



Humanists of Sarasota Bay, Inc.
Sarasota, Florida

HUSBAY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2022

Humanists Helping Ukraine From The Humanist BY SARAH RAY

As a humanist, it's disheartening to watch humanity plunge into yet another war. I believe in things like cooperation over competition and the ideal that we all benefit far more when we work together toward a common cause. The empathetic through-line of the human condition causes us to have big feelings about people on the other side of the planet, people we will likely never meet, yet with whom we share so much.

While governments work through issues of diplomacy, sanctions, and hopefully preventing all-out nuclear war, everyday people are putting their humanist values on the frontline to help strangers in need.

Randa Black of Orlando, Florida is an accomplished actor, having appeared in hundreds of national and regional commercials and TV shows, plus the 2010 feature film *Action*. She's also an endorsed humanist celebrant and an activist for the separation of church and state. She describes her views as "not against anyone's religion" but recognizes that, by mingling religion and government, as in many invocation policies across the US, we end up endorsing one religion above all others, and above lack of religious belief.

In early March, she booked an Airbnb in Kyiv, Ukraine. In a message to the apartment's owner, she said, "I feel for you and your country. I'm from Orlando, Florida[.] I have a short-term rental business, too. I will not be visiting at this time but wanted to send you money. I hope this little gesture finds you healthy and safe. Peace and love to

you! You're welcome to visit and stay with me for free. Please know that the world cares about you and the people of Ukraine!"

Regarding her booking, Randa said, "I wanted the woman to know she is cared about and to send money to help. As a humanist, I think of actions, not just thoughts and prayers."

Elated, the woman replied, "Dear Randa, today I got your letter and was so exciting for read. Peace and love for you from my heart, doors of my home are always open for you! You touched my heart with your message of love and help. May the God keep you for your kind pure open heart. I can not find words of gratitude and love for your indifferent (sic) attitude to this situation. I sincerely thank you and I am glad for any help. Bombings and explosions everywhere in the city. When everything is over, the doors of my house are open for you!"

Since I learned of Randa's gesture, this approach has gone viral with people booking rentals across Ukraine and in neighboring nations where many are fleeing for safety.

Foundation Beyond Belief (FBB)—a nonprofit which seeks to end poverty and hunger, promote good health and well-being, and foster employment opportunities and economic growth in ways that exemplify humanist values—supports a network of local groups around the world who regularly work toward these goals in their local communities and beyond. FBB's Beyond Belief Network Team, "Northwest Chicagoland Humanist Crew", a small but mighty eighteen-person Facebook group, is collecting clothing, shoes, and blankets for Ukrainian refugees in Poland. FBB also suggests additional ways to support Ukrainians.

Haiku Quintets: dandana.us/fivepalms

Lived Experience

I know what it's like
to grow up a straight white male
in an intact home

but I do not know
the lived experience of
women, Blacks, gay men,

abuse survivors,
refugees, homeless addicts,
pregnant teens, paupers

so, I should not make
decisions about how best
to solve their problems

but, they are humans
who feel feelings, as I do
therein lies a clue

Note: Composed as President Biden is considering a Black woman for the Supreme Court



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 Anatomy of Anxiety: Understanding and Overcoming the Body's Fear Response **Book review by Karen Koenig**

originally published at the NY Journal of Books.

“*The Anatomy of Anxiety* describes myriad stresses that drive up our anxiety and provides a framework for figuring out how we can beat or benefit from it.”

The Anatomy of Anxiety addresses how to cope with anxiety in an age when it seems rampant within and around us. *The Anatomy of Anxiety* describes myriad stresses that drive up our anxiety and provides a framework for figuring out how we can benefit from or beat it. If you are seeking to understand the basics of anxiety and how to treat it, this comprehensive book will increase your knowledge base and set you on a path to a less anxious, more peaceful life. If you already know a good deal about the subject, you will find no substantial new ground covered here.

As a holistic psychiatrist using a functional medicine approach to mental health, Dr. Vora’s focus is on “considering the whole person and addressing imbalance at the root.” She implies that this approach is not commonly used in traditional psychiatric practice, but nowadays, most psychiatrists (as well as other mental health providers) take into account how physical, lifestyle and real-world issues—stress, illness, sleep, eating, work, social media and current affairs—affect clients’ mental and emotional states and tailor anxiety treatments accordingly.

Specifically, Dr. Vora examines how our habits “such as chronic sleep deprivation, poor nutrition, and even doom scrolling on social media . . . are capable of creating a stress response in the body, which prompts the release of hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline—signaling a state of emergency to the brain that can leave us feeling anxious.” Through cases and examples, she illustrates how stress can harm us, leaving us with emotional and physiological problems that, in turn, can cause and manifest as anxiety. In addition, she shares her own mental and physical health struggles during her arduous medical school training to bring home what stress can do to the body and mind.

The book is divided into three parts: It’s *Not All in Your Head*, *False Anxiety* and *True Anxiety*. Part 1 discusses current cultural strains and stresses, beginning with Vora talking about the magnitude of global anxiety: “Almost three hundred million people worldwide struggle with an anxiety disorder—with Americans being the most anxious country of all.” She focuses less on diagnosing various ways we experience anxiety and more on how it feels in and is expressed through our bodies.

She explains in detail the book’s main premise, which is presented as standing apart from other theories on anxiety: the difference between what Vora calls “false” and “true” anxiety.

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

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Elsewhere, local AHA Chapters and Affiliates, like the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara, are hosting educational speakers to learn more about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, how it affects us in the US and the world, and how we can help. Dr. Adrian Ivakhiv is a Professor of Environmental Thought and Culture at the University of Vermont and Visiting Scholar at the University of California Santa Barbara’s Carsey-Wolf Center. His research on culture and environment has taken him to late- and post-Soviet Ukraine (including a year in 1989-90 as a Canada-USSR Scholar studying the cultural impacts of the Chernobyl nuclear accident) and beyond. He suggests that, in addition to making donations to various organizations supporting Ukrainian resistance, we call our elected officials to express our support for sanctions and reach out to any personal or professional connections we may have in Russia. “When [Russian] State Media is

not allowing discussion of the reality of the war, the only way people can find out is if they hear it from enough places,” Ivakhiv says. “Russian support and acquiescence are what allows their government to conduct this assault.”

Roman, a Ukrainian listener of the [David C. Smalley Podcast](#), described on the March 12th episode (#579) how many of the women and children have left the cities for less populated areas or bordering countries, while the men have stayed behind to fight and work. His own family has all stayed, and he continues to work, he says, “so that I can pay taxes because nowadays it’s really critical for our economy to be at least partially running.” Roman believes Ukraine will be victorious and says that seeing the outpouring of support from across the world “gives us the courage to fight for our territory.”

Are you or your local humanist group doing something to support Ukraine?

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.

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

May 2— 7:00 PM Kate Holmes, Advisory Board member at the Historical Society of Sarasota County. It's Florida: Land of Fabulous Fables and Fascinating Facts.

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.

HATS OFF TO HUSBAY: At our annual meeting, member Karen Koenig suggested that space be created on our website so members could comment on what HUSBAY means to you. All of you came to HUSBAY for many reasons, and we urge you to go to HATS OFF TO HUSBAY on our website telling us in a brief comment what HUSBAY means to you.. You can find HATS OFF TO HUSBAY by clicking [HERE](#)

President's Message April 2022

The annual meeting in January underscored some concerns about the future funding of our standard operating budget. As many of you know, we have a substantial savings, mostly funded by the Klein Foundation, to help pay for projects like our scholarship and special events such as the Darwin Day luncheon.

This brings me to an issue that was discussed at length by the Board at its March quarterly meeting. We have a short fall of funds needed for standard operations such as lectures, post office box, donations, supplies and other expenses. This is largely because we have had a sharp decline in membership, particularly since the pandemic. We now have 87 members compared to as many as 125 at one time.

The Board can use some of the savings to augment the shortfall in the short-term but we found that unacceptable for the long-term. The discussion became about how to raise more funds to handle those

standard operations. We discussed asking members to make donations, having fund raisers, and also a proposal to raise the dues in 2023.

We will be sending you soon the revised, bare bones budget which includes recommendations from the members attending the annual meeting. As you will see the money garnered from dues is not enough to run the level of programs in the past. We will need to up our game to keep things going the way we like.

Thanks to members who have volunteered and a very supportive Board, our organization has thrived during the pandemic with zoom special interest presentations. We have had a Darwin Day luncheon, and we will be holding lectures beginning in May, continuing perhaps this summer and in the fall.

As the Board continues to work on our challenges as a membership, we will need your support in attendance and financially, of course. The Humanists of Sarasota Bay will celebrate its 25th year in 2024. All of us can be proud of ourselves and thankful for our founders, and the leaders who followed that we are arriving at this milestone!

Humanists Applaud Congress's Support for Repealing Blasphemy Laws in Government Funding Bill for 2nd Year

(Washington, DC, March 11, 2022) – Last night, Congress passed the 2022 Appropriations Act, which includes language, drafted by staff at the American Humanist Association, that supports the repeal of blasphemy laws around the world. This is the second year Congress has, through the appropriations process, explicitly encouraged the State Department to prioritize the global repeal of blasphemy laws, using AHA-drafted language.

The bill “includes funds to support in-country training programs for countries that repeal or begin a formal process to remove blasphemy-related offenses for their criminal codes, and to train relevant civil society leaders, religious leaders, the media, the judiciary, and law enforcement on conflict de-escalation tools, community engagement, peacebuilding, and international human rights standards,” states the Act's [joint explanatory statement](#).

“We were delighted to see Congress include our language in the bill for the second year,” says AHA Director of Policy and Social Justice Rachel Deitch. “Repealing blasphemy laws and moving toward a society that allows and encourages freedom of thought requires significant investment in reframing not only the law, but public perception and beliefs. That’s exactly what this language aims to provide. We hope that Congress’s actions to include the language for a second year establishes a precedent that ensures that the US government will support these efforts for years to come.”

Blasphemy laws exist in more than 80 countries and are the most explicit laws banning the expression of doubts or criticism regarding religion. In several countries, the penalty for being found guilty of violating these laws is death. Blasphemy laws are used to restrict the rights of not just the nonreligious, but minorities of all faiths and philosophies, women, LGBTQ people, and political dissidents

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This is Vol 4 Issue of the HUSBAY Newsletter edited by Bob La Salle. 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



Humanists Deeply Saddened By Not Guilty Verdict in Kyle Rittenhouse Trial

From The Humanist

The American Humanist Association is outraged by the verdict in the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse, which pronounced him not guilty on all charges.

In August of 2020, Rittenhouse traveled from his home in Illinois, carrying a semiautomatic rifle into downtown Kenosha, Wisconsin, during a period of unrest over the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black resident, by a White police officer. Rittenhouse then shot and killed protesters Joseph Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber, and injured Gaije Grosskreutz. Rittenhouse faced five felonies, including first-degree reckless homicide, first-degree recklessly endangering safety, and first-degree intentional homicide.

The rifle that Rittenhouse brought to the protests in Kenosha was purchased by a friend, since Rittenhouse was seventeen and not legally old enough to purchase it, a reminder of the lack of necessary restrictions on gun laws in the United States.

“Make no mistake: this trial, the events that led up to it, and its outcome demonstrate the hold white supremacy has on our country. When white supremacists can opportunistically flock to a city grieving the shooting of a black resident, seek out violence, then kill people in the streets with impunity, our entire system lays bare its brokenness,” said Nicole Carr, Acting Executive Director of the American Humanist Association. “We mourn for those directly impacted by this judgment and call for our country to finally confront and amend its dangerous gun laws.”

