



Humanists of Sarasota Bay, Inc.
Sarasota, Florida

HUSBAY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2022

Fanatical religious backlash is a bad business

From FFRF

The usual tenets of ultraconservatives are being jettisoned in order to promote a Christian nationalist agenda, as **Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis'** revenge against pro-LGBTQ Disney reveals.

When extremist politicians who run on campaigns promoting "big business" start going after big business entities — even icons such as Disney, Google and Coca-Cola — then clearly politics is not business as usual.

DeSantis, a fervently conservative Catholic, is on a retributive crusade against Disney. Last Friday, the governor revoked a half-century-old tax and self-governing deal with Disney because the corporation dared to criticize his "Don't Say Gay" law and also halted political donations. The "Don't Say Gay" law muzzles discussion of LGBTQ issues in public schools, and was passed amid odious warnings by a DeSantis spokesperson that "grooming" goes on in public schools.

Critics charge that the revocation of Disney's privileges will leave taxpayers in central Florida responsible for making up about \$163 million in missed taxes. Hikes are expected on property taxes. How does the party of big business justify this?

Earlier this month, Alabama passed a law criminalizing medical care for young transgender individuals who are transitioning and legislation similar to Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill. When she signed the anti-transgender measure, ultrareligious Gov. Kay Ivey invoked God, as she has in the past while signing anti-abortion legislation: "I believe very strongly that if the Good Lord made you a boy, you are a boy, and if he made you a girl, you are a girl.

... Instead, let us all focus on helping them to properly develop into the adults God intended them to be." Ivey's motto could be: "God says it, I believe it, that settles it."

Alabama's sole gay lawmaker said from the Statehouse floor that his conservative colleagues had no business interfering with the decisions of parents, doctors and children: "Where's the freedom in that? Where's small government in that?" asked state Rep. Neil Rafferty.

The same hypocrisy exists with the rash of states that have shockingly outright banned all or most abortion care in recent months. Legislators who typically cavil the most over the so-called intrusions of "big government" into citizen lives have no problem at all demanding to make the most intimate and life-altering decisions for female constituents.

Nothing is too petty for these fanatics to dictate, whether it's which bathroom a middle-schooler must use or if a parent may seek gender-affirming care for transgender children. A judge has temporarily blocked a portion of a law, signed by devoutly religious Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, that requires "child abuse" investigations against such parents. The law, in effect, criminalizes LGBTQ minors and supportive parents. Abbott is even urging citizens to squeal on such parents.

All of this plays out against a backdrop of divisive school board meetings, with many self-righteous parents crying "parental rights" after being on the warpath against school masking over the past two years. New York Times columnist Frank Bruni wisely points out that public schools don't just exist for parents. do with any one parent's ideology, religion or lack thereof."

Continued on page 3

Haiku Quintets: dandana.us/fivepalms

Staring into the Abyss

once upon a time
we had a chance to change course
but skipped the off-ramp

warm water expands,
ice sheets melt into the sea,
coastal cities sink

half of world's people
escaping to higher ground,
crowd their new neighbors

this train cannot stop
planet's sixth mass extinction
is well underway

my fellow lemmings,
staring into the abyss,
let's pay attention



*Three passions, simple but
overwhelmingly strong, have
governed my life:
The longing for love,
the search for knowledge, and
unbearable pity for the
suffering of mankind.*

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](#).

Women Rowing North: Navigating Life's Currents and Flourishing As We Age

Reviewed by: Karen R. Koenig Originally published at the New York Journal of Books

In *Women Rowing North*, Mary Pipher dives in and upends the myths of female aging by detailing both the joyous and depressing truths of our sunset years. She gives us a bird's eyeview of growing old through a kaleidoscope of women's stories and by sharing her own experiences and emotions as she enters the final decades of her life. The themes of the book—how to cope, grow, heal and change late in life—emerge as Pipher weaves snippets of interviews with women of varying older ages, ethnicities, personalities, and situations into her exposition.

Her intent is to write “a guidebook for the flourishing that is possible” for women in their 70s and beyond, a time that can be as debilitating and heartbreaking as it can be satisfying and exhilarating. Pipher rightfully rages against how, since the beginning of time, older women have been painted into dark or colorless corners, and she rejoices in their using wisdom born of experience to paint themselves back out, sometimes in glorious technicolor. Pipher insists that finding one's authenticity is one of the best gifts of aging and delights in the fact that “we become who we believe we can be.”

She points out how “Young people do not understand older people because they have never been old,” an obvious truth, and one that both old and young would do well to remember. She is insistent that older women need to share their considerable wisdom by “educating other people about the negative stereotypes and the reality of our lives”—advocating for women across the life span and connecting with people of all ages, rather than cocooning themselves with women their age.

Pipher lays out an unvarnished, balanced landscape of women's final decades. Pluses abound. Older women often are healthier and more active than men their age. They are closer with friends and family. They are wiser, with a wider frame of reference for everything that happens to them and those who share their lives.

They have seen it all, or most of it, anyway. Now that the future is rapidly approaching or has arrived, they take things a day at a time, the way they have always been advised to do. They no

longer need to wonder and worry who they will become because it is who they are now, and the only developmental task left is for them to come to terms with this final self.

But, as Pipher says, and it is a point she makes repeatedly in the book, “We don't become our wisest selves without effort.” She fervently believes that we need to stop fighting the suffering that abounds in every life and, instead, grow from it. This is far from a new thought, but it is worth keeping in mind. Another is to know the difference between loneliness, which is unwelcome, and solitude which is both comfortable and satisfying.

The book does not minimize the despair, physical suffering, grief, and anger of growing old, as our minds and bodies deteriorate in ways that sometimes make us unrecognizable to ourselves. Equally, however, Pipher reminds us how pointless it is to dwell on either emotional or physical pain. Instead, she urges women to reach out to old friends and make new ones, find meaning in life through giving back or, finally, taking care of self, loving others, and making peace with what is. Even in grief, she contends, we can find something valuable to hold on to that will get us through our darkest hours. If there is one concept that Pipher's book is trying to instill in women as they reach their seventies, it is self-acceptance. To be their best selves, she encourages them to settle old scores with the universe by showing mercy to themselves and to others. She urges them to remember the parts of the past that are useful for a better present and to stop fretting about tomorrow. If they can do this, as they go on living while moving toward dying, their days will be rich and their minds will be at peace.

Although Pipher's message to her sisters is to make the best of their final decades, readers may find parts of the book depressing rather than enlivening. Though she writes beautifully and encourages women to lighten their load by laughing at themselves, Pipher's tone is serious and the book is a bit plodding. She is right that we need to take charge of our lives and not give in or up as it draws to a close. Speaking of our final decades, she says, “I hope that we can experience bliss.” What she means is that in spite of the inescapable pain that aging will bring us in one form or another, she hopes that we can rise above it.

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.

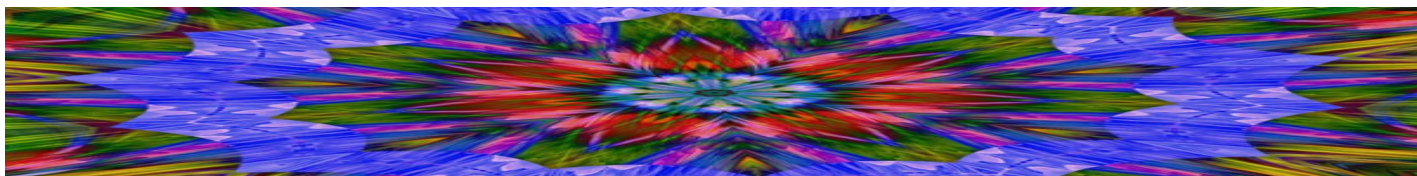
May 2— 7:00 PM Kate Holmes, Advisory Board member at the Historical Society of Sarasota County. It's Florida: Land of Fabulous Fables and Fascinating Facts.

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

May 2022

May marks an interesting time for me. It's a transition time as winter residents have begun or will begin their journey back to the "north". It marks a welcomed reduction in traffic, the return of easy access to restaurants, access to beaches that have swarmed with bodies and, of course, the gradual change to a hot humid summer. I welcome these changes as it means a kind freedom I've experienced each late spring and summer in the 40 plus years I've lived in Sarasota County.

It's been particularly difficult with the pandemic raging to keep our organization viable. Somehow we seem to be rising from the ashes, though slowly, thanks to vaccinations, science, and our leadership and volunteers.

I ask those members who head back to the "north" to keep in mind that thanks to Zoom, you do have a vehicle for keeping up and connecting with those of us who remain here. Take advantage of this technology and join us!

Humanists Urge Supreme Court to Defend Religious Freedom of Public School Students From the American Humanist Association

The American Humanist Association (AHA) joins Freedom From Religion Foundation to file an amicus brief with the Supreme Court of the United States in *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*. The brief expresses the AHA's support for Bremerton School District and emphasizes the need to protect the religious freedom of public school students.

Joe Kennedy served as head coach of the junior varsity football team and assistant coach of the varsity team at Bremerton High School. Kennedy would regularly give a post-game prayer at the 50-yard line and encouraged students to join him. Some residents grew worried about this practice, concerned for students who opted to not join the prayer who may feel alienated and potentially ostracized.

"Public school officials violate the First Amendment at its core when they coerce students directly or through social pressure to participate in prayer in connection with a school activity," noted AHA Legal Director and Senior Counsel Monica Miller. "Our amicus brief also demands procedural equality for nonreligious plaintiffs, meaning we want the Supreme Court to treat our clients the same way it treats Christian plaintiffs."

The brief, authored by counsel for Freedom From Religion Foundation and joined by the AHA along with the Center for Inquiry and Secular Coalition for America, argues that the case itself has become moot, especially since Kennedy has "removed himself from the threat of allegedly unconstitutional policies" and has since become a Florida resident, meaning he can no longer sue a Washington school district over its policies. Regardless, if the Court does review the merits of this case, it must consider the harm to nonreligious students.

From page 1

Ominously, as Jamelle Bouie, another New York Times columnist points out, many of those who are fanning the flames against "critical race theory" and LGBTQ rights related to our public schools, are hell-bent on destroying our public schools. Foremost among these is Christopher Rufo, who is deliberately using these trumped-up controversies with the overt goal of destroying our public schools.

"These are not just attacks on individual teachers and schools; they don't stigmatize just vulnerable children and their communities; they are the founda-

tion for an assault on the very idea of public education," writes Bouie.

America's secular public education system represents the best of the United States, and just like big businesses with consciences, it is under assault by extremists determined to inflict their personal religious dogmas upon all citizens. Like all bullies, the Christian nationalists are starting with the most vulnerable: Black children and LGBTQ minors and their parents. It's a very bad business — and the answer is to keep religion out of our laws, social policies and public schools.

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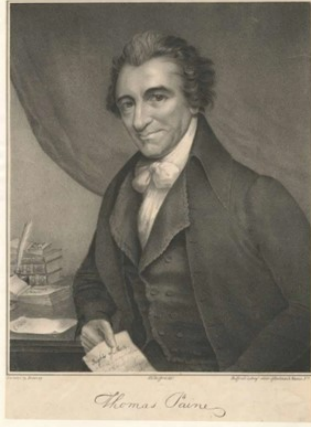
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Husbaynewsletter@gmail.com

Eminent historian endorses Thomas Paine D.C. memorial

A prominent scholar and historian has endorsed the construction of a statue of Thomas Paine in the nation's capital — providing the project a huge spur.

Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., introduced legislation in February (HR 6720) to authorize the building of a much-needed memorial to Thomas Paine.



“Despite his catalytic role in founding America and our constitutional republic, Thomas Paine remains too often on the dark outskirts of history,” Raskin said. “This memorial to Paine — amazingly already pre-funded with a flood of voluntary contributions and pledges from private citizens — will be a powerful and dramatic addition to the symbolic life of Washington, D.C.”

Now, Historical Society of Pennsylvania CEO David Brigham is enthusiastically backing the idea. “As Philadelphia was the political center of the American Revolution, and with Thomas Paine as a leader of the movement towards independence in 1776, this recognition project is an important step towards unifying America around the common ground of the American Revolution,” says Brigham. “1776 began with Paine’s *Common Sense*, which turned the tide towards independence and led to the Declaration of Independence and the idea of the universal rights of mankind that underlies the Declaration. 1776 ended with Paine’s *Crisis I*, the ‘times that tried men’s souls,’ which helped turn the tide in the Revolutionary War.”

Co-sponsors of the Thomas Paine memorial bill include Reps. Jared Huffman, D-Calif., Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., Mark Pocan, D-Wis., Sean Casten, D-Ill.,

Madeleine Dean, D-Pa., James McGovern, D-Mass., Mark DeSaulnier, D-Calif., and Thomas Suozzi, D-N.Y. The legislation will authorize the Thomas Paine Memorial Association to establish the commemorative work in the District of Columbia. The association is working with renowned sculptor Zenos Frudakis, and the statue will be paid for through private funds. The Thomas Paine Memorial Association is the recipient of a very generous pledge from Todd Stiefel and the Stiefel Freethought Foundation — which will ensure that the memorial will become a reality.

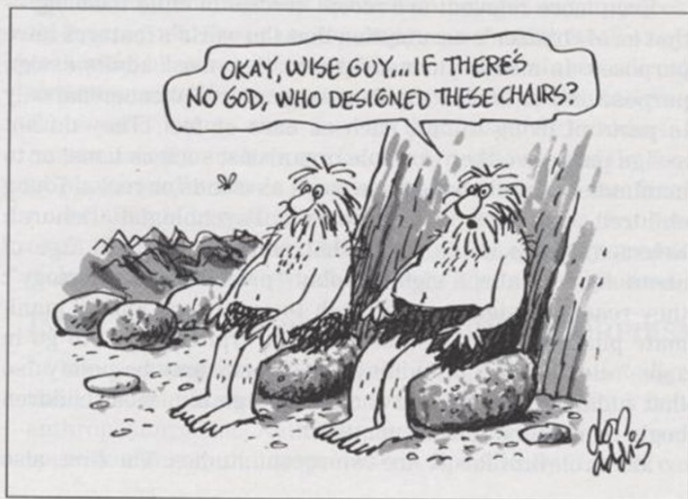
“A staunch abolitionist, Thomas Paine popularized the idea that justice and equality must be the basis of government, and laid down the ideals of American democracy,” adds Brigham. “A prominent statue to Paine is long overdue.”

Members of the Thomas Paine Memorial Association (TPMA) are delighted to receive support from such a luminary.

“This endorsement by a major American educator and art historian means a lot,” comments Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president and co-founder serving as the secretary of TPMA. “This endorsement will convince many minds about the necessity of the project.”

Margaret Downey, TPMA president, states, “The endorsement of the Thomas Paine statue project by David Brigham provides a great opportunity to educate the public about the importance of recognizing Thomas Paine’s accomplishments — which include advancing democracy, justice and equality in the United States of America. TPMA thanks Brigham for his support as it paves the way for more experts to join in the effort.”

The Thomas Paine Memorial Association is confident that the project to memorialize the “Forgotten Founder” will get a substantial boost due to the approval of experts in the field — especially someone as renowned as David Brigham.



“I’ll make you a deal, Stacy. If you stop trying to save my soul, I’ll stop trying to free your mind.”