

# PIQUE

Newsletter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York

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March 2, 2021

Worry! What must we do about not only the internet Doctor Nos but the Let's-see-what-happens idiots, too? This week we consider serious security risks, the drinking water in Florida, serious stupidity in Texas, and we applaud a Texan who puts pompous piety to shame. We worry, too, about what we can no longer say in print, about our national pledge and our erstwhile racist national anthem. We mock the Former Guy's toadies, and print a couple of letters and one more post-pandemic dream. But first, a humanist talks poetry, science, and the universe. Stop worrying. — JR

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## SUBJECTIFYING THE UNIVERSE: SCIENCE AND POETRY

Ursula K. Le Guin

*(Excerpted from the Foreword, "Deep in Admiration", to her last book of poetry, Late in the Day, Poems 2010-2014.)*

I guess I'm trying to subjectify the universe, because look where objectifying it has gotten us. To subjectify is not necessarily to co-opt, colonize, exploit. Rather it may involve a great reach of the mind and imagination. ...

Poetry is the human language that can try to say what a tree or a rock or a river *is*, that is, to speak humanly *for it*, in both senses of the word "for". A poem can do so by relating the quality of an individual human relationship to a thing, a rock, or river, or tree, or simply by describing the thing as truthfully as possible.

Science describes accurately from the outside, poetry describes accurately from the inside. Science explicates, poetry implicates. Both celebrate what they describe. We need the languages of both science and poetry to save us from merely stockpiling endless "information" that fails to inform our ignorance or our irresponsibility.

By replacing unfounded, willful opinion, science can increase moral sensitivity; by demonstrating and performing aesthetic order or beauty, poetry can move minds to the sense of fellowship that prevents careless usage and exploitation of our fellow beings, waste and cruelty.

Poetry often serves religion; and the monotheistic religions, privileging humanity's relationship with the divine, encourage arrogance. Yet even in that hard soil, poetry will find the language of compassionate fellowship with our fellow beings.

*(Editor's Note: I found the above in a newsletter — free and ad-free — which I recommend to one and all: "Brain Pickings by Maria Popover". Do yourself a favor and check it out. — JR)*

## THE MOST SERIOUS SECURITY RISK FACING THE UNITED STATES

Jonathan Tepperman

*(Excerpted from nytimes.com, 2/9/2021)*

Sometime last year, a shadowy group of hackers — now thought to be Russians working for that country's foreign intelligence service — broke into digital systems run by Solar Winds, an American tech firm, and inserted malware into the code. When the company then sent out its next regular software update, it inadvertently spread the virus to its clients — more than 18,000 of them, including huge corporations, the Pentagon, the State Department, Homeland Security, the Treasury and other government agencies. The hack went undetected for months, until the victims started discovering that enormous amounts of their data — some of it very sensitive — had been stolen.

Solar Winds may have been the biggest cyberattack on the United States in years, if not ever. But it was hardly a singular event. In the last half decade or so, American corporations have suffered billions of dollars of losses in similar incursions. Between 2019 and 2020, more than 600 towns, cities and counties were hit by ransomware attacks, shutting down hospitals, police departments and more. America's adversaries — Russia, China, Iran and North Korea — have by now thoroughly infiltrated the computer systems that run some of the United States' most important infrastructure, including not just power grids and dams but also nuclear plants.

All of which raises the question: Why does this keep happening? After all, the United States isn't just the most formidable and intimidating military power in the world; it's also the most sophisticated cyber power. The country's conventional arsenal has proved remarkably effective at scaring off any would-be attackers; these days, no nation on

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the planet would dream of going toe-to-toe with the United States military. So why doesn't the same logic work in the cyber realm, where Washington could just as easily inflict biblical vengeance on anyone who messed with it?

There are two basic answers. The first is that deterring cyberattacks turns out to be much, much harder than deterring conventional ones, for a long list of reasons. Among them: Despite all its offensive power, the United States, as one of the most wired nations on earth, is also more vulnerable to such attacks than many of its less-connected enemies. Cyberattacks are also relatively cheap, while cyberdefense is expensive and painstaking. And then there's the problem of attribution: Given how hard it often is to spot digital incursions in the first place (remember, the Solar Winds hack went undetected for months), and the tendency of countries to rely on private hackers only loosely connected to the government to do their dirty work, figuring out whom to retaliate against can be very difficult. Unlike nuclear missiles, hacks rarely come stamped with a clear return address.

In *This Is How They Tell Me the World Ends*, Nicole Perlroth provides another explanation for the ever-expanding cyberassaults on the United States: the way that Washington, in its careless rush to dominate the field, has created and hypercharged a wildly lucrative, entirely unregulated gray market for insanely dangerous digital weapons that private hackers develop and then sell to the highest bidder. Which only sometimes is the United States. ...

As for who's most to blame for our current state of cyberinsecurity — in which all of us are targets and the tech we, our government and our infrastructure providers rely on is now penetrated at will by foreign actors — Perlroth has little doubt. Sure, the hackers who actually create all those nasty little tools and then sell them to whatever government will pay the most — no questions asked — bear primary responsibility. And sure, the foreign states who use these tools against us or their own people are guilty too. But none of this would have happened, Perlroth argues, if Washington hadn't decided years ago to neglect cyberdefense and focus instead on paying programmers around the world to find and weaponize vulnerabilities in existing software — gaps known as “zero days” in the industry — that grant those that wield them “digital superpowers”. (The term “zero days” comes from the fact that when a tech company finds such a flaw in its software or hardware, it has zero days to fix it or suffer the consequences.)

If enabling this market was Washington's original sin, its second catastrophic blunder, according to Perlroth, was Stuxnet: the computer worm the United States allegedly used to destroy a fifth of the centrifuges at Iran's Natanz nuclear enrichment plant in 2009-10. While the worm, a stunning technological breakthrough, may have forestalled an Israeli attack on Iran, set back Tehran's weapons program and driven the mullahs to the bargaining table, it also shattered a basic norm: It was the first time one government had digitally infiltrated the networks of another and used its access not for spying — which everyone does — but to

wreak physical havoc. Once that gentlemen's rule was broken, Perlroth argues, it became open season for America's enemies to try to do the same to it; and now it's only a matter of time, she concludes, till we face a digital Pearl Harbor.

## WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS?

**John Rafferty**

**I**t has been said that if somewhere on Earth a red button were to be discovered on the wall of a cave beneath a sign that read END-OF-WORLD BUTTON, DO NOT PUSH, the sign's paint wouldn't even have time to dry.

More realistically, more frighteningly in today's world, there are probably tens or even hundreds of thousands of people around the globe who have advanced computer skills and no mental braking system to halt their Let's-see-what-happens impulses.

For instance: In a terrifying series of events Feb 12, a civil servant in the city of Oldsmar, Florida managed to save the entire population from mass poisoning. Officials from Pinellas County say a hacker remotely accessed a computer that controls the city's water treatment system, dramatically increasing the amount of sodium hydroxide in the water supply before an operator noticed and stopped it.

The hacker, using TeamViewer, a common piece of software for remotely controlling computers, changed the sodium hydroxide from about one hundred parts per million to 11,100 parts per million. Even in smaller quantities, sodium hydroxide can cause severe skin burns and eye damage.

Luckily for the citizens of Oldsmar, a plant operator who was not watching porn or playing solitaire on his monitor noticed someone remotely accessing the system, throttling up the sodium hydroxide levels and then disappearing — and so immediately reduced the levels back to normal and shut off remote access. Lucky, this time.

What the hell are we going to do about this?

## HAVE THEY NO SHAME? NO, REP. GREEN, THEY HAVEN'T.

**Hemant Mehta**

**J**ust before the U.S. House passed the Equality Act on a nearly party-line vote, Rep. Al Green of Texas gave a barn-burner of a speech in defense of the bill by throwing the Christian God right back at all the Republicans who claimed their religion led them to oppose civil rights protections for LGBTQ people.

“You used God to enslave my foreparents. You used God to segregate me in school. You used God to put me in the back of the bus. Have you no shame?”

“God created every person in this room. Are you saying that God made a mistake?”

“This is not about God. It's about men who choose to discriminate against other people because they have the power to do so. ...”

“My record will show that when I had the opportunity to deliver liberty and justice for all, I voted for rights for all.”

## IN TEXAS, THE TAIL WAGS THE DOGMA

Jonathan Engel

In the wake of the epic Texas power failure that took scores of lives, there was a lot of pure BS spread by right-wing spouters as to what went wrong in the Lone Star state. (Really, these people should all be in the fertilizer business.) On Fox News Tucker Carlson blamed it all on wind turbines, while Texas Governor Greg Abbott cast his aspersions on the Green New Deal, which, by the way, exists today only on paper. As for Ted Cruz, somehow or other everything was the fault of his tween daughters. Of course, as the phrase “climate change” is an incantation that must never pass Republicans’ lips, they all somehow failed to mention the fact that it is the world’s reliance on fossil fuels that is enhancing weird weather phenomena such as deep freezes in Texas, of all places.

But the guy who really takes the Blue Ribbon for dogma-fueled inanity has to be Rick Perry, who, we will all remember, is both the former governor of Texas and the former U.S. Secretary of Energy\*. Perry took the opportunity presented by this disaster to inform the world that the people of Texas would rather go days without electricity than allow Federal regulation that would have compelled Texas to take the kind of preventive maintenance steps that would have prevented this catastrophe. Exactly how many freezing, starving and thirsty Texans Perry consulted before making these asinine comments is unknown at this time.

What Perry was saying is that because conventional Texas-Republican dogma is “No regulations under any circumstances”, there’s no reason to even think about how specific regulations may have prevented this disaster. As *The New York Times* wrote on February 22, “In Texas energy regulation is as much a matter of philosophy as policy. Its independent power grid is a point of pride that has been an applause line in Texas political speeches for decades.” And of course if that’s your governing “philosophy” there’s no need or reason to actually examine evidence as to what would work and what wouldn’t, especially under changing circumstances. Apparently in Texas dogma determines policy, as opposed to a reasoned examination of the relevant evidence. And now we’ve all seen how well that works out. \*Don’t forget “Dancing With the Stars” first-round loser. – JR

*To the Editor:* Re Jon Engel’s essay (PIQUE, Feb 23) about the “Christian Prophets Are on the Rise” article in the *NYTimes*: [author] Ruth Graham has a better chance of nudging a few true believers off this nonsense by letting them come to the conclusion on their own. It does no good to confront them directly with the fact that they are idiots. We’ve seen this in the followers of a popular cult here in the U.S., nameless here forevermore. All the best. – Brian Lemaire  
*Comment:* You mean the nameless cult of the Former Guy?

*To the Editor:* I didn’t recognize that the photo in PIQUE [Feb 23] of the guy smoking a cigar was Rush Limbaugh ‘til you mentioned him on Happy Hour today [Sunday]. It’s pretty nasty. Keep up the good work. – Joel Galker

## A MORE UNIVERSAL PLEDGE IS NEEDED. IS IT?

On nonpareilonline.com/, AHA Executive Director Roy Speckhardt had this to say about an Iowa pledge-of-allegiance controversy:

“Wednesday’s ‘Our View: Forcing schools to administer the pledge does not make Iowans better patriots’, highlighted the concerning nature of Iowa House File 415, intended to require school districts and certain accredited nonpublic schools to administer the pledge of allegiance.

“As a humanist, and a father of a child in public schools, the passing of this bill concerns me. The current version of the pledge includes divisive religious language that excludes the growing population of nonreligious Americans. How can the pledge represent the American ideal, when it doesn’t even include all of us? The words, ‘Under God’, can only be interpreted as an endorsement of monotheism, leaving polytheists like Hindus and nontheists like humanists unrepresented in an important aspect of our national tradition.

“Having students recite a pledge every day that unfairly favors a religious majority will do little to unite us.

“Secondly, it is important to protect the First Amendment right of students to respectfully decline to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance, but that is much harder to do when it’s a mandated activity carried out every day. As mentioned in Wednesday’s Our View, there are often social repercussions of opting out of the pledge that could lead to a division between students and the pressure to conform.

“It’s a laudable goal to unite Americans, and a truly universal pledge could be a means toward such an end. Removing divisive religious language would be a better first step than mandatory administration of the current pledge in public schools. Only then can we work toward the vision of the country that the Pledge of Allegiance aspires to: indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

*Comment:* Here’s an even better idea: Why emulate North Korea and its group-think patriotism at all? How about we just dump any “pledge of allegiance” entirely? – JR

## AND WHILE WE’RE AT IT, HOW ABOUT A LITTLE LESS “O SAY CAN YOU SEE”?

(Excerpted from “Mark Cuban had it right the first time. Sports should stop playing the anthem.”, by Mike Wise, on *Washingtonpost.com*, 2/15/2021)

In November, Mark Cuban quietly told some of his employees to stop playing the national anthem before the Dallas Mavericks basketball games. It took more than a month for anyone to notice; more than 10 Maverick home games had already passed when *The Athlete* broke the “news” that the music had stopped.

Still, it hit a nerve. Depending whether you’re on the Blue or Red team today, Cuban was transformed overnight into either a beacon of tolerance — or a leftist libflake who reviles the republic for which it stands.

This being 2021, there is no Mr. In-Between.

First, the Nationalism Police weighed in. Among them the lieutenant governor of Texas, Dan Patrick: “Your decision to cancel our National Anthem at @dallasmavs games is a slap in the face to every American & an embarrassment to Texas. Sell the franchise & some Texas Patriots will buy it. We ARE the land of free & the home of the brave.”

Then NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and Cuban had a genial chat. That leash the league gave teams to do what they felt was appropriate after the summer of 2020? Gone. Play-the-anthem league policy was reinstated, including at Mavericks games. The moment for change had passed.

Cuban had it right the first time. Like the flag before and after Jan 6, we’ve now weaponized the “Star-Spangled Banner”. Wholly supporting its inclusion at domestic sporting events is our new shallow-end referendum on patriotism. The anthem has already split the country.

Organized sports have cheapened the national anthem for decades. The lyrics and the music have been co-opted by professional leagues determined to forge an unneeded alliance between sports and nationalism.

Roger Goodell’s NFL uses America as its brand, wrapping itself in 100-yard flags, military fighter-jet flyovers and, by God, quarterbacks who stand for the national anthem. To be pro-American is to be pro-football – and revel in the absurdity of it all, the way Joe Buck and Troy Aikman did on Fox last year when their mics were still on:

Aikman: “That’s a lot of jet fuel just to do a little flyover.”

Buck, snarkily: “That’s your hard-earned money and your tax dollars at work!”

But Cuban has more supporters than the pregame shows would admit. “This should happen everywhere,” New Orleans Pelicans coach Stan Van Gundy tweeted on Wednesday, supporting Cuban’s original decision. “If you think the anthem needs to be played before sporting events, then play it before every movie, concert, church service and the start of every work day at every business. What good reason is there to play the anthem before a game?”

None, really, other than at the World Cup, the Olympics and maybe a state high school or college national final.

There is a silent majority out there, tired of the hate being spewed in the name of patriotism. They see the hypocrisy, how the same far-right patriots who decry not playing an anthem at a game also remain silent when the metal pole from the Stars & Stripes is used to beat and bloody a police officer on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Not enough of us listen when millions of people say the anthem doesn’t represent them.

“The real issue is: How do you express the voices of those that feel the anthem doesn’t represent them or cause them consternation?”, Cuban rightly asked. He was talking about Black and brown people in this country.

Knowing Cuban for more than two decades, I can say he is unsubtle, unpredictable, unnuanced and, though the NBA has fined him more than \$3 million for eviscerating referees and the league more than a dozen times, unembarrassed. What the billionaire owner and “Shark Tank” regular is not is un-American.

Cuban years ago founded the Fallen Patriot Fund to help families of U.S. military personnel killed or injured in the line of duty. But in these polarizing, Red vs. Blue times, he’s suddenly cast as an owner who wouldn’t play a song penned by a man who enslaved people, a song that had a stanza excised in the 20th century for obvious reasons:

*No refuge could save the hireling & slave  
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave\*:  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave  
O’er the land of the free & the home of the brave.*

We’re too polarized, politically poisoned, to toss the anthem from sports now. But in time, the anthem needs to be ejected from all the games. And when that happens, there will be a benefit: When you finally hear the lyrics and music, they might actually feel special.

*\*What Francis Scott Key was referring to was the outrageous, disgraceful decisions by some unpatriotic, sneaking fugitive slaves who had taken up the British offer of freedom after the war if they’d run away from massa and join the British cause. Ungrateful wretches! – JR.*

## THE ENCROACHMENT OF THE UNSAYABLE

Bret Stephens

(From the New York Times OpEd page, 10/19/2020)

In January, in what now seems like a bygone age, the writer George Packer delivered a memorable speech, “The Enemies of Writing”, for the honor of winning the Hitchens Prize. “Why is a career like that of Christopher Hitchens not only unlikely but almost unimaginable? Put another way: Why is the current atmosphere inhospitable to it? What are the enemies of writing today?”

For a sense of what Packer meant, consider that in 2007 Hitchens wrote – and *Vanity Fair* published – an essay titled, “Why Women Aren’t Funny”. It was outlandish, but also learned, and maybe not entirely serious. Imagine that ever running today, in *Vanity Fair* or any other mainstream publication. Or take another Hitchens column from the same year, in which he called Islam “simultaneously the ideology of insurgent violence and of certain inflexible dictatorships”. Try finding a line like that today in *Slate*, where it first appeared.

What these examples show, and what Packer brilliantly captures in his speech, is what might be called the encroachment of the unsayable. It’s an encroachment that, in its modern form, began with the Ayatollah Khomeini’s 1989 fatwa against Salman Rushdie for *The Satanic Verses*, which was deemed blasphemous. In short order, the world got to see who in the liberal world really had the courage of liberalism’s supposedly deepest convictions.

Since that episode – which resulted in nearly a decade of hiding for Rushdie, the killing of his novel’s Japanese translator and the shooting of his Norwegian publisher – there have been all-too-many similar moments: the slaying of the Dutch director Theo Van Gogh in 2004, the Danish cartoon affair in 2005-06, the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre in 2015, and, last week, the beheading of French teacher Samuel Paty by a Chechen refugee, according to authorities, for the

sin of showing his students two caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad as part of a lesson on free speech.

As in the other instances, the reaction has been heart-break, defiance, solidarity — followed by a quiet moral concession. Often, this takes the form of a “yes-but” response in which the crime is condemned while also viewed as an answer to a provocation that is itself indefensible.

After the Rushdie incident, former President Jimmy Carter published an Op-Ed in the *Times* that called Khomeini’s death sentence “abhorrent” but added that Rushdie’s book “is a direct insult to those millions of Muslims whose sacred beliefs have been violated”. After PEN American Center chose to honor Charlie Hebdo for its Freedom of Expression Courage Award, some members of PEN America protested the choice because the slain cartoonists had poked fun at the beliefs of a “marginalized, embattled and victimized” minority.

The upshot of these controversies has been a kind of default to a middle position that goes roughly as follows: Fanatics shouldn’t kill people, and writers and artists shouldn’t needlessly offend fanatics. It’s a compromise that is fatal to liberalism. It reintroduces a concept of blasphemy into the liberal social order. It gives the prospectively insulted a de facto veto over what other people might say. It accustoms the public to an ever-narrower range of permissible speech and acceptable thought.

And it slowly but surely turns writers, editors and publishers into cowards. Notice, for instance, that I have just described the suspect in Paty’s murder as a “Chechen”. Why? Because it’s accurate enough, and it’s not worth dealing with the choice and precision of a single adjective.

It isn’t entirely clear whether there’s a causal connection between the way so many Western liberals have tried to dance around the subject of religious fanaticism and other encroachments on socially acceptable speech. But the two have moved in tandem, with equally destructive results. Our compromised liberalism has left a generation of writers weighing their every word for fear that a wrong one could wreck their professional lives. The result is safer, but also more timid; more correct, less interesting. It is bad for those who write, and boring for those who read. It is as deadly an enemy of writing as has ever been devised.

In his speech, Packer notes that good writing is “essential to democracy, and one dies with the other”. The corollary to this thought is that the more some ideas become undiscussable, the more some things become unsayable, the more difficult it becomes to write well. We are killing democracy one weak verb, blurred analogy and deleted sentence at a time.

I should be more precise. When I say “we”, I don’t mean normal people who haven’t been trained in the art of never saying what they really think. I mean those of us who are supposed to be the gatekeepers of what was once a robust and confident liberal culture that believed in the value of clear expression and bold argument. This is a culture that has been losing its nerve for 30 years. As we go, so does the rest of democracy.

## QANON MERGES WITH ELVIS CONSPIRACY

Andy Borowitz

(Excerpted from *newyorker.com*, 1/23/2021)

QAnon, which has hemorrhaged supporters since Inauguration Day, announced that it is merging with the conspiracy theory that claims Elvis Presley is still alive.

A QAnon spokesman was upbeat about the new joint venture, which will be known as QElvis.

“We are proud to be joining forces with the Elvis conspiracy theory, which has been going strong ever since that fateful day in 1977 when Elvis didn’t die.” Further, he said: “Every member of QElvis is committed to one simple truth: that Elvis is still alive, and that his death was faked by George Soros and Hillary Clinton.”

## THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, 2021

Each of the seven Republican senators who voted to convict Donald Trump in his impeachment trial has been censured or publicly vilified (sometimes called “traitor”) by home state Republican officials and party organizations.

Retiring Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, an ordinarily rock-ribbed right-winger, was one of the seven who looked at the Trump-triggered disaster of January 6 and said he had to vote his conscience, to convict.

Back in Pennsylvania, Washington County GOP Chair Dave Ball explained the thinking of his organization in censoring Toomey and, really, the ethos of the national Republican party in 2021:

“We did not send him there to vote his conscience. We did not send him there to ‘do the right thing’ or whatever he said he was doing. We sent him there to represent us.”

## MITCH McCONNELL, MEET MITCH McCONNELL

*Mitch McConnell*: “There is no question, none, that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the event of that day [the Jan 6 riot/insurrection].”

*Fox News’s Bret Baier*: “If the party’s nominee [in 2024] is President Trump, would you support him?”

*Mitch McConnell*: “Absolutely.”

## ON KISSING THE FORMER GUY’S RING

You know what would be fun? If I were Donald Trump, I’d announce that I need a kidney, and I’d make all of these guys — Lindsey Graham, Rudy, Mike Pence — I’d make them all give me one kidney to choose which one I like best. — *Jimmy Kimmel*

## ONE MORE POST-PANDEMIC PLAN

I just reread again what others have written about what they’ll do when their lives are normalized (“What Will Change?”, Feb 16). After finishing all of that, I found what I want to do after my children, grandchildren and I are vaccinated and can be in the same place at the same time. My plan is to arrange a rousing reunion of those I love, the ones who live in New York, Colorado and The UK so I can hug them all for as long and often as I want to. — *Adrienne Karp*

# SHSNY CALENDAR: FEBRUARY – MAY 2021

## FICTION BOOK CLUB ONLINE

The SHSNY Fiction Book Club meets online via Zoom for the duration of our enforced isolation. Join the Zoom Meeting at <https://zoom.us/j/97467470190?pwd=dGdEbTkwV0pSRmZRWHYvajFoTXlrZz09>  
Meeting ID: 974 6747 0190  
Passcode: Read

**TUES, MARCH 9, 7:30 pm**  
**MR. BRIDGE**  
and/or  
**MRS. BRIDGE**  
**Evan S. Connell**

*Mr. Bridge* is a classic portrait of a man, a marriage, and the manners and mores of a particular social class in the first half of twentieth-century America.

*Mrs. Bridge* completes the group portrait of a family divided by loneliness, boredom, isolation, and sexual longing. – *Paperback & Kindle*

**TUES, APRIL 13, 7:30 pm**  
**THE ISLAND OF SEA WOMEN**  
**Lisa See**

The *NYTimes* best-seller takes place over many decades in Korea, from Japanese colonialism in the 1930s and 1940s through the era of cell phones and wet suits for the women divers of their village's all-female diving collective. A "mesmerizing new historical novel." – *Paperback & Kindle*

**TUES, MAY 11, 7:30 PM**  
**THE GOOD LORD BIRD**  
**James McBride**

The story of a young boy born a slave who joins John Brown's antislavery crusade – and who must pass as a girl to survive. – *Paperback & Kindle*

## HUMANIST BOOK CLUB

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, MARCH 4, 7:00 pm**  
**A LOT OF PEOPLE**  
**ARE SAYING:**

***The New Conspiracism and the Assault on Democracy***  
**Nancy L. Rosenblum and Russell Muirhead**

Conspiracy theories are as old as politics. But conspiracists have introduced something new: conspiracy without theory. And the new conspiracism has moved from the fringes to the heart of government with Donald Trump. What is to be done about it?  
– *Paperback & Kindle*

**THURS, APRIL 1, 7:00 pm**  
**ON TYRANNY:**  
***Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century***  
**Timothy Snyder**

A historian of fascism offers a guide for surviving and resisting America's turn towards authoritarianism.

We are no wiser than the Europeans who saw democracy yield to fascism, Nazism, or communism. Our one advantage is that we might learn from their experience. *On Tyranny* is a call to arms and a guide to resistance. – *Paperback & Kindle*

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## HUMANIST HAPPY HOUR ONLINE

**SUNDAY, FEB 28, 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=c0NrNUoweDVGWWho2ditvYmJlVjVVGdz09>  
Meeting ID: 980 634 4432  
Passcode: SHSNy  
Join by Skype for Business  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9806344432>

## MONDAY MOVIES: MUSICALS!

Let's have some fun, screening, talking about, and simply enjoying the best "all-singing, all-dancing" Hollywood (and other) classics. Rent 'em on Amazon (\$3.99), watch, then Zoom in at ...  
<https://zoom.us/j/92351454127?pwd=OVg5NnBaUFc4NWtLbHJlJmV1vZlY1Zz09>  
Meeting ID: 923 5145 4127  
Passcode: watch

**MONDAY, MARCH 1, 8:00 pm**  
**MY FAIR LADY**

Maybe the best musical – stage and/or screen – ever made. Rex Harrison, Audrey Hepburn, Stanley Holloway, that Lerner & Loewe score, and *eight* Oscars, including Best Picture.

**MON, MARCH 15, 8:00 pm**  
**TOO MANY GIRLS**

Lucille Ball stars – before she was "Lucy!" – in this 1940 bit of froth and fun. With Eddie Bracken, Ann Miller, Frances Langford, Richard Carlson, and some Cuban bandleader.