

Freethought News

Vol. 5 No. 9, September 2016 Jim Peterson, Rick

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* TB-CoR Org.

Upcoming Events

- October** - The Great Climate Debate
- December** - Solstice Humanlight End-of-the-year Celebration and annual Potluck.
- January** - AoF presents Skeptivent: The essentials of Critical Thinking in one afternoon.
- February** - Darwin Day. TB-CoR's big annual event hosting some the worlds greatest scientists.



Now is the Time

To meet the critical issues of our time as a freethinker: one no longer burdened with the clinking detritus of a benighted past. Join one (or more!) of our member organizations, pay your dues, speak up at public meetings: make a difference.

Being an humanist atheist is nothing to hide when the world desperately needs the kind thinking that you can apply. Not Jesus, nor Vishnu, nor any other god is going to save our world: that's your job.

Editor reports gravity remains as attractive as ever.

Jim Peterson tells us that his recent close inspection of the sidewalk outside the Dunedin Library in August left him powerfully impressed with the strength of the impact we have come to expect with the force that holds the planets in their orbits. He hopes the sling will be off his broken shoulder by October. Til then he advises no further inspections are necessary.

School district tells Hillsborough principal: Don't lead prayer circles



Marlene Sokol, Times Staff Writer
Tuesday, August 9, 2016 4:42pm

TAMPA — A Riverview elementary school principal has received a warning letter from his bosses over a faculty prayer session that took place last week on his campus as the staff prepared for the new school year.

The Aug. 4 letter from chief of staff Alberto Vazquez went out to principal Anthony Montoto, describing a video in which "you, the Assistant Principal and members of the Frost Elementary School staff were praying on Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2016 at the start of the day during pre-planning week."

Under state and federal law, Vazquez wrote, "all schools must assure that our actions are lawful and respectful of others and remain inclusive and neutral among religions and between religion and non-religion." <snip>

On Wednesday, at a news conference, the *Tampa Bay Times* asked superintendent Jeff Eakins if such an event was ever appropriate on school grounds.

"I think everyone must have their own willingness to do something like that," Eakins said. "What an individual chooses to do, an individual chooses to do."

Full story [here](#).

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.evolvetampa.com

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

Happiness

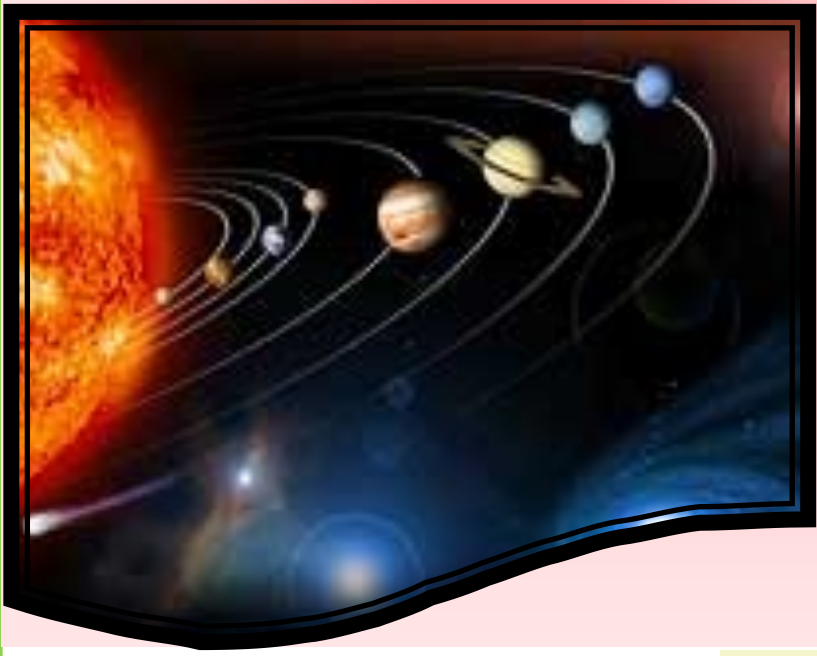
Our 29th Year

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

This will be a commentary on the longest trip we will ever make. Our Sun is 93 million miles away from Earth. There are hundreds of billions of stars in the Milky Way, distant galaxies are billions of light-years away. Such numbers are virtually impossible for the human mind to grasp ... but Humanist board member with a background in science and technology, *Jordan Williams*, will attempt to make these mind-boggling numbers and distances a bit more tangible with scale models and examples from the real world. This promises to be a fun and exciting afternoon.



Volume 24 No. 9 September, 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



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
September 3rd**

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

Many of us go to dinner afterwards at: **Marguerites Cafe** directly across from the Library.

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 monthly social Dinner for *September* 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, September 18th 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 9-16

A Father's Relief

An Irish girl had not been home for over five years. Upon her return, her father cussed, "Where have ye been all this time? Why did ye not write to us, not even a line? Why didn't ye call? Can ye not understand what ye put yer ol' mum thru?"

The girl cried "Sniff, sniff, Dad, I became a prostitute."

"Ye what!?! Out of here ye shameless harlot! Sinner! You're a disgrace to this family."

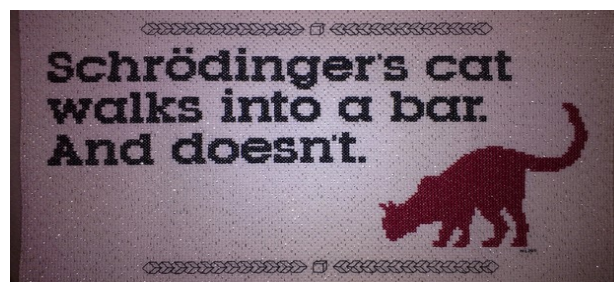
"OK dad, as ye wish. I just came back to give mum this fur coat, and you a mansion and \$5 million bank account. And ..."

"Now what was it ye said ye had become?" interrupted her father.

"Oh forgive me...a prostitute!"

"Oh, be Jesus! Ye scared me half to death girl! I thought ye said PROTESTANT!"

-- *HumanistNetworkNews.Org*



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
Beth Maxie,
Jim Peterson, President
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~*~*~*~*~*~

Jordan Williams, mail Publisher

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

Need Psychological Counseling?

For a secular therapist, click:

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
North Tampa Public Library

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

September 17th, 1 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. Subject: JP

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



Member, TB-CoR,
 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.

A Humanist Discussion group in east Tampa !

UU Humanists of Tampa

Meetings temporarily suspended.

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

Our shouting is louder than our actions,
 Our swords are taller than us,
 This is our tragedy.
 In short,
 We wear the cape of civilization,
 But our souls live in the stone age.

~ Nizar Qabbani

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
 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-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.org/>



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

Regardless how we address the challenges of climate change, resource depletion, overpopulation, debt deflation, species extinctions, ocean death, and on and on, we're in for one hell of a century. It's simply too late for a soft landing.

I'd certainly prefer that we head into the grinder holding hands and singing "kumbaya" rather than with knives at each other's throats. But better still would be avoiding the worst of the worst. Doing so would require our leaders to publicly acknowledge that a prolonged shrinkage of the economy is a done deal. From that initial recognition might follow a train of possible goals and strategies, including planned population decline, economic localization, the formation of cooperatives to replace corporations, and the abandonment of consumerism. Global efforts at resource conservation and climate mitigation could avert pointless wars.

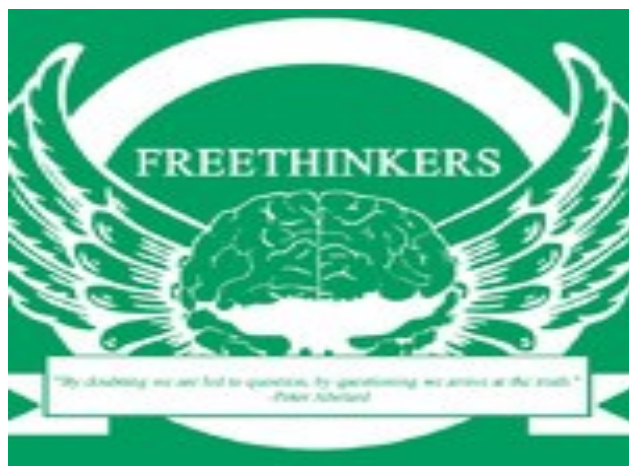
But none of that was discussed at the conventions. No, America won't be "Great" again, in the way Republicans are being encouraged to envision greatness. And no, we can't have a future in which everyone is guaranteed a life that, in material respects, echoes TV situation comedies of the 1960s, regardless of race, religion, or sexual orientation.

Bernie Sanders offered the best climate policies of any of the pre-convention candidates, but even he shied away from describing what's really at stake. The times call for a candidate more in the mold of Winston Churchill, who famously promised only "blood, toil, tears, and sweat" in enlisting his people in a great, protracted struggle in which all would be called upon to work tirelessly and set aside personal wants and expectations. The candidates we have instead bode ill for the immediate future. Given the absence of helpful leadership at the national level, our main opportunity for effective preparation and response to the wolf at our doorstep appears to lie in local community resilience building.

It's the truth. Can you handle it?

Learn more about us:
<http://www.tampabaypostcarbon.com/> So how has our climate system changed in the last century? How do we really know our climate is changing thanks to us, rather than just going through a normal period of flux? You can learn more at next month's "Climate Debate" on the 1st. See the Oct News! JP.

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

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

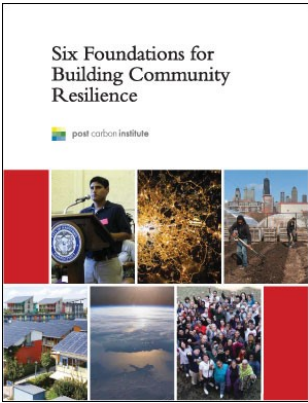
Meetings are normally held on the fourth Friday of each month (except November and December when it is on the third Friday) at the Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22nd Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL., at 8:00 P.M. Meetings are open to the public. [Calendar](#)



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

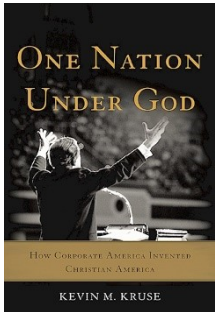
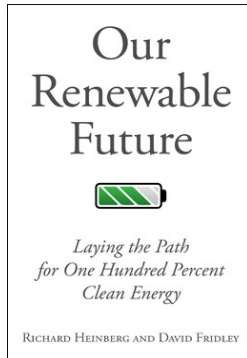
Meaningful Books



Engaging cutting-edge innovators, on-the-ground early adopters, local and national activists, and key thought leaders to build community resilience in response to the 21st Century's sustainability crises.

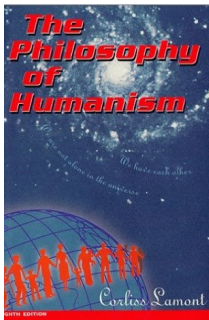
Click the cover for more info.

With the depletion of easily accessible carbon, this transformation will entail a major shift in how we live. What might a 100% renewable future be like? Which technologies will play a role in our energy future? What challenges will we face in this transition? How can we make sure our new system is just & equitable?



From an award-winning historian, the story of how in the middle of the 20th century, corporate titans and evangelical activists rewrote history and created the pervasive myth that America was, is, and always will be a fundamentally Christian nation.

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](#) now. But the first [can be found here](#).



This powerful book is the definitive study of the history and growth of the humanist movement in North America. Renowned philosopher and activist Corliss Lamont offers a vigorous argument for humanism and provides an affirmative, intelligent guidebook for shaping a better life in today's complex world.

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

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

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St. Clair McKelway
Clements
Cragun – Phillips
Nisbett – Cohen
Stenesch
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

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

AOF Family Fun Day & Potluck

Sunday, September 11, 2016, 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM at Ed's home.

- Get together to build our community - have fun - and share good food. Bring your favorite dish to share, enough for 8.
- Dogs and cats live at this house.
- There is a pool, so bring your swim suit if you wish.

One day last fall, Niya Kenny watched as a school resource officer flipped her classmate out of her chair, grabbed her arm and leg, and threw her across the room.

The violent scene, [captured on camera](#), took place at Spring Valley High School in Richland County, South Carolina. Kenny's classmate had refused to put away her cell phone and leave the room, so a teacher called in Officer Ben Fields. As the altercation unfolded, Kenny called out for help and said, "Y'all cannot do this!"

Fields told Kenny, who was crying over the incident, that she was going to jail, too. After handcuffing and taking the other student out of the room, he arrested Kenny. She was jailed for the day, fingerprinted and photographed, and was later released with criminal charges of "disturbing a school."

On her behalf, [the ACLU filed a lawsuit](#) against South Carolina to challenge a law that makes "disturbing a school" a criminal offense.

The ACLU found that hundreds of students — some as young as 7 years old — are being charged under a far-reaching and nebulous "disturbing schools" law for behaviors such as loitering, cursing, or undefined "obnoxious" actions on school grounds. The statute also has a chilling effect on students who speak out against policing abuses in schools. Black girls and boys are nearly four times as likely to be targeted under the law.

Students should not face violent arrests, jail time and criminal charges for normal adolescent behavior. **Thank you for standing with us as we take on this urgent issue.**

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

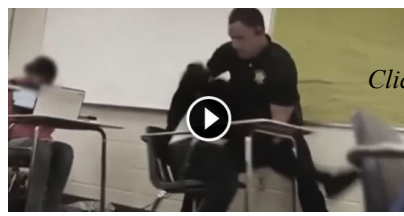
We are a group of Unitarian Universalists committed to a humanistic and non-theistic worldview. Currently, meetings are scheduled once a month and are usually held on the third Sunday of most months from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, after UU services.



Clearwater, Florida

This month, no meeting.

ACLU Sues on Behalf of Student Who Spoke Out During Violent Classroom Arrest



Click on the photo to see the video.

Tampa Bay Thinkers



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

Sept 15th Topic: tba

See our Meetup site:

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

The Military Association of Atheists & 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,

Humanist Families of Greater Tampa

Jennifer Hancock started this organization several years ago. It uniquely serves Humanist families with a variety of wonderful programs throughout the year. There is a strong emphasis on creative childrearing. Here, you can make connection with other families dealing with the problems of living in a society that is still hostile to an explicitly Humanist Way of life. Jennifer is author of several books including: *The Humanist Handbook*, *The Humanist Approach to Happiness*, and her latest book, *The Bully Vaccine*.



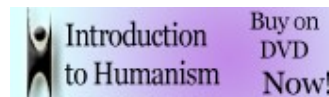
Humanist Families organizes social outings every month. These are opportunities to do something fun, socialize and enjoy each other's company. Sometimes we go to a park, sometimes a museum, sometimes we go swimming. Our group has grown over the past year to the point we now organize Tampa area outings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

Throughout the year we host parties like Darwin Day in February, World Humanist Day in June, Freethought Day at Disney in October and Carl Sagan Day in November.

Among our spin off groups, is a Parenting Beyond Belief group which gets together to discuss the challenges of raising children without religion. We are on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/).

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

Thank you! **Jennifer Hancock**



**The Institute
for Science
and Human
Values**

Toni Van Pelt

President and Public Policy Director
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What has Atheists of Florida planned for 2016?

1. Getting interfaith/community groups in Florida to admit AoF as a member organization
2. Conduct a T-Shirt and Button contest
3. Ensuring public libraries have free-thought magazines and materials available
4. Hosting a series of meetings on Living Without God(s)
5. Promoting a campaign to end religious exemptions from vaccinations
6. Promoting a campaign to fight religious influence in local government
7. Protest any invasion into public schools of religious material
8. Voter Education for School Board elections in every Florida county



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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

Religious Fundamentalism: A Side Effect of Lazy Brains?

Insights from neuroscience suggest that the brain tends to automatically accept rather than reject beliefs, oftentimes independent of how logical they might be.

By Bobby Azarian | 14 September 2015, [The Daily Beast](#)

If there is anything that global news has shown us in the past couple of years, it's that [fundamentalism](#) is on the rise and more pervasive than ever. Fundamentalist beliefs have driven countless [beheadings](#), bombings, and execution-style murders by terrorist groups like [ISIS](#) and [al Qaeda](#) in the last year alone. At a time when religious extremism is running rampant in large areas of the world, and steadily growing in virtually all others, finding effective ways to fight it at its core is in the interests of all free nations.

Although many complex causes of fanatical fundamentalism have been identified by a wide range of disciplines, a growing body of evidence from the field of [neuroscience](#) suggests one major contributing factor: Brains generally accept beliefs because they have to work much harder to reject them as false.

Beliefs and the Brain

Scientific research investigating the neural underpinnings of belief got its start as recently as 2008, when popular author and neuroscientist Sam Harris began a series of brain imaging studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. The concept was simple: How is the brain activated differently during a state of belief compared to a state of disbelief?

While in an fMRI scanner, participants were asked whether or not they believed in a number of statements. Sentences ranged from the very simple and fact-based (California is larger than Rhode Island), to the abstract and highly subjective (God probably does not exist). The data revealed activation of distinct but sometimes overlapping brain areas during belief versus disbelief conditions.

Additionally, the scans clearly showed something that was more straightforward. Brain activation, overall, was much greater and persisted longer during states of disbelief. This is important because neuroscience has long shown that greater brain activity requires more mental resources, of which there is a limited supply. A cognitive process that demands little mental resources, such as believing, is less work for the brain and therefore favored. This concept was summed up nicely in a 2015 *NewScientist* cover story on the science of beliefs, which stated, "Harris' results were widely interpreted as further confirmation that the default state of the human brain is to accept. Belief comes easily; doubt takes effort."

This finding has great implications for understanding the factors involved in human behavior and decision-making. We all know that our beliefs strongly guide our actions and shape our moral and political attitudes. Since the brain tends to accept ideas rather than reject them, those raised in cultures that promote religious indoctrination of children at a very early age—long before they are taught science, if taught science at all—are more susceptible to holding fundamentalist beliefs later in life.

The rest of the article: [Further evidence](#) [@BobbyAzarian](#).

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 Representative to the United Nations

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Six signs you are being treated by a quack

The term 'quack' is often employed as a disrespectful description for clinicians, particularly those who are unskilled, ignorant, dishonest and employ bogus therapies for a profit. Quacks are everywhere, I am afraid, but alternative medicine seems like a promised land to them. Quackery endangers our wealth and, more importantly, our health.

To protect yourself from quackery ... go [here](#).

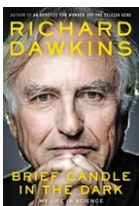
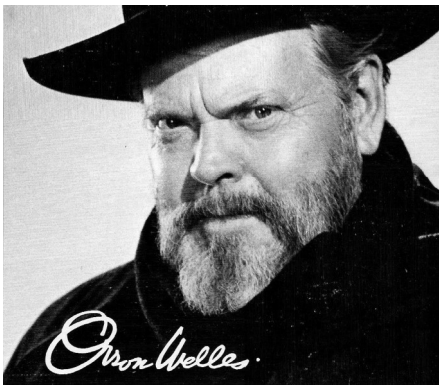
Eight slogans that quacks love to use: if you hear these, find a proper doctor

In the [first](#) of this two-part article, I discussed six popular tricks of the quackery trade. Some readers pointed out that these ploys are not exclusively used in alternative medicine. I agree. Quacks are everywhere, and unfortunately conventional medicine has its fair share of charlatans as well. Yet I would nevertheless suggest that the ploys mentioned in part one and the eight discussed below are more often used in alternative than in mainstream medicine.

Full article [here](#).

Orson Welles discusses the nature of 'cold reading', a type of analysis used by many phony psychics and fortune tellers to trick their customers into thinking they indeed do have special powers, and how some can become so skilled at it that they actually trick themselves into believing they are truly psychic.

<https://youtu.be/IjPsnfysrp8>



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www.evolvetampa.com

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.

FLORIDA REPORT
Civil liberties news in the Sunshine State



We welcome active members to the board. Donations are also much needed. The [Greater Tampa Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union](#) (ACLU) of Florida (FL) is chartered for the local ACLU membership of Greater Tampa including the Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Polk and Sumter Counties of Florida. Pinellas County ACLU members have a separately chartered chapter. The southern Greater Tampa Bay counties are chartered to the Sarasota Chapter of the ACLU of Florida.

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Tampa Bay CoR welcomes **new Freethought Group** [Freethought Fellowship Meetup](#)

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Richard Feynman Creates a Simple Method for Telling Science From Pseudoscience (1966) in [Philosophy, Science](#) | April 1st, 2016

How can we know whether a claim someone makes is scientific or not? The question is of the utmost consequence, as we are surrounded on all sides by claims that sound credible, that use the language of science—and often do so in attempts to refute scientific consensus. As we’ve seen in the case of the anti-vaccine crusade, falling victim to [pseudoscientific arguments](#) can have [dire effects](#). So how can ordinary people, ordinary parents, and ordinary citizens evaluate such arguments?

The problem of *demarcation*, or what is and what is not science, has occupied philosophers for some time, and the most famous [answer](#) comes from philosopher of science [Karl Popper](#), who proposed his theory of “[falsifiability](#)” in 1963. According to Popper, an idea is scientific if it can conceivably be proven wrong. Although Popper’s strict definition of science has had its uses over the years, it has also come in for its [share of criticism](#), since so much accepted science was falsified in its day (Newton’s gravitational theory, Bohr’s theory of the atom), and so much current theoretical science cannot be falsified (string theory, for example). Whatever the case, the problem for lay people remains. If a scientific theory is beyond our comprehension, it’s unlikely we’ll be able to see how it might be disproven.

Physicist and science communicator [Richard Feynman](#) came up with another criterion, one that applies directly to the non-scientist likely to be bamboozled by fancy terminology that sounds scientific. [Simon Oxenham at Big Think](#) points to the example of Deepak Chopra, who is “infamous for making profound sounding yet entirely meaningless statements by abusing scientific language.” (What Daniel Dennet calls “[deepities](#).”) As a balm against such statements, Oxenham refers us to a [speech Feynman gave in 1966](#) to a meeting of the National Science Teachers Association. Rather than asking lay people to confront scientific-sounding claims on their own terms, Feynman would have us translate them into ordinary language, thereby assuring that what the claim asserts is a logical concept, rather than just a collection of jargon.

The example Feynman gives comes from the most rudimentary source, a “first grade science textbook” which “begins in an unfortunate manner to teach science”: it shows its student a picture of a “windable toy dog,” then a picture of a real dog, then a motorbike. In each case the student is asked “What makes it move?” The answer, Feynman tells us “was in the teacher’s edition of the book... ‘energy makes it move.’” Few students would have intuited such an abstract concept, unless they had previously learned the word, which is all the lesson teaches them. The answer, Feynman points out, might as well have been “‘God makes it move,’ or ‘Spirit makes it move,’ or, ‘Movability makes it move.’”

Instead, a good science lesson “should think about what an ordinary human being would answer.” Engaging with the concept of energy in ordinary language enables the student to explain it, and this, Feynman says, constitutes a test for “whether you have taught an idea or you have only taught a definition. Test it this way”:

Without using the new word which you have just learned, try to rephrase what you have just learned in your own language. Without using the word “energy,” tell me what you know now about the dog’s motion.

Feynman’s insistence on ordinary language recalls [the statement attributed to Einstein](#) about not really understanding something unless you can explain it to your grandmother. The method, Feynman says, guards against learning “a mystic formula for answering questions,” and Oxenham describes it as “a valuable way of testing ourselves on whether we have really learned something, or whether we just think we have learned something.”

It is equally useful for testing the claims of others. If someone cannot explain something in plain English, then we should question whether they really do themselves understand what they profess.... In the words of Feynman, “It is possible to follow form and call it science, but that is pseudoscience.”

Does Feynman’s ordinary language test solve the demarcation problem? No, but if we use it as a guide when confronted with plausible-sounding claims couched in scientific-sounding verbiage, it can help us either get clarity or suss out total nonsense. And if anyone would know how scientists can explain complicated ideas in plainly accessible ways, [Feynman](#) would.

via [Big Think](#). Related Content:

- ◆ [The Character of Physical Law: Richard Feynman’s Legendary Course Presented at Cornell, 1964](#)
- ◆ [The Feynman Lectures on Physics, The Most Popular Physics Book Ever Written, Now Completely Online](#)
- ◆ [Richard Feynman Presents *Quantum Electrodynamics for the NonScientist*](#)
- ◆ [The Drawings & Paintings of Richard Feynman: Art Expresses a Dramatic “Feeling of Awe”](#)

Josh Jones is a writer and musician based in Durham, NC. Follow him at [@jdmagness](#)

Skepticism is part of reflection ... In religion and ethics, in politics, you have to be skeptical of claims that people make. It applies to all parts of life. Your own beliefs and the beliefs of others, and your willingness to examine these, to see if they hold up under scrutiny. ~ Paul Kurtz



THE AFFIRMATIONS OF HUMANISM: A Statement of Principles by Paul Kurtz

1. We are committed to the application of reason and science to the understanding of the universe and to the solving of human problems. We
2. deplore efforts to denigrate human intelligence, to seek to explain the world in supernatural terms, and to look outside nature for salvation.
3. We believe that scientific discovery and technology can attribute to the betterment of human life.
4. We believe in an open and pluralistic society and that democracy is the best guarantee of protecting human rights from authoritarian elites and repressive majorities.
5. We are committed to the principle of the separation of church and state.
6. We cultivate the arts of negotiation and compromise as a means of resolving differences and achieve mutual understanding.
7. We are concerned with securing justice and fairness in society and with eliminating discrimination and intolerance.
8. We believe in supporting the disadvantaged and the handicapped so that they will be able to help themselves.
9. We attempt to transcend divisive parochial loyalties based on race, religion, gender, nationality, creed, class, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, and strive to work together for the common good of humanity.
10. We want to protect and enhance the earth to preserve it for future generations, and to avoid inflicting needless suffering on other species.
11. We believe in enjoying life here and now and in developing our creative talents to their fullest.
12. We believe in the cultivation of moral excellence.
13. We respect the right to privacy. Mature adults should be allowed to fulfill their aspiration, to express their sexual preferences, to exercise reproductive freedom, to have access to comprehensive and informed health-care, and to die with dignity.
14. We believe in the common moral decencies: altruism, integrity, honesty, truthfulness, responsibility. Humanist ethics is amenable to critical, rational guidance. There are normative standards that we discover together. Moral principals are tested by their consequences.
15. We are deeply concerned with the moral education of our children. We want to nourish reason and compassion. We are engaged by the arts no less than by sciences.
16. We are citizens of the universe and are excited by discoveries still to be made in the cosmos.
17. We are skeptical of untested claims to knowledge, and are open to novel ideas and seek new departures in our thinking.
18. We affirm humanism as a realistic alternative to theologies of despair and ideologies of violence and a source of rich personal significance and genuine satisfaction in the service to others.
19. We believe in optimism rather than pessimism, hope rather than despair, learning in the place of dogma, truth instead of ignorance, joy rather than guilt or sin, tolerance in the place of fear, love instead of hatred, compassion over selfishness, beauty instead of ugliness, and reason rather than blind faith or irrationality.
20. We believe in the fullest realization of the best and noblest that we are capable of as human beings.

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Neil DeGrasse Tyson, Astrophysicist, Humanist, Director of the Hayden Planetarium, star of the new version of Carl Sagan's *Cosmos* series **is coming to TAMPA**

Thursday, November 17, 7:30 PM

At the Straz Center–Morsani Hall
1010 N Macinnes Pl, Tampa 33602

[MAP](#)

Click [here](#) for more information.





Repealing the Burkini Ban Doesn't Address the Real Problem

by Nicholas Little, August 26, 2016

The ban and the way it was enforced were wrong. But while our commitment to religious freedom and free speech and expression requires us to support the right of women to dress as they wish, whether that be in “revealing” or “modest” attire, or anything in between, whether for purely personal or religious reasons, in the significant majority of cases, religious dress codes for women are not voluntarily adopted by their wearers.

[Read more...](#)



Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science

Why the Founding Fathers wanted to keep ministers from public office

Aug 20, 2016, By John Fea

There's an old Baptist saying that goes something like this: “If you mix horse manure and ice cream it doesn't do much to the manure, but it sure does ruin the ice cream.”

I thought about this saying when I heard that Donald Trump was speaking in Orlando, Fla., to 700 evangelical pastors associated with the American Renewal Project.

The American Renewal Project is founded and directed by David Lane, a conservative Christian political activist and former Jerry Falwell Sr. operative who is trying to get 1,000 pastors to run for political office between 2016-2018.

Continue reading by clicking [here](#).

You may think the world is falling apart. Steven Pinker is here to tell you it isn't.

If you think this has felt like the summer of sadness, you are not alone. See the video [here](#).

University of South Florida Humanities Institute



The Fall 2016 [lineup of speakers](#) is listed, and there is sure to be at least one to interest you.

Check out the free Fall 2016 newsletter here. http://bit.ly/2bO9rPS_FallNewsI_USFHI



40 Years of *Skeptical Inquirer* Celebrated with Special Anniversary

Skeptical Inquirer, the groundbreaking magazine that launched a movement for science and critical thinking in a world beset by pseudoscience and snake oil, is turning forty years old. To celebrate this landmark occasion, *Skeptical Inquirer* this month released a special [40th anniversary issue](#), in which some of the biggest names in skepticism turn their critical eyes inward to discuss what they see as the state of the skeptical union and offer their prescriptions for a stronger movement in the years to come.

Celebrities of science kick things off, with pieces from **Neil deGrasse Tyson** and **Bill Nye**, both emphasizing the necessity of critical thinking and an understanding of science to maintain a healthy democracy and to avert global catastrophe. This special issue also features essays from luminaries such as **Lawrence Krauss**, **Steven Novella**, and **Richard Wiseman**, and even pieces that are critical of the skeptic movement's missteps and pitfalls, from thinkers such as **Scott Lilienfeld**, **Sharon Hill**, and **Daniel Dennett**.

Look for this issue on newsstands now or in your mobile device's app store, and then take the advice of *Skeptical Inquirer* editor **Kendrick Frazier**: “Plunge into this intellectual, real-world thought-fest. Drink deeply. Think well.”



The Achievements of Paul Kurtz

By Bill Cooke, Part One

Paul Kurtz was born into a family with relatively recent memories of Russia and with a great enthusiasm for American society and what it could offer those who worked hard. Martin Kurtz, a businessman, and his wife Anna, lived in Newark, New Jersey when their son Paul was born on December 21 1925. The value of education was well understood and Paul was destined for a university education. But soon after enrolling at Washington Square College at New York University, he volunteered for military service. Not quite 19, his unit was rushed to the front during the height of the Battle of the Bulge. A few months later he was among the forces that liberated Dachau concentration camp. He stayed with the American forces in Germany for eighteen months after the war before being demobilized.

Once again a civilian, Kurtz resumed his studies at New York University before moving on to Columbia University, where he took his PhD in 1952. He was a student of Sidney Hook and retained a lifelong relationship with the older philosopher. And through Hook, Kurtz stands in direct line from John Dewey. It is not overstating things to say that Kurtz's work cannot be understood without appreciating how comprehensive the influence of Dewey and Hook has been. Like Hook, Kurtz has always been keen to distance humanism from dogmatic interpretations and unsavoury allies. And like Dewey, Kurtz has wanted to emphasize the positive elements of nonreligious living. Having said this he has also been more willing to criticize religion than either of his mentors. Originally he was willing to use religious language to articulate humanist concepts and values, but after the 1970s he turned against this. In the tradition of Dewey and Hook, Kurtz has devoted his career to outlining a naturalistic and optimistic philosophy of life. But it was Kurtz's fate to be prominent at a time of resurgent fundamentalism on the one hand and postmodernism on the other, which required a whole new approach to problems his mentors thought long dealt with.

Kurtz's doctoral dissertation was called "The Problem of Value Theory." His academic career was devoted to justifying the methods of objective inquiry, although he was also very interested in the history of American philosophy. This was reflected in his contribution to the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* that Paul Edwards edited in the 1960s, and which has long been regarded as uniquely authoritative. As well as entries on Cadwallader Colden (1688-1776) and Elihu Palmer (1764-1806), Kurtz was entrusted with the important article on American Philosophy. He developed this interest by editing two extensive anthologies of American philosophy. He also continued to work in value theory and decision theory, his principal contribution being *Decision and the Condition of Man*.

But Kurtz was as much of a public intellectual as he was a cloistered academic. In the manner of Dewey and Hook, Kurtz was actively involved in political and social issues of the day. So when he was offered the editorship of *The Humanist*, the magazine of the American Humanist Association (AHA) in 1967, he took it. On assuming the editorship, Kurtz gave every impression of being a young man in a hurry. Shortly after taking the editorship, he wrote:

"A person who leaves the traditional church in revolt does not want a warmed over dish of platitudes as a weak substitute, as he has been often served by organised humanism in the United States. If one reads what many professional humanists write about, one often finds the same old clichés and slogans. Humanism should be concerned with moral choice and social change, and not just theorize about them." (1967a, 151)

Posted by Toni Van Pelt, tvanpelt@brighthouse.com

There are various forms of religious and non-religious beliefs in the world. On the one end of the spectrum are traditional religious beliefs; on the other "the new atheism." Not enough attention is paid to humanism as an alternative.

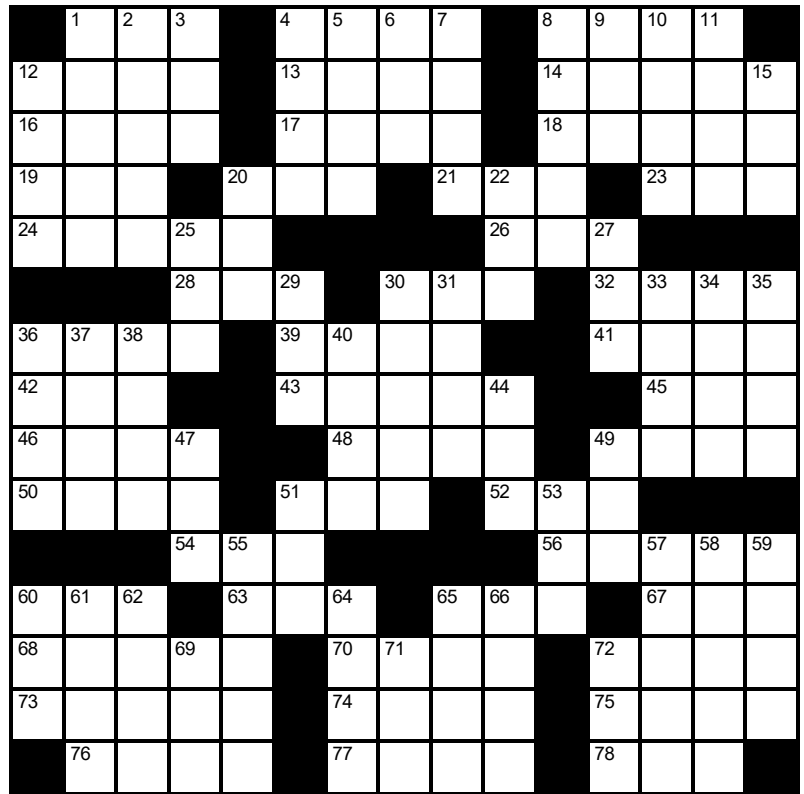
The Institute for Science and Human Values advocates non-religious secular Neo-Humanism. Our planetary community is facing serious problems that can only be solved by cooperative global action. Fresh thinking is required. Humanity needs to reconstruct human values in the light of scientific knowledge.

Across

1. Common plastic
4. Eye
8. Astrological transition point
12. Get-up-and-go
13. Eccentric
14. "Come here ___?"
16. Breezy
17. Intersecting body parts
18. Bing, bang or boom
19. 1973 Supreme Court decision name
20. Attention
21. Decline
23. "Baloney!"
24. Tolerate
26. Masefield play "The Tragedy of ___"
28. "Fantasy Island" prop
30. "___ will be done"
32. BBs, e.g.
36. Influence
39. By way of, briefly
41. Clap
42. ___-Wan Kenobi
43. Agronomists' study
45. Bubkes
46. Opera star
48. ___ tide
49. Russian assembly
50. Increase, with "up"
51. Certain digital watch face, for short
52. Make sense, with "up"
54. ___ green
56. Additional
60. "Tarzan" extra
63. Appear
65. "Yadda, yadda, yadda"
67. Bauxite, e.g.
68. Flavor
70. Try, as a case
72. ___ probandi
73. Ribbon holder
74. Shrek, e.g.
75. Egyptian Christian
76. Far from ruddy
77. Hideous
78. "A jealous mistress": Emerson

Down

1. Former
2. Of songbirds
3. Coquettish
4. Creole vegetable
5. Attendee
6. Auction unit
7. Barely gets, with "out"
8. Kind of line
9. Blinking light, maybe
10. Ado
11. 100 centavos
12. Cutting remark
15. After expenses
20. Barely get, with "out"
22. "___ calls?"
25. Aged
27. 40 winks
29. "___ alive!"
30. Put to the test
31. ___ Bowl
33. Children's ___
34. Wing, say
35. ___ podrida
36. Changes
37. Final notice
38. In person
40. Better
44. Masseur's workplace, maybe
47. Software program, briefly
49. "Silent Spring" subject
51. Anita Brookner's "Hotel du ___"
53. Elmer, to Bugs
55. Before the due date
57. Accept
58. Blow
59. Medical advice, often
60. Balaam's mount
61. Perry Como's "___ Loves Mambo"
62. Hero's tale
64. 10 C-notes
65. Benjamin Disraeli, e.g.
66. Four's inferior
69. "___ Baby Baby" (Linda Ronstadt hit)
71. ___ roll
72. Mozart's "L' ___ del Cairo"



This is a classic riddle.

I spend \$50 as below. Where is my missing \$1

Spend	Balance
20	30
15	15
9	6
6	0
50	51

***In August 1492,
Columbus sailed the ocean blue.
October 12th they sighted land,
And set their feet upon the sand.
What Did Columbus see on his right hand?***

Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – September, 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/>



09-03, Saturday, 2 PM	DUNEDIN– Humanist Soc. of the Suncoast	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists
09-04, Saturday, 10 AM	TAMPA BAY AREA– Humanist Families	RSVP here: Family outings and other activities. Details & RSVP: http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN
09-07, 10 ... Various times	TAMPA – Center for Inquiry	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup
09-07, 10, 11 ... Various times	CLEARWATER & S TAMPA– Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc..	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/TampaBaySkeptics-Meetup
09-09, 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
09-11, 15, 22 ... Various times	CLEARWATER & S TAMPA– Atheists of Florida, Inc.	Details & RSVP : http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup
09-11, Sunday, 2 PM 2 nd Sundays	BRANDON–CFI Sunday Social, with Tampa Bay Skeptics	Skeptical interests with critical thinkers. Click to RSVP : http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup
09-17, Saturday, 11 AM	NE TAMPA – Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & RSVP : http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists
09-19, Monday, 7 PM	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. RSVP here: http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers
09-24, Saturday, 10:30 AM; <i>Must have read the book to attend</i>	NW HILLSBOROUGH– CFI Readers Book Discussion	Limited to 10 paid-up CFI members. RSVP is required. http://bit.ly/CFI-TB_Meetup
09-26, Monday, 6 PM	N. PINELLAS AREA– CFI Freethought Supper	RSVP is required. Seating is limited to 25! For CFI & TBS paid members. 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
Numerous events—see the Website.	E. TAMPA– Humanities Institute at USF	See Web site for full listing of many events & calendar. http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities Locations vary!
Off for September	E. CLEARWATER– UU Clearwater Humanists	Details: http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists



Clearwater, Florida



2017 Freethought Cruise with Hemant Mehta

<https://freethoughtcruise.wordpress.com/>

March 16-20, 2017