



# The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

# Freethought News

Volume 1 No. 2 July 2012 Jim Peterson, Editor

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\* Member organizations

## Political Season reveals retreat of Enlightenment

By *John Atcheson*

We are witnessing an epochal shift in our socio-political world. We are de-evolving, hurtling headlong into a past that was defined by serfs and lords; by necromancy and superstition; by policies based on fiat, not facts. Much of what has made the modern world in general, and the United States in particular, a free and prosperous society comes directly from insights that arose during the Enlightenment. Too bad we're chucking it all out and returning to the Dark Ages. Literally. Two main things distinguished the post Enlightenment world from the pre Enlightenment Dark Ages.

First, Francis Bacon's *Novo Organum Scientiarum (The New Instrument of Science)* introduced a new way of understanding the world, in which empiricism, facts and ... well ... reality ... defined what was *real*. It essentially outlined the scientific method: observation and data collection, formulation of hypotheses, experiments designed to test hypotheses and elevation of these hypotheses to theories when data consistently supported them. It was and is a system based on skepticism, and a relentless and methodical search for truth.

It brought us advances and untold wealth and health. From one-horse carts to automobiles to airplanes. From leeches and phrenology to penicillin and monoclonal antibodies. Until recently.

Now, we seek to operate by revealed truths, not reality. Decrees from on high – often issued by an unholy alliance of religious fundamentalists, self-interested corporations, and greedy fat cats – are offered up as reality by rightwing politicians.

For example, North Carolina law-makers recently passed legislation [against sea level rise](#). A day later, the Virginia legislature required that references to global warming, climate change and *sea level rise* [be excised](#) from a proposed study on *sea level rise*. Last year, the Texas Department of Environmental Quality, which had commissioned a study on Galveston Bay, cut all references to sea level rise – the main point of the study. We are, indeed, at an epochal threshold.

As Stephen Colbert so aptly put it: [if your science gives you results you don't like, pass a law saying that the result is illegal. Problem solved.](#) Except it isn't. Wishing reality away, doesn't make it go away. Pretending that the unreal is real doesn't make it real.

And the descent into the Dark Ages is marked by more than global warming. Take austerity budgets. There is [an extensive historical record showing that implementing austerity measures in an economic slowdown is counter productive](#). And this data is backed up by current experience in Europe, [where austerity measures have been disastrous](#). So the data is telling us austerity during a jobs crisis hasn't worked in the past and isn't working now. What to do? [Pass an austerity budget](#), of course.

### Welcome to the Dark Ages.

The litany of ignorance goes on and on. Teach Creationism. Teach the “controversy” on climate science and intelligent design. Declare deregulation – which was a primary cause of the 2008 economic collapse – to be the solution to it. Preach trickle down economics, even after it has failed every time it's been adopted; even as we watch wealth rocket up the income brackets. What's next? Give the flat-earthers a say. Oh hell, why stop there. Let's put Earth back in the center of the solar system where it belongs.

(continued on page 7)

## Directory

### Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

#### Calendar

Rick O'Keefe

#### Website

Rob Byrch

#### Newsletter

[Jim Peterson](#)

#### Special Projects

Mark Brandt

## Be Included!

Group Leaders are invited to send items for this Newsletter. Please send them to:

[Jamestp@metrodirect.net](mailto:Jamestp@metrodirect.net)

For calendar items, include as much info as possible.



## July 2012 COR Calendar

Compiled by *Rick O'Keefe*, with *Dale Friedley*, *Rob Byrch*, & *Jim Peterson*

### Dates/times may change due to unforeseen reasons,

Check event details on the Coalition of Reason website at:

<http://tampabay.unitedcor.org/tampabay/>

### Joint CFI & Brandon Atheists—BRANDON

Starts Saturday night, July 10th, at 7:00 PM

Location: The Brass Tap, 775 Brandon Town Center, Brandon, FL  
[map: RSVP](#) to Kathryn before Friday, June 9th, noon.

The Brandon Atheists are a fun and friendly social-only group (no divisive activism). So, if you want good conversation and a choice of 400+ craft beers, visit our monthly joint evening of freethought enjoyment. Ask the host for the Brandon Atheists table.



### The Suncoast Humanist Society

meets at Countryside Library, Clearwater [Map](#) at 2741 S.R 580. Saturday, July 7th at 2 PM will host a two part session discussing (1) the **Permaculture** as a response to future human development and (2) a further discussion of the film shown at the previous THA meeting "The Invisible War". See pages [4](#) - [6](#)

### St. Pete—CFI Social sunset dinner

Wednesday, July 11- 2012 at 7:00 pm, at the popular Hurricane Restaurant, 807 Gulf Way, St. Pete Beach, FL. We will reserve a water-front patio table in its usual place at The Hurricane Seafood Restaurant at Pass-A-Grille. This location is often popular with Sarasota members as well, given its proximity off the Skyway. The Hurricane is affordable and features a deck with a nice water-front view. Most importantly the conversation is sure to be stimulating. So we don't book the wrong number of seats, we require attendees to RSVP at our [Meetup](#) or e-mail to [Eric](#) before 7 PM Tuesday, July 10. Limit 20. (hurry!)



### CFI Skeptics & Humanists BRANDON

Location, time & place: TBA

More info at: <http://www.meetup.com/CFI-Tampa-Bay/>  
**RSVP** to Carl at (813) 661-0633 or [here](#).

### UU Clearwater Humanists

No activity scheduled at this time. Check this calendar.  
 Location: Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater,  
 2470 Nursery Blvd., Clearwater, FL

Info and map to UUC: <http://uuclearwater.org/> For information, folks can contact Bill Norsworthy at 687-9867 or Mark Brandt at 560-0971. **RSVP** to Mark for most events at [mwbrandt@mail.usf.edu](mailto:mwbrandt@mail.usf.edu)



Clearwater, Florida

### Tampa Bay Thinkers Discussion Group CARROLLWOOD CULTURAL CENTER

Monday July 21st at 6:30 pm RSVP at the website.

A variety of contemporary issues are discussed in depth. Details can be seen on our [Meetup](#) site. If you will be going, please bring a potluck snack, or picnic-type treat.  
 Location: Carrollwood Cultural Center, 4537 Lowell Rd, Carrollwood, FL 33618 (NW Tampa) Click for a [MAP](#) to the Center.



**Café Philo**—philosophical discussion group in Tampa at Dale Mabry Barnes & Noble See [Website](#) for more info.

### Tampa Humanist Association—NEW TAMPA



Starts Saturday, July 21st, 2012 at 11:00 am

Location: Jimmie B. Keele Library, 2902 W.

Bearss Avenue, Wesley Chapel, FL

MAP: Jimmie B. Keele Library

**"Harmonious Madness: Romanticism's Challenge to Humanism."** *Tom Bird, Ph.D*

### CFI Skeptics & Humanists in the Pub—DUNEDIN

Monday, July 25, 6:00 PM

Café Alfresco, 344 Main Street, Dunedin, FL 34698

[Map](#), [menu](#), etc.

Our monthly Dunedin gathering is a congenial affair, with far-ranging discussions and good humor. Join us! Voted "Best Restaurant on the Pinellas Trail 2009" by *Tampa Bay Magazine*. **RSVP is required** if you are coming so we can reserve enough space. Seating is limited! [Click here](#) before noon, June 24 (Sunday) ([Tampa@CenterForInquiry.net](mailto:Tampa@CenterForInquiry.net)).

### THA German Cuisine Night—NEW TAMPA/USF

Starts Wednesday, July 18th, 2012 at 6:00 pm

Location: Mr. Dunderbak's Beer Garden, 14929 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa FL 33613 (813) 977-4104

Come and enjoy German food and a wide variety of beers with your fellow freethinkers. If you like Red cabbage, potato pancakes, sandwiches and other gustatory delights ..., this is for you. Usually, every 3rd Wednesday is our German Beer night.

Map: <http://tinyurl.com/3cy7ctb>

Menu: <http://dunderbaks.com/menu.html>

**RSVP required:** "reply" or call (813) 344-5256 by 5 PM, Monday, July 17th so we can reserve space. Subject to cancellation.

### Art Film Meetup:

Dale Friedley host a discussion of:

**Does Genre diminish popular Cinema?**



Always see [website](#) for updated info. Burns Court Café 401 South Pineapple Avenue, Sarasota, FL Sunday July 1st at 12 PM  
 Email: [DaleFried@aol.com](mailto:DaleFried@aol.com)

### July social dinner for the Humanist Society

will take place on Sunday July 22nd at 5:00PM at Carmelita's Mexican Restaurant located at 7705 Ulmerton Rd. at its intersection with Belcher Rd. in Largo. This restaurant has many fine offerings in the \$10 range. It has been named top Mexican restaurant in the area many times. Please reserve with Glenn Paul at 727-595-3347 or email reply by Saturday July 21st. Hope to see many of you there. Note: Look for coupons in your mail for Carmelita's.

### Need Psychological Counseling? For a secular

therapist, see: [Cognitive Neuro Sciences Inc.](#) Or, [The Therapist Project](#).



[Click to register](#) by June 30th for Aug.

Ages 7-16, Holland, NY



## St. Pete–CFI Social sunset dinner

Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup> 2012 at 7:00 pm, at the popular Hurricane Restaurant, 807 Gulf Way, St. Pete Beach, FL. We will reserve a water-front patio table. It's been a while since CFI has held a social on St. Pete Beach, but we're back for July, and in its usual place at The Hurricane Seafood Restaurant at Pass-A-Grille. This location is often popular with Sarasota members as well, given its proximity off the Skyway.

The Hurricane is affordable and features a deck with a nice water-front view. Most importantly the conversation is sure to be stimulating. So we don't book the wrong number of seats, we require attendees to **RSVP** at our [Meetup](#) or e-mail to [Eric](#) before 7 PM Tuesday, July 10. Limit 20, so don't miss out by not responding on time (besides, it is impolite and inconsiderate to not RSVP if you are going).

Click for a [MAP](#). Bonus: Read [Eric's blog HERE](#).

Our [CFI Web site](#) lists our activities, changes, and news.

By **Rick O'Keefe**

## Research in CFI Publications

Please visit the [CFI Publications](#) page for more information.

*Philo: A Journal of Philosophy* is a peer-reviewed academic journal which publishes original, conceptually precise, and argumentatively rigorous articles in all fields of philosophy. Although not devoted to any specific branch of philosophy, Philo encourages the submission of work that examines philosophical issues from an explicitly naturalist perspective. It also welcomes work on the philosophical credentials of both naturalism and various supernaturalist alternatives to naturalism.

*The Scientific Review of Mental Health Practice* is the only peer-reviewed journal devoted exclusively to distinguishing scientifically-supported claims from scientifically-unsupported claims in clinical psychology, psychiatry, social work, and allied disciplines.

## Publications

The results of research and activities supported by the Center are distributed to the public in a variety of national and international magazines and newsletters.

The flagship magazines for the educated public published at the Center for Inquiry are CSI's [Skeptical Inquirer](#) and the Council for Secular Humanism's [Free Inquiry](#) (with a combined readership of nearly 100,000).

Additional magazines at CFI are read in the U.S. (*The American Rationalist*), United Kingdom (*The Skeptic*), Perú (*New Skepticism*, and *The Journal of Applied Philosophy*), and Russia (*Common Sense*).

The Center's ground-breaking peer-reviewed academic journals include [The Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine](#), [The Scientific Review of Mental Health Practice](#), and [Philo](#).

There are a variety of electronic and print newsletters for associated membership organizations: [Skeptical Briefs](#) for members of CSI, [Secular Humanist Bulletin](#) and *Family Matters* for associate members of the Council, *African-American Humanist Examiner* for members of African-Americans for Humanism; [Campus Inquirer](#) for members of CFI's campus outreach program; and [SOS International Newsletter](#) for participants in Secular Organizations for Sobriety, as well as *The Ingersoll Report*, a bulletin of the Robert G. Ingersoll Memorial Committee.

The official newsletter of the Center for Inquiry-International is the *CFI Report*.

**Join in on our Free Inquirers Club's monthly discussion.**

Contact David Vangsness for details: [CLICK here](#).

[See page 13 for more news of CFI](#)



**Compassion & Choices**  
Choice & Care at the End of Life.





# The Humanist Society of the Suncoast

*A Socratic society dedicated to the proposition that the fully examined life is well worth living.*  
Member organization of the Humanists of Florida, the AHA, COR, and CSH. Find us at [www.suncoasthumanist.com](http://www.suncoasthumanist.com)

## Join us for A July Double Header

### 1. Permaculture: an Approach to sustainable Living

The Pinellas County Permaculture Guild is an organization where interested parties can learn, educate others, and participate in becoming the solution for sustainable living. They invite all occupations and interests to join the group. Their approach is holistic as our goals include everyone within the community. They seek to improve the environment for ourselves and the living world around us. This is a view quite compatible with that of the Post Carbon Council which is also projecting a future world which will require of us quite a different response than what we of this generation have become accustomed too. Because we humans are often surprisingly clever at the task of compensating for our own stupidity, it is hard to anticipate the precise dimensions of our future home. But Permaculture offers us a direction that seems to meet some very likely constraints.

**Jay Hardman** is a retired archaeologist and Certified Permaculture Designer.

### 2. The Invisible War: Women in the Military

On Saturday June 16th, many people turned out at the meeting of the Tampa Humanist Association to watch and comment on a new film that has won a great deal of attention at various film festivals around the country. It is a documentary on the treatment of women who have been raped while serving the military. The horrific abuse they suffered at the hands of an unsympathetic and indifferent bureaucracy more attentive to preserving appearances than providing elementary justice was exposed in all of its viciousness and inhumanity.

**Dale Friedly** deserves great thanks for bringing us this film and providing us with an opportunity to discuss a problem to which too little attention has been paid.

Our conversation will be anchored to the problem of continuing repression in our social institutions. So, if you did not see the film there is still lots of space to contribute your insights on this problem.

Get creative! Join us.

JP

Remember... we meet

in the **Countryside Library** at  
2741 State Rd. 580 in Clearwater

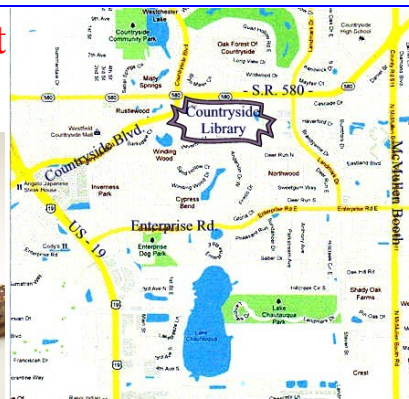


**Food: the first kindness. Humanists aspire to true friendship with our fellow human beings. An important measure of this is concern for the physical needs of others.**

**There is hunger here in our community.**

**Don't forget to bring canned and boxed food or checks for**

## Tampa Bay Harvest.



**Please join us  
for this free and  
open discussion.**

**On Saturday,  
July 7th  
at 2 PM:**

**Clearwater Country  
-side Library  
2741 State Rd. 580  
Clearwater, FL 33761**

Following our  
meeting, many of us  
will dine and argue  
together at the  
**Greek City Cafe,**  
across from the mall.

Volume 20 No. 7

July, 2012

## Social Policy

The five policy resolution adopted at our last meeting were:

1) Restrain ourselves from **gratuitous attacks on religion and religious belief systems.** An exception is made for situations that are clearly injurious. We will strive for respectful dialogue.

12 in favor 4 opposed

2) Governments should **emphasize economic growth over austerity programs.** The political push for austerity has been used as an excuse to dismantle social welfare programs. Tom Friedman has written extensively on this issue. The economic pain should be commensurate with the size of benefits received during the prior economic expansion.

Raise taxes on those who have had out-sized benefits and can obviously afford to contribute proportionately more.)

15 in favor 2 opposed

3) Invigorate efforts to preserve **separation of church and state.**

19 in favor 1 opposed

4) We should firmly stand in **opposition to any attempt at voter suppression.**

20 in favor 0 opposed

5) One response to the concern over probable/inevitable human **over-population** is to strongly promote and make available, in the U.S. and globally, the use of birth-control. Related to this is the oppression of women in male-centric cultures.

20 in favor 0 opposed **JG**



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

## What is the Humanist Way?

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

## Our monthly social dinner,

The Moveable Feast for July will be at:

### *Carmelita's Mexican Restaurant*

on Sunday July 22nd at 5:00PM. It is located at 7705 Ulmerton Rd. at its intersection with Belcher Rd. in Largo.

This restaurant has many fine offerings in the \$10 range. It has been named top Mexican restaurant in the area many times. Look for coupons in your mail for Carmelita's.

Please reserve by July 21st.

**Contact** Glenn Paul by the at 727-595-3347 or email at [kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com).

## Laugh Lines

## Veggie Groaner

Tired of constantly being broke and stuck in an unhappy marriage, a young husband decided to solve both problems by taking out a large insurance policy on his wife, with himself as the beneficiary, and then arranging to have her killed. A 'friend of a friend' put him in touch with a nefarious, dark-side underworld figure who went by the name of 'Artie.' Artie explained to the husband that his going price for snuffing out of a spouse was \$10,000. The husband said he was willing to pay that amount but that he wouldn't have any cash on hand until he could collect his wife's insurance money. Artie insisted on being paid at least something up front, so the man opened his wallet, displaying the single dollar bill that rested inside. Artie sighed, rolled his eyes and reluctantly agreed to accept the dollar as down payment for the dirty deed.

A few days later, Artie followed the man's wife to the local Costco Warehouse. There, he surprised her in the produce department and proceeded to strangle her with his gloved hands. As the poor unsuspecting woman drew her last breath and slumped to the floor, the manager of the produce department stumbled unexpectedly onto the murder scene. Unwilling to leave any living witnesses behind, ol' Artie had no choice but to strangle the produce manager as well.

However, unknown to Artie, the entire proceedings were captured by the hidden security cameras and observed by the shop's security guard, who immediately called the police. Artie was caught and arrested before he could even leave the premises. Under intense questioning at the police station, Artie revealed the whole sordid plan, including his unusual financial arrangements with the hapless husband who was also quickly arrested.

The next day in the newspaper, the headline declared:

*(You're going to hate me for this...)*

Artie Chokes 2 for \$1.00 at Costco

7/12

Thanks to Connie Purdum

# 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

**Steve Brown, VP**

**Jim Butler**

**Robert Byrch**

**Terry Eckstien**

**Lois Fries, Secretary**

**Jon Green**

**Jim Peterson, President**

**Frank Prah**

**Marios Psomas, treasurer**

**Emeritus members:** Anita Garcia, Mark Kligman, Jerry Moore, Mark Winterbottom, Bob Collette, Glenn Paul, Don Acenbrach, Jackie Jordan, Brent Yaciw, Mike Hubbard, Matt Cooper

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

**Jim Butler Publisher.**

**Jim Peterson, Editor**

E-Mail us at:

[jim@suncoasthumanist.com](mailto:jim@suncoasthumanist.com)

## How you can Help

I hope these general notes are helpful.

**Contribute** to the welfare of our own local chapter by leading efforts to bridge gaps, bring tolerance and social unity, and exercise kindness everywhere. A little financial help is always appreciated as well. **Start by renewing your membership!**

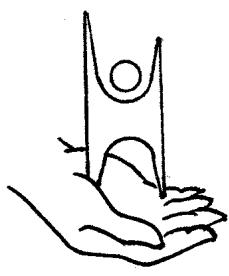
At a recent board meeting, we made plans to participate with an **information table** at a major public event in the coming year.

We are putting together a **Speakers Bureau** for outreach. You can help in many ways.

And we need help in setting up our meetings: chairs, electronic components when needed, literature and food collection tables. **See a Board member** to offer your help. JP



# A Humanist Helping Hand



Several members have formed a caring response team to help members of our Humanist family who may need supportive practical help. This is an independent group, not affiliated directly with the Humanist Society. But their efforts are wholly consistent with the Humanist outlook.

Contact a helper below if you or another member needs help or wishes to participate.

- ◆ Terri Eckstien (813) 891-9399
- ◆ Jerry Moore (727) 455-4973
- ◆ Nan Owens (813) 662-6612

~ *Join or Renew* ~  
The Humanist Society  
of the Suncoast.

### Annual Dues

- \_ Trial -3 month- free news
- \_ **Regular -\$25.**
- \_ **Renewal (January)**
- \_ **Reg. Couple -\$30.**
- \_ **Life -\$200.**
- \_ **Life Couple -\$250.**
- \_ **Associate -\$10.**
- \_ **Contribution for growth**

## Our Humanist Traveling Library



Thanks once again to the great and generous efforts of **Matt Cooper**, We have a wonderful library of current books. But we need a librarian. This is a circulating library that depends on the integrity (and memory) of members to return and keep circulated, the many volumes in this fine unique collection. Matt has "paid it forward", now it's your turn.

**Please Volunteer!**

*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 \_\_\_\_\_

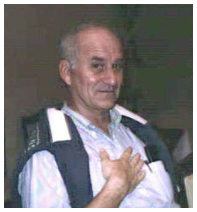
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Privacy respected)*

*Send to:*

**Glenn Paul, Asst. Treasurer**  
*Humanist Society of the Suncoast*  
2507 First St. #E  
Indian Rocks Beach  
33785-3010



**Here's a quick way to do some good.** It only takes about 1 minute each day to click onto [thebreastcancersite.com](http://thebreastcancersite.com), or [thehungersite.com](http://thehungersite.com) and about 6 more worthy websites each day, each of which produces income for the site, and costs you nothing but a minute of your time.

**Glenn Paul**

**Our Humanist Society is actively looking for interesting speakers with novel and well thought out ideas on just about any subject of interest to a general audience - even if not from a distinctly Humanist perspective.**

**Let any board member know if you would like to recommend a speaker or topic. Call**

## Your published Letters....

### Science shortage

How discouraging it was to see your chart showing under 20 percent of Americans believe in evolution without help of a god. Americans need to get over their ancient superstitions and realize that humans are the dominant animal species because of the primary evolutionary benefit of being bipedal, giving us the greatest warrior abilities in all the animal kingdom. It's been said that without religion the world would be at least a thousand years more advanced. Our schools have really failed teaching science and thinking skills due to the influence of organized religion.  
6/20 TB Times



*Francis Prahl*

## Read Humanist Periodicals:

The Humanist, Free Inquiry, Free Mind, Humanist Perspectives, Skeptical Inquirer, Secular Humanist Bulletin, The Florida Humanist Journal, Skeptic, Essays in Humanism, and many others.

## Humanist Quotes

“One can't be a really good teacher without being a humanist. We can endlessly improve our educational system by making our teachers better humanists. **All of our teachers.** If we have a substantial and clear humanist message we can reach and enrich each teacher.”

**Ricardo Trellis** [Movimiento Humanista Evolucionario Cubano](#)



## Political Season... *Continued from page 1*

First, we don't need no stinkin' science. We don't need no pesky reality. We just gotta pass a few laws and declare things to be the way we want them to be, facts be damned. You know, keep your government hands off my Medicare.

Second, the Enlightenment laid the groundwork for our form of government. *The Social Contract* is the intellectual basis of all modern democratic republics, including ours. John Locke and others argued that governments derived their authority from the governed, not from divine right. Governments could be legitimate, then, only with the consent of the governed.

Jefferson acknowledged Locke's influence on the *Declaration of Independence* and his ideas are evident in the Constitution.

Here again, our founders used reason, empiricism and academic scholarship to cobble together one of the most enduring and influential documents in human history. For all its flaws, it has steered us steadily toward a more perfect union. Until recently.

Now, reason, empiricism and scholarship are the punch line to right wing jokes and jihads. Santorum captured the Tea Party's hostility to these Enlightenment virtues when he [likened a college education to an indoctrination](#). Thankfully, Santorum is gone, but the embrace of ignorance he advocated lives on. And so corporations are now accorded the rights of citizenship. Power, once again, is meted out by birthright, not inalienable right. By possession of wealth, not by justice or equity or merit. So what?

Well, the US now has the same income inequality as [Cameroon](#), [Uganda](#) and [Rwanda](#), and we're trapped in this pathetic state – [income mobility in the US lags behind most other developed nations](#).

In short, Horatio Alger is dead, long live Exxon.

We are, indeed, at an epochal threshold. We can continue to discard the Enlightenment values which enabled both an untold increase in material wealth and a system of government which turned serfs into citizens. A system which – for all its flaws – often managed to protect the rights of the many, against the predatory power of the few. Or we can continue our abject surrender to myths, magical thinking, and self-delusion and the Medieval nation-state those forces are resurrecting.

Republicans and Tea Partiers may be leading this retreat from reason, but they are unopposed by Democrats or the Press. And in the end, there is a special place in Hell for those who allow evil to prosper by doing nothing.



[John Atcheson](#) is author of the novel, [A Being Darkly Wise](#), an eco-thriller and Book One of a Trilogy centered on global warming. His writing has appeared in The New York Times, the Washington Post, the Baltimore Sun, the San Jose Mercury News and other major newspapers.

Atcheson's book reviews are featured on [Climateprogress.org](#). ©



## Bank of Wisdom *Electronic publishing to make the world better*

7

These Rare Books are Amazing, and only a penny a page. Bank of Wisdom is listing thousands of Rare and Suppressed books in PDF format. These eBooks have a picture of every page so exact reliability is maintained. Yet these eBooks can be Searched and the Cut-and-Paste feature is active, these books can be used for scholarly research, and quoted by page and paragraph, just like the actual book. And for the casual reader there is no end of amazing and interesting facts and ideas that will enlighten, educate, astound, and elevate your view of History and the World. Most important we specialize in books to un-brainwash. The cost of most PDF instant downloads is \$.01 per page. (\$1.00 per hundred page book.) Entry for withdrawals is located here:

<http://bankofwisdom.com>

[economichumanrights.org](http://economichumanrights.org)

POOR PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Contact: Rev. Bruce Wright

Phone: (727) 278 1547

Email: [bgcwright@aol.com](mailto:bgcwright@aol.com)

Web: <http://economichumanrights.org>

**The Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign and others will march on opening day of the Republican National Convention on AUGUST 27th, Monday from 3pm to 530pm.**

*This is a March of the Homeless, the Poor, the Unemployed and Supporters to call for a STOP TO ALL FORECLOSURES, STOP THE CRIMINALIZATION OF THE POOR AND HOMELESS. HOUSING AND FOOD ARE HUMAN RIGHTS!*



**Freethinkers@USF** is a multicultural, 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 student organization is open to anyone of any religious persuasion or personal beliefs. Write [Rodrick Colbert](#) or [freethinkersusf@gmail.com](mailto:freethinkersusf@gmail.com) for details.



## FLORIDA REPORT

Civil liberties news in the Sunshine State



It probably comes as no surprise that Florida is ground zero in the nationwide fight over voter suppression. And the ACLU has been right in the middle of it.

When they passed a law making voter registration next to impossible here in Florida, we (along with the Brennan Center) went to court on behalf of the League of Women Voters and other groups and won.

Now they're trying to purge hundreds, possibly thousands of rightfully-registered voters off the rolls — and we (along with the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law) filed a lawsuit to prevent it.

Governor Rick Scott just won't quit. He's bound and determined to block the vote in Florida — especially for minority voters.

**Tell Governor Scott the ACLU is on alert and won't let him derail or deny anyone's voting rights.**

The ACLU is fighting tooth and nail all across the country to protect people's right to vote. And we won't stop fighting — not here in Florida, not anywhere.

Florida is a key battleground in our effort to make sure people aren't denied this most fundamental freedom. Let's make it clear we won't let any attack against that fundamental right go unanswered.

**Act now. Tell Governor Scott that we won't stand for any voter suppression ploys.**

We know when we stand together we can make a difference. But they are going to throw everything they've got at us in the six months leading up to Election Day. With your help, I'm confident that whenever and wherever people's right to vote is put in jeopardy, the ACLU will be there — protecting the right to vote and the Voting Rights Act that people fought so hard for almost 50 years ago.

Let's keep fighting,

*Howard L. Simon*

Executive Director, ACLU of Florida



**People**  
Over Politics

## Tampa Humanist Association

"**Harmonious Madness: Romanticism's Challenge to Humanism.**" *Tom Bird, Ph.D.*, an apostle of Romanticism for over 30 years, will give us an overview of who the Romantics were, a few of their essential convictions about the creative process and their potential challenge to the tenets of modern Humanism.

The Question?

If Humanism praises the sole use of logic, reason, and rationality to convey understanding and the sublime experience, is there no accommodation for the Romantic, the person utilizing the illogical, the inexplicable, the imagination, or intuition? Can "madness,"—the Romantic conscious abandonment of reason--be somehow wedded to "harmony"; that is, the Classical virtues of rationality, balance, and symmetry? What Humanistic processes are involved when a person seeks or experiences the Sublime? Don't miss this fascinating and thought-provoking presentation!



**Saturday July 21, 2012 at 11.00am**

**Jimmie B. Keele Library,**

**2902 W. Bearss Avenue, Tampa, FL.**

Look for the Tampa Humanist Association sign.

In addition, we have instituted a Humanist Movie club and run joint Humanists and Skeptics in the Pub with our colleagues from the Center for Inquiry. For a **complete schedule of events** see:

<http://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Humanist-Association>

Or our Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/tampahumanist>

Or our website: <http://www.tampahumanist.com>

Join us for our fun, open and, enlightening discussions.

We have recently filed to become a charter member of the American Humanist Association, headquartered in Washington, DC. AHA, with their extensive local and national [media contacts](#), their lobbying and [coalition efforts](#) on Capitol Hill and the efforts of our [grassroots activists](#), will ensure that the humanist point of view is represented in the halls of power, down on Main Street, and everywhere in-between.

Through our Charter Membership with AHA, we work alongside other national organizations in the community of reason, and also reach out to our progressive allies to work on issues of common concern.

Working with our sister organization, the *Humanist Society of the Suncoast* and the Tampa Branch of *Center for Inquiry* and other organizations within the United Coalition of Reason, it is THA's intention to enlarge the voice of humanism within the Tampa Bay region.

### Officers and board of THA:

President: **Robert Byrch**,

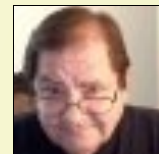
Vice-President: Rick O'Keefe,

Secretary: Dale Friedley - Media

Treasurer: Gale Barron,

At large Members: Gin Kohl Lieberman - Media

Patricia Walters-Events, & Jim Peterson- Newsletter





# Freedom of Thought for Our World, and Our Future



**Tampa Bay CoR**  
TAMPA BAY COALITION OF REASON

## Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

Freethought Organizations in the Tampa Bay Area

Americans United,\* Tampa Humanist Association, Humanist Society of the Suncoast, Center for Inquiry, UU Humanists Clearwater, UU Humanists Tampa,\* Secular Student Alliance USF,\* Atheists of Florida, Plus numerous Meetup organizations that promote what are essentially Freethought ideas and principles. (\*= not currently members of the Coalition)

Member organizations and agencies should contact the following CoR representatives about the matters indicated:

**Calendar:**  
Rick O'Keefe

**Newsletter:**  
[Jim Peterson](#)

**Website:**  
Rob Byrch

**Special Projects**  
Mark Brandt

For several years now, various leaders of the freethought community in the bay area have been meeting informally to share experiences, and occasionally to coordinate plans. But recently, changing circumstances have brought additional pressure to cooperate in bringing programs and members services to an expanding movement. At this point leaders continue to meet, and together with the various boards of directors and committees, try to develop policies that will enable every group to enhance its unique role in serving its members. There appears to be general agreement on developing several community wide programs over the year that will allow significant speakers to be presented in our area. The costs of these programs will be shared among the organizations proportionally.

Thus substantive and exciting new activities will be 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, Fred Edwards. You may recall that UCoR was the major impetus to getting a large number of billboards erected across the nation with such messages as "You can be good without God. Millions are!"

**TBCoR is not a membership organizations, but an alliance of groups identified with the Humanist /Atheist movement.**

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

<http://tampabay.unitedcor.org/tampabay/>



TBPCC is an autonomous adjunct to the Humanist Society.

## Why no Solar Power for the Sunshine State?

Ask state lawmakers why Florida doesn't focus more on solar energy and they'll complain about too many clouds.

So with little political will to aggressively tap the sun, Florida now lags behind other not-as-sunny places such as Massachusetts, Ohio, New York and New Jersey in developing more solar capacity. New Jersey installed the most new solar in the first quarter of 2012, according to a report released Wednesday by the Solar Energy Industries Association. Florida ranked 14th.

The difference was huge. New Jersey added almost 174 megawatts from January to March. At that rate, the state would add the equivalent of a mid-sized nuclear reactor to its electrical capacity by the end of the year. Florida added just 2.8 megawatts.

Why is the Sunshine State falling behind in development of solar electricity? Several reasons.

The primary one, experts say, is a lack of a state requirement or even a goal for increasing the amount of solar electricity. James Fenton, director of the Florida Solar Energy Center at the University of Central Florida, put it this way: "Florida itself does not have a vision for its future. That's true on everything in Florida, but particularly in regard to energy."

In 2006, former Gov. Charlie Crist pushed for a policy that would have required 20 percent of the state's energy to come from renewable energy sources by 2020, but that effort died.

State lawmakers scuttled the idea, saying Florida's "intermittent cloud cover," or essentially clouds that come and go, would disrupt solar power generation and make it unreliable. It's a claim lawmakers echo today.

"I heard that for 10 years ... intermittent cloud cover," said Susan Glickman, a lobbyist for the environmental group Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. "A good number of states have set targets for renewable energy and that helps to create a market where renewable energy can thrive and Florida policy makers have not done that."

We invite you to become a member of the Council, and make a difference in the quality of our lives. Click below for more:  
[www.tampabaypostcarbon.com](http://www.tampabaypostcarbon.com)

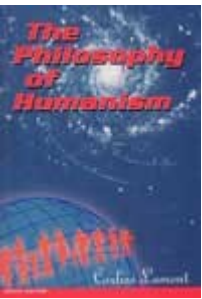
## Humanist Books from the AHA

### One Planet One People by Carl Coon Hardcover 149 pp \$22.



By Carl Coon, Former Ambassador to Nepal In this succinct, highly readable overview of the evolution of human society, the author argues that the 21st century will witness a crucially important and difficult transition for the human race. Blending the disciplines of anthropology and evolutionary psychology with over thirty years of experience in the diplomatic corps, Coon traces the evolution of the human tendency to divide others into two groups, "us versus them." Today, he argues, we have reached a stage where the whole world must be viewed as "us," for only a united world community can cope with today's global challenges.

### The Philosophy of Humanism - Corliss Lamont

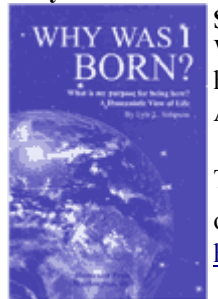


\$16.95

By Dr. Corliss Lamont.

In a work that is a standard text and reference in the ongoing international discussion around secular humanism, Lamont offers an argument for a philosophy that advocates for happiness in this life rather than hope for an undefined afterlife. Paperback, 371 pages.

### Why Was I Born?



\$5.00

Why Was I Born? What is my purpose for being here?

A Humanistic view of life by Lyle J Simpson.

These books and a great many more can be ordered from: **The Humanist Press**  
<http://evolvefish.com/fish/HumanistPress.html>



The Foundation Beyond Belief is sponsoring a local "light up the night Walk" on behalf of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS). This is a walk, not a run or jog, and there will be assistance along the trail. For more information see:

<http://pages.lightthenight.org/2012/FBB>

Endorsed by the American Humanist Association, Center For Inquiry, Harvard Humanist Chaplaincy & Alumni, Secular Student Alliance, and United Coalition of Reason, and nearly every national association. The Steifel Family has promised to match every dollar up to \$500,000. **A short walk for a great cause!**

**Find out more about end of life issues.** Everyone has to face this final question. But there are choices not provided by conventional institutions. For more information see: <http://hemlockflorida.org/index.htm> & [www.compassionandchoices.org](http://www.compassionandchoices.org)

## Clearwater UU Humanists <sup>10</sup>

We are a group of Unitarian Universalists committed to a humanistic and non-theistic worldview. Currently, meetings are scheduled once a month and are usually held on the third Sunday of most months from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, after UU services. The UU Humanists are open to all aspects of humanism, including investigation of religious humanism. However, the focus of the group is on secular aspects of humanism.

Programs have been well received with attendance between 50 and 75. To learn more, please contact: co-facilitators:  
Bill Norsworthy [bnorsworthy@verizon.net](mailto:bnorsworthy@verizon.net)  
Mark Brandt [mwbrandt@mail.usf.edu](mailto:mwbrandt@mail.usf.edu)  
Website: [www.uuclearwater.org](http://www.uuclearwater.org)



### New

UU Humanists will be having their next gathering at Applebee's, 5110 E. Bay Dr., Clearwater, Florida Clearwater, on August 17th at 7pm.

Please confirm reservations after July 14, to Bill Norsworthy 727-687-9867, or Mark Brandt 727-733-7855 or 727-560-0971, by August 3. **Sir Harold Kroto**, an ardent Humanist and Nobel Laureate in chemistry, will be speaking at UU Humanists meeting on Sunday, September 30, at 12:30pm. Dr. Kroto now teaches at FSU in Tallahassee, and will speak for an hour. All welcome.



## Florida Now

<http://www.flnow.org/>

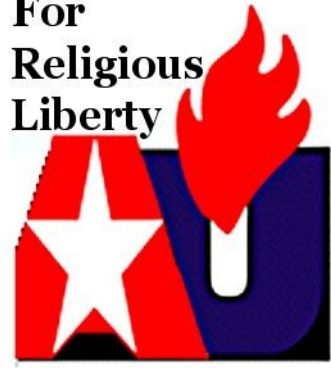
**NOW is a multi-issue political organization. NOW's self-defined role has been to initiate change for the benefit of the greatest number of people, to affect the legal and institutional structures of the society in a way that systematically expands the choices and possibilities available to all women.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

The Florida National Organization for Women (NOW) is in strong opposition to the Personhood Amendment ballot initiative for which the organization Personhood Florida is currently collecting signatures, according to Florida NOW president Donna Slutiak. "This amendment is ridiculous and an insult to women," Slutiak said. "The issue of Personhood would have very far reaching results, and would do more than criminalize abortion; it would also make birth control pills and the IUD illegal in the state of Florida. The amendment states that human life begins at the time when an egg is fertilized, which will also impact in-vitro-fertilization clinics. How would you like your mother's fertilized eggs that are sitting in a clinic freezer to have inheritance rights? Do you want to have to go underground to get your birth control pills?" Florida NOW expects all intelligent people to pledge not to sign this initiative, and to vote against it, if by some fluke it does get on the ballot. Personhood is bad for womanhood.



*A Tradition of Advocacy*

## For Religious Liberty



**Americans United  
for Separation of Church & State**  
~ Pinellas County Chapter ~

For more information, see: <http://www.au.org/>  
The Chapter meets at Good Samaritan Church located at 6085 Park Blvd, Pinellas Park (61st St.). The next meeting is September 10, at 7:00 PM. We are working for the defeat of Amendment 8, the so called Freedom of Religion Amendment. It allows tax payer funds to support religious schools & organizations. Also, we will be contacting local churches to remind them of the legal dos and don'ts concerning pulpit electioneering.

## 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](http://www.maaf.info)

Contact: Chris  
([christbrown@yahoo.com](mailto:christbrown@yahoo.com))  
MSGT, USAF (Active) Co-Organizer:  
MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists  
(MASH) MacDill AFB, FL

# Humanist Families of Greater Tampa

**Jennifer Hancock** started this organization several years ago. It uniquely serves Humanist families with a variety of wonderful programs throughout the year. There is a strong emphasis on creative childrearing. Here, you can make connection with other families dealing with the problems of living in a society that is still hostile to an explicitly Humanist Way of life.



Jennifer is author of several books including; *The Humanist Handbook*, *The Humanist Approach to Happiness*, and her latest book, *The Bully Vaccine* (illustration below). - JP

**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 at:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/HumanistFamiliesTampa/>

## Living Life as a Humanist

I was recently re-reading [Humanism and its Aspirations](#) by the American Humanist Association. The American Humanist Association makes it very clear: this statement isn't about what we must believe as Humanists, it's a statement about what we do believe. This is incredibly important because Humanism has no dogma. We are dogma free. What that means is that you don't have to believe the same things that Humanists do. However, if you do, you are probably a Humanist.

So, what is it that we Humanists do believe? Well, here is the list according to [Humanism and its Aspirations](#). I encourage you to read the entire document for full details.

Science is the best method for determining knowledge

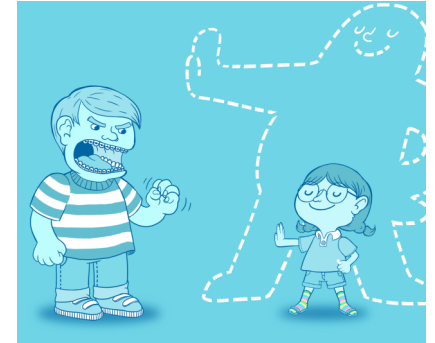
- Humans are an integral part of nature
- Our values are grounded in human welfare
- Life's fulfillment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals
- Humans are social by nature and find meaning in relationships, and
- Working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness

If you believe these things to, you may be a Humanist.

## The Humanist Mom's Recipe File

**Mango Banana Spinach Smoothie** from [Martha Knox](#)

Blend together: 3/4 cup frozen mango, 1 banana, 1 cup loose raw spinach, and 1 cup water . Pour result into a small but eager child. Gurgles of satisfaction will ensue.





# Atheists of Florida



**Chairman, Tracy Thomas**  
**President, Ed Golly**  
**Vice President, Frank Prah**  
**Treasurer, Nan Owens**  
**Acting Secretary, Tracy Thomas**

**AoF outreach programs** are currently in hiatus, pending resolution of legal matters regarding our media And Meetup sites. A copy of the April 2012 newsletter is available by writing to: [AthAIFLE@aol.com](mailto:AthAIFLE@aol.com).

Look for exciting new programs in the offing very soon. We are a resource for those with questions and doubts about the standard religious narrative of life. We affirm the positive values of a rigorously logical and scientific approach to the problems of life.

At the same time, we bring a human centered ethic to bear in serving our fellow human beings as they struggle to overcome the delusional psychology of years of religious conditioning.

As an institution committed to bring the enormously prolific benefits of the atheist proposition to ever larger numbers of our citizens, we desire to enable an enlightened majority of truly free people to turn their intelligence toward the real problems we all must face.

AoF has been a leader in the effort to preserve church state separation. We look forward to serving a growing constituency.



## Institute for Science and Human Values

Inspired by Empathy, Creativity and guided by Reason

(No Local chapters at this time. See <http://www.instituteforscienceandhumanvalues.net/>)

### NIX 6

#### Excluding Women from the Florida Constitution



by **Toni Van Pelt**, Public Policy Director of the Institute for Science and Human Values and Southeast Regional Director for the National Organization for Women.

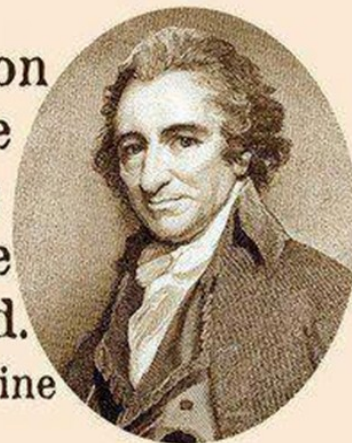
Article 1 section 23 of the Florida Constitution states that "Every natural person has the right to be let alone and free from governmental intrusion into the person's private life." Why does the Florida legislature want to remove women from this very critical right?

As HJR 1179 made its way through the state Legislature this session, the bill was presented as a way to restrict public funding of abortion — which is already illegal and has been for three decades. The bill morphed into Amendment 6 on the 2012 ballot titled "Florida Abortion". But one of the underplayed consequences is that it would also roll back a constitutional privacy right in the Florida Constitution, which currently provides more protection for women than the U.S. Constitution does.

Just as important to know about is the Florida legislative 2012 ballot initiative: Florida Religious Freedom, Amendment 8. Find out what you can do to help educate Floridians on the dangers of this amendment to our civil society. The proposed measure would prevent individuals from being barred from participating in public programs if they choose to use public funds at a religious provider.

To argue with a person  
 who has renounced the  
 use of reason is like  
 administering medicine  
 to the dead.

• Thomas Paine



Thanx to Rob Byrch

### Holidays of Special Interest to Freethinkers

- **July 4th** - Independence Day. Remember Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Madison, and Paine – all Deists. An opportunity to join our communities in recognizing our indivisibility as a people and our personal liberty as human beings.
- **2012 International Year of Sustainable Energy for All (UN)**



## Center for Inquiry–Tampa Bay Skeptics

<http://CenterForInquiry.net/Tampa>

CFI–Tampa Bay is a founding member of Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason, the organization that erected the “Are you good without God. Millions are.” Billboards in Tampa and Clearwater (paid by United Coalition of Reason).

Those of you who can, please donate blood. Also, support efforts to alleviate hunger in our area by sending a check so local food banks can buy food at reduced cost (it’s better than donating food).

CFI’s Special Interest Group, **Tampa Bay Skeptics**, has provided years of service in offering people with extraordinary abilities (paranormal) the public venue for demonstrating their talents under mutually agreeable testing conditions. TBS has been instrumental in examining and reporting on the Tarpon Springs “weeping icon”, hypnosis, (in) famous psychics, local astrologers, etc.

### What is Tampa Bay Skeptics?

Founded in 1988, Tampa Bay Skeptics is a nonprofit educational and scientific organization devoted to the critical examination of **paranormal** and **fringe-science** claims, and the dissemination of factual information about such claims. In 2004, TBS became a Special Interest Group of the [Center For Inquiry–Tampa Bay](#).

Particular areas of interest to TBS include **UFOs**, **"psychic" power**, **astrology**, **fringe science & medicine**, purported **miracles** and other **New Age** claims. Our interest in religion is restricted to claims that can be objectively tested and potentially verified, such as "weeping icons" or miraculous healings.

TBS conducts its own investigations, follows the activities of other skeptics groups, monitors the press coverage of the paranormal, and publishes a quarterly newsletter, [Tampa Bay Skeptics Report](#), which is also distributed gratis to members of the press and to many other skeptics groups around the world. TBS also makes its representatives available to local and national media to provide a skeptical voice as a counterweight to the irrationalism and superstition that is increasingly prevalent in the television and print media.

TBS does not reject claims out of hand, but rather is committed to objective and critical inquiry. In this vein, we share the philosophy of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry ([CSI](#)) -- publisher of [Skeptical Inquirer](#) magazine, an international organization that has nurtured the growth of local skeptics groups (such as ours) all over the world.

### TBS's "\$1,000 Challenge"

Whenever possible, TBS attempts to put claims to the test. Since 1989 we have had a standing [\\$1,000 Challenge](#) available to anyone able to provide TBS with verifiable scientific proof of any paranormal phenomenon. No one has yet succeeded, but we remain open-minded (though highly skeptical) and desirous of subjecting testable paranormal claims to objective scrutiny. Should anyone ever succeed in a test for TBS, we will arrange for a test by the James Randi Educational Foundation for its [\\$1,000,000 Challenge](#).

### Membership in TBS

We encourage those who wish to help further the cause of skepticism to join TBS! You can take your first step, and make a statement about irrationality and superstition at the same time, by writing a check for \$15 to cover your first year's dues. Annual membership includes four issues of [Tampa Bay Skeptics Report](#), each snailmailed to you in advance of our quarterly meetings (last Saturday of every March, June, September, and December). Members also receive a 30% discount on any [Prometheus Books](#) purchased through TBS.

Make your \$15 check payable to "Tampa Bay Skeptics" and mail to:

CFI c/o O'Keefe

4011 S. Manhattan Ave. #139

Tampa, FL 33611-1277

**Or want to simply join our [TBS e-mail list\(s\)](#)? Or order [TBS T-shirts](#)?**

**Or join [CFI–Tampa Bay](#)?** (Note that we are offering a free 1<sup>st</sup> year membership in TBS for members of Center for Inquiry.) Back issues of the *TBS Report* may be found here: [http://tampabayskeptics.org/tbs\\_report.html](http://tampabayskeptics.org/tbs_report.html)

**See more CFI news on [Page 3](#)**





<http://tampabay.unitedcor.org/tampabay/>

## The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

**So you don't believe in gods?** You are not alone. And yes, you can be good without God. Millions are. Thousands of your friends and neighbors in the Tampa Bay area feel the same as you. The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason is a group of local organizations representing freethinkers, humanists, skeptics, atheists and agnostics that provide a sense of community and a central clearinghouse for the many like-minded groups in the greater Tampa Bay area.

All of these groups share common ground, while each has its own particular emphasis and atmosphere. Some are focused on scientific inquiry and education. Others are focused on ethics and community, activism or the arts. Others monitor state/church separation and fight for your civil rights. All alike are committed to promoting the wider acceptance of a more rational and contemporary view of humanity and the universe we live in.

This site <http://unitedcor.org/tampabay> is where secular people in the Tampa Bay area can discover groups to join, activities in which to participate, events to attend and like-minded people with which to socialize. In short, we want to help those who have grown beyond religious belief to find their philosophical home.

Those nonbelievers who are not ready, or who are unable, to "come out" can take comfort in knowing that they are not the only ones who accept the reality of a 100% natural world.

For the religious community, we want them to realize that, although nontheists reject the supernatural, we share with them compassionate human values that most religious believers embrace. In most ways, we are like them; hard working, taxpaying, moral citizens who care deeply about our families, our communities, our state and our country.



**CoR Leadership Team 2012**

Mark Brandt, Rob Byrch, Rick O'Keefe, Jim Peterson  
Not pictured, Ed Golly

Nontheists are a large minority, larger than many minorities having much more political and cultural influence than we do.

Based on the US Census Bureau estimate of Florida's 2008 population and several polls, we estimate our statewide constituency at about 2,800,000 residents (more than 400,000 in the Tampa Bay quad-county area). Tampa Bay CoR has organized to increase our standing in the marketplace of ideas and to take our rightful place at the table of acceptance and equal rights. We invite all nontheists to support us in our efforts.

Even if you never join a group or attend a meeting you can help Florida move forward by contributing to local or national participating organizations. And you can always help to further the nontheistic community just by standing up proudly for your reality-based life among your friends and family. It's OK to not believe in gods. And, yes—you can be good without a god or religion. Millions of us are. *Rick O'Keefe*

*Rick is the leader of CFI for Tampa Bay and also the Calendar coordinator for the coalition of Reason.*



## Cultural Treasures...

**MFA**  
Museum of Fine Arts  
ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

## Unified Events Being Planned

Coalition members are working to bring great new programs and common speakers to our area. Already efforts are being made to design activities and observances of the birthday of Charles Darwin. By joining our efforts and treasury, we may be able to bring a national level speaker to be the center point of our program around February 12 of 2013. We can't say who it is yet, but you'll be delighted when you find out!

**We welcome more organizations to join this Coalition effort. Contact us [Here](#).**

Housing collections of European, American, Pre-Columbian and Asian art and photography.

Find it at:  
255 Beach Drive Northeast,  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

All these things are yours.  
Stay awhile and be uplifted.