

The Hoosier Humanist Herald

FreeThought Fort Wayne, Inc. Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 12

Message from the President

In the last few weeks, I have come across a number of anti-atheist/humanist statements. One was a dialogue between an Israeli historian, Yuval Noah Harari, and humanist philosopher A.P. Norman published in Free Inquiry magazine, April/May 2018 issue. Harare has his own definition of humanism (not ours) which then leads him to ascribe much of modern strife to humanist philosophy. Norman skillfully rebuts these points.

Another attack was a Facebook video naming Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, and Sam Harris as "New Atheists" who have strongly denounced Islam and religion in general, as divisive and driving a wedge between believers and humanists.

The third example was an editorial for the Fort Wayne News-Sentinel. The editorial was submitted by a gentleman associated with the Catholic newspaper "Our Sunday Visitor." The crux of the article was to enjoy and celebrate the Christmas season with its true meaning and ignore the whining of the "secular effete" (self-indulgent, dealing in trivialities) who decry the nativity scenes on public property and other intrusions of religion into public life.

All of this raises the question of how we, as atheists/humanists, should defend our stance, or even take the offensive, against such false portrayals and smug superiority of religious advocates. My thought is to do what we can as individuals, as group members, and participants in a global movement. We possess what I believe to be a superior moral alternative to religion and it is incumbent upon us to present it intentionally, yet respectfully, in any way we can.

Happy holidays!

Robert Brandt, Former President of FTFW

FTFW CafePress Shop

The [CafePress storefront](#) for getting your own piece of FTFW merchandise is now open! We have a number of shirts/hoodies and stickers/buttons/magnets/signs currently available, with more products to come! FTFW gets a small commission from each purchase, so we greatly appreciate your contribution!

Karen's Corner



Karen Mizner, President of FTFW

Tardigrades: The Toughest Creatures on Earth



Tardigrades, also called water bears or moss piglets, are near microscopic animals with a kind of scrunched up head, eight short legs and “paws” with 4-8 claws on each. They were first discovered by German zoologist, Johann August Ephraim Goeze, in 1773 and have since been determined to be nearly indestructible.

Tardigrades have a dorsal brain on top of a paired ventral nervous system.

Humans, by contrast, have a dorsal brain and a single dorsal nervous system.

Tardigrades have rudimentary eyes, but no circulatory or respiratory systems (qualities that differentiate them from most members of their sister taxonomic clade, the insects/arachnids/crustaceans). They feed on plant and animal cells, as well as bacteria, and are prey to amoebas, nematodes, and other tardigrades.

They have been boiled, crushed, dehydrated, and blasted into space (TARDIS, Tardigrade in Space, in 2007). They can survive for 10 days when exposed to a vacuum and radiation. They are capable of living almost anywhere, as they can also survive in temperatures as cold as -459°F and as high as 300°F. They are ancient organisms, whose fossils have been carbon dated to over 500 million years ago.

Their normal life cycle spans only a few months, but when tardigrades are deprived of water, they curl up into a dry shell and enter into a state called “tun,” which is a near-death state of suspended animation where they can live for several decades.

This capability is due to certain anti-dehydration proteins, called Tardigrade-Specific Intrinsically Disordered Proteins (TDPs), which help them to survive desiccation for

up to a century. They can also withstand pressures as high as 6,000 atmospheres, which is nearly six times the pressure of water found in the deepest ocean trench, the Mariana trench.

I would like you to know that I wanted to put an exclamation point at the end of nearly every sentence above, but realized it would have been redundant because virtually everything about this marvelous animal is absolutely amazing!

Karen Mizner, President of FTFW

Amazon Smile



Do you make purchases on Amazon? Did you know that FreeThought Fort Wayne is now a charitable organization listed on Amazon Smile? Simply use the link on the Amazon Smile logo above or look up the charity, "American Humanist Association," in New Haven, IN (on Amazon Smile) to have Amazon contribute 0.5% of your Amazon purchase (at no cost to you!) to FTFW. You can also find a link to contribute to [our Amazon Smile](#) on the FTFW website under the "Stores" menu.

Annual Membership Renewal



NOW is the time And we want YOU!

**Yes, it's our annual member renewal time
Please renew your membership dues by going to**

<https://www.freethoughtfw.org/becoming-a-member/>

**There are lots of membership options
Including becoming a "Monthly Steward"
OR
Just see a FTFW Board Member at any meet up.**



Letter to the Editor

Here's your chance! Have an idea for our group? Have a question for us? Have you experienced frustrations as a non-believer? Do people question you about what

Humanism means? Just want to vent a bit? Have a funny story to share? Have a question for our Celebrant, Victoria Gipson? The Hoosier Humanist Herald committee will do its best to respond to your concerns. Submit your letter via e-mail to fortwayneaha@gmail.com with the subject line of "Letter to the Editor" or "Ask a Celebrant," then watch for a response in our next month's newsletter! Please note that letters may be edited for clarity and space.

Festivus Shirt Pre-Orders



Festivus
long sleeve shirt

Pre-order now and
pick-up at Festivus, Dec 8th!

Proceeds are donated to
 FreeThought Fort Wayne

Upcoming Events

FTFW Monthly Board Meetings

December Dates TBD

Current dues-paying members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly meeting. Dates/times are still to be determined, as we have several events this month. Details can be found on our Facebook pages as well as our website calendar.

We Are Atheists Live Call-In Show

December 4, 2018 (Tuesday): 7:00-8:00 pm

FTFW hosts a semi-monthly local access TV show called "We Are Atheists" through the Allen County Public Library's channel, Access 2 (also broadcast on Comcast 57 and Frontier 27). You can [view it live](#) and/or call in (260-422-3902) with any

questions, thoughts, or concerns that you might have for the hosts. You may also leave comments through [Facebook](#), [Discord](#), or email (WeAreAtheistsTV@gmail.com).

Festivus for the Rest of Us

December 8, 2018 (Saturday): 6:00-8:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Wayne

This FTFW annual event is going to be different from previous years. Instead of holding at a restaurant, we are being hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Wayne and children are welcome. FTFW is providing a spiral-sliced ham as an entrée so vegetarians will need to plan accordingly. We ask that everyone bring a dish or beverage to share. Coffee and water will be provided. We are also offering specially designed FTFW Festivus long-sleeved t-shirts available [here](#) for purchase with proceeds donated to FTFW. In accordance with the "solemnity" of the occasion, Ugly Sweaters are also welcome. There will be an optional wrapped White Elephant gift exchange with a \$10 limit. No need to buy something if you don't want to, just rummage around through your house or garage. Surely there's something you would like to offer up—for posterity's sake, of course. Please keep it funny and fun!

Festivus is a secular holiday traditionally celebrated on December 23 as an alternative to the pressures and commercialism of the Christmas season. Festivus entered popular culture after it was made the focus of the 1997 Seinfeld episode "The Strike." The event includes a Festivus dinner, an unadorned aluminum Festivus pole, practices such as the "Airing of Grievances" and "Feats of Strength," and the labeling of easily explainable events as "Festivus miracles." The episode refers to it as "a Festivus for the rest of us." See [here](#) for the source of this event description.

We Are Atheists Live Call-In Show

December 13, 2018 (Thursday): 7:00-8:00 pm

FTFW hosts a semi-monthly local access TV show called "We Are Atheists" through the Allen County Public Library's channel, Access 2 (also broadcast on Comcast 57 and Frontier 27). You can [view it live](#) and/or call in (260-422-3902) with any questions, thoughts, or concerns that you might have for the hosts. You may also leave comments through [Facebook](#), [Discord](#), or email (WeAreAtheistsTV@gmail.com).

What is an Atheist Issue?

December 17, 2018 (Monday): 6:30-8:30 pm at the Allen County Public Library

(Tecumseh branch), large meeting room

Jim G. Helton, the Kentucky State Director for American Atheists and the co-founder/co-President of the Tri-State Freethinkers, will be discussing what kinds of issues are commonly addressed by atheists. Please join us for this free educational presentation that is open to the public. Refreshments will be provided.

More about Jim Helton: Under his leadership, Tri-State Freethinkers adopted the highway in front of the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter and led a protest that received international attention. He played a key role in eliminating Gideon's bible distributions in public schools and removing abstinence-only sex education.

Mr. Helton's activism at the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter landed him appearances in the 2017 documentary film *Bill Nye: Science Guy* and the forthcoming documentary *We Believe in Dinosaurs*. He has been quoted in countless news outlets, including *The New York Times*, *Miami Herald*, and *Washington Post*. He is a fixture in local media and has given interviews for international television specials in France, Switzerland, and elsewhere.

As National Field Organizer, Mr. Helton works with affiliates, local partners, and state directors to challenge religious privilege and fight to protect church/state separation at the local level by building coalitions around specific issue campaigns, including medically accurate sex education, LGBT non-discrimination ordinances, and religious exemptions. See [here](#) for the source of this background information.

Meeting of the Minds

December 19, 2018 (Wednesday): 6:00-8:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Wayne

This is a recurring event for FTFW every month on the third Wednesday, whereby folks get together for an open discussion on a particular topic of interest. Be sure to bring your suggested discussion topic ideas and we will vote as a group on which one(s) to talk about.

Meeting of the Minds

January 16, 2018 (Wednesday): 6:00-8:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Wayne

This is a recurring event for FTFW every month on the third Wednesday, whereby folks get together for an open discussion on a particular topic of interest. Be sure to bring your suggested discussion topic ideas and we will vote as a group on which one(s) to talk about.



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