

The Hoosier Humanist

Herald

FreeThought Fort Wayne, Inc. Newsletter

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Message from the Technology Director

I know this represents the second newsletter in a week, so I apologize, but hopefully we will be able to get back to our usual schedule after this “catchup” period. There is not much more to say in this issue, other than that some dates/times/places of events have been updated, including the fact that the next “Meeting of the Minds” was mistakenly reported as next Wednesday (22nd), when it is actually today (15th). An additional change includes the fact that we are changing the “Meeting of the Minds” events to be every second Wednesday, instead of every third. We are also hosting a FTFW table for Pride Fest that you are welcome to stop by and help run after we finish walking in the parade. Please let us know what times you’d like to volunteer to help run the table or just stop by and say, “hi.” We, as progressive freethinkers, do make a concerted effort to support those in the LGBTQ+ community, as they are often shunned, shamed, and/or demonized by certain religious communities.

Also, due to the brief nature of this “message from a board member” segment and of the other article kindly submitted by Bob, I have scooped up the additional space allotted in this newsletter and devoted it to writing a special article to envelope two articles worth of space. This article represents approximately 50% of my Master’s research, with a second article (representing most of the remainder of my research) in the process of being written. “May” you have a great month!

Chris Rex, Technology Director 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

CHECKMATE, FLAT-EARTHERS!!



Karen Mizner, Former President of FTFW

Recent Changes to Women's Rights: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

"A Mixed Year for Women" was the title of an op-ed piece in a recent issue of "The Nation" magazine. Here are some of the gains.

1. Voters repealed Iceland's constitutional ban on abortion and legalized the procedure for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
2. Chile legalized abortion for rape victims and in situations where the fetus has a fatal condition or the woman's life is in danger.
3. Iceland was deemed the most equal country in the world for women by the World Economic Forum.
4. Iceland just passed the first law requiring employers to prove that they're paying men and women equally.

5. Women and men have equal legal rights in the workplace in only six countries. Ten years ago there were none.
6. In India the Supreme Court decriminalized homosexuality and ruled that sex with child brides is rape.
7. Lebanon, Morocco, and Jordan repealed laws that absolved rapists who married their victims (input by Chris Rex: this is great progress, as marrying rape victims is an act condoned by the Christian Bible).
8. Saudi Arabia lifted its ban on women drivers.
9. The U.S. House of Representatives now has 102 women serving, 23.4% of all House members. That ties us with Montenegro for 78th place.

I deliberately left out the downsides remaining, but I must mention one more: Russia decriminalized domestic violence that doesn't break bones.

Bob Brandt, Former President of FTFW

Amazon Smile

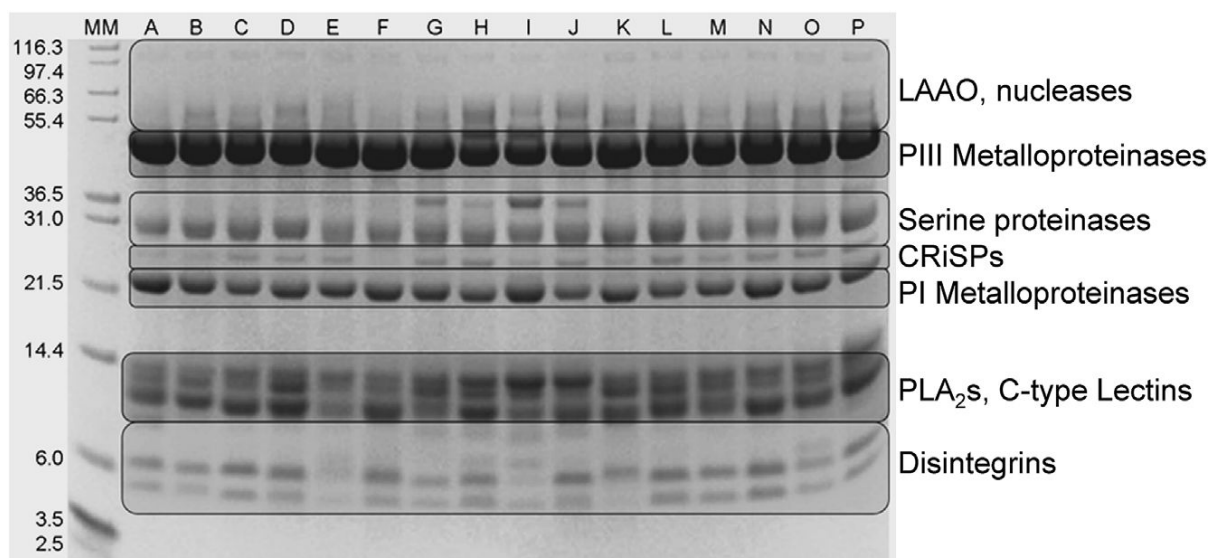


Do you make purchases on Amazon? Did you know that FreeThought Fort Wayne is now a charitable organization listed on Amazon Smile? Simply use the link on the Amazon Smile logo above or look up the charity, "American Humanist Association," in New Haven, IN (on Amazon Smile) to have Amazon contribute 0.5% 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.

Rattlesnake Venom Variability



After undergoing minimal edits, I successfully published the first paper from my Master's thesis in a peer-reviewed journal on April 4, 2019. The title was, "Venom composition of adult Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes (*Crotalus atrox*) maintained under controlled diet and environmental conditions shows only minor changes." It was just one more nail in the coffin for this archaic notion that snake venom composition remains constant throughout the lifetime of a snake after birth/hatching. We now know, and readily accept, the idea that neonate/juvenile venoms of many (if not all) snake species are at least slightly different from adult venoms. Once considered an adult, however, most people consider minimal, if any, changes occurring within venom composition over the remaining lifetime of the snake. I performed this study to directly address that speculation and perhaps shed some light on changes in a snake's venom that may occur when adult specimens are captured from the wild and then reared in a captive environment for 8+ months with stable temperatures, humidity, light cycle, and adequate food/water.



We extracted venom from 16 Western Diamondback rattlesnakes four different times over that 8-month period and analyzed them using 10 different experimental procedures (summary table presented below). As expected, the venom composition within individual snakes remained more/less the same for most analyses, including 1-D SDS-PAGE (a type of gel electrophoresis, pictured above). This kind of analysis creates something of a venom “fingerprint” of up to 16 samples very quickly/easily, allowing us to identify differences between venom extractions and between individual snakes. Although not shown, there were minimal, if any, differences between different venom extractions within an individual snake, but many notable differences between all 16 snakes [labeled A-P above, after the MM (molecular marker) which serves as a reference for the kDa (kilodalton) weight of each venom compound].

Analysis	Changes over captivity
1-D SDS-PAGE	~ none
Fibrinogen Digest	~ none
RP-HPLC	~ none
MALDI-TOF MS	~ none
Protein Conc.	none (p = 0.678)
AZO MPr	none (p = 0.932)
LAAO	increase (p = 0.013)
PDE	increase (p < 0.001)
KLSP	none (p = 0.917)
TLSP	none (p = 0.956)

For two enzyme assays (shown above, LAAO: L-amino acid oxidase, PDE:

phosphodiesterase), venom activities appeared to increase in activity over time. Of the ~24 different venom proteins in Western Diamondback venom, LAAOs and PDEs are not particularly toxic to mice. Thinking about this from a functional perspective, it is curious as to why these compounds, which are of little use in offense/defense, would change during captivity. Perhaps there is a feedback mechanism with certain aspects of the environment/diet and the regulation of the genes that control LAAO and PDE production. Alternatively, there might be steady ontogenetic changes over the course of adulthood or a supply/demand problem with producing those venom compounds in the wild (as a result of poor nutrition), resulting in their lower expression in the wild venom. It will take further studies to fully elucidate this venom mechanism in order to better understand the factors we need to consider when collecting venom samples for research (including finding anti-cancer drugs) or antivenom production (which often relies on venom from captive snakes).

If you would like a PDF copy of this article to read (for personal use, not distribution), you may send me an email at christopher.j.rex@gmail.com. Here is the reference information for this article:

[Rex, C.J., Mackessy, S.P., 2019. Venom composition of adult Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes \(*Crotalus atrox*\) maintained under controlled diet and environmental conditions shows only minor changes. *Toxicon* 164, 51-60.](#)

Chris Rex, Technology Director of FTFW

Letter to the Editor and Newsletter Submissions

**Have a story to tell?
Have something to say?
Want to write a letter to the editor?**



Put your thinking cap on, grab your laptop and pen an article for the "Hoosier Humanist Herald" monthly newsletter. Just 200-300 words and you can be published writer! Submissions due by the 16th of each month. Submissions may be edited for length and content.

Send submissions to: fortwayneaha@gmail.com

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! Alternatively, if you wish to discuss current events or an interesting article, feel free to submit your thoughts as an article in the newsletter! Please note that submissions may be edited for clarity and space (200-300 words).

Fort Wayne Movie Club (FWMC) Movie Buzz List

[Fort Wayne Movie Club](#) (FWMC) is a social group on Meetup.com and Facebook, intended mostly to watch and discuss movies, and explore events in Fort Wayne and the surrounding area with other movie lovers, mostly on big screen, but also other

venues as opportunity arises.. FTFW board member, Chris Woods, has shared his [Movie Buzz List](#) of movies from March through May 2019.

Upcoming Events

National Blood Pressure Month

May 2019

This is the month to focus on ensuring your blood pressure remains within healthy ranges, somewhere around 120-140/80-90. Helpful techniques include reducing salt and saturated fat consumption, while increasing vegetable, fiber, and unsaturated fat consumption.

FTFW Reunion Brunch

May 5, 2019 (Sunday): 11:00-1:00 pm at Lucky Turtle Grill (622 E. Dupont Rd., Fort Wayne)

FTFW would like to invite members since 2007 to this gathering in the back section of the back room of this establishment.

Astronomy Day

May 11, 2019 (Saturday): ~9:00 pm (dusk) at the StarQuest Observatory on 1720 Webster Rd (New Haven)

We will join the [Fort Wayne Astronomical Society](#) at their StarQuest Observatory for a stargazing event around dusk. Their members will provide several telescopes and guide you through a tour of the visible stars in the universe. It helps to have a flashlight (or to simply use your phone's flashlight function), as it's very dark to permit better viewing of the stars. Mosquitoes can be a problem, depending on recent weather conditions, so mosquito repellent and darker clothing may both be helpful. Cologne is not recommended, as it often attracts the mosquitoes.

FTFW Monthly Board Planning Meeting

May 13, 2019 (Monday): 6:30-8:30 pm at the Taqueria La Pinata on 6121 N. Clinton St. (Fort Wayne)

Current dues-paying members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly planning meeting. Details can be found on our Facebook pages as well as our website calendar.

Meeting of the Minds

May 15, 2019 (Wednesday): 7:00-8:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Wayne on 5310 Old Mill Rd

This is a recurring event for FTFW every month on the third Wednesday (all future MotM will be on the second 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.

Regular Sunday Meetup

May 19, 2019 (Sunday): 11:00-1:00 pm at the Lucky Turtle Grill (622 E. Dupont Rd., Fort Wayne)

This is a recurring event for FTFW every Sunday. Come join in the back of the restaurant and enjoy their famous breakfast buffet with custom-made omelettes and crepes. This is a quieter setting than Old Crown and they are very accommodating. Hope to see you there. All future Sunday meetups will be made here, until indicated otherwise.

Regular Wednesday Meetup

May 22, 2019 (Wednesday): 6:00-8:00 pm at TBD

This is a recurring event for FTFW every Wednesday that is not Meeting of the Minds. This is a laid-back meetup where any/all topics are open for casual discussion. Location often changes, so please stay tuned to our Facebook page for details.

"Hail Satan?" Movie Showing

May 24, 2019 (Friday): 7:00-8:30 pm at the Cinema Center (Spectator Lounge, 437 E. Berry St., Fort Wayne)

This event will be a showing a movie, "Hail Satan," at the Cinema Center. The movie, itself, is 95 minutes long and we will have discussion afterwards. Tickets go on sale on Monday, May 21st at 6:00 p.m. and we recommend you get tickets because the Spectator Lounge has limited seating! According to Rotten Tomatoes, "Hail Satan?" challenges preconceived notions of its subject with a smart, witty, and overall entertaining dispatch from the front lines of the fight for social justice." They give it a 96% rating on the Tomatometer. We may grab dinner beforehand, so please stay tuned!

FTFW Monthly Board Meeting

May 28, 2019 (Tuesday): 6:30-8:30 pm at the Aboite Branch of the ACPL (5630 Coventry Lane, Fort Wayne)

Current dues-paying members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly meeting. Details can be found on our Facebook pages as well as our website calendar.

LGBT Pride Month**June 2019**

This is the month to focus on celebrating LGBT equality, as well as men's health.

Fort Wayne Arab Fest**June 1-2, 2019 (Saturday & Sunday) at Headwaters Park (333 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne)**

Supporting the Arab community, Arab Fest is a two-day event that features music, camel rides, a market with vendors, characters, dancing, and food. Details can be found [here](#).

FTFW Monthly Board Planning Meeting**June 9, 2019 (Sunday): 1:30-3:30 pm at the Arby's on 333 E. Washington Center Rd (Fort Wayne)**

Current dues-paying members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly planning meeting. Details can be found on our Facebook pages as well as our website calendar.

Meeting of the Minds**June 12, 2019 (Wednesday): 7:00-8:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Wayne on 5310 Old Mill Rd**

This is a recurring event for FTFW every month on the second 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.

World Humanist Day**June 21, 2019 (Friday): all day**

World Humanist Day is an opportunity for humanists and humanist organisations to publicize the positive values of Humanism and to share the global concerns of the Humanist movement, and we've been celebrating the day since the 1980s.

Humanist groups around the world mark World Humanist Day with a wide variety of activities ranging from activism to parties. World Humanist Day may be recognized with official proclamations or promotional campaigns to educate people about the growth of the secular community and the ethical values of humanists. Groups may run courses or conferences to deepen understanding of the principles of Humanism and programmes run by humanist organisations. They may emphasize their global solidarity by raising awareness and money for a freethought group working in a different country. Or groups may simply throw a party or share a picnic to celebrate. Details can be found [here](#).

Community Harvest Food Bank Volunteering

June 22, 2019 (Saturday): 8:30-11:30 am at the Community Harvest Food Bank on 999 E. Tillman Rd (Fort Wayne)

FTFW will be helping hand out food to the needy at the Community Harvest Food Bank. We accept non-perishable foods all year long and will deliver them that day. Please keep in mind that only those who are 14+ years old can hand out food, while children 5-13 can work in the grocery store area. The first 30 minutes will be a safety talk, followed by handing out or organizing food. Please wear comfortable clothing that is weather-appropriate, including closed-toe shoes. Be prepared to be on your feet for the entire 2.5 hours. Plastic gloves will be issued to all participants. If you own a [FTFW shirt](#), please wear it to volunteer. Please [register](#) beforehand if you wish to volunteer.

FTFW Monthly Board Meeting

June 25, 2019 (Tuesday): 6:30-8:30 pm at TBD

Current dues-paying members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly meeting. Details can be found on our Facebook pages as well as our website calendar.

Arc Encounter Protest

July 6, 2019 (Saturday): 10:00-1:00 pm at The Arc Encounter (1 Arc Encounter Dr, Williamstown, KY)

This protest is hosted by American Atheists.

Three Rivers Festival

July 12-20, 2019 (Friday & Saturday) at Headwaters Park (333 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne)

The Three Rivers Festival draws nearly half a million visitors each summer that come together to have some fun, savor tasty treats, and catch up with old friends, all while making new friends and creating great memories! As a not-for-profit entity, Three Rivers Festival generates its revenue from sponsorships, vendor participation fees, ticket sales, gate admission at the Festival Plaza, souvenir sales, and refreshment sales. The Festival strives to keep events at a free or minimal admission fee to keep the festival accessible to the community! Three Rivers Festival offers everything from food to fun. Bring your family and friends and enjoy Food Alley, Art in the Park, the Bed Race, the Three Rivers Festival Parade, Trivia Night, Children's Fest, and so much more! Details can be found [here](#).

FTFW Monthly Board Planning Meeting

July 14, 2019 (Sunday): 1:30-3:30 pm at TBD

Current dues-paying members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly planning meeting. Details can be found on our Facebook pages as well as our website calendar. This will be the first meeting with the new board members.

Meeting of the Minds**July 10, 2019 (Wednesday): 7:00-8:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Wayne on 5310 Old Mill Rd**

This is a recurring event for FTFW every month on the second 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.

FTFW Monthly Board Meeting**July 23, 2019 (Tuesday): 6:30-8:30 pm at TBD**

Current dues-paying members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly meeting. Details can be found on our Facebook pages as well as our website calendar.

Fort Wayne Pride Fest**July 26-27, 2019 (Friday & Saturday) at Headwaters Park (333 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne)**

Supporting the LGBTQ community, Pride Fest is a two-day event that features live entertainment, vendor market, a beer tent, food plaza, workshops, tournaments, KidSpace and fun with the Fort Wayne community. Details can be found [here](#). FTFW will have a table setup on Saturday, July 27, 12-7 pm to engage with people, hand out information, collect email addresses from interested parties, and "possibly" sell our FTFW t-shirts. Prior to working the table, we will be participating in the pride march/parade through downtown Fort Wayne at 11:15 am. Stay tuned for more information and please contact a Board member if you would like to volunteer to "work" the booth for a shift or march in the parade (as we need at least two people to hold the FTFW banner).

National Immunization Awareness Month**August 2019**

National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) is an annual observance held in August to highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages.

Communities across the country use the month each year to raise awareness about the important role vaccines play in preventing serious, sometimes deadly, diseases

across the lifespan. It is a great time to consult with your doctor or family physician to stay on top of your routine vaccinations, including tetanus, which should be boosted every 10 years for adults. Details can be found [here](#).

FTFW Annual Picnic

August 3, 2019 (Saturday): 11:00-3:00 pm at Foster Park (Pavilion #2) at 3900 Old Mill Rd. (Fort Wayne)

Come one; come all to FTFW's Annual Picnic, which will be a family affair for all members and their families, as well as the general public. The food/drink for this free event is provided by the guests, themselves, so please bring a dish or non-alcoholic beverage (alcohol is prohibited) to contribute! Kids are welcome to join us, as there is a small playground and restrooms nearby. We will have games and fun activities for everyone, including giant bubbles, lawn bowling for kids, Jenga, paper airplanes ready to be colored, water balloons, and squirt guns for those who want to participate. Join us for a fun time with friends and families!

National Book Lovers Day

August 9, 2019: all day

National Book Lovers Day harnesses all the excitement bibliophiles feel about books into one celebration on this day. A day for all those who love to read, National Book Lovers Day encourages you to find your favorite reading place, a good book (whether it be fiction or non-fiction) and read the day away. From the scent of a rare first edition book found in an old time book collection, to a crisp, fresh book at the local supermarket, the very sight of a book can bring back memories. Reading as a child, enjoying the short stories, the long books and the ability to lose yourself in a story so powerful that at the end your asking yourself where to get the next book in the series. This is for the reader in all of us, the celebration of Book Lovers Day! Details can be found [here](#).



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