



Humanists of Sarasota Bay, Inc.
Sarasota, Florida

HUSBAY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2023

Living Humanist Values: The Ten Commitments

BY [KRISTIN WINTERMUTE](#) - The Humanist Magazine

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF HUMANISM? How does one live as a humanist?



Like many of you, I have read a plethora of articles and longer works defining humanism. Each proclaims a different emphasis highlighting various aspects of what is valued by humanists. Some declare humanism to be a religion, a life stance, or a worldview, while

others profess it to be a progressive philosophy, an ethical perspective, or a belief system. Usually, an array of principles is provided as a list of what's key to humanists—affirming human worth and dignity, reason, compassion, morality, ethics, democracy, scientific inquiry, naturalism, and critical thinking with no adherence or affirmation of a divine creator or other supernatural force. None of the definitions are entirely conclusive, and all are correct in outlining the fundamentals of humanism.

However, this brings little clarity to what humanism is or how one lives as a humanist. Without a definitive set of beliefs, dogma, or scripture, humanism appears nebulous, which is the main reason we at the American Humanist Association Center for Education have developed the Ten Commitments.

Whereas the Ten Commandments of the Hebrew Bible are a set of strict rules dictated by God, the Ten Commitments stand on their own as humanist values to maintain and strive to practice daily. They

propose we put our values into action to work towards positively impacting our communities and society. In their simplicity, the Ten Commitments ultimately define what we are about and what we stand for. I also see the Ten Commitments as an avenue for collaboration—a gathering point for all humanists to work together.

Now, having grown up humanist and having worked in a variety of professional capacities in the movement, I'm very aware that within humanist circles, independence of mind is a significant priority—a venerated value for those who feel they narrowly escaped the confines of a religion that was “commanding” and, in some cases, repressive. And so many may initially feel the Ten Commitments smack of a directive authority and should be rejected.

However, I think the Ten Commitments are less about absolutes and serve more as a guide to putting our beliefs into action. They hold us accountable to our values. They ask humanists to be proactive versus reactive. They demonstrate that being humanist involves doing what is inherently right to ensure the well being of everyone and everything in this world. They inspire me to be better as a person and do better as a humanist.

It is my hope that readers find similar value in them. (A simpler version has also been developed for use in educational settings with younger humanists and in various other promotional ways). The AHA Center for Education plans to build a curriculum around the Ten Commitments that would also appeal to others in a variety of secular settings, such that the Ten Commitments become not only widely accepted character education, but a guide within professional settings promoting health and wellness.

[For a complete review of the 10 Commitments - go here.](#)

Haiku Quintets: dandana.us/fivepalms

!As We Are Told
he dropped fiery death
on Japan's powerless pawns,
as Truman ordered

he showered vile gas
on trainloads of marked scapegoats,
as the Fuhrer wished

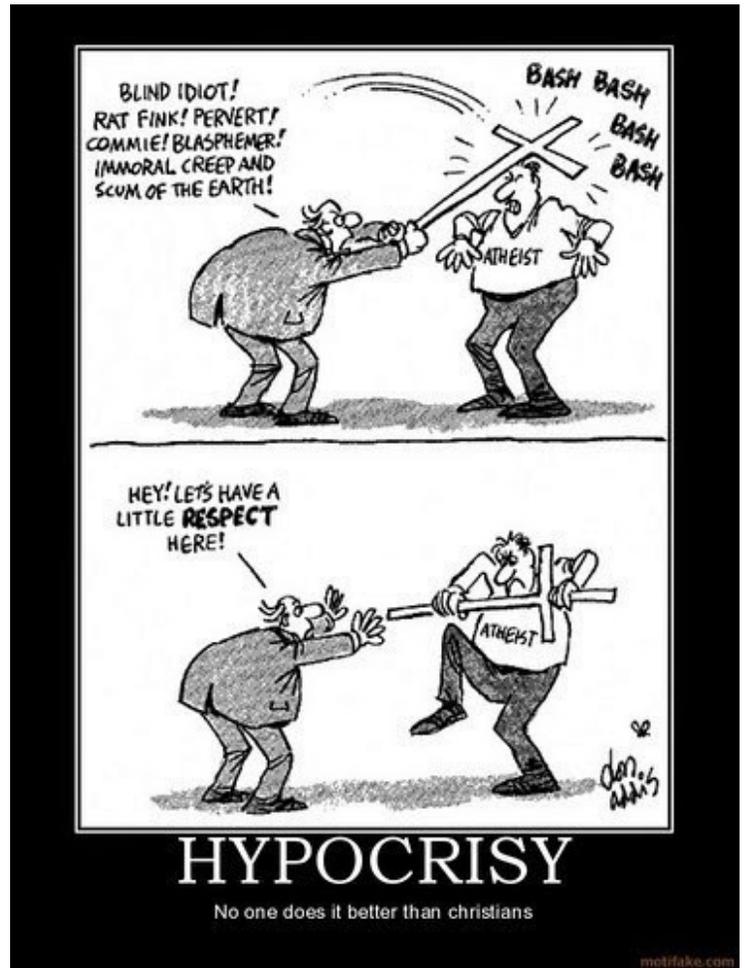
he launched cruise missiles
striking hospitals and schools,
as Putin desired

Members cast floor votes
to rescind democracy,
as Trump demanded

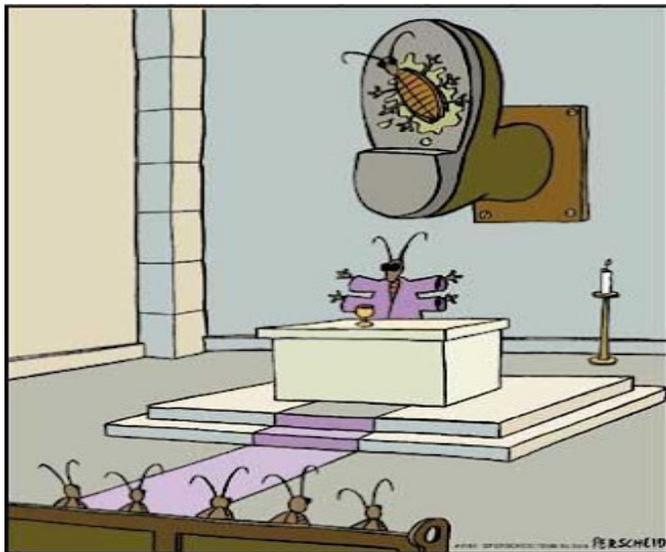
whether we believe
our duties serve greater good,
we do as we're told



29 September 2022, Smithsonian Museum, Chantilly, Virginia The Enola Gay delivered "Little Boy" to Hiroshima, 6 August 1945.



Something like this can happen in the best families.



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 TOP 25 MOST INFLUENTIAL LIVING ATHEISTS Excerpted from Superscholar.org

Go back a few hundred years, and atheism was very much a minority position. Those who were atheists would have been ostracized by society and possibly even killed (as in burned at the stake, depending on how far back you go). Fast forward to the present, and atheism is far less objectionable, and in some circles even the dominant view.

In the new millennium, prominent atheists abound. One website, www.celebatheists.com, is even dedicated to listing celebrity atheists. Celebrity atheists are wide-ranging and include people like Mark Zuckerberg, Lance Armstrong, and Jodie Foster. Even so, they don't make it on to our list of influential living atheists. Why? Because they, like so many other atheists, don't make a big deal out of their atheism. They live their lives without God, but are happy to let other people live their lives with God.

To make it on SuperScholar's list of influential living atheists, an atheist can't merely disbelieve in God but also must actively encourage others to disbelieve in God. But even that isn't enough to make our list. Bill Maher and Penn & Teller, for instance, use their prominence as entertainers to promote atheism. But they do so mainly as popularists, not as scholars attempting to make a considered case against theism and for atheism.

Thus, to make it on our list, an atheist needs not only to be actively promoting atheism but also to do so as scholars in scholarly forums – this is, after all, SuperScholar! All the names below fit that bill. They are notable scholars in their own right and they use their scholarship to promote atheism explicitly or to promote forms of thought that make belief in God untenable.

Many of the scholars listed here have given new life to atheism, inviting the term “neo-atheism” to describe their impact and movement. Since the rise of neo-atheism in the last decade, public acceptance of atheism in the United States has vastly increased. In Gallup polls until ten years ago, those willing to call themselves atheists hovered around 10 percent. It's now up to just under 15 percent.

Whether this atheistic upsurge in polls indicates an actual increase in the number of atheists or just a greater willingness of atheists to be known as such, it underscores a seismic shift in our culture away from belief in God and toward more secular ways of viewing the world.

1. Richard Dawkins

Weighing in at the top spot is, of course, Richard Dawkins. Using science, and especially the evolutionary theory of Darwin, to undercut the factual basis of religious belief, he has turned against religion as rationally and morally incoherent. Dawkins is the most conspicuous public voice and face of contemporary atheism. **Books:** [The God Delusion](#), [A Devil's Chaplain](#), [The Selfish Gene](#)

2. Sam Harris

A close second behind Dawkins is Sam Harris. Command-

ing a \$50K honorarium and traveling with an entourage that includes a security detail (for his criticism of Islam), Harris is the “rock star” of contemporary atheists. Though finding religion a bad idea generally, he is open to certain aspects of the paranormal, which raises eyebrows among some atheists.

Books: [The End of Faith](#), [Letter to a Christian Nation](#)

3. Christopher Hitchens

Christopher Hitchens is the most articulate and urbane voice among contemporary intellectual atheists. Witty and searing, he shirks no debate. And as a worldclass journalist and correspondent, he commands a highly visible platform from which to promote atheism. **Books:** [God Is Not Great](#), [The Portable Atheist](#)

4. Daniel Dennett

Daniel Dennett, together with Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens, completes what has been called the “four horsemen” (referring to the four horsemen of death in the biblical book of Revelation). Dennett is a worldclass professional philosopher who has argued for materialistic atheism in everything from human consciousness to evolutionary biology. **Books:** [Breaking the Spell](#), [Darwin's Dangerous Idea](#)

5. Stephen Hawking

Stephen Hawking is one of the world's great theoretical physicists. His trade-press book A Brief History of Time took the world by storm in the late 1980s. In it he raised the prospect of a self-creating universe, which he has since developed at length. The theme he keeps pounding is the extraneousness of the God hypothesis. **Books:** [The Grand Design](#), [A Brief History of Time](#)

6. Steven Pinker

As a cognitive scientist, Steven Pinker deconstructs all aspects of human thought that might be construed as pointing to a non-material origin. With a Harvard professorship and a steady stream of popular books arguing for a materialistic view of cognition, he has been a remarkably effective apologist for atheism.

Books: [How the Mind Works](#), [The Blank Slate](#)

7. Michael Shermer

A former evangelical Christian, Michael Shermer promotes a skepticism that eliminates any vestige of supernaturalism. Founder and publisher of Skeptic Magazine, he is an indefatigable voice for atheism through popular books, highly visible debates and television interviews, and a monthly column with Scientific American.

Books: [Why People Believe Weird Things](#)

Continued on page 6

For all 25 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

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

What have you learned, and would like to share

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](#).

Monthly Meetings

All lectures begin at 2pm with a social gathering and lecture at 2:30. Time for non-lecture events are noted. Lectures are held at the Center for Arts and Humanity, 1226 N. Tamiami Trail, 34236.

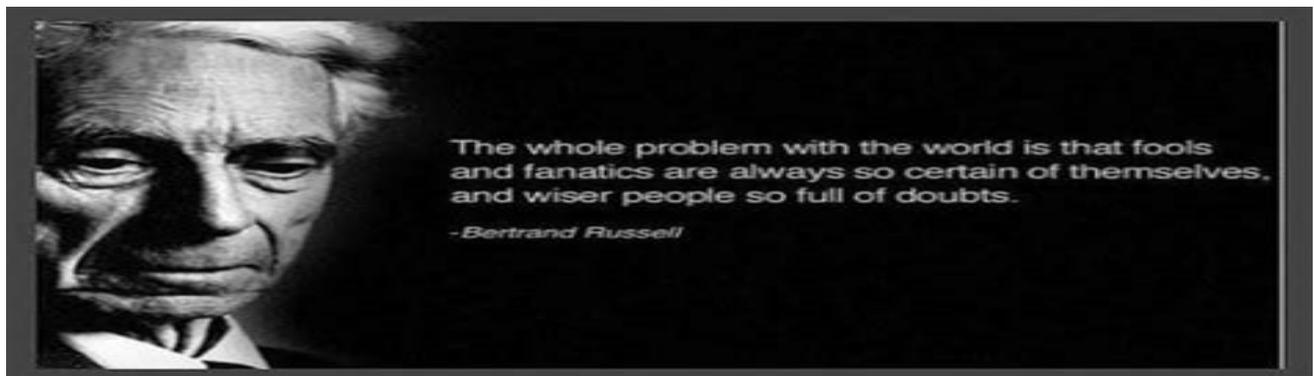
January 9	New Year Party, (7pm)
January 23	Annual Meeting
February 11	Noel W. Smith Darwin Day Luncheon
March 6	Sarah Wertheimer, Embracing our Differences Project
April 2	Annual Carl Sagan Picnic (4pm), Turtle Beach Pavilion
May 1	TBD

Chat & Chew

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

It's now time to renew your dues for 2023. Please make your check out to HUSBAY for \$40 per person and send it to HUSBAY, PO Box 52989, Sarasota 34232. Note: If you joined HUSBAY on or after September 1, you are automatically renewed for 2023.

We received word that one of our former members, Jay Gonen, has died. Our condolences to his wife, Mary Coleman, and family.



President's Message

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

This past year was the beginning of events and activities after the pandemic closed down everything forcing us to hold our lectures and SIGs via Zoom.

The Board worked hard to get us working toward normalcy as COVID vaccines made it possible to get out and about. Our lectures got started again, luncheons began, SIGs started up, and we held our Darwin Day luncheon attended by 60 members. We were saddened with the death of our founder Noel Smith. We welcomed several new members and inched our way to 100 members. We began our HUSBAY newsletter again after a few years of hiatus.

In the new year, the Board expects to continue our lectures, luncheons, SIGs, and the Darwin Day luncheon with a new name, the Noel W. Smith Darwin Day Luncheon. We hope to hold Zoom meetings as needed. The newsletter will begin its second year.

The Board and I want to thank all of you who continued your support of HUSBAY and continued to participate in our activities. You helped keep us afloat during this challenging time.

Special thanks to Board members: Bob LaSalle who edited and published our newsletter for the first time in several years; to Barry Zack our VP who got our SIGs going again and our Wednesday luncheons on track as well as keeping our website operating; to Sandie Zellick who got Chat and Chew going again and kept notes on our meetings as secretary; to Holly Downing who adeptly managed our treasury and kept the money straight; to Paul Jacques whose ideas and perceptions kept us on track and contributed to Zoom meetings; to Donna Gannon who stepped in and filled in and helped with unexpected needs and whose wisdom was valuable many times.

Members, you have elected a strong Board that didn't let the pandemic affect the value of HUSBAY. I ask you to take a moment to thank your Board members for their efforts in 2022.

My wish is that all of you will have a healthy and happy 2023!

Board members' emails: dbhelgager@comcast.net; barryzed@gmail.com; sandie34293@gmail.com; dhollydowning@gmail.com; (Paul) pwpj11@verizon.net; (Donna) dagc608@gmail.com; rlasalle@gmail.com;

DONOR'S CORNER

Donations made during the month

Contributor: \$25 to \$49
Bob La Salle

Supporter: \$50 to \$99

Leader: \$100 to \$199

Allstar: \$200 to \$500
Garrett Cantrell

Sidney Carton's Tale

*These are no slim pickins
From the pen of Charles Dickens*

*Whether floating on a barge
With Madame De Farge*

*Or sharing a cigarette
With Lucie Manette*

*Both had sold their breasts
At their husbands' behests*

*Those acts were such pitties
A Sale of Two Titties*

Thanks to Barry Zack

HUSBAY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Helgager, President
Barry Zack, Vice President
Holly Downing, Treasurer
Sandie Zellick, Secretary
Paul Jacques, Bob La Salle, Donna Gannon

This is Vol 5 Issue 1 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: rlasalle390@gmail.com

Bad Vibes Only: (and Other Things I Bring to the Table)

Reviewed by Karen R. Koenig—From the NY Journal of Books <https://www.nyjournalofbooks.com/book-review/bad-vibes-only-and>

“McInerny’s greatest gift is knowing the exact ingredients that make learning about oneself seem so effortless and hopeful.”

Bad Vibes Only is a self-help book disguised as a memoir. If it weren’t so humorous, Nora McInerny’s memoir would be painful to read, mirroring as it does some of our deepest insecurities and secret fears. She chronicles her woes as a cautionary tale in order for the rest of us to get our lives together before it’s too late. In fact, this collection of essays might be more aptly called “mess-ays”—anecdotes and stories about how badly the author feels or fears she has messed up her life and how messed up she’s felt for most of it.

McInerny touches on appearance, aging, regrets, pedigree, perfection, self-improvement efforts, disappearing choices, fighting against nature, critical self-talk, social media and technology, dealing with parents or being one, and more. She neither spouts theories nor pretends to be an advice-dispenser. Rather, she shows readers where she’s gone both wrong and right in life and lets them decide which path they’d rather pursue in their own. She succeeds at holding up a mirror so readers can see their defects as friend, parent, boss, or employee, and makes the pinch of recognition tolerable by cringing or laughing at her own failings along with them.

McInerny, an award-winning author, podcaster and TED talker, sweeps up the wreckage and refuse of her life without self-pity: obsessions, mishaps, near and total catastrophes and the deep well of self-defectiveness she has drunk from since childhood.

Whether describing her delayed diagnoses of ADHD and anxiety, alcohol binges, battle with anorexia, struggles to be an effective parent, or the devastating premature death of her first husband, she can be counted on to neither gloss over nor glamorize her suffering. She describes herself as the “saddest happy person I know” or “the “happiest sad person I know.”

She pretty much sums up what the book (and life) should be about in declaring that “‘Good Vibes Only’ makes a cute saying for a mug, but a pretty ominous interpersonal standard.” She’s telling us that people bond in the trenches, when they share their mutual misgivings and misery, as she is doing through her writing. When hearts meet with openness, curiosity, and without judgment somehow our inner ugliness and shame start to melt away. Readers can feel her reaching out and cheering them on to be the best people they can be.

However, she is abundantly clear that she does not mean people should strive for perfection via status, beauty, brains, or skill, but that our best is purely personal and subjective, not to be compared with anyone else’s. In fact, her final essay (perhaps the best in the book), “Good Better Best,” focuses on the human need to feel special—which has plagued her since her childhood and began with her obsession to be in her school’s gifted program—only to be accepted and discover that her exceptional schoolmates looked far better from afar than up close.

What may appear to be a memoir full of lively, witty prose is really essay after essay of what psychology calls teaching moments. Perhaps McInerny’s greatest gift is knowing the exact ingredients that make learning about oneself seem so effortless and hopeful.

From page 3

18 Edward O. Wilson

The inventor of sociobiology and the inspiration behind contemporary evolutionary ethics, Edward O. Wilson started life as a fundamentalist Southern Baptist only to become an ardent supporter of evolutionary naturalism under the inspiration of Charles Darwin. A two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, he sacralizes Nature and urges it (her?) as a replacement for traditional conceptions of God.

Books: [Sociobiology](#), [The Future of Life](#)

9. James Randi

Formerly a professional stage magician, James Randi has used his skills at deceiving the eye to uncover the techniques, tricks, and stratagems of charlatans who use religion as a cloak for fraud. In thereby exposing religious frauds, he has gone further and turned against religion generally, regarding it as “silly” and “fantastic,” promoting instead a naturalistic understanding of the world.

Books: [The Faith Healers](#), [Flim-Flam! Psychics, ESP, Unicorns, and Other Delusions](#)

10. Jennifer Michael Hecht

A renaissance woman with expertise in history and philosophy, Jennifer Michael Hecht is providing the theoretical underpinnings for the new atheism. A prolific author and wide-ranging speaker, she is demonstrating that the leading new atheists no longer comprise a “gentlemen’s club.”

Books: [Doubt: A History](#), [The End of the Soul](#)

11. Barbara Forrest

An active secular humanist, Barbara Forrest came to prominence as the leading philosophical voice against the form of creationism known as intelligent design. Criticizing intelligent design as religious propaganda and as an attempt to insert God into educational curricula, she has been effective at making conceptual space for atheism.

Books: [Creationism’s Trojan Horse](#)

12. Susan Blackmore

Writer, speaker, and parapsychology skeptic, Susan Blackmore addresses the question of human consciousness from the perspective of Richard Dawkins’ idea of “the meme,” a unit of cultural information transmitted once organisms evolve sufficient consciousness. For Blackmore, religion is not only a noxious meme but also false. **Books:** [The Meme Machine](#), [Conversations on Consciousness](#)