

Freethought News

Vol. 5 No. 6, June 2016 Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe,

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* TB-CoR Org.

Jeri Beth Maxie Gotts



Remembering Beth Maxie

See next page for a gathering to celebrate her life.

Your Career in Showbiz

Atheists of Florida is currently producing a regular online video series, the *Atheist Forum*, from our studio in South Tampa. We are always seeking help with the production either as crew members; writers, producers, camera, switchboard operators, or as participants for our program usually consisting of two or more presenters discussing a particular topic relating to science, education, state/church separation, art, philosophy, or any of a thousand other variegated topics.

This is a great experience dealing with exciting ideas and interesting people on a project that can make a significant contribution to the social and intellectual vibrancy of our community. Sessions are on Thursday nights, contingent on talent. If you would like to participate, contact AoF's Chris Brown at aof@aof.ngo.

Take the bus to ...

Reason

the Rally that is, in Washington D.C.
June 4th, 2016.

Updates here: <http://rallybus.net/reason-rally/>

Or...

If you can't make it to the rally, then join local folks for a "Watch Party" at AoF headquarters on June 4th, at:

5004 S. MacDill Ave Tampa FL

Time and other details: [AoF Meetup](#)

The Reason Rally and its member organizations are organizing a bus trip to bring Tampa Bay folks to the rally that is promised to be a major event on the national scene.

**"We are many! We are strong!
We are united! And we are here!"**

Directory

Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Calendar

[Rick O'Keefe](#)

Web site

[Jim Peterson](#)

Newsletter

[Jim Peterson](#)

Special Projects

Mark Brandt, Judy Adkins, & Bill Norsworthy

See our event website at:

www.evolutetampa.com

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

This publication online at: www.suncoasthumanist.com

Trump Might Win by Robert Reich

A new Washington Post/ABC News poll released Sunday finds Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in a statistical tie, with Trump leading Clinton 46 percent to 44 percent among registered voters. That's an 11 percent swing against Clinton since March.

A new NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, also released Sunday, shows Clinton at 46 percent to Trump's 43 percent. Previously she led 50 percent to 39 percent. Polls this far before an election don't tell us much. But in this case they do raise a serious question.

Since he cinched the Republican nomination two weeks ago, Trump has been the object of

.....see page 12

Looking for a copy of *Brief Candle in the Dark* by Richard Dawkins? See information on page 10.



Our 29th Year

The Humanist Society² of the Suncoast News

An Epicurean society dedicated to the proposition that the fully examined life is worth living well.
Associate organization of the Humanists of Florida, the AHA, COR, and CSH Find us at www.suncoasthumanist.com

Volume 24 No. 6 June, 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



Let us know what you think: in depth! Reader ideas and commentary will be given very favorable consideration.

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

Remembering Beth

Beth Maxi was suddenly and unexpectedly taken from us by a heart attack on Sunday, May 1st.

She served on the TB-CoR board almost from its inception, and was active in the Humanist Society, the UU Humanist group, and CFI. She contributed to, and was the ever present helpful and gracious personality at almost every event in the Tampa Bay freethought community.

A gathering of memories will take place on Saturday, June 4th at 2 PM at the Clearwater UU congregation, in the Octagon. All members are invited to come and share reminiscences and refresh their joy in the fact of our participation in her life, and she in ours.



This coming together will replace our regular meeting, the next one of which will be on July 9th instead of the 2nd because of the July 4th Holiday.



Tampa Bay Harvest

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.

Please join us at

**2:00 PM
June 4th***

in
The Octagon of
the Clearwater Unitarian -
Universalist Congregation

At:
2470 Nursery Rd,
Clearwater, FL 33764

[Map](#)

*This meeting only.



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 monthly social Dinner
for June, 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](#). Be there on Sunday June 19th 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?

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

Laugh Lines A Woman's Glossary of terms -2

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

Grocery list (grow•sree list) n What you spend half an hour writing, then forget to take to the store.

Hair dresser (hare dres•er) n. A magician who creates a hair style you can never duplicate.

Hardware store (hard•wer stor) n. Similar to a black hole in space: once he goes in, he isn't coming out any time soon.

Housework (haws•wrk) n. Work around the house including moping and washing dishes.

Childbirth (chlld•brth) n. You go through 36 hours of contractions. He holds your hand and says, "focus...breathe...push...."

Lipstick (lip•stik) n. On your lips, a color to enhance the beauty of your mouth. On his collar, a color only a tramp would wear.

Park (pahrk) v./n. Before children, a verb meaning, "to go somewhere and neck." After children, a noun meaning "a place with a swing set and slide".

Patience (pay•shuns) n. The most important ingredient for dating, marriage and children. See also "tranquilizers."

HUMANIST SOCIETY OF THE SUNCOAST

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

Board of Directors

Meets Sept., December, April

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Steve Brown,
Lois Fries, Secretary
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Jim Peterson, President
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Dec., Rob Byrch, Dec. Jackie Jordan,
Brent Yaciw, Mike Hubbard, Matt
Cooper Dec, Jim Butler
~*~*~*~*~*~*

Jordan Williams, mail Publisher

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

Need Psychological Counseling?

For a secular therapist,
click:

**Cognitive Neurosciences
Inc.**

or, **The Therapist Project,**

or, **Lynda Gurvitz,**
(727) 725-8820

or, **Patricia Walters,**
(813) 452-6547



Tampa Humanist Association

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

June 18th, 11 AM

Discussion Leader: *Lucas Hopegood*

TBA While we haven't settled on a topic just yet, you can be sure that we will have a grand adventure exploring vital questions and engaging that most profound of human qualities: your intelligence.

The experience you've accumulated, and the knowledge picked up in the course of everyday living is the substance of great insight. Share it with us.

JP

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



Show off your commitment to Science and Reason!



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

Order from [Rick O'Keefe](#)

Tampa Bay CoR
TAMPA BAY COALITION OF REASON

Tampa Bay CoR

9654 W. Linebaugh Ave. PMB #110

Tampa, FL 33626

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-TampaBay, Tampa Humanist Association, Institute for Science and Human Values, Humanist Society of the Suncoast, UU Humanists Clearwater, Atheists of Florida, UU Humanists Tampa,* Freethinkers @ USF,* Plus numerous Meetup organizations that promote 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 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.org/>



Member, TB-CoR
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.

A Humanist Discussion group in east Tampa !

UU Humanists of Tampa

Meetings temporarily suspended for the summer.

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/>

“Is it too modern to notice that there is nothing [in the ten commandments] about the protection of children from cruelty, nothing about rape, nothing about slavery, and nothing about genocide? Or is it too exactly “in context” to notice that some of these very offenses are about to be positively recommended?”

Christopher Hitchens



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

Prospects for Civilization

Prior to the fossil-fueled Industrial Revolution, the share of the global population that lived in cities was small—less than 10 percent. Today, just over half of humanity lives in cities. At some stage, the trend toward urbanization will taper off or even reverse itself. It is impossible to know how close we are to that tipping point, but it could well occur during this century, and a decline in available energy is likely to be the key driving factor.

Analogous historic moments have been associated with the collapse of complex societies. Civilization is defined, literally, by city dwelling (*civis*, the Latin root of the word *civilization*, means “city”). Urban living historically has brought with it social stratification and full-time division of labor. As civilizations expand, they urbanize; when they fail, cities empty out and people return to subsistence agriculture or foraging. The process of collapse typically entails massive mortality.

As ancient civilizations crumbled, absent sound leadership from elites, people responded by creating new, simpler social and economic arrangements that required smaller energy investments. We can see the faint beginnings of similar trends today in the “sharing economy,” in organizations of idealistic young organic farmers, and in Transition initiatives. Although the 1970s “back-to-the-land” movement (which coincided with historic energy crises) largely fizzled, perhaps due to cheap oil flowing from the North Sea and Alaska during the 1980s and 1990s, we may be on the cusp of similar, more widespread, and possibly more desperate trends today.

[BUY THE BOOK](#) - Order your copy now using the discount code **4SOTW**

From Can a City Be Sustainable? (State of the World) by The Worldwatch Institute. Copyright © 2016 Worldwatch Institute. Reproduced by permission of Island Press, Washington, DC.

Dorothy Wylie



1915 - 2016

Teacher, Playwright, Extraordinary Humanist

More information on a memorial will be forthcoming.

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, Inc.

(SPAC), has been meeting continuously since 1927.

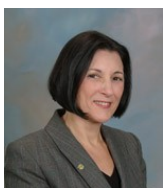
It was incorporated in 1979 as a nonprofit, tax deductible organization.

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

spaceaminer@gmail.com



Meetings are normally held on the fourth Friday of each month (except November and December when it is on the third Friday) at the Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22nd Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL., at 8:00 P.M. Meetings are open to the public.



TBCoR Leadership Team 2016

Toni Van Pelt ~ ISHV

Bill Norsworthy UUCH

Mark Brandt, UUCH

Chris Brown, MAF

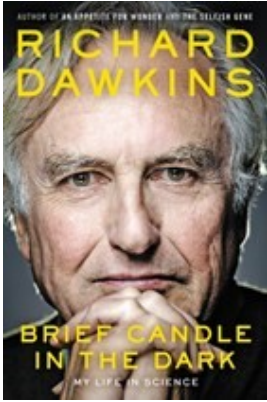
Jenn Hancock, TBHF

Rick O'Keefe, CFI, TBS

Jim Peterson, HSS, TBPC

Al Hann AoF ~

Meaningful Books



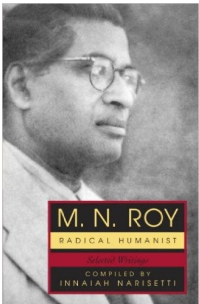
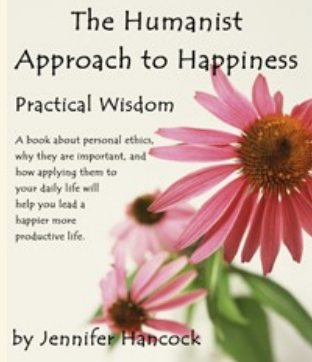
The last few copies, signed by Richard Dawkins, are available. This is his recent autobiography that he presented to us in Clearwater last October.

Order here:

<http://bit.ly/EvolveTampa>

Our own Jennifer Hancock's popular book that guides readers into happiness through applied Humanist ethics. Look at reviews, applicability, and discount savings here:

<http://happiness.jen-hancock.com>



M.N. Roy emphasized ethics and eschewed supernatural interpretations as antithetical to his scientifically oriented conception of "new humanism." He also underscored the importance of universal education to make average people scientifically literate and to teach them critical thinking. Get it here: <http://amzn.to/1RdYPnm>

Investigator Joe Nickell applies psychological and scientific scrutiny to many varied claimed "miracles". How many of them seem valid? Are they all due to faulty perception or recall, bias, hoaxing and the will to believe?

Buy here: <http://bit.ly/1RdWPLR>

Looking for a Miracle



Joe Nickell



More *Seasonings* by CFI & Humanist Society member and journalist- poet, **Lula J. Dovi**. She has completed a second illustrated chapbook of poetry reflecting on her 92 years of adventures. It is available at [Google Books](https://books.google.com/books) now. But the first [can be found here](#).

Evolve Fish is a good source for your freethought goodies:
Pins, jewelry, posters, buttons, bumper stickers, t-shirts, etc
<http://evolvefish.com/>

The Matt Cooper

Memorial Humanist Lending Library

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

TITLE

1. The Expanding Circle
2. In Gods we Trust
3. Why Evolution is True
4. The Second World
5. Denialism
6. The Selfish Gene
7. Democracy Incorporated
8. The Upside Irrationality
9. The End of Growth
10. The God Delusion
11. All That We Share
12. Sex, Time, and Power
13. Sex at Dawn
14. What liberal Media
15. The End of Faith
16. Plan B
17. The Portable Atheist
18. Open Society
19. Non Believer Nation
20. God on Trial
21. Natural Experiments of History
22. The Missionary Position
23. Life Inc
24. A brief History of Time
25. Breaking the Spell
26. The Philosophy of Humanism
27. The Quotable Atheist
28. 50 Reasons People Give for Believing In
29. Mathematics and Politics
30. Stealing Elections
31. The God Virus
32. What Every American Should Know About World
33. Imagine There's no Heaven
34. Hidden Order
35. What the Dog Saw
36. Sway
37. The Better Angels of our Nature
38. Letter to a Young Contrarian
39. Hot, Flat, and Crowded
40. Gaming the Vote
41. Subversion Fable
43. Evolution and the Big Question
44. Why People Believe Weird Things
45. The World is Curved
46. The Snow Ball
47. The Moral Landscape
48. How We Believe
49. Full House
50. The Origins of Political Order
51. Asimov's Guide to the Bible
52. Autobiography of Mark Twain
53. Science Friction
54. Genius
55. Inevitable Illusions
56. Sex & God
57. Being Right Is Not Enough
58. Loser Takes All
59. Taking Back Politics
60. What Happened in Ohio?
61. Autobiography of Mark Twain
62. The Sceptics Annotated Bible
63. Database Systems (Complete Ver.)
64. Reluctant Database Administrators
65. Asimov's Guide to the Bible
66. Inevitable Illusions
67. Ain't Nobody's business If You Do
69. Bonk
70. What Money Can't Buy
71. Financial Shenanigans
72. Sex & God
73. Best American Non required Reading
74. Reporting at Wit's End
75. Corporations are not People
76. Could I Vote Mormon for president?
77. Culture of Honor
78. Rot on the Vine
79. **Thoughts of a Freethinker** **New!**

AUTHOR

- Peter Singer
Scott Atran
Jerry Coyne
Panag Khanna
Michael Specter
Richard Dawkins
Sheldon Wolin
Dan Ariely
Richard Heinberg
Richard Dawkins
Jay Wallgasper
Leonard Shlain
C. Ryan, & C. Jetha
Eric Alderman
Sam Harris
Lester Brown
Christopher Hitchens
George Soros
David Niöse
Peter Irons
Diamond-Robinson
Christopher Hitchens
Douglas Rushkoff
Stephen Hawkins
Daniel Dennett
Corliss Lamont
Jack Huberman
God. G. Harrison
Alan Taylor
John Fund
Darrel Ray
Editors of Free Inquiry
David Friedman
Malcom Gladwell
Ori, Rom Brafman
Steven Pinker
Christopher Hitchens
Thomas Friedman
William Poundstone
Alexa KcKearing
David Stamos
Michael Shermer
David Snick
Warren Buffett
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Michael Shermer
Steven Jay Gould
Francis Fukuyama
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Michael Shermer
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Piatrelli & Palmarini
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Cathy Allen
Fitrikis, Rosenfeld & Wasserman
Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith
Kifer, Bernstein, & Lewis
Josef Finsel
Isaac Asimov
M. Piatrelli-Palmarini
Peter McWilliams
Mary Roach
Michael J. Sandel
Howard Shilit
Darrel Ray, ED.D
Dave Eagers
St. Clair McKelway
Clements
Cragun – Phillips
Nisbett – Cohen
Stenesh
Kaye

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

Florida Atheists



Chair, Tracy Thomas; President pro-tem, Al Hann



Join members of our Tampa chapter at our new headquarters / Studio Building

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

June, 2016 - 5004 S. MacDill Ave Tampa Fl.

Are you concerned about the upcoming school board elections?

Help Atheists of Florida research candidates running for school board across the state of Florida. We will survey them on their views of state-church separation and the teaching of science, then publish the results so voters can have a better understanding before voting (we will not be endorsing any candidate). This can be done from your home, no need to go anywhere. The first elections are in August, so we need to get started very soon. Just send an email to elections@aof.ngo to volunteer.

Not going to the Reason Rally?

We are planning to air a special video feed from the rally stage featuring all the fantastic speakers about reason and critical thinking and snacks of course. Free at our office from 9:45AM to around 6PM on the 4th. (Donations would be nice.) Look for info on our meetup site or email us at aof@aof.ngo.

Did you know that this year is the 225th anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights?

We will be having an event in December to observe this anniversary, especially as it relates to the establishment clause. If you would like to help organize this event, please send an e-mail to aof@aof.ngo about your concerns, ideas, etc. and we will discuss them.

St Pete Atheists // Freethought Group

Moderated by: Gary Thompson

Wednesday, May 18, 2016 7:00 PM

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"

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.



Clearwater, Florida

This month, our meeting will be at the Memorial for our member, **Beth Maxi** on June 4th See page 2

Stay tuned during July for our Hot Days spectacular at Chilis

Trump v. Clinton, Immunizations, Climate Change, Miracles, Consumer "goods", Commercials, ETC.....

Ready for Skepti-Camp 2 ?

Remedies good for what ails ye.

Remember what fun we had last time? Do you miss it? Don't be "left behind" this time, register now for SKEPTICAMP2 - August 27th, 2016, 1pm - 6pm (doors open at 12:30 PM.) Watch for more details as we get closer to the event. Limited seating. Tickets can be had at: [HTTP://aof.ngo/skepticamp2](http://aof.ngo/skepticamp2)

[Sign up to be a discussion leader now](#)

This will be a fundraiser for AOF as well as continuing education for the community. Tickets are available in advance for \$10 for AOF members (membership in the organization, not just in the meetup group), \$15 for non-AOF members (but includes a year membership in AOF.) \$15 at the door for everyone
See report of the first one [here](#).

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*.

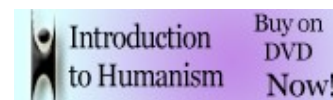


Humanist Families organizes social outings every month. These are opportunities to do something fun, socialize and enjoy each other's company. Sometimes we go to a park, sometimes a museum, sometimes we go swimming. Our group has grown over the past year to the point we now organize Tampa area outings 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](#). See more at: <http://www.Jen-Hancock.com>.

Thank you! **Jennifer Hancock**



Tampa Bay Thinkers



Thinking deep thoughts about serious matters since 2008. Carrollwood Cultural Center, Tampa, every 3rd Monday, monthly at 7 PM.

June 20th Topic:
TBA

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

The Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers



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

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

On the web at: www.maaf.info

Contact: Chris (christbrown@yahoo.com)
MSGT, USAF (Retired)

Co-Organizer:

MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB, FL

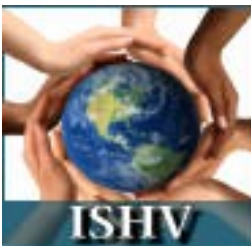


Freethinkers@USF is a multi-cultural, interdisciplinary student society which welcomes USF students who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics, skeptics, freethinkers, humanists, or religiously open-minded

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

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

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



The Institute for Science and Human Values

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



Tampa Bay Computer Society & Doc's Café

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Rick O'Keefe

“Do No Harm” Act Would End RFRA’s Religious Impositions, Says Center for Inquiry

The Center for Inquiry (CFI) applauds and supports the introduction of the “Do No Harm Act,” an amendment to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) that would prevent its use in situations that involve third-party harm, helping to end the law’s sanctioning of religious discrimination and imposition.

The measure, introduced this morning by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Rep. Joe Kennedy III (D-MA), would amend RFRA by adding language stating that RFRA should not be interpreted to allow the imposition of one’s religious views or practices upon another, to authorize discrimination against others because of one’s religious views, or to sanction any kind of meaningful harm through a legal exemption. In addition, the amendment guarantees that RFRA cannot be used to deny goods or services to beneficiaries served by government contracts and grants.

“Freedom of religion is a fundamental right that protects all Americans, but this freedom does not include the right to restrict or control the behavior of others,” said Nicholas Little, Vice-President and General Counsel for the Center for Inquiry. “At its inception, CFI was one of very few voices cautioning that RFRA would permit religiously motivated discrimination, whether against religious minorities, the non-religious, women, or LGBTQ Americans. Sadly, we were right. But this fix would help ensure that the law could no longer be used as a weapon to impose one person’s religious beliefs on other unwilling parties.”

“We thank Reps. Scott and Kennedy for taking a bold and important step today to protect the religious freedom and equal rights of all Americans,” said Michael De Dora CFI’s director of public policy. “Members of Congress should put aside their partisan differences and approve this fair-minded amendment. We look forward to working with our partners on Capitol Hill, including religious, non-religious, church-state, and civil rights groups, to move this important measure forward.”



Threatened with Death, Bangladeshi Blogger Gets Asylum in Germany, Helped by Center for Inquiry

A secular writer and activist targeted for death by militant Islamists in Bangladesh has been granted asylum in Germany. After receiving several threats due to her advocacy, **Shammi Haque** sought help from the U.S.-based Center for Inquiry, which supplied her with emergency assistance to help ensure her safe relocation. Read the rest: <http://bit.ly/1ODHbKf>

22-year-old Shammi Haque has built a reputation in Bangladesh as a respected, outspoken, and fearless activist on behalf of secularism and free expression. On her blog, she wrote in support of democracy and human rights, and spoke against radical Islam. In public protests and demonstrations, she became a highly visible critic of religious extremism, a recognized symbol of secular resistance. This made her a target of those same militants who brutally murdered several writers and activists associated with secularism and criticism of radical Islam.

Humanism offers people an opportunity to socialize, get support, take part in civic evolution, enrich their minds; or just attend activities without contributing time or money. Whether one is a participant or is a bit shy, it helps to learn what humanism is. A couple of definitions are:

- ◇ ◇ Any system that puts human interests and the human mind paramount, rejecting the supernatural, belief in a god, etc.
- ◇ ◇ An outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. Humanist beliefs stress the potential value and goodness of human beings, emphasize common human needs, and seek solely rational ways of solving human problems.

That’s all well and good, but it is only a starting point. To paraphrase the Bible, calling oneself a humanist without actually working to improve oneself and society, without joining in, is a dead end. Do you agree? Let us know. *rok*

Support CFI-Tampa Bay

Join now to keep informed about our activities, participate in our programs, and become a member!



A cross displayed in a public park in Pensacola, Fla., isn't a problem because it's "simply there" and it's like a tree.

I know. It doesn't make sense. Yet those arguments were made recently by the Pensacola *News-Journal* after the American Humanist Association (AHA) and the Freedom From Religion Foundation filed suit to remove a Latin cross from Bayview Park. The suit, which the groups filed on behalf of four residents, argues that the display of a sectarian symbol on public land violates the First Amendment.

According to the *News-Journal*, the groups tried to resolve the matter outside of court. They sent letters asking city officials to remove the cross from the park last July, but it's still there.

"Federal courts have made abundantly clear that the government's display of a Christian cross on public land violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment," said AHA attorney Monica Miller in a statement. "This cross sends a clear and exclusionary message of government preference for Christianity over all other religions." The cross, naturally, has plenty of local defenders. Pensacola Mayor Ashton Hayward said the city would review the cross in light of the lawsuit, but added that he hoped a "compromise that respects the law and the prevailing preference of the residents" could be reached. In statements on his [official Facebook page](#), State Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Pensacola) condemned the "liberal lawsuit." "America will always be a friendly place for the Cross and we won't be taking any down in Northwest Florida," he wrote. Gaetz, it should be noted, is currently running to represent the area in the U.S. Congress.

The *News-Journal's* editorial board also supported the cross in a nigh incoherent piece that attempted to argue that the cross is somehow simultaneously religious and non-sectarian.

"It's a silent, long-present part of the landscape not unlike the many oaks and pines that stand solemnly along the Bayou Texar shoreline," [the paper asserted](#). "What the manufactured controversy over it demonstrates is what so-called 'humanist' groups often miss about the human experience – that freedom of religion does not necessitate, nor mandate, a freedom from religious imagery. It never has."

The overwrought editorial also contains this gem: "In reality, the slender white cross is a benign structure surrounded by all the diversity and vibrant activity in Bayview Park. Kayakers float at a distance from it. Joggers move past it. Dogs chase squirrels around it. Skateboarders lounge beside it."

(Oh, well, if *squirrels* are being chased that changes everything. Even first-year law students know that under long-standing court precedent, constitutional violations are negated when harried squirrels are present.)

Seriously, it's surpassingly odd to compare a Latin cross to a tree. It's apples and oranges, obviously: The cross is a manufactured thing, created for a purpose and to send a message. Yes, it may be made from wood, but it functions quite differently than a simple pine or oak. Read more here: <https://au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/in-the-crosshairs-fla-city-debates-future-of-sectarian-symbol-in-public>

A Tradition of Advocacy

For Religious Liberty



Ever wonder what other Florida Freethought groups are doing?



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

FLORIDA REPORT
Civil liberties news in the Sunshine State



U.S. Senators are about to head to their home states for recess. These next few weeks are critical to [urge Senators to act on meaningful and effective criminal justice reform](#).

Across party lines many Senators support the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act. This bill will roll back some of the damage and discriminatory sentencing that began as part of the failed War on Drugs.

[Before you begin your Memorial Day Weekend, add your name to tell the Senate to support the most significant proposed criminal justice reform legislation in years.](#)

The Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act would retroactively reduce some of the harshest federal prison sentences for non-violent drug offenses that began as part of the failed War on Drugs. It would lower multiple mandatory minimums for drug offenses – draconian punishments that disproportionately hurt people of color.

It's time to end the failed policies that have kept so many people ensnared in the system for decades. It's time to reform legislation so that impacted families and communities can begin to heal.



Connect with the [ACLU of Florida](#)

BECAUSE FREEDOM CAN'T PROTECT ITSELF JOIN THE ACLU

Tampa Bay CoR welcomes new Freethought Group

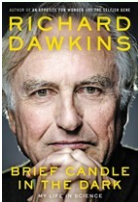
[Inaugural Freethought Fellowship Meetup](#)

When: July 24, 2016 @ 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
Where: Spirit of Life UU (18412 Burrell Road
Odessa, FL, 33556
Contact: MAILTO: info@meetup.com [Tampa Bay](#)

Join us to hear about our local creative community, and the growth of Makerspaces throughout the Tampa Bay area, and enjoy some homegrown music followed by a potluck social afterwards

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A Field Guide to Critical Thinking

James Lett SKEPTICAL INQUIRER Volume 14.2, Winter 1990

Selected article from *Tampa Bay Skeptics Report* <http://bit.ly/TBSReport-OnLine>



There are many reasons for the popularity of paranormal beliefs in the United States today, including:

- ◆ ◆ the irresponsibility of the mass media, who exploit the public taste for nonsense,
- ◆ ◆ the irrationality of the American world-view, which supports such unsupportable claims as life after death and the efficacy of the polygraph, and
- ◆ ◆ the ineffectiveness of public education, which generally fails to teach students the essential skills of critical thinking.

As a college professor, I am especially concerned with this third problem. Most of the freshman and sophomore students in my classes simply do not know how to draw reasonable conclusions from the evidence. At most, they've been taught in high school what to think; few of them know how to think. In an attempt to remedy this problem at my college, I've developed an elective course called "Anthropology and the Paranormal." The course examines the complete range of paranormal beliefs in contemporary American culture, from precognition and psychokinesis to channeling and cryptozoology and everything between and beyond, including astrology, UFOs, and creationism. I teach the students very little about anthropological theories and even less about anthropological terminology. Instead, I try to communicate the essence of the anthropological perspective, by teaching them, indirectly, what the scientific method is all about. I do so by teaching them how to evaluate evidence. I give them six simple rules to follow when considering any claim, and then show them how to apply those six rules to the examination of any paranormal claim. The six rules of evidential reasoning are my own distillation and simplification of the scientific method. To make it easier for students to remember these half-dozen guidelines, I've coined an acronym for them: Ignoring the vowels, the letters in the word "FiLCHeRS" stand for the rules of Falsifiability, Logic, Comprehensiveness, Honesty, Replicability, and Sufficiency. Apply these six rules to the evidence offered for any claim, I tell my students, and no one will ever be able to sneak up on you and steal your belief. You'll be filch-proof. [Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/1Tv7FmL>]



From the Secular Coalition of America...

In May, Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA), along with seven co-sponsors, introduced the Transparency in Taxpayer-Funded Discrimination Act (HR 5265). This bill would require the Department of Education to make publicly available the list of religious colleges that have requested and/or received religious exemptions to civil rights laws.

These exemptions allow colleges to discriminate against students in a variety of ways, including student admissions, financial aid, housing, sports teams and clubs. The bill was introduced with the intent of allowing students to make informed decisions about their higher educational choices, without unknowingly setting themselves up to be discriminated against.

Although the Department of Education has published the current list of schools requesting these exemptions on its own, this bill would make it a requirement for future administrations. [Write to your Representative now and ask them to co-sponsor this important bill.](#)

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

Trump might Win *From page 1*

...even more unfavorable press than he was before – about his treatment of women, his propensity to lie, his bizarre policy proposals.

Before this came months of news coverage of his bigotry, megalomania, narcissism, xenophobia, refusals to condemn violence at his rallies, refusals to distance himself from white supremacists, and more lies.

So how can Trump be pulling even with Hillary Clinton?

Throughout the Republican primaries, pundits and pollsters repeatedly told us he'd peaked, that his most recent outrageous statement was his downfall, that he was viewed as so unlikeable he didn't stand a chance of getting the nomination.

But in my travels around the country I've found many who support him precisely because of the qualities he's being criticized for having.

A Latina-American from Laredo, Texas, tells me she and most of her friends are for Trump because he wants to keep Mexicans out. She thinks too many Mexicans have come here illegally, making it harder for those here legally.

A union member from Pittsburgh says he's for Trump because he'll be tough on American companies shipping jobs abroad, tough with the Chinese, tough with Muslims.

A small businessman in Cincinnati tells me he's for Trump because "Trump's not a politician. He'll give them hell in Washington."

Political analysts have underestimated Trump from the jump because they've been looking through the rear-view mirror of politics as it used to be.

Trump's rise suggests a new kind of politics. You might call it anti-politics.

The old politics pitted right against left, with presidential aspirants moving toward the center once they cinched the nomination. Anti-politics pits Washington insiders, corporate executives, bankers, and media moguls against a growing number of people who think the game is rigged against them. There's no center, only hostility and suspicion.

Americans who feel like they're being screwed are attracted to an authoritarian bully – a strongman who will kick ass. The former reality TV star who repeatedly told contestants they were "fired!" appears tough and confrontational enough to take on powerful vested interests.

That most Americans don't particularly like Trump is irrelevant. As one Midwesterner told me a few weeks ago, "He may be a jerk, but he's our jerk."

By the same token, in this era of anti-politics, any candidate who appears to be the political establishment is at a strong disadvantage. This may be Hillary Clinton's biggest handicap.

The old politics featured carefully crafted speeches and policy proposals calculated to appeal to particular constituencies. In this sense, Mrs. Clinton's proposals and speeches are almost flawless.

But in the new era of anti-politics Americans are skeptical of well-crafted speeches and detailed policy proposals. They prefer authenticity. They want their candidates unscripted and unfiltered.

A mid-level executive in Salt Lake City told me he didn't agree with Trump on everything but supported him because "the guy is the real thing. He says what he believes, and you know where he stands."

In the old politics, political parties, labor unions and business groups, and the press mediated between individual candidates and the public – explaining a candidate's positions, endorsing candidates, organizing and mobilizing voters.

In this era of anti-politics, it's possible for anyone with enough ego, money, and audacity – in other words, Donald Trump – to do it all himself: declaring himself a candidate; communicating with and mobilizing voters directly through Twitter and other social media; and getting free advertising in mainstream media by being outrageous, politically incorrect, and snide. Official endorsements are irrelevant.

Donald Trump has perfected the art of anti-politics at a time when the public detests politics. Which is why so many experts in how politics used to be played have continuously underestimated his chances.

And why Trump's demagoguery – channeling the prejudices and fears of Americans who have been losing ground – makes him the most dangerous nominee of a major political party in American history.

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The Institute for Science and Human Values

Inspired by Empathy and Creativity, guided by Reason

Paul Kurtz, Founder • Jonathan Kurtz, Chairman



The Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

May 10, 2016

Re: CARD Opposes Taxpayer-Funded Employment Discrimination

82 religious, education, civil rights, labor, and women's organizations wrote to voice strong opposition to any amendments to S. 2814, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2017, that would sanction taxpayer-funded employment discrimination.

The government should never fund discrimination and no taxpayer should be disqualified from a job under a federal contract or grant because he or she is the "wrong" religion.

While expressing appreciation for the important role religiously affiliated institutions historically have played in addressing many of our nation's most pressing social needs, as a complement to government funded programs, they also recognized that the separation of church and state is the linchpin of religious freedom. In their view, effective government collaboration with faith-based groups does not require the sanctioning of federally funded religious discrimination.

Because it is inconsistent with the longstanding principle that federal dollars must not be used to discriminate, we urge you to reject any efforts to sanction taxpayer-funded employment discrimination in federal contracts and grants.

Toni Van Pelt, President and Public Policy Director [website. www.instituteforscienceandhumanvalues.net](http://www.instituteforscienceandhumanvalues.net)



Katha Pollitt and Soraya Chemaly Added to Women in Secularism 4

Few events in the freethought world have sparked as much conversation, debate, and inspiration as CFI's Women in Secularism conferences. It's been almost two years since the third such conference, and the time has come to reconvene on this pivotal topic.

[Women in Secularism 4](#) will be taking place September 23–25 in Arlington, VA, and there are many things to talk about: The intrusion of religion into women's lives; violence against women around the world who refuse to let dogma relegate them to second-class status; the role of "safe spaces" within a movement that champions free expression; and so much more.

And now, the conference is adding journalists and activists **Katha Pollitt** and **Soraya Chemaly** to an already incredible lineup of speakers that includes **Rebecca Goldstein**, **Julia Sweeney**, **Bonya Rafida Ahmed**, **Melanie Brewster**, **Wendy Kaminer**, **Kavin Senapathy**, and many more.

So don't wait. [Register](#) for this highly anticipated conference now.

In Memoriam: Sir Harry Kroto by Joe Nickell

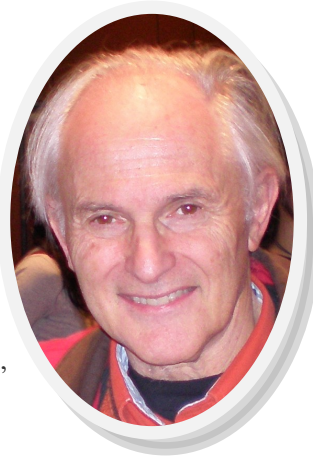
English chemist, Nobel laureate, humanist, CSI Fellow, and all-around admirable human being, **Sir Harold Kroto** has left those of us who knew him saddened over his death, April 30, 2016, of Lou Gehrig's disease.

Harry (as he wanted to be called) was best known as co-recipient of the 1996 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. He, Robert Curl, and Richard Smalley discovered carbon 60, a new form wherein 60 carbon atoms form a ball-shaped polyhedron molecule, reminiscent of R. Buckminster "Bucky" Fuller's geodesic dome. (Hence the molecules were called "buckyballs" and the related class of molecules were the *fullerenes*. The most common fullerene molecule is named Buckminsterfullerene.)

Harry said: "To be a scientist is to be fascinated by the Universe, to have the same attitude as that of a child." What did that consist of? Simply curiosity and openness. Richard Dawkins paid him the high compliment of saying that he had "the curiosity of a child." He loved children. He and his wife of over a half century, Lady Margaret Kroto, had two of their own, and Harry was constantly involved in giving workshops for children and in supporting his Vega Science Trust, an educational charity, and other endeavors.

Harry never lost his sense of childlike wonder—whether he was working at chemistry, physics, or mathematics, or using his impressive talent as a graphic artist and designer, or engaging in any of his myriad other interests, including music.

I first met this remarkable man when we were fellow presenters at a CSI mini-conference in Tallahassee in October 2011. We had a very engaging conversation: about Buckminster Fuller (with whom I was once fascinated to spend part of an afternoon) and—among other topics—Harry's invention of a magic trick. We must've acted like a couple of kids. I'll always remember him that way.



CSiCon 2016: An Oasis of Reason in the Desert



It's time for skeptics everywhere to gather in a town full of magical thinking! [CSiCon 2016](#), the year's biggest skeptics' conference, will take place **October 27–30 in Las Vegas!** Get set to bring your critical mind to the City of Light, where you'll hear from the icons of skepticism, such as the amazing **James Randi**, evolutionary biologist **Richard Dawkins**, science education champion **Eugenie Scott**, memory expert **Elizabeth Loftus**, physicist **Lawrence Krauss**, climate scientist **Michael Mann**, *The New Yorker's* **Maria Konnikova**, and so many more.

The conference will take place in the stellar Excalibur Hotel and Casino and will feature amazing presentations, illuminating workshops, a Halloween costume party, and, being that this is the Excalibur, a joust dinner at the Tournament of Kings.

This is no illusion; it's really happening. Investigate it for yourself, [and register right now](#).



Reason Rally 2016: CFI Is Your Home Base, On the Ground and Online

[The 2016 Reason Rally](#) is just around the corner, and it's likely to be the biggest celebration of the nonreligious in history. And whether you're at the Rally in person, or you're looking to keep tabs from home, the Center for Inquiry will be at the center of it all and your prime source for everything that's going on.

This week, CFI announced a great way for everyone to stay informed and up to date on what's happening at the Rally with [CFI Live at the Reason Rally](#). This will be your central hub for all things Reason Rally, frequently updated throughout the event with news and highlights, interviews with speakers and attendees, insights and commentary from CFI's on-the-ground team, and much more. Whether you're sitting comfortably at home or celebrating on the National Mall, you'll be able to keep current by checking in throughout the Rally at [centerforinquiry.live](#).

And for all those who will be at the Rally, make a point of coming to the Exhibitors' Tent, where you'll see the combined display of CFI, the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science, and the Openly Secular campaign! There, you'll be able to meet with CFI team members and special guests, take a photo or video for Openly Secular, and even get a chance to win some cool freethought swag and memorabilia. CFI will be a major part of every aspect of the Reason Rally and its surrounding events, so If you haven't already, [go plan your trip now!](#) And starting June 4, stay up to date with [CFI Live](#).

Tampa Bay Coalition – JUNE, 2016 Calendar of Reason



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



06-02, Thursday, 7 PM	CLEARWATER & S TAMPA– Atheists of Florida , Inc.	Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup
06-04, Saturday, 2 PM	DUNEDIN– Humanist Soc. of the Suncoast	Memorial for Beth Maxie. Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists
06-04, Saturday, 2 PM	TAMPA – Center for Inquiry	Memorial for Beth Maxie. Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup
06-04, Saturday, 2 PM	E. CLEARWATER– UU Clearwater Humanists	Memorial for Beth Maxie. Details: http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists
06-10, Friday, 7 PM at MOSI	E. TAMPA– Museum Astronomical Resource Society (MARS) at MOSI	Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/1Psc2Pi Other events: http://bit.ly/MARS-home
06-18, Saturday, 11 AM	NE TAMPA – Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists
06-19, 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
06-25, Saturday, 10:30 AM; <i>Must have read the book to attend</i>	NW HILLSBOROUGH– CFI Readers Book Discussion	Limited to 12 <i>paid-up CFI members</i> . RSVP is required. http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup
06-27, Monday, 6 PM	N. PINELLAS AREA– CFI Freethought Supper	RSVP is required. Seating is limited to 25! For CFI & TBS <i>paid members</i> . http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup
Every 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
Summer break Lectures & receptions	E. TAMPA– Humanities Institute at USF	See Web site for full listing of many events & calendar. http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities Locations vary!
TBA	TAMPA BAY AREA– Humanist Families	RSVP here: Family outings and other activities. Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN
TBA	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. RSVP here: http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers



2017 Freethought Cruise with Hemant Mehta

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