



HUMANIST Monthly

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September 2021

A Publication of the Capital District Humanist Society
Connecting the Secular Humanist Community of Upstate New York, Western Massachusetts, and Southern Vermont

September 12th, 2021 at 1:00pm

Laurie McNeil —Good Vibrations: The Interplay of Music and Physics

Scholars and musicians from the ancient Greeks to modern times have asked questions about music: Why do we find the combination of certain pitches pleasing? Why do two different instruments playing the same note sound different? Can musical instruments be improved (and what would that mean)? The answers to these questions arise from the profound connections between music and physics.

This talk will elucidate some principles of musical acoustics and explore how they affect the way instruments work and how we experience musical sound. In doing so it will draw on Dr. McNeil's background as a physicist and a musician, and on her experience co-teaching a course on the subject with a professional musician, promises an entertaining and informative presentation.

Dr. McNeil is the Bernard Gray Distinguished Professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She earned an A.B. in Chemistry & Physics from Radcliffe College, Harvard University, and a Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Current paid CDHS members will automatically receive an invite to the meeting via e-mail. Anyone who is not a current paid member of CDHS can request an invitation by sending an e-mail request to: webmaster@humanistsociety.org.



The CDHS September social will be an afternoon at the Annual Tugboat Roundup in Waterford on Saturday, September 11th.

We will gather at 11:00 AM at the visitor's center (Hurst Harbor Ctr.). The weather was so nice for our August social, I have ordered more of the same. There will be many vendors including a farmer's market. The address for your GPS is 1 Tugboat Alley, Waterford, NY 12188. The Tugboat Roundup is a gathering of tugboats, workboats and barges to celebrate the maritime heritage of the Northeast Inland Waterways. The festival features a tug parade, tug tours, boat rides, tug talks, competitions, fireworks, children's activities, vendors, food, and more.

The Tugboat Roundup takes place along a quarter mile of the Erie Canal and at Lock E2 Park. The address of the festival will take you to the Hurst Harbor Center (formerly the Waterford Visitor Center) at the heart of the festival. However, parking is very limited in this area. A satellite parking lot is available. A trolley to the festival is available from the parking lot to the festival (Saturday and Sunday only). It is short walk from the parking lot to the festival. You will see signs for the parking lot when you arrive in Waterford. If you choose to find a parking spot closer to the festival, please note that this is a residential area and be respectful of homes and driveways.

The roundup's website is www.tugboatroundup.com.



Capital District Humanist Society, Inc.

Established 1986

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CDHS is affiliated with:

- The American Humanist Association (AHA)
- Center for Inquiry (CSI)
- Humanists International (HI)
- The Secular Coalition for America (SCA)

Recap of our August Speaker's Presentation

Dr. John Suarez is a retired UCLA Professor of Psychiatry. His topic was

"Blasphemy: A Medieval Concept with Modern Consequences."

He began by displaying our First Amendment, guaranteeing the free exercise of religion — which includes freedom to reject religion. Indeed, to blaspheme. Blasphemy is defined as insulting, contempt for, or lack of reverence for God. But the concept has been expanded to socio-political contexts, being applied against artistic, political, scientific, and literary expression. In other words, any non-conforming expressions.

While earlier Western societies punished blasphemy, the issue became largely moot with the Renaissance and Enlightenment. Though some American states actually still have anti-blasphemy laws on the books. The Supreme Court has never had occasion to rule on this.

Meantime, most Muslim nations outlaw blasphemy, with punishments including death, and the comfy chair. The issue came to the fore with the 1989 Fatwa by Ayatollah Khomeini against Salman Rushdie for authoring *The Satanic Verses*, seen as blasphemous. Rushdie had to go into hiding; a Japanese translator was killed. Later a Dutchman Theo Van Gogh, was murdered for making a film considered blasphemous. And of course there was the "Danish Cartoon" affair, satirizing Mohammad, and the Charlie Hebdo magazine attack.

Nine-eleven also brought the issue to the fore, spotlighting terrorism in the name of Islam. The Muslim world reacted with sympathy but was wishy-washy about actually condemning the attacks; which provoked a Western backlash against Islam; and then Muslim demands for punishments for "insulting Islam."

Suarez said that while basically the West focuses on the rights of individuals, the Muslim World privileges instead the protection of religion. Suarez noted that the UN has performed a balancing act between vaunting human rights and accommodating blasphemy laws; it has stopped short of condemning "defamations of religion" as demanded by some Muslims. But many European nations have acceded to such demands, banning "hate speech" critical of religion. The U.S., in contrast, remains committed to the free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Suarez said that punishing blasphemy stifles independent thinking and thus perpetuates conformity and preservation of the status quo. This keeps the Muslim world from reconciling with modernity; what it needs is a Reformation and Enlightenment.

He noted that many in the Muslim world accused of blasphemy are subjected to violence. There is a program, *Secular Rescue*, part of the Center for Inquiry, aimed at aiding and protecting such voices, including relocating them to safety.

Recap by Frank
Robinson

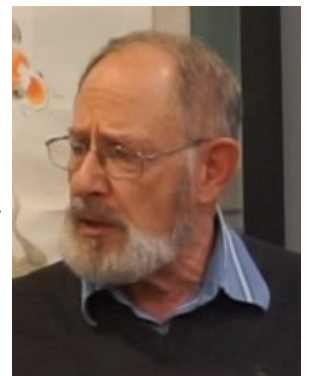
From the Editor

I'm back!

In mid-July, Dee and I flew to Portland, Oregon to meet our son and daughter-in-law (they had flown up from Albuquerque). In recent months, I had experienced problems with walking and balance. Those conditions unfortunately increased when we were out in Portland. Once back in Albany, on July 6th, we were driving home after having dinner at a friends' house. I must have been a little spacey - I almost drove into the closed gates of Albany Rural Cemetery - that was setting off alarms in the Wind residence and on Saturday, the 7th, I checked in to the emergency rooms at St. Peter's Hospital. When I left a week later I was on the mend and slightly bionic.

They determined that I had LADA (Latent Autoimmune Diabetes in Adults). This is a nasty condition where your immune system attacks the cells in your pancreas that secrete insulin. This is a form of type 1 diabetes. So, I got training in how to test my blood sugar levels, which is no great deal. We really didn't have to modify our diet at home at all. In fact, what we had been eating at home going into this was a healthier low-carb diet than what they were calling a low-carb diet in the hospital.

Also, while I was there in the 'shop', they decided it would be a good idea if they gave me a pacemaker, so I am slightly bionic and my batteries are good for 10 years. Now, I'm up and about and duty calls, because I have to get the next issue of this Newsletter out to our members. For those who sent me messages of good wishes and encouragement, I think you. Who knows - they may have helped.



Is there a town of Chelm in Tennessee?*

In East European Jewish folklore, the city of Chelm (Pol., Chełm; Yid., Khelem) functions as an imaginary city of fools, similar to that of the Greek Abdera, the English Gotham, and the German Schilda, among numerous others. The legendary “town of fools,” often presented ironically as “The Wise Men of . . .,” is a feature common to most European folklores. Chelm, as was the case with its counterparts in other cultures, spawned hundreds of tales describing outlandish naiveté and stupidity that have been printed in dozens of editions in a variety of languages. Many of these are titled *The Wise Men of Chelm*.

Given the stupidity of the herds of anti-vax anti-maskers in Tennessee (there are many other states that would fall under this umbrella), it appears that there are Tennessee Chelmites all across the state.

You may have seen videos of the massing of these illiterates at School Board meetings. Well, as you sow, so shall ye reap. (below).....

Piggybacking on anti-Vaxing parents’ rights to endanger other people’s children, conservatives in the state have fought vociferously against mask mandates in schools. A little less than two weeks ago, as the Delta variant of the Covid-19 virus spread across the country, the Williamson County school board in Tennessee decided to pass a mask mandate for the upcoming start of the school year. This came as Tennessee released data showing that in the first two weeks of August, almost 14,000 children were making up almost 25% of Tennessee’s new cases of Covid 19.

The School Board meeting was an ugly affair, as a mob of ‘antis’ hurled real threats like ‘we know where you live’ at board members who are voting to save their children. In the end, only elementary school students were mandated to wear masks. What happened in Williamson County Tennessee as of August 19, 2021? Schools closed. Why? Of the 560 students in the school, 187 tested positive for Covid-19 and of the 77 faculty members, 23 tested positive. This comes on the same day that a Nashville NBC affiliate reported that Williamson County has had 3500 mask exemptions for religious or medical reasons filed. That number is reportedly set to increase as Gov. Bill Lee signed an executive order allowing parents to just opt out of mask mandates. Some people never learn.

***Or are the Chelmites distributed all across the state?**



Laughing in Disbelief

LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, ABSURDITÉ
ANDREW HALL

www.patheos.com/blogs/laughingindisbelief/2021/08



Newly excavated dead sea scrolls

endorsed Covid vaccines

Newly unearthed from the Qumran Caves in the West Bank revealed prophecies concerning the coronavirus. Not only do the authors write of the plague, but they also herald the vaccine and facemasks as “Gifts from God” that “only the foolish refrain from”. This series of fragments and manuscripts that have come to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1946/1947 and 1956. They are some of the earliest editions we have of the Hebrew Scriptures, the book of Enoch, and Psalms.

Archaeologists suspected other such writings were in the surrounding area. Professor Andrew from the Theological Institute of Theology (TIT) relentlessly excavated caves for years only to find nothing. Finally, his Herculean effort paid off. Five large and relatively undamaged scrolls dating from the third century BCE were discovered. “This would be a finding of the century under normal circumstances,” Prof. Canard said. “But the prophecies are what is going to amaze everyone regardless of their faith.”

The scrolls point to a time when a “spiky monster” of “minuscule dimensions” will ravage the planet. “The LORD in his wisdom will send messengers to educate the people and provide protection against the enemy. These men and women will teach the parables of the Masking of Faces and the Prodigal Jab. Many will listen. But some who have eyes and ears will still not see or hear the lessons. They will perish.”

If you read the bible in reverse, it’s about the world’s population killing each other until there’s only 2 people left, and then the woman picks an apple and they both get naked.

—reportedly written by Macaulay Culkin

Tom Flynn, giant of American freethought, has died at age 66



The world has lost a towering figure of American free thought, a man who was both on the cutting edge of secular humanist thought, as well as the foremost caretaker of the community history. The entire Center for inquiry family is anguished by the sudden and unexpected death of our colleague, teacher, and friend Tom Flynn at age 66.

Tom held numerous leadership roles during his more than 30 years with the Center for Inquiry, most recently as editor of Free Inquiry magazine, director of the Robert Green Inc. Ingersoll birthplace Museum and the Free Thought Trail, and former executive director of the Council for Secular Humanism. But this collection of titles does not nearly convey the plainer truth, which is that

Tom Flynn was the beating heart of the Center for Inquiry and indeed the wider free thought movement. A stark rationalist and staunch atheist if ever there was one, Tom was nonetheless brimming with enthusiasm, curiosity, bold ideas, and perhaps most of all, humor. He had a deep love and encyclopedic knowledge of freethought history and devoted himself to the preservation and rediscovery of American free-thoughts' great untold stories.

info@centerforinquiry.org

The Bible clearly says: Put others first (even during a pandemic)

Too many American Christians are approaching this pandemic as if the only thing that matters is their so-called "personal freedoms." I hate to make too many assumptions about them, but I don't think they read the same Bible I do. If they did, wouldn't they stumble across the following swath of verses about putting others first? Wouldn't they then have to apply this litany of data to their approach to this current COVID crisis?



The author, Matthew Distefano, lists many, but this one is, in my view, most applicable:

Philippians 2:4

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

(Progressive Christian in patheos.com/blogs/allsetfree/2021/08)

<p>Coming to a mailbox near you...the ballot for those Board members up for reelection.</p> <p>Please vote and return the ballot by October 15th.</p>	CDHS Executive Council Election Ballot - September 2021			
	Rosina Ansaldo	Secretary	Yes ___	No ___
	Judy McCann	Membership	Yes ___	No ___
	Sherry Levine	At Large	Yes ___	No ___
	Don Porterfield	Executive Director	Yes ___	No ___
	Dee Portzer	Socials	Yes ___	No ___
	Roland Tozer	Treasurer	Yes ___	No ___

"The question I get asked by religious people all the time is, without God, what's to stop me from raping all I want? And my answer is: I do rape all I want. And the amount I want is zero. And I do murder all I want, and the amount I want is zero. The fact that these people think that if they didn't have this person watching over them that they would go on killing, raping rampages is the most self-damning thing I can imagine."

Penn Jillette

quonation.com

August Social

On August 10th, eight members of the CDHS gathered in Freedom Park to watch a fun performance by the U. S. Water Ski Demo Team.

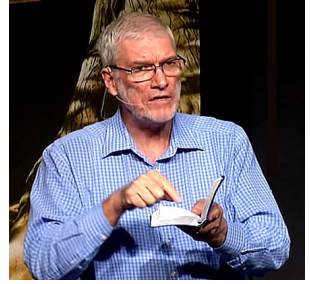
They show their talent every Tuesday during the months of July and August, weather permitting, on the Mohawk River next to Jumpin' Jack's. The team competes all over the Northeast. Some of us had fried dough, ice cream or dinner from JJ's. The weather cooperated and a good time was had by all.

E.T., Phone Hell? Creationist Ken Ham Says Jesus Can't Save Space Aliens

The Noah's Ark guy is being rude to extraterrestrials ... again. Creationist Ken Ham, who built a giant Noah's Ark-themed attraction in Kentucky, said he doesn't think there's life outside of Earth. And if such life existed, they shouldn't expect any form of salvation from Jesus Christ.

"Jesus came to save us, not to another planet to save another race of beings," Ham wrote on Twitter, adding that it's clear "salvation through Christ is only for the Adamic race," aka human earthlings. On the bright side, however, Ham said they won't need redemption anyway ... since they don't exist. The Bible, according to his strict interpretation, says only Earth was made to be inhabited, "and the other celestial bodies were created for signs, seasons, days, and years," he tweeted.

Ham was responding to a recent poll that found deeply religious Americans are less likely to believe in intelligent life outside of Earth. He has made similar comments before, writing in 2014, "Jesus did not become the 'GodKlinton' or the 'GodMartian'! Only descendants of Adam can be saved." "Not all Christians agree with Ham."
www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/23/08/2021



EDITOR'S NOTE: I guess Ham never had the opportunity to view this 'classic' - "It's a end-times Japanimation free for all as Satan's Martian communist minions attack the One World Government, with the fate of all our aluminum siding in the balance!"

GOP Senate candidate: my decisions would rely on the Constitution and the Bible



Josh Mandel is the former Ohio lawmaker and state treasurer who is now running for the Republican nomination to the U.S. Senate on a platform of just plain being a MAGA cultist who thinks the Bible should govern everyone's lives. Last month, he took a torch to the Constitution and tweeted, "the Bible and the Constitution are not supposed to be separate". A couple of weeks to go, he called for a Judeo-Christian revolution, which is frightening to those of us who recognize we are already living in a country that's being destroyed in a large part because of conservative Christians having too much power.

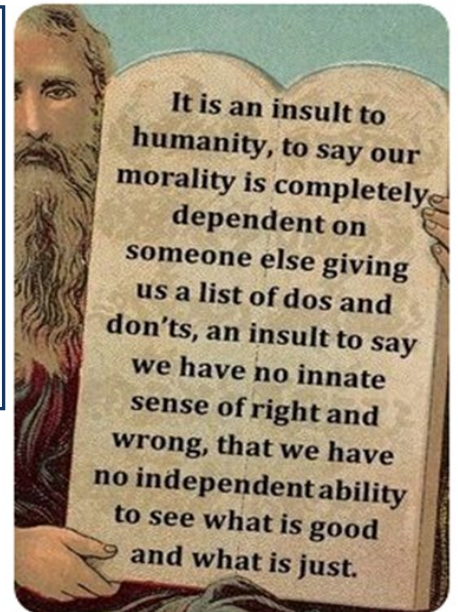
On Saturday during a campaign stop, he reiterated his Christians only platform telling the crowd while he's in office, he'll make decisions with two documents in mind: "In this country right now, we're in a fight against the radical left, who are trying to take away our guns. We're in a fight against the secular left, which is trying to take God out of all aspects in our life. My feeling is we shouldn't be watering down our Judeo-Christian values; we should be doubling down on those Judeo-Christian values and instilling God in all aspects of the classroom, of work, and of society. When I get to Washington, I'm going to make decisions with two documents in hand," he added. "With the Bible in one hand and the Constitution in the other."

(Hemant Mehta in *friendlyathe-*



I have been asked to publicize this worthwhile organization. Please check out their websites. If you need additional information, contact Olga Porterfield.

"The International Rescue Committee responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and gain control of their future. In more than 40 countries and over 20 U.S. cities, our dedicated teams provide clean water, shelter, health care, education and empowerment support to refugees and displaced people. "



Wise sayings:

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

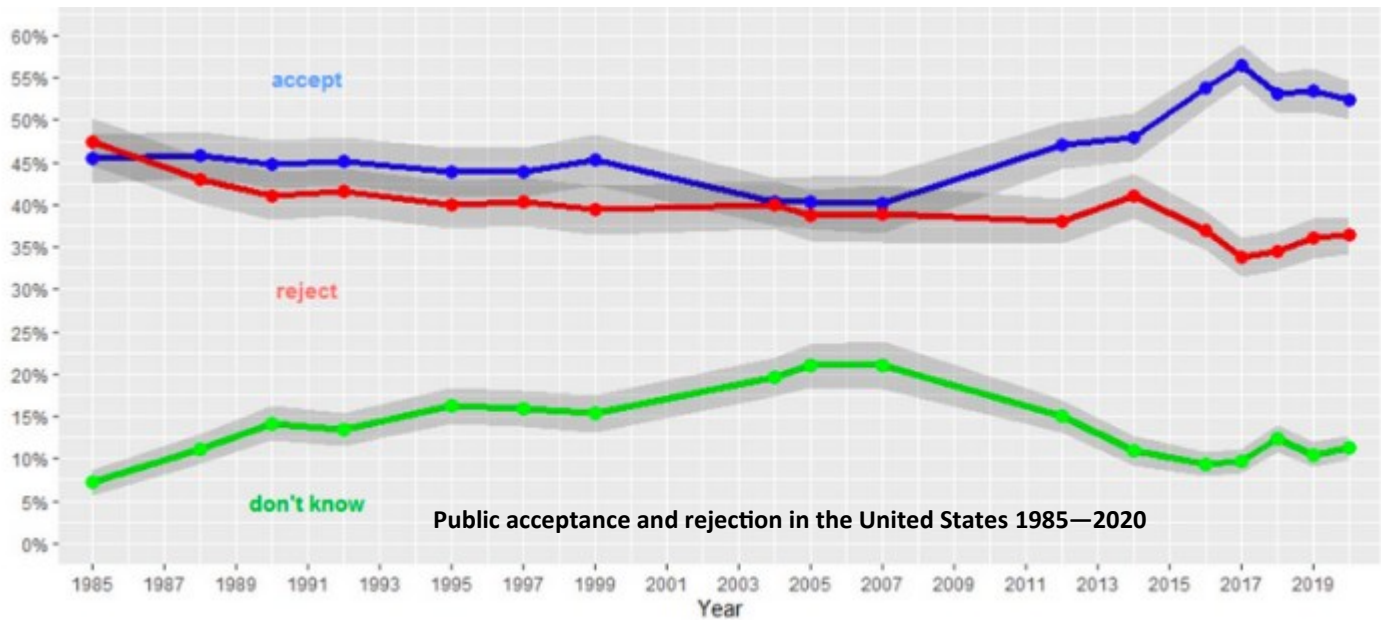
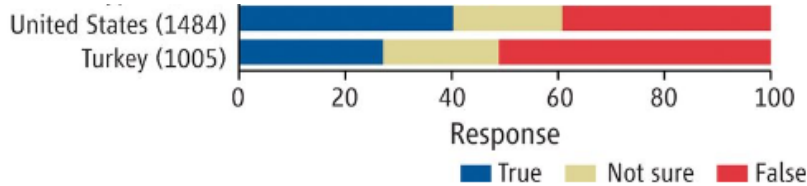
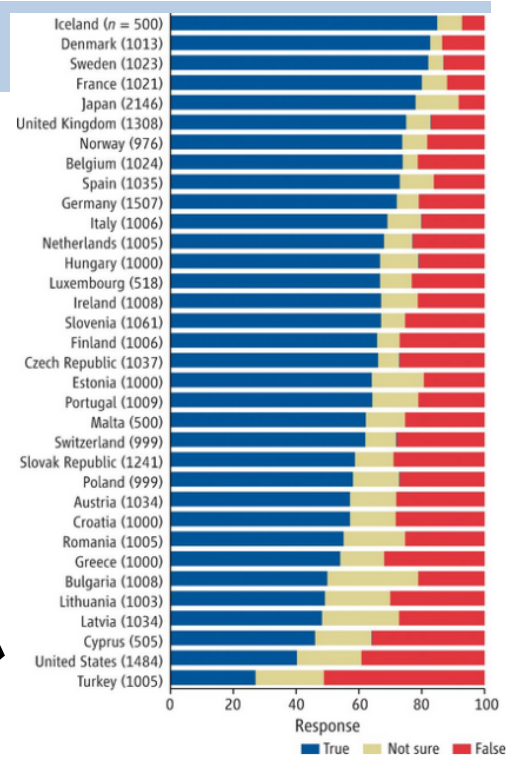
Some good news.....

Research Shows a Rise in the Public Acceptance of Evolution Over the Last Decade

More than a decade ago, in 2006, the *Journal Science* published this chart showing the acceptance of evolution in more than 34 countries. If you're looking for the United States, we're the ones waaaaay near the bottom of the list, with a paltry 40% of people who accept that evolution is true. The only country lower than us when it came to science literacy was Turkey.

The most recent Gallup poll on the matter, from 2019, found something a little more optimistic. Only 22% of Americans correctly said that humans developed over millions of years with God playing no role in the process, but another 33% of Americans agreed on the "developed over millions of years; they just felt God guided the process. Still, that's 55% of Americans who accept evolution.

Hemant Mehtafriendlyatheist.patheos.com/2021/08/23/



CHRISTIANITY DAILY

Friday, August 27, 2021 Last Update: 3:03 AM EST

- US
- WORLD
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- SOCIETY
- LIFE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- OPINION
- VIDEO

Anti-God group names Anthony Fauci as the '2021 Humanist of the Year'

Aside from getting the public's attention due to his leaked emails which proved his mismanagement and misleading of Americans with regards to COVID-19, Dr. Anthony Fauci is now getting some attention for receiving an award from an atheist group, praising his "commitment to accessible, evidence-based information."

The American Humanist Association, an atheist group that proudly claims to be "good without a God," has awarded Fauci with the "2021 Humanist of the Year" award, the highest recognition that the group can give to any person who doesn't believe in God.

At one time, there was intelligent life on planet Earth.....



Jimmy DeYoung
@jimmydeyoung



Some are asking, "Is the new Corona Virus Vaccine connected to the "mark of the Beast"?"

More here: news.prophecytoday.com/2020/12/some-a...

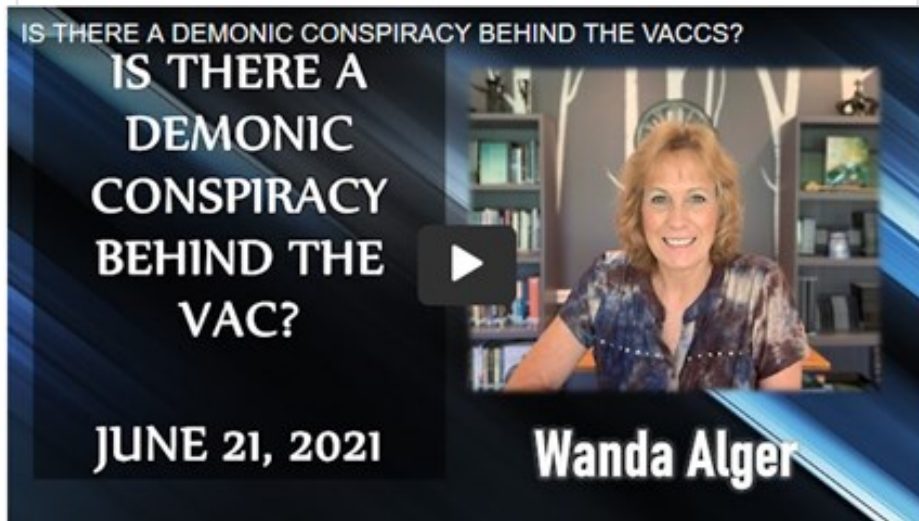
11:25 AM · Dec 18, 2020



5



See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter



And now, for something completely different.....

Reliable reviews after a tourist visiting Loch Ness in Scotland left a vicious one-star TripAdvisor review complaining that the loch's famous monster never showed up. "Don't go if you are wanting to see it," warned the reviewer, "because you will end up bitterly disappointed like we were."

CDHS Executive Council

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Appointed Positions

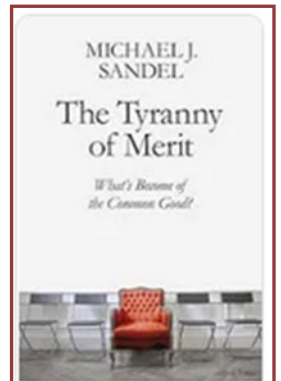
Hospitality	Mira Peck
Room Arrangements	Frank Robinson

BOOK CLUB

The Book Club is discussing The Blind Storyteller by Iris Berent. This will be followed by The Tyranny of Merit by Michael Sandel.

The Group meets at Ridgefield Park (at Park & Ridgefield Streets) - weather permitting. The next meeting is scheduled for September 9th, between 1 and 3.

Interested? Put down your book and contact Frank Robinson.



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Visit us on the web at humanistsociety.net

The Capital District Humanist Society (CDHS) is an independent, non-profit (and non-prophet), non-partisan and strictly non-religious educational and social organization for those who share humanist values: commitment to education, rational and free inquiry, democracy, social concerns and fellowship. CDHS is affiliated with the four major humanist organizations - the American Humanist Association (AHA), the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), the Secular Coalition for America (SCA) and the Humanists International (HI).

There are six types of CDHS member support: Individual, \$50/yr; Family, \$80/yr; Student \$25/yr; Sustaining, \$100/yr; Patron, \$150/yr; Lifetime Member, one contribution of \$1000 or more.

Members receive our publication, *The Humanist Monthly*, and vote by mail each September on the make-up of the governing Executive Council. Members are eligible for election to the Executive Council and may also serve as appointed officials. Members are welcome to attend Executive Council meetings.

The IRS recognizes CDHS as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Therefore, all donations, both cash and materials with established "fair market value", qualify as charitable contributions for income tax purposes.

Donations are gratefully accepted to help speed our growth. CDHS is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization under the IRS Code. Financial disclosure information and our annual report are available upon request.

If you know of someone who may be interested in CDHS, please pass this newsletter along or give us the name; we will send a sample copy or two with no obligation.

We value your input. In the best humanist tradition, CDHS has no rigid picture of itself. We ask you to join us, not follow us. What activities and services would you like CDHS to provide its members? Send us your suggestions, questions, and comments.



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All this information will be included in our Directory, which is distributed to members only, unless you request otherwise by checking and signing here. [] I do not want to be listed in the CDHS Member Directory _____

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[] Individual Membership	\$ 50	_____
[] Family Membership	\$ 80	_____
[] Sustaining Member	\$100	_____
[] Patron	\$150	_____
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