

# PIQUE

Newsletter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York

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September 29, 2020

It's Get-a-flu-shot season, isn't it? ... but, um, *this* year? And so up front we offer some advice on getting advice. We offer, too, Banned Book Week, Blasphemy Day and "Religious Remixers" (that should keep you busy), titles for the next Mel Gibson torture-porn flick, an update of the right-wing "We're #1" chant, Jon Engel's denial of personal responsibility for Donald Trump, Trump's own responsibility for White Supremacy hatred, a reckoning of his sticky-fingering in the federal till, and my own recommendation on volunteering to get rid of the creepy *schmorrer*. — JR

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## HOW TO KNOW WHEN YOU CAN TRUST A COVID-19 VACCINE

Maggie Koerth

(Excerpted from *FiveThirtyEight.com*, 9/23/2020)

Scientists around the world are currently undertaking one of the fastest vaccine-development programs in history, trying to get the novel coronavirus under control as quickly as humanly possible. But the vaccines being tested sit at a nexus of misinformation and mistrust. Between Trump's apparent meddling in federal health agencies' decision-making, skepticism about the seriousness of the disease, and long-standing culture wars around the safety of vaccines in general, it's easy to find yourself floundering, unsure who you can trust.

So I spoke with a handful of people who really know how vaccines, clinical trials and COVID-19 work to find out how to know when it's a good idea to get the vaccine. They offered these four pieces of advice.

**Look for transparency in the data —  
even if you don't go through it yourself.**

Don't get your COVID-19 vaccine advice from politicians or pharmaceutical companies. ... Instead, trust independent scientists and medical professionals — your doctor, for instance, or your state's health commissioner.

**Listen to the independent reviews (with a caveat).**

Every COVID-19 vaccine candidate will have to go through two separate independent review boards before it gets to you — one through the trial's sponsoring institution and another through the FDA. ... Again, transparency is key.

**Be highly skeptical of anything released  
before the end of the year.**

There is such a thing as too speedy. Eric Topol, a professor and executive vice president at Scripps Research, a nonprofit biomedical research institute, who has worked on large

clinical trials for nearly three decades, didn't mince words: It would be impossible to have a properly vetted COVID-19 vaccine ready for public release before the general election — at least one that's had any kind of real safety and efficacy testing. "Capital 'i' impossible," he said.

**Trust the experts who are being straight with you  
about the limitations above everyone else.**

In terms of efficacy, the COVID-19 vaccine is not going to be like a measles shot. Instead, we're likely talking about something more like the flu vaccine — even if you get it, you won't be perfectly protected.

The FDA has said it would require any vaccine to be at least 50 percent effective before approving it. But that still means that half the people who get the shot won't be immune. It's critical that anyone talking to the public about the vaccine be honest about these limitations,

But whenever a vaccine is developed this quickly, issues that the clinical-trial process didn't catch are only going to come up later — whether that's problems of efficacy or of safety. If a side effect is rare enough, it might not become apparent until millions of people have taken the vaccine.

Whatever comes out of this vaccine might have longer-term implications for immunization in general. If the public decides this process wasn't trustworthy, it will give ammunition to efforts to discredit all vaccines.

**Update September 22:** Russian President Vladimir Putin offered UN staff free doses of the country's COVID-19 vaccine, Sputnik V, which has not completed clinical trials for efficacy and has not been thoroughly vetted for safety.

Public health experts were quickly skeptical of the move, seeing it as merely a political stunt to give the appearance that Russia was "winning" the race to develop a vaccine against the pandemic coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. At the time, the vaccine had only been tested in two small

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clinical trials, involving just 76 people total—and the data from those small trials had not yet been released.

Russian researchers have since published that data in the journal *The Lancet*. The results indicate that Sputnik V spurred potentially protective immune responses and did not cause any severe side effects. However, outside researchers were quick to note oddities in the data, including that different samples generated suspiciously identical or near-identical results.

Dr. Margaret Harris, spokesperson for World Health Organization, which is an agency within the UN, declined to comment, but UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told the AP: “We thank President Putin for his generous offer, which will be studied by our medical services.”

*Comment: In other words, “We’re highly skeptical of anything released before the end of the year.”*

## I DID NOT MAKE ANYONE VOTE FOR DONALD TRUMP

Jonathan Engel

This past Sunday I participated in the weekly SHSNY Sunday Happy Hour Zoom chat. As often happens, the lively conversation eventually got around to politics. A few people made a point that I have heard many times before: that part of the reason that so many white working class and rural people voted for and still support Trump is that they feel belittled and uncared for by mainstream politics and culture. They feel that their needs and concerns are ignored and that “big city elites” (like me, I guess) are condescending and patronizing, pushing them into Trump’s arms as the only politician who cares about them. I disagree with that analysis very strongly, and my thoughts about last Sunday’s conversation inspired me to write this essay.

Are educated city dwellers sometimes dismissive of our country cousins? Yes, and that’s not right. But intellectual elites have no real power to impact the lives of the white working class, while financial elites do. That people incorrectly conflate intellectual with financial elitism is not my fault. But there’s much more. In terms of mass culture, religious rural and blue collar folks do the same and worse to educated urbanites as we do to them. Such as referring to us as effete pointy-headed intellectuals with no common sense. Just a bunch of latte drinking, Volvo driving, tree hugging libtards. (For the record, I don’t drink coffee of any kind, I haven’t owned a car since 1986, and I’m much more comfortable in the city than I am around trees). Okay, so we poke fun at each other, and not always good-naturedly.

In that vein, some people have pointed out Hillary Clinton’s use of the word “deplorables” to refer to some Trump supporters. I certainly agree that this was a political gaffe of the highest order, as well as being not particularly nice. But let’s look at the substance. Take coal miners, for example. Trump promised them that he would bring back thousands upon thousands of coal mining jobs, which was a crock when he said it and remains a crock to this day. But they swallowed it because that’s what they wanted to

hear. Whereas Clinton had enough respect for the miners to tell them the truth, which is that these particular jobs are a relic of the past and would not be coming back. But she also told them that in a Clinton administration they would have access to healthcare and receive training in the power industries of the future, i.e., wind and solar. Coal miners voted overwhelmingly for Trump, but whose promises look better and more realistic today? It’s not Clinton’s fault that they chose to listen to Trump’s obvious lies rather than Clinton’s difficult and inconvenient truths. That’s on them.

What is truly patronizing and condescending is to treat adult Trump voters like children who have no agency of their own. I am treating them like adults, not like whiny brats who lash out in any direction because their feelings have been hurt. Their decision to vote for an obviously incompetent, unfit, moral degenerate belongs exclusively to them; they own it. At least I respect them enough to hold them responsible for their own votes and for educating themselves as to the important issues of the day, and to believe that they are fully capable of obtaining and processing that information. What is truly patronizing is to believe otherwise and therefore not hold them responsible for the danger to democracy they put in the White House.

## YOU ALL DON’T GET IT Bev

*(To answer the question, “Why do people continue supporting Trump no matter what he does?”, I found this on Facebook from a lady named Bev, shared it there, and now here. – JR)*

You all don’t get it. I live in Trump country, in the Ozarks in southern Missouri, one of the last places where the KKK still has a relatively strong established presence. They don’t give a shit what he does. He’s just something to rally around and hate liberals, that’s it, period. He absolutely realizes that and plays it up. They love it. He knows they love it. The fact that people act like it’s anything other than that proves to them that liberals are idiots, all the more reason for high fives all around.

If you keep getting caught up in “Why do they not realize this problem?” and “How can they still back Trump after this scandal?”, then you do not understand what the underlying motivating factor of his support is.

It’s “Fuck liberals!” That’s pretty much it.

Have you noticed that he can do pretty much anything imaginable, and they’ll explain some way that rationalizes it that makes zero logical sense? Because they’re not even keeping track of any coherent narrative, it’s irrelevant. “Fuck liberals” is the only relevant thing. Trust me; I know firsthand what I’m talking about.

That’s why they just laugh at it all because you all don’t even realize they truly don’t give a fuck about whatever the conversation is about. It’s just a side mission story that doesn’t matter anyway. That’s all just trivial details – the economy, health care, whatever.

Go ahead and try to have a logical, rational conversation with them. Just keep in mind what I said here:

“Fuck liberals.”

## HE REALLY IS JUST A SMALL-TIME GRIFTER ...

*(Copied from "Trump blows cash advantage -- but pockets campaign dollars" on Huffingtonpost.com, 9/22/2020)*

President Donald Trump forced his campaign managers to take pay cuts in the last two months. But new filings with the Federal Election Commission show that Trump's campaign and the Republican National Committee spent \$203,000 at his hotel near the White House and another \$37,542 on space at his Trump Tower in Manhattan although the campaign is based at a high-rise in Arlington, Virginia. Total reported payments in August from the campaign and the RNC to the president's own businesses amounted to \$251,409, even as his reelection operation loses its fundraising advantage to Joe Biden.

Since he took office, the political committees under his control have spent a total of \$7,231,392 at Trump's various businesses, according to a HuffPost analysis of FEC records.

## .... LIKE HIS SCHNORRER\* BUDDY, NETANYAHU

**John Rafferty**

Imagine you're the leader of a nation—Prime Minister, President, whatever—a person who commands armies and daily makes decisions affecting millions of lives. Imagine the power you'd have. And what perks, too – just think of all the stuff and services you'd get for free!

Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, sneaks his dirty shirts and socks into the American President's guesthouse for free laundry service.

Over the years, the Israeli leader has developed a reputation among the staff at the U.S. president's guesthouse for bringing special cargo on his trips to Washington: bags and suitcases full of dirty laundry, according to U.S. officials familiar with the matter.

The clothes are cleaned for the prime minister free of charge by the U.S. staff, a perk that is available to all foreign leaders but taken advantage of sparingly by other visitors, given the short stays of busy heads of state.

*\*Schnorrer is Yiddish for "beggar" or "sponger" to describe a freeloader who asks for little things, like cigarettes or pocket change, without offering a return. – JR*

## A DONALD TRUMP CV

He's the "billionaire" who hides his financials. The "genius" who hides his college grades. The "businessman" who bankrupted three casinos and lost over a billion dollars in ten years. The "handsome playboy" who pays for sex. The "virologist" who knows more than Dr. Fauci. The "leader of the free world" who said he "fell in love" with Kim Jong Un. The "Christian" who doesn't go to church. The "Commander-in-Chief" who committed treason by turning a blind eye to Russian bounties on our soldiers. The "unifier" who calls white supremacists fine people. The "philanthropist" who defrauds charity. The "patriot" who dodged the draft five times. The "innocent man" who refuses to testify. And the "tough, strong" man who wears makeup and hairspray.

## TRUMP PREACHED WHITE SUPREMACY IN MINNESOTA, AMERICA BARELY NOTICED

**Tim Dickinson**

*(Excerpted from Rolling Stone, 9/22/2020)*

On the night Ruth Bader Ginsburg died, Donald Trump made a campaign appearance in Bemidji in northern Minnesota. Trump played to the base instincts of an adoring crowd, where MAGA hats outnumbered face masks by an extraordinary margin – before he slipped into a terrifying embrace of eugenics, "the racehorse theory" of human breeding, and the superiority of "Minnesota genes". ...

Trump (openly endorsed) eugenics – the discredited theory that the human race can be improved with selective breeding for superior traits. The theory has an ugly history in America. And Hitler's embrace of eugenics gave rise to the program of "race hygiene" that culminated in the extermination of millions.

"You have good genes, you know that right?" Trump said to the nearly all-white crowd. "A lot of it is about the genes, isn't it? Don't you believe? The racehorse theory," Trump said. "You think we're so different? You have good genes in Minnesota." ...

It doesn't take a secret decoder ring to understand what Trump was aiming at. The idea that white Minnesotans, like racehorses, have superior, inheritable genes, is white supremacy – embraced not as a cultural construct, but as if it were based in hard science. ...

Trump does not recoil from the most dangerous ideology of the 20th century, but instead celebrates it on the campaign trail in increasingly explicit terms.

## I VOLUNTEER AT VOTE FORWARD

**John Rafferty**

I needed to do something more than simply vote against the Orange Occupant. Of course I have contributed what I could afford to Biden and a couple of Congress candidates (and before them to my first love, Elizabeth Warren), but I wanted to do something more. Luckily I have old and smart friends like Denver resident and PIQUE subscriber Adrienne Karp, who alerted me to Vote Forward.

Yesterday (I'm writing this on Friday, 9/25), I downloaded pdfs of letters to 20 registered-but-didn't-vote-recently people in Texas (TX is what I was assigned – as good as any other). I added a handwritten (blue ink, please) personal message to each form letter, urging them to vote. *(Yes, it's a non-partisan form letter, but I'm pretty sure I'm writing to mostly Democrats or leaners.)*

I prepared the first five yesterday, i.e.: print the form, write the insert and sign, stuff and seal, hand-address an envelope and add a stamp. All letters stay on hold until a TBA mid-October mail date. I'll do five more today, and five a day (maybe more), until mail date – *while sitting down!*

Like any worthwhile endeavor, it keeps me away from the bars and out of the pool halls, and it feels good to do.

If you're interested, Google Vote Forward.

## BANNED BOOK WEEK

September 27 – October 3

(Copied from “Banned Book Week Sunday, Sept 27 – Saturday, Oct 3, 2020”, in AOF News & Views – Newsletter of Atheists & Other Freethinkers, Sep, 2020)

September’s end marks Banned Books Week, a celebration of the Freedom to Read, established by the American Library Association in 1981 in response to growing attempts to ban books in public libraries across the country. First observed in 1982, we celebrate it each year during the last week starting in September, to remind us not to take for granted our freedom to read the written word. Every year bookstores and libraries across the United States celebrate Banned Books Week with displays of and readings from books that have been banned or threatened throughout history.

Such works range from the Bible and Thomas Paine’s *The Age of Reason* to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and J.K Rowling’s Harry Potter series, and has included books on atheism, science, tolerance, social issues, love and sex, and philosophy. Jean Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Paine, Voltaire, Aristophanes, Margaret Sanger, Mary Shelley, Ambrose Bierce, Charles Darwin, George Eliot, Mark Twain and John Locke were all victims of censorship during their lifetimes and still face censorship in some sections of the world today.

Banned Books Week stands as a reminder that freedom is precious, that without constant diligence and defiance we can lose it, even in the U.S. If anything, this should motivate freethinkers everywhere to read banned books, discuss them, and protect the rights of all Americans to read what they want, when they want, in libraries across the country.

## BLASPHEMY DAY, SEPTEMBER 30.

### SAY SOMETHING OUTRAGEOUS ... IN PUBLIC

Secularists and freethinkers worldwide celebrate International Blasphemy Day or “Blasphemy Rights Day” to mark the day when images of Muhammad appeared in the Denmark newspaper *Jyllands Posten* in 2005. Conservative Muslims reacted to the drawings with worldwide protests, riots, embassy burnings and death threats. Formally founded in 2009 by Ronald Lindsay, Director of the Center of Inquiry in Amherst, New York, and promoted by the Campaign for Free Expression, this secular holiday now stands as a platform for individuals freely to express criticisms of religion and religious establishments.

As Ron said in a television interview: “Religious beliefs should be subject to examination and criticism just as political beliefs are, but we have a taboo on religion ... we’re against restrictions on speech based purely on the possibility that some people might be offended. ... [But] if you go down that path there’s no end to it.”

Participants have celebrated Blasphemy Day in various ways: with speeches, art exhibitions, feasts, poetry, music and song, and by taking the Blasphemy Challenge (*Google it, then do it*). Use your imagination.

## WE’RE NO. 28! AND DROPPING!

Nicholas Kristof

(Excerpted from The New York Times, 9/9/2020)

New data suggest that the United States is one of just a few countries worldwide that is slipping backward. The newest Social Progress Index ... finds that out of 163 countries assessed worldwide, the United States, Brazil and Hungary are the only ones in which people are worse off than when the index began in 2011. And the declines in Brazil and Hungary were smaller than America’s.

The index collects 50 metrics of well-being – nutrition, safety, freedom, the environment, health, education and more – to measure quality of life. Norway comes out on top in the 2020 edition, followed by Denmark, Finland and New Zealand. South Sudan is at the bottom, with Chad, Central African Republic and Eritrea just behind.

The United States ranks 28th – having slipped from 19th in 2011 – behind significantly poorer countries, including Estonia, Czech Republic, Cyprus and Greece.

The United States ranks No. 1 in the world in quality of universities, but No. 91 in access to quality basic education. The U.S. leads the world in medical technology, yet we are No. 97 in access to quality health care.

The Index finds that Americans have health statistics similar to those of people in Chile, Jordan and Albania, while kids in the United States get an education roughly on par with what children get in Uzbekistan and Mongolia.

The decline of the United States over the last decade in this index – more than any country in the world – is a reminder that we face structural problems that predate President Trump and that festered under leaders of both parties. Trump is a symptom of this larger malaise, and also a cause of its acceleration.

That’s why this is an election like that of 1932, when American voters decisively rejected Herbert Hoover’s passivity and gave Franklin Roosevelt an electoral mandate – including a flipped Senate – that laid the groundwork for the New Deal and the modern middle class. But first we need to acknowledge that we are on the wrong track.

Let’s wake up.

## THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST: THE SEQUEL!

Barry Duke

(Excerpted from *thefreethinker on pathoes.com*, 9/23/2020)

Über-conservative Catholic actor and director Mel Gibson has sent a tsunami of mirth through social media by announcing that he’s planning to release a sequel to his 2004 torture-porn flick, “The Passion of the Christ”.

The news immediately set Twitter users on a quest to find the best title for Gibson’s comeback kid. Among the popular recommendations are:

*The Passion of the Christ 2: Dead and Loving it.*

*The Passion of the Christ 2 : Nailed It.*

*The Passion of the Christ 2: I can’t believe it’s not Buddha.*

But there is one clear popular front-runner –

*The Passion of the Christ 2: Electric Boogaloo.*

## WHO ARE “RELIGIOUS REMIXERS”?

**Kenneth E. Frantz**

(Excerpted from “*The New Godless Religions: An Interview with Tara Isabella Burton*”, at [religionandpolitics.org](http://religionandpolitics.org), 9/22/2020)

The United States has seen an increase in the so-called “nones”—people who don’t identify with any religious tradition. Some scholars have viewed this growing group as a sign that Americans are becoming more secular. Tara Isabella Burton argues in her new book, *Strange Rites: New Religions for a Godless World*, that this notion is misguided.

Burton takes a closer look at the lives of ostensibly non-religious people and finds that, even if they don’t identify with a religious tradition, there can still be a strong spiritual undercurrent to their lives. Her book takes readers through a number of spiritual subcultures, including among the followers of SoulCycle, Jordan Peterson, and witchcraft.

Kenneth E. Frantz spoke to Burton about her book.

**Religion & Politics:** In your book, you talk about the religiously remixed. Who are they and why did you consider them important to write about?

**Tara Isabella Burton:** I think that traditional conceptions of secularization in America have looked at the religiously unaffiliated as an indicator that America is getting less religious. That is actually not the case. About 72 percent of the religiously unaffiliated say they believe in some sort of higher power. About 17 percent say they believe in the Judeo-Christian god. In addition, you have people who affiliate with religious tradition—i.e., self-identified Christians—whose belief systems, structures, practices, and rituals are a little bit more eclectic. Almost 30 percent of self-identified Christians, for example, say they believe in reincarnation, which traditionally would not be something you would associate with orthodox Christian doctrine.

In talking about remixing, what I wanted to capture was this phenomenon I see as much more salient than so-called secularization, which is the way in which spirituality, meaning, purpose, community, and ritual are all divorced both from traditional religious observance and from one another. You might get your sense of meaning from one place and purpose from one place and community from a different place and so on and so forth. This kind of mix-and-match mentality, this anti-institutionalism, and desire to remake one’s own religious life in a more individualized way—all of these things I call together the phenomenon of remixing.

**R&P:** In your book you mentioned three categories of remixers. Could you get into those?

**TIB:** These categories aren’t mutually exclusive. They come from different forms of polling and data. You have your *faithful “nones”*—your people who say they are religiously unaffiliated but also say they believe in a higher power. You have your people who self-identify as *spiritual but not religious*. What’s interesting about that group is there are people who say that they’re spiritual but not religious but will also say “but I’m Christian” or “but I’m Jewish”.

They might be affiliated with a religion, but they don’t call themselves religious, which itself opens up a field of questions. What does it mean to be religious? What does it mean to belong to a religion? What does it mean to identify as part of a religion and then also say you’re not religious? So that’s another can of worms.

The final can of worms is what I call the *religious hybrids*. These are people who do identify strongly with a religious tradition but who—as in the case of the Christians and reincarnation—have a personal theological outlook that is more eclectic than traditional orthodox theology. We don’t have good enough data to tell the overlap between these people because these are different polling systems. But, when we take it all together, what we can see is that a huge proportion of religious and not explicitly religious Americans fall into these categories. They are people whose approach to spirituality, whose approach to their religious life, is informed by this sense of individualization, by this sense of intuitionism and anti-institutionalism.

To put it very bluntly and reductionistically, they’re making their own religion in some sense.

**Comment:** Your thoughts, Dear Reader? Send them to [editor@shsny.org](mailto:editor@shsny.org), please. – JR

## ENOUGH, ALREADY ... LET’S GET IT DONE

**Garrison Keillor**

(Excerpted from his blog, <http://www.garrisonkeillor.com/a-late-dispatch-from-the-new-york-correspondent/>, 9/16/2020)

We bought a new TV in August to liven up our days and somehow cannot figure out how to tune in news programs — which platforms are they on — so we don’t watch them, which is a relief. I’m tired of hearing the name in the news, don’t care to hear words that rhyme with it such as “dump”, “hump”, “lump”, “chump”, “rump”, “slump”, look at the news online and avert my eyes from the smug New York playboy face with the fruitcake hair. It’s time for the election now though it’s September. The election should’ve been held a year ago. The man is a bad dream.

I’m an American, I love hamburgers, country music, baseball, small towns on the prairie, the American September, Levi jeans, the poetry of Jim Harrison and Maxine Kumin, and this guy is a Russian who learned his English at the movies. He isn’t one of us, not even slightly. ...

The election approaches. Let’s get it done.

## READERS RESPOND

**To the Editor:** I am sorry to learn of the passing of Philip Appleman (PIQUE, 9/22). I enjoyed reading his poetry in *Freethought Today*. I met him and his wife about 27 years ago at a gathering of members of the Secular Humanist Society of New York at a huge apartment in Battery Park City in lower Manhattan owned by a feisty Irishman named Vince Gillen. I was president of the group at the time. The Applemans were a very nice couple. I recall Philip Appleman read some of his poetry to the group, which included prominent SHSNY members Art Harris and Ed McCarten. – Dennis Middlebrooks

# SHSNY CALENDAR: SEPTEMBER 2020 – JANUARY 2021

## FICTION BOOK CLUB ONLINE

The SHSNY Fiction Book Club meets online via Zoom for the duration of our enforced isolation.

To be included and notified of each meeting's link and password, email your address to Sharon Krutzel at [sharonkrutzel@rcn.com](mailto:sharonkrutzel@rcn.com)

### TUESDAY, OCT 13, 7:00 pm **AMERICAN DIRT** Jeanine Cummins

Stephen King calls it "extraordinary", and this *NYTimes* best-selling story of a comfortable, middle-class Mexican family caught up in the flight to *el Norte* and away from drug violence has been called "the international story of our times". *Hardcover, Kindle.*

### TUESDAY, NOV 10, 7:00 pm **THE THIRST** Jo Nesbo

Harry Hole is one of crime fiction's greatest cops ever, but after promising the woman he loves he's through, something about the killer who targets his victims on Tinder pulls Harry back to the chase in this eleventh novel in the series. *Paperback, Kindle.*

### TUESDAY, DEC 8, 7:00 pm **THE VANISHING HALF** Brit Bennett

From the bestselling author of *The Mothers*, a stunning new novel about twin sisters, inseparable as children, who ultimately choose to live in two very different worlds, one black and one white.

### TUESDAY, JAN 12, 7:00 pm **THE LYING LIFE OF ADULTS** Elena Ferrante Start reading.

## HUMANIST BOOK CLUB ONLINE

We continue online for the duration of our social distancing. Harry French will send the linking codes for the Zoom meetings. Send your address to: [htfrench46@gmail.com](mailto:htfrench46@gmail.com)  
Meanwhile, do the reading ...

### THURS, OCT 1, 7:00 pm **TWILIGHT OF DEMOCRACY: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism** Anne Applebaum

Thought-provoking and gracefully written, this is the book – by a Pulitzer-Prize winning historian – to read for "insight into what Trump's rise and rule really mean – here and abroad – for democracy in our time".  
– Ron Elwing, NPR

### THURS, NOV 5, 7:00 pm **HOW INNOVATION WORKS: And Why It Flourishes in Freedom** Matt Ridley

Author of *The Rational Optimist*, Ridley chronicles the history of innovation – the reason we experience both dramatic improvements in our living standards and unsettling changes in our society – and how we need to change our thinking on the subject.

### THURS, DEC 3, 7:00 pm **THE HOOLIGAN'S RETURN: A Memoir** Norman Manea

At the center of this internationally acclaimed memoir/novel is the author himself, always an outcast, on a lifelong journey through Nazism and communism to exile in America.

## HUMANIST HAPPY HOUR ONLINE

### SUNDAY, SEP 27, 5:00 pm

Pour something, grab a snack, and join 15 or more humanists and rationalists for lively conversation in our SHSNY Happy Hour!

Zoom in at  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9806344432?pwd=c0NrNUoweDVGWWho2ditvYmJlVjVGdz09>  
Meeting ID: 980 634 4432  
Passcode: SHSNy  
Join by Skype for Business  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/skype/9806344432>

## MONDAY MOVIES

### MONDAY, SEP 28, 8:00 pm *We'll discuss Bong Joon Ho's* **PARASITE**

Here's the 2019 South Korean black comedy thriller – about class, caste, and a poor family at war with the rich – that won four Oscars, including Best Picture? Rent it on Amazon (\$3.99), watch, and then Zoom in Sep 28, 8:00, at:  
<https://zoom.us/j/93111889428?pwd=NEs2dVRIRTNZbHZZSmhmU3FPb3Zhdz09>  
Meeting ID: 931 1188 9428  
Passcode: Watch

## MORAL MISFITS IS UP

Check out the first Rich Sander and John Rafferty (and guests) discussions. Go to YouTube and to Moral Misfits, then click on "Bait & Switch" and "Me Stupid? No, You Stupid".

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