



Humanists of Sarasota Bay, Inc.
Sarasota, Florida

HUSBAY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2021

Millions of Humanists celebrate Christmas joyfully, meaningfully, and authentically, without pretending to be Christians or grinchishly trying to take anything away from them.

Doug Muder—UU World

Every year, millions of Humanists around the world celebrate Christmas. We do it joyfully, meaningfully, and (dare I say it?) authentically, without either pretending to be Christians or grinchishly trying to take anything away from them. For many of us, it is our favorite holiday, “the most wonderful time of the year,” as the song puts it.

That’s a real accomplishment, one that has taken decades or even centuries of work. We seldom step back and take credit for that accomplishment, but we should.

So have a Merry Christmas, Humanists. You deserve it. Celebrate proudly and apologize to no one for the traditions that bring you joy.

A skeptic (we love skeptics) might ask what a Humanist Christmas consists of and what it is all about. That’s easy: On Christmas, Humanists celebrate family, community, and universal themes like peace on earth and good will to all people. We tell stories of mythic characters (like Scrooge, the Grinch, and many others) who, for a time, were lost to family and community but had powerful experiences that turned them around and brought them home again.

It is, for us, a time of hope. If we feel securely connected to our loved ones, we think of those who are lost to us and hope that someday they may return. If we ourselves feel lost, it is a time to examine those broken connections and ask if or how they might be repaired.

From the repair of personal relationships, our eyes rise to the distant possibility of repairing the world, and we indulge the perennial Humanist dreams of world peace, world community, and universal justice.

It is natural to do this in what (in the Northern Hemisphere, at least) is the darkest time of the year, because at the winter solstice it is the sun that seems

lost to us, but turns around and starts coming back. These times of darkness are naturally times of hope, as we yearn for the long summer evenings of memory.

Those themes are embodied in a variety of traditional celebrations. We gather together with friends and relatives to have large communal meals, and each household develops its own traditions around particular dishes, decorations, and rituals. We exchange presents as tokens of our mutual appreciation and try not to let mercantile Christmas take over, with its greed and extravagance. We deck our halls with lights (symbolizing hope as the cold season turns) and evergreen trees (which symbolize the continuance of life through difficult times).

“But wait!” our skeptic may object. “That’s just Christian Christmas.”

Is it? To the extent that Christians find the same meanings we do in the season, we are happy for them. And if they want to overlay the holiday with some Christian myth—one that fits the overall themes, we hope—that’s up to them. (We will, however, object if they commandeer public resources to send a sectarian message.) But the annual Christian campaign to “Keep Christ in Christmas” is a virtual admission of just how well the holiday works without Christ. No one has to remind us to keep the turkey in Thanksgiving or the fireworks in the Fourth of July.

Ultimately, of course, we are all building on the inheritance of traditions far older than any of our current belief systems. The solar cycle, the feasting, the evergreens, the gifts, and many of the other components have their own histories that go back much further than the birth of Jesus, the miracle of the Temple lights, or any other story of the season. And as all religions that last do so by satisfying human needs, some amount of convergence is to be expected.

I am told that if you look into the ancient history of Humanist Christmas (back to the twentieth century or even further), it does intertwine with Christian Christmas. There is, after all, the odd coincidence of the name. But no matter. It is its own holiday now, and a very fine holiday it is.
Merry Christmas, Humanists.

Haiku Quintets: dandana.us/fivepalms

Holiday Haiku

hail winter solstice!
northern Earthlings' shortest day,
pole's maximum tilt

let us celebrate
our Neolithic forebears'
Sun God's next rebirth

Stonehenge pagans' rites
or Saturnalia's heirs
... pick your tradition:

Hanukkah, Christmas,
Alban Arthan, Korochun,
"holy" Festivus ...

or, join together
as secular humanists,
be kind and have fun!



FREEFLO
FREETHOUGHT FLORIDA FREETHOUGHT FLORIDA FREETHOUGHT FLORIDA

MARCH 4—6, 2022

Marriot Orlando Airport Lakeside

Save the date

Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, *without theism or other supernatural beliefs*, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good. To learn more go [here](#).

The Reckoning: Our Nation's Trauma and Finding a Way to Heal

Book review by Karen Koenig

“For this country to heal from its inarguably traumatic past, it is crucial to experience its pain: to feel anguish, sadness, and rage along with facing a recognition of being complicit in (perhaps unwittingly) traumatizing others by looking the other way.”

In the same way that a therapist explores and attempts to understand the roots of trauma in a suffering patient, psychologist Mary L. Trump traces this country's current social and political ills back in time to the litany and legacy of the painful events that spawned them. Herself a survivor of Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Dr. Trump knows all too well what it is like to live in the wake of failing “to recognize that we are being traumatized *while* we are traumatized.” She has also written about trauma as the niece of former President Donald J. Trump, in her book, *Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man*.

The Reckoning examines today's political hostility and socially aggressive culture and insists that if we are ever to come together and heal our divisiveness of literally seeing things in “black” and “white,” we must pause and reflect on how our nation devolved to its current polarized state. Such a reckoning starts with each of us taking an unflinching look backward at this nation's traumatic history in order to determine what we can do to begin to make things right in the present and to forge a democratic society *for all*.

The book is divided into four parts: the original traumatic events that cleaved our country in two, including the Civil War and Reconstruction; the recent and current events including the presidency of Donald Trump and the COVID pandemic that breathed fire into the bitter rift between “them” and “us”; how our legal, political, educational, governmental, financial and social institutions overtly and covertly fostered and still foster unfairness and racial injustice; and how former President Trump's administration led to the seditious act of storming the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

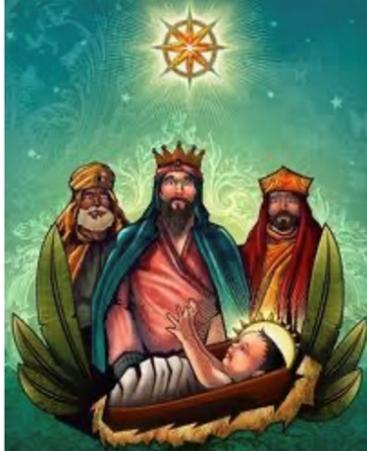
For the rest of the article, click [HERE](#)



“We can't afford the same old inaction. We need bold *new* inaction!”

Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh

By Barry Zack - ©2021 -last update 11/20/21



It seemed that God was hanging around heaven, growing bored with nothing much to do. After all, being responsible for every action to occur in the universe, answering prayers, punishing those who ate bagels during Passover, would seem an unmanageable task. But compared with creating it all in the first place, it was really no big deal for Him. Launching plagues, floods, and pestilence had become all too routine, and smiting had lost some of its luster. Even hanging around with Saint Peter had become tiresome. He needed something to liven things up.

So what does an All Mighty, All Powerful, yet sexually inexperienced Deity do to break the monotony? Obviously, joining a social group for members with similar tastes and background was not an option, and the reverends Billy Graham, James Dobson, Rick Warren and Al Sharpton were not yet begat to give Him advice.

“I know,” He bellowed. “What I need is a family.” And when He finally arrived at that decision, He wondered why He hadn’t thought of it before.

“Having a Son, will create tension and confusion,” He thought. “My flock will be divided as to whether He is really My issue. But, and this is a Big but, I will have someone to take over the family business. Further, I would be relieved from the burden of having to wake up early to smite, as each of the many factions, insisting that only they are the arbiters of what is the True God, will do it for Me. “It shalt be a million laughs,” he sang out, gleefully.

“But whom shall I choose to share The Experience, obviously Supreme in every way?” He pondered. “Surely, I could have any maiden I want. I mean, who would not want to know me in the biblical sense?” He asked, winking to an imaginary audience.

What qualities must a woman possess that would make her a suitable mother for the Son of God?

“I know,” He exclaimed. “She must be an emblem of purity. I will choose a woman already married who is still a virgin. Surely, there must be many fitting that description.”

So The Lord, descended upon the earth in search of the perfect mother. After what would have been an exhaustive search for a mortal, but child’s play for Him, He spotted her on the back of a donkey, heading toward Bethlehem, clinging to a man in the drivers’ saddle. They had been married just that morning - in a civil ceremony.

Having no social graces (He hadn’t needed any), He was unsure just how to approach the couple with his idea. Clumsily, He introduced Himself.

“Hi, my name’s er, Yahweh, but my friends just call me ‘Yah’?” came a voice out of nowhere. It was surely a pickup line that had never been used before. Joseph, the driver, nearly fell out of his saddle, which would have taken the passenger with him.

For the rest of the story, please click [HERE](#)

Special Interest Groups

Here is a list of Special Interest Groups (If you have an idea for one, please let us know).

SIG Names

Focus of the Group

Current Affairs (CAF):

Events discussed during the current news cycle

Life's Experiences (LEX):

Your memorable experiences to share with the group

Non-Fiction Review (NFR):

Reviews of non-fiction books, magazine articles, films and TV

Creativity (CRE):

Includes short stories, poetry, blogs; in other words fiction writing (including reviews) as opposed to non-fiction review.

Roundtable (RT):

A discussion of a topic selected by the SIG hosts

Science Technology & Medicine (STM): What have you learned, and would like to share

Open Forum (OF):

This SIG will happen on dates when no one has stepped up to do a presentation on any of our previously existing categories.

Check our website for specific information by clicking [HERE](#).

We need members to step up and help us develop programs for our SIG (Special Interest Group) meetings! Do you have a story to tell? A book to review? A rant? Do you have a career experience or hobby to share? A talk about a technology you like? A topic you would like covered? (We can find a speaker.) Have you written a book? Let us know ASAP!

Please respond to Dave Helgager at dbhelgager@comcast.net or

Barry Zack at barryzed@gmail.com

Monthly Meetings

ALL LECTURES, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED, WILL BE AT THE CENTER FOR ARTS AND HUMANITY, 1226 N. TAMIAMI TRAIL, SARASOTA 34236 (Corner of 13th and Tamiami Trail) Suggest if coming west on Fruitville, you turn right at Coconut and proceed to 13th St., turning left. All lecture dates are on Mondays.

December 1--Renew your membership

December 6--Sarasota County Homeless Project for the Mentally Challenged, Megan Howell, Executive Director, Founder, Second Heart Homes

January 3--New Year's Party, 7pm-9pm (Drinks, Snacks, Music provided.)

January 17--Miracles of Science--Brian Dunning, Science Writer and producer of Skeptoid Podcast (skeptoid.com)

January 31, 2022--Annual Meeting 6:30pm Center of Arts & Humanity

February 12--Darwin Day Luncheon, Saturday, 11:30 at Marina Jacks, Scientist from Mote Marine (Speaker and subject yet to be determined.) This year we celebrate on Darwin's actual birthdate. Details for reservations, etc. in January.

March 7--Dr. Matthew Edlund, What Constitutes Good Sleep Health?

April 3--Annual Carl Sagan picnic--4-7pm at Turtle Beach Pavilion (Directions and what to bring will be provided at a later date.)

SPECIAL NOTE: Summer lectures under consideration and will be announced sometime in 2022.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are nearing the end of 2021. The Board and I have tried hard to provide some semblance of a program during this year restricted by COVID-19. We appreciate your support, and your emails of encouragement.

It's now December and time to renew your dues. The Board has voted to return to our regular dues of \$30 per person. We look forward to a full year of programs, including our annual Darwin Day Luncheon, the annual Carl Sagan Day Picnic, our lectures, weekly and biweekly luncheons, scholarship award, and maintaining a viable Humanist organization in the area.

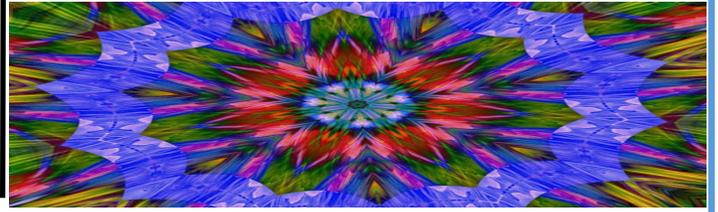
Your financial support is critical. Please renew your dues this month and provide the financial

support so valuable to HUSBAY.

An email you should have received contains the renewal form and all the necessary information for paying your annual dues. Even if you don't feel you are able to participate fully in our activities and programs, your financial support is needed.

Thanks for supporting HUSBAY and renew your dues this month.

Dave Helgager



Alexei Coyne recipient of our 2021 scholarship

A student at Venice Senior High School, Alexei wants to study anthropology and research sociocultural anthropology, focusing on the societies of ancient Greece and Rome. Alexei grew up in a Roman Catholic household, but really started questioning his religious upbringing at the age of eight. During puberty, Alexei sought help as he began having an identity crisis and was told to pray to God for assistance and guidance. Fortunately, medical and mental health research helped Alexei understand his identity. He came out at age fourteen as an atheist and at age eighteen as a transgender man and feels "no restraints on my identity from a religion that does not accept me."

Alexei is an LGBTQ+ advocate at school and a resource for teachers on trans issues. During the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of the

Black Lives Matter movement, he raised money for the victims of the pandemic and awareness of police brutality. When Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill into law requiring all K-12 public schools to require a minute of silence for "prayer or meditation," Alexei knew it was a violation of state-church separation and is organizing students to make their voices heard. He's also writing an article on the subject for a Florida newspaper.

Alexei says "despite the separation of church and state, the secular views of students have been neglected and avoided by many institutions. Having an organization like SSA dedicated to the secular views of students is important in the modern world, helping secular voices become more normalized."

The Board met at Crow's Nest with Bud and Judy Klein to present Alex with his check for \$3000 and a certificate. His mother Susan was also present. The scholarship is funded with help from the Klein Foundation and the Secular Student Alliance.

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It is published monthly and delivered by email to our members. If you have anything you would like published herein, please send it to: Husbaynewsletter@gmail.com