



Humanists of Sarasota Bay, Inc.
Sarasota, Florida

HUSBAY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2022

Humanism Offers Hope over Despair

BY **GINAN RAUF** • 20 JANUARY 2022 from The Humanist

There is not just one humanism. There are cultural variants, emerging humanisms, we must strive to bring into being/existence in a world riddled with multiple/cascading crises. Here one thinks of Anthony Pinn's humanism with its embrace of difference. The humanism of which I speak is an open-ended venture insofar as it concerns itself with transformative action and collective struggle for a "better" world. Imagined possibilities are central to this project (along with) an abiding faith in human creativity, particularly our collective ability to transform ourselves in order to transform the world. That faith can appear absurd, naive or downright foolish to the cynical. Cynicism, after all, corrodes this abiding faith in others and our willingness to work for unimagined possibilities. Why invest time or energy in risky ventures? The results are uncertain and the benefits to the individual unclear. Cynicism aligns itself most easily with the counterrevolution and bends adaptively, perhaps even opportunistically, to the will of authoritarian regimes.

Despair works to the advantage of those who seek to perpetuate oppressive structures. It robs us of the power to act. As Rebecca Solnit shrewdly observes, "Your opponents would love you to believe that it's hopeless, that you have no power, that there's no reason to act, that you cannot win. Hope is a gift you don't have to surrender, a power you don't have to throw away. And though hope can be an act of defiance, defiance isn't reason enough to hope. But there are good reasons to hope."

It's hardly a coincidence, then, that authoritarian regimes *repeatedly* make a spectacle of despair and target young activists who are closely asso-

ciated with the possibility of (radical) cultural transformation. They serve as a visual embodiment of how activism *invariably* leads to incarceration or worse. Take the example of Sarah Hegazi, an Egyptian queer activist and feminist [arrested for flying a rainbow flag](#) during a Mashrou' Leila concert.

Accused of promoting "devious sexual behavior" that purportedly violates the values of the Egyptian family, she was tortured in prison and sought asylum in Canada where she eventually committed suicide.

A highly articulate activist and original thinker had been driven to despair. That's the situation before us: We are left to mourn the tragic loss of an individual life and contemplate the tragedy of her squandered human potential. Hegazi's death sheds light on how structures of power decimate hope as expressed by Rebecca Solnit. There are violent mechanisms in place that disrupt any attempt to cultivate a different way of life or expand the freedom of expression. The incarceration of highly visible activists nips hope in the bud so that the young and experimental don't get too many ideas into their heads or feel the collective power to act.

Suicide, a radical articulation of despair, signals that all self-directed action or forms of resistance are bound to end in a futile act of surrender. Its usefulness to authoritarian regimes cannot and should not be underestimated. One might think of it as a ritual reenactment of authoritarian triumph over the state's designated enemies or shattered bodies. Anti-humanist "virtues" such as blind obedience and excessive reverence for authority figures are constantly being cultivated in the public sphere. For the rest of the article click [HERE](#).

Haiku Quintets: dandana.us/fivepalms

Darwin Day

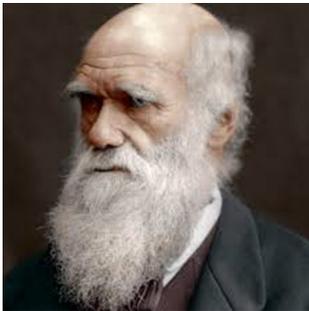
COVID's on the hunt
evolution's not done yet
hide behind your mask

nature's famous law:
"survival of the fittest"
stay alert, humans!

our tasty bits tempt
hungry predator wants more
she can't eat just one

wily genes mutate
natural selection works
Darwin showed us how

seek gods' protection?
or seek knowledge through science?
nothing fails like prayer



Composed in celebration of Darwin Day for HUSBAY



FREETHOUGHT FLORIDA
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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](#).



Atheist Hell.

An atheist loves his fellow man instead of god. An atheist believes that heaven is something for which we should work now--here on earth for all men together to enjoy..

Madalyn Murray O'Hair

Every Child Deserves a Family

BY [RACHEL DEITCH](#) • 20 JANUARY 2022 from the Humanist

There are more than 400,000 youth in foster care. But, foster care and adoption agencies turn away qualified, loving parents because of who they are, who they love, or what they believe—all in the name of religious freedom.

For example, a Christian agency could deny adoption by qualified Jewish parents (which has recently become the subject of a [lawsuit in Tennessee](#)), and a Jewish agency could deny adoption by qualified Christian parents. An agency could refuse to allow a gay or transgender extended family member to adopt an orphaned child. And an agency could refuse to place an LGBTQ+ child with accepting parents and instead place them with parents who intend to force them into harmful conversion therapy.

These aren't merely hypotheticals. [There are countless children and families who have experienced religiously motivated discrimination in the child welfare system.](#)

Too many foster children spend years in the system without finding a forever home. Yet, same-sex couples are seven times more likely to foster and adopt than opposite-sex couples and are more likely to foster and adopt hard-to-place children like large sibling groups, older children, and children with disabilities. Turning away qualified LGBTQ+ foster and adoptive parents limits the pool of homes available and harms kids in care.

The 1 in 3 foster children who identify as LGBTQ experience higher rates of mistreatment, long stays in residential care rather than with families, and higher rates of homelessness, being trafficked, and criminal justice system involvement.

As humanists, we refuse to stand idly by. That's why the American Humanist Association has joined a collective week-of-action with child advocacy, LGBTQ+, faith, and civil rights groups to raise our

voices and demand Congress take action and support the John Lewis Every Child Deserves a Family Act. This important piece of legislation would:

- prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, and marital status against families and youth in taxpayer-funded child welfare services;
- require culturally competent care for youth and families of color and youth and families who are disabled, religious minorities, or LGBTQ+;
- bar conversion therapy in foster care;
- require data collection on LGBTQ+ youth and families; and
- establish a National Resource Center for LGBTQ+ youth in foster care within the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families.

In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in *Fulton v. The City of Philadelphia*, which was technically narrow to the specifics of the case, but still devastating, it's clear that the courts have relinquished their responsibility to our Constitution. Some of our country's most vulnerable kids pay the price each day, so we need Congress to act.

[Please help us ensure that no taxpayer-funded foster or adoption agency can use their religious beliefs to prevent a child from finding a loving home and contact your Congress members now.](#) (Reaching out to elected officials is easy through our online Humanist Action Headquarters. It truly only takes two minutes.)

Each child deserves a loving and supportive home. Each child deserves culturally competent care that respects their identities and specific circumstances. Each child deserves the opportunity to flourish. Faith should never be allowed to stand in the way of that.

Special Interest Groups

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

SIG Names

Current Affairs (CAF):

Life's Experiences (LEX):

Non-Fiction Review (NFR):

Creativity (CRE):

Roundtable (RT):

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

Open Forum (OF):

Focus of the Group

Events discussed during the current news cycle

Your memorable experiences to share with the group

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

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

A discussion of a topic selected by the SIG hosts

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.

February 12--Darwin Day Luncheon, Saturday, 12:00pm at The Meadows Country Club, 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?

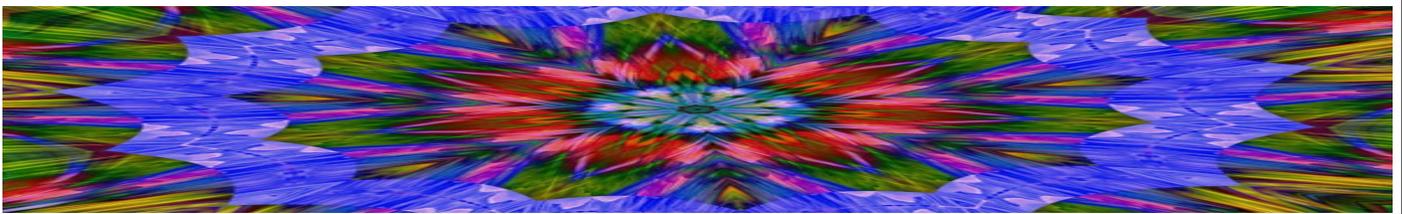
April 3--Annual Carl Sagan picnic--4-7pm at Turtle Beach Pavilion (Directions and what to bring will be provided at a later date.)

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

Chat & Chew

Meets every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at Perkins restaurant at Fruitville and Cattlemen at 12noon.

The SIG is meeting for chat and discussion at the New Dynasty restaurant in Sarasota, every other Wednesdays at noon or when no SIG is scheduled. SIGs will be presented via ZOOM. Watch your email for announcements.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This month we celebrate the birthday of Charles Darwin born February 12, 1809. We will commemorate his birthday at our annual Darwin Day Luncheon which conveniently falls on February 12. This is the first luncheon since the pandemic began, and I am looking forward to seeing those members who choose to attend.

It's also Black History Month and a time to reflect on all the efforts ongoing to discount our country's history of racism. As Humanists, we must stand against such efforts and do our part to combat racism and to ensure its inclusion in American history books taught in our schools. Just the recent efforts to ban 16 books in Polk County, Florida, continues to keep that issue in front of us.

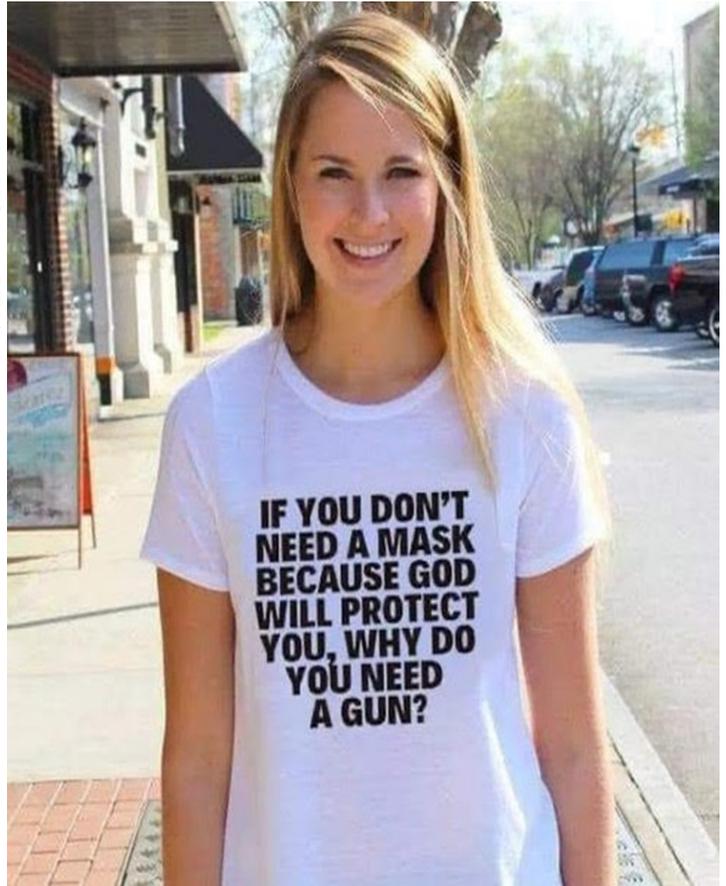
It's also comforting to know that nearly all our members are fully vaccinated and have had the booster. This speaks well of our reliance on science for decision making. It makes it possible to hold our Darwin Day Luncheon with a large degree of comfort.

Finally, I give my Darwin award to all those unvaccinated Americans who on their death beds refused to acknowledge that they had COVID and to those who denied the value of vaccination then died of COVID.

As Darwin so aptly put it: "Ignorance more frequently begets confidence than knowledge. It is those who know little, and not those who know much, who so positively assert that this or that problem will never be solved by science."



"Hi there! We're in the neighborhood peddling conspiracy theories and we're hoping you're an idiot."



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This 90-Year-Old Holocaust survivor is fed up with un-hinged anti-vaxxers and their Nazi/vaccine comparisons

From AlterNet



Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many far-right anti-vaxxers have not been shy about comparing vaccine and testing mandates, face mask requirements and social distancing guidelines to the activities of Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime of the 1930s and early 1940s. [Fox News' Lara Logan](#) even compared Dr. Anthony Fauci to Dr. Joseph Mengele. And someone who witnessed the Holocaust first hand and lived to talk about it, [90-year-old Polish Jew and author Sidney Zoltak](#), is fed up the outrageous and downright idiotic things that anti-vaxxers have been saying about the Holocaust.

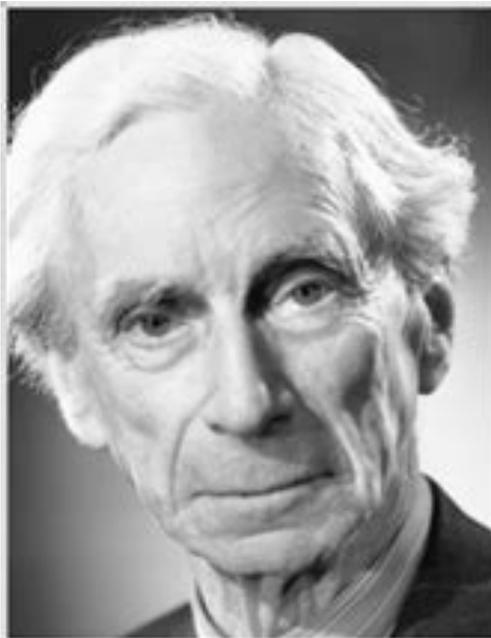
Zoltak, according to the Daily Beast's Marlow Stern, was only ten when Nazis invaded Siemiatycze, Poland, his home town, and sent many of its Jewish residents to the infamous Treblinka death camp — where at least 900,000 Jews were slaughtered. Zoltak's family, Stern notes, "avoided that fate" by "going on the run" and "hiding wherever they could."

Zoltak, discussing anti-vaxxers who make Nazi/

Holocaust comparisons, told the Beast, "It takes an awful lot of what we would call *chutzpah*, because anybody who did not live through German occupation in Europe for any length of time would not know what the Holocaust was. Among my community of 7000 Jews, less than 70 survived. And among the survivors, none of them were my classmates or friends."

Anti-vaxxers, Zoltak added, "use the Holocaust because of *hate*. They want to say something negative about the Jews, and they use the Holocaust."

Zoltak, who now lives in Montreal, Canada, has been publicly lecturing about the horrors of the Holocaust during his travels. Describing his family's struggle to survive the Holocaust back in Poland, Zoltak told the Beast, "We would go out at night to get fresh air, occasionally — and often, in the bunker, we could not breathe any air. There's nothing that I can compare it to, and I'm certainly not going to compare it to going through the COVID-19 pandemic."



Education ought to foster the wish for truth, not the conviction that some particular creed is the truth.

— Bertrand Russell —

AZ QUOTES