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/aclufltampa/>

Column: [Defending rights in Florida after this election](#)

Change our nation’s libel laws to go after critics in the media. The day after the election, the ACLU of Florida staff met first to come to terms with our collective shock at the civil liberties challenges we are now surely facing, then to begin planning ... [Tampa Bay Times](#)

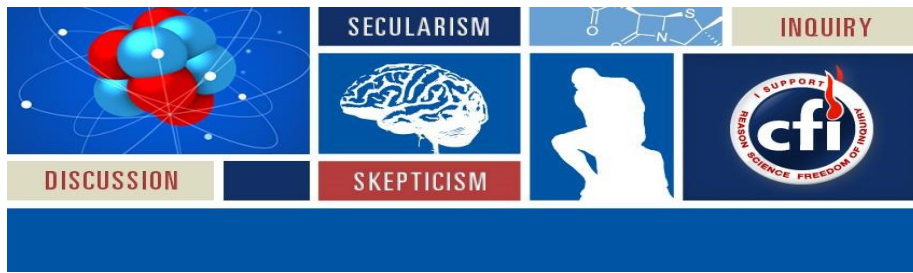


Clearwater UU Humanists

**Usually on the
3Rd Sunday at 12:30**

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.

In December, come to Winterfest Potluck.



GOD ON TRIAL

The Fable of the Christ

Michael B. Paulkovich

Appeared in [Free Inquiry](#), vol 34 issue 5, July 10, 2014

[As a “Christmas” treat, this tidbit is offered.]

I have always been a staunch Bible skeptic but not a Christ-mythicist. I maintained that Jesus probably existed but had fantastic stories foisted upon the memory of his earthly yet iconoclastic life.

After exhaustive research for my first book, I began to perceive both the light and darkness from history. I discovered that many prominent Christian fathers believed with all pious sincerity that their savior *never came to Earth* or that if he did, he was a Star-Trekian character who beamed down pre-haloed and full-grown, sans transvaginal egress. And I discovered other startling bombshells.

An exercise that struck me as meritorious, even today singular, involved reviving research into Jesus-era writers who *should have* recorded Christ tales but did not. John Remsburg enumerated forty-one “silent” historians in *The Christ* (1909). To this end, I spent many hours bivouacked in university libraries, the Library of Congress, and on the Internet. I terminated that foray upon tripling Remsburg’s count: in my book, I offer 126 writers who should have but did not write about Jesus (see the box on p. 57). Perhaps the most bewildering “silent one” is the super-Savior himself. Jesus is a phantom of a wisp of a personage who *never wrote anything*. So, add one more: 127.

Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2gs6rII>



Beyond atheism.
Beyond agnosticism.
Secular Humanism

Our local [Meetup](#) makes it easy to view and *RSVP* to our activities and 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; and some require prepayment.

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Great Lectures now on **YouTube**

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[Select Humanities Institute Lectures Now Available Online!](#)

Get caught up on some of the events you may have missed this semester or share one that you really loved with your students. Select lectures will now be available on YouTube.



[Richard Dawkins Foundation](#)
[for Reason & Science](#)

Richard’s Paragraph of the Week:

“Reason is not a thing. It is a function of the brain. Our brains have a hugely complex new layer, or set of layers, that have evolved to the point where we now have the ability to use language and to think more broadly about behavior. We can think about our thoughts. We can think about thinking about our thoughts. We can think about other people thinking about us thinking about their thoughts. (This is sometimes called Theory of Mind.) We can deliberate, compare, anticipate, contrast, imagine, and prioritize. We can run “what if” scenarios. We can refrain from acting and wait for more information. (That is one of the functions of the frontal lobe, which checks our actions in social settings. It is what keeps you from burping loudly at a wedding or funeral, for example.) We can investigate, read, and ask for help. We can search our memories for consequences to similar situations, past lessons, previous mistakes.”

– Dan Barker, *Life Driven Purpose*, pg 67

So much more to read [HERE](#). <http://bit.ly/2dggynJ>








Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – 2016 Calendar



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.*
 Your **RSVP** is requested, and often is required for admittance. *Meeting planners need this information.*
Check for more events + details on the Coalition of Reason Web site at: <http://www.tampabaycor.org/>



Listings below are regularly scheduled events. Check with the organization to confirm for any particular meeting.

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

December—Winterfest Pot Luck; February—Darwin Day