



Vol. XL No. 8
August 2026

HUMANIST Monthly

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

Sunday, August 2nd, 2026

In Person at 12:30 PM and Online at 1:00 PM

Uncovering Vladimir Putin's Inner Man



**Andrew Goodman
and Vladimir Putin**

Long before he became President of Russia, over a period of almost 18 months in the early 1990s, Vladimir Putin opened up to Andrew Goodman in extensive, private conversations about politics, economics and Russia's place in the world. Unlike Putin's numerous biographies – which have uncovered loads of facts about Putin, but very little about what he thinks – Goodman's direct personal encounters with Putin help reveal what makes Putin tick. This presentation addresses how Putin came to power in St. Petersburg, and later in Moscow, and how he wields power.

Andrew Goodman is a retired U.S. Senior Foreign Service officer who spent over 30 years specializing in Soviet/Russian affairs. As Deputy Principal Officer at the U.S. Consulate in St. Petersburg (1992–1995), his counterpart in the city government was Vladimir Putin, giving him a unique opportunity to get to know Putin personally. He has published a number of articles about Putin and has taught at Columbia University, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Mary Washington University.

The program will take place both in person (at 12:30 PM) and online (at 1:00 PM) via Zoom. Andrew Goodman will present live and in person at Pinnacle Living at 45 Forts Ferry Road in Latham, NY. It is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available at the in-person meeting before the speaker's presentation, but **PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN BEVERAGE**. Current paid CDHS members will automatically receive an invitation to the online meeting via email. If you are not a current paid CDHS member, please see the paragraph below to request an email invitation to attend.

ANYONE WHO IS NOT A CURRENT PAID MEMBER of CDHS can attend. Send an email request to:

CDHS.Albany@gmail.com. Please send the request several days prior to the meeting.

The Capital District Humanist Society provides a supportive community for exchanging ideas, heightening our knowledge of the world and ourselves, fostering moral and ethical growth, and promoting the principles of secular humanism. CDHS is a member organization for people with humanist values. Our values include commitment to free inquiry, rational thought, lifelong education, democracy, social concern, and fellowship.

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)

On Sunday, September 13th, 2026, 12:30 PM (In Person) and 1:00 PM (Online)
The Capital District Humanist Society Presents:

Girls' Education in Afghanistan: How Charmaghz Is Defending the Right to Learn in the Most Challenging Place on Earth

Afghanistan is the only country in the world where girls are barred from attending school beyond 6th grade. Since the Taliban's return to power in 2021, more than 2.2 million girls and young women have been shut out of education. Charmaghz is a US nonprofit founded in 2018 by Afghan education activist Freshta Karim. For seven years, Charmaghz ran a Mobile Library program in Kabul that reached over one million child visitors. In 2025, the Taliban forcibly shut down the organization's in-person programs, and it refocused its mission on providing online education to Afghan girls and young women banned from school. This program will discuss how Charmaghz responded to that setback, and what it takes to defend girls' education in the most challenging place on earth.



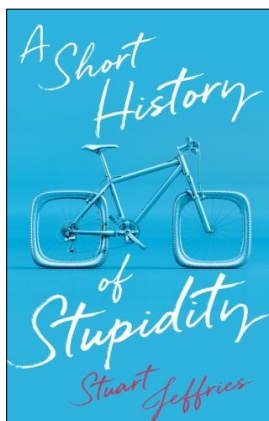
Liz Robinson

Liz Robinson is the CEO of Charmaghz. She has worked with nonprofits in the international development and education sectors for over a decade, including across the Middle East, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. She first worked in Afghanistan in 2016, and is deeply committed to elevating and advancing education programs that transform children's futures, and the systems that shape them. Liz has a BA from Tufts University in International Relations and Economics, an MA from University College London in Education and International Development, and a Graduate Certificate in Early Grade Reading in Developing Countries from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

This program begins at 1:00 PM. The presentation will be live, in person at Pinnacle Living at 45 Forts Ferry Road in Latham, NY. It is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available at the in-person meeting before the speaker's presentation. **Please bring your own beverage.** Current paid CDHS members will automatically receive an invitation to the on-line meeting via email. If you are not a current paid CDHS member, request an email invitation to attend no later than Friday, August 7th, to CDHS.Albany@gmail.com.

Reminder: There will be no October meeting

CDHS Book Group is reading *A Short History of Stupidity* by Stuart Jeffries. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays.



**Contact Frank Robinson if you would like to join the
spirited and informative
discussion.**

CDHS Executive Council

Executive Director	Don Porterfield
Secretary	June Hendricks
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Programs, Publicity	Fred Levine
Publications	Carol Quantock
Social Activities	Candace Fuller
Membership, Telephone	Heather Drinkwater
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Compliance	Vacant
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Appointed Positions

Hospitality	Sue Parry
Room Arrangements	Frank Robinson
Caring Network	Rosina Ansaldo

RECAP OF OUR JULY SPEAKER'S TALK

by Frank Robinson

Nancy Scarselletta, an experienced teacher, heads the Language Learning Institute. Her talk was about France's July 14 holiday — which we call "Bastille Day" — then two days hence — with an emphasis on how language figures into the story. She focused on words like "liberty, equality, fraternity," the French national motto arising out of the Revolution. And power, fear, inequality, collective action, dignity, participation, rights, and freedom. Words that she said still matter.

Language, Scarselletta said, is more than just vocabulary and grammar, but carries memory, embodying emotions, feelings, culture, voice.

Pre-revolutionary France was a monarchy, with power flowing from above, a society of privilege, with the masses having no voice — and decreasing food. The King (since 1774), Louis XVI, was married to an Austrian import, Marie Antoinette, who never said "Let them eat cake," but Scarselletta discussed what she may actually have said. Anyhow, this outsider Queen was not exactly popular.

Royal extravagance led to mounting debts, finally requiring Louis to summon (after a long hiatus) the Estates General, a governing body, to address the financial crisis. The body was divided among the nobles, the clergy, and everyone else. The king wound up dissolving it; but on June 20, 1789, the "everyone else" component said, "Screw that," and decamped outdoors to swear an oath declaring they represented the people. That "Tennis Court Oath" was really the start of the French Revolution. Then on July 14, insurgents successfully stormed the Bastille, a (nearly empty) prison, which event has come to symbolize this historic watershed. There soon followed the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen."

The King and Queen duly lost their heads. But it took the French nearly another century to get rid of monarchy once and for all. A lesson for us.

A recording of this presentation can be found on the CDHS YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/Qagsx655XvU>.

Candidates for Upcoming Election for CDHS Executive Council Positions

CDHS will be holding an online election in September for positions on our Executive Council (EC). We will be using the ElectionBuddy System that we used for the EC election last year. Voting will begin in mid-September and continue through mid-October. Each CDHS membership level (Individual, Family, Sustaining, Patron, or Life) is entitled to one vote. More information about the election will be provided in the September newsletter and email messages to the membership.

Members that have been nominated for positions on the EC include:

- Programs/Publicity—Fred Levine

We are also seeking nominations for candidates for one open position (Compliance Officer) on our Executive Council. The EC meets monthly and duties for this position are:

- Compliance Officer—Review financial statements, bank statements, and account reconciliations provided by the Treasurer.

If you have been a member of CDHS for over one year, please consider volunteering your time and efforts in this role. CDHS is a volunteer organization and relies on members to volunteer their time to help maintain CDHS as a successful and effective organization. Please contact Don Porterfield at cdhs.albany@gmail.com if you would like to run for this position.

Nearly half of Gen Z says Trump makes them less likely to attend church

Evangelical leaders traded their moral credibility for political power—and young Americans noticed

(Reprinted from The Friendly Atheist, July 24, 2026)

There's at least one silver lining to Donald Trump being president: A hell of a lot of young people say they're less likely to go to church because of his ties to Christianity.

That's according to an unpublished study from the Billy Graham Center Research Institute, based out of (evangelical) Wheaton College, and cited by the Christian Post:

The Billy Graham Center Research Institute surveyed 2,365 Gen Z adults, ages 18-28, through NORC's AmeriSpeak panel between Aug. 9 and Sept. 26, 2024. The study was funded by the Lilly Endowment.

According to the research, 48% of respondents said they agree with the statement "Christians' support of Trump has made me less likely to go to church."

That included 19% who "strongly agreed," 14% who "agreed" and 15% who "slightly agreed." By contrast, 52% disagreed, including 21% who "strongly disagreed," 16% who "disagreed" and 15% who "slightly disagreed."

Rick Richardson, professor of evangelism and leadership at Wheaton College and the study's lead researcher, told The Christian Post on Tuesday that the research is yet unpublished and being adapted into a book.

It's hard to say a lot about this study without knowing more about how it was conducted or what the nature of this book is going to be, though it's important to note it was done before the 2024 election and Trump has only gotten more extreme and more corrupt since then—largely due to the Christian Nationalist sycophants who seem to defend his actions at every turn. If that many young people were turned off by him in 2024, you have to imagine the numbers are even worse today given his war of choice in Iran, his careless destruction of our economy, his suppression of the Epstein files, DOGE, the explosive diarrhea, etc.

But let's assume these results are accurate. It would confirm what critics have been saying for years now, which is that white evangelical leaders chose short-term political gain over long-term religious success. They have prayed with Trump in the Oval Office, argued that certain victories (like the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade*) are worth everything else, and convinced roughly 80% of white evangelicals to vote for Trump in each of the last three presidential elections.

The relationship between Trump and conservative Christians has always been transactional. Trump gave them whatever they wanted—credibility they never earned, federal judges who prioritized right-wing religious beliefs over a plain reading of the law, access to political power, etc.—and they gave him their votes. No scandals dissuaded them. No wars bothered them. No attempt to overthrow our democracy gave them pause. No amount of sinning in real time made them budge. They're just as immoral as he is. It was a match made in Hell.

They've had countless opportunities to distance themselves from him and it would have been easy for them to justify it—with the Epstein files, the appointments of ignorant zealots to positions of power, the brazen ways he's enriched himself at the expense of the country. They never did. They always argued that Democrats were the real enemy even as the argument became harder and harder to justify to a conservative base.

Not only were they silent in the face of moral disaster, they openly advocated for him even when they didn't have to, insisting that Trump was one of their own. The now-dead abuse advocate James Dobson said in June of 2016 that Trump had become "born again," adding that he personally knew the person who "led him to Christ." Pastor Mark Burns (who famously lied about his own credentials) said in 2024 he's "personally heard [Trump] profess his faith in the Lord Jesus." Evangelical huckster Hank Kunneman claimed Trump was anointed by God. Southern Baptist preacher Robert Jeffress agreed Trump was "born again" and a Christ follower.

And those are just the preachers around him. Trump himself has said he identifies as a Christian, a move that allowed him to sell an overpriced cheaply made Bible plastered with his name. Don't forget when he held up a Bible in front of a church after his team used tear gas to drive away peaceful protesters.

To a large extent, his Christian cosplaying has worked. In 2023, Republican voters said Donald Trump was more religious than Mitt Romney and Joe Biden. They just overlooked the fact that Trump was a thrice-married racist who paid hush money to porn stars he was having affairs with when his current wife was pregnant with his fifth child. That he was the Two Corinthians guy. That he said he doesn't need forgiveness. That he couldn't even name his favorite Bible verse.

When you look at all of this holistically, Trump has hijacked evangelical Christianity the same way he hijacked the Republican Party. He took an already broken and extremely dysfunctional group of people bounded together by who they hate and brought them all together under his umbrella. You can't separate Trump from the GOP any more than you can separate Trump from conservative Christianity.

I think there's an argument to be made that if you ask young people if they want to go to church—especially a white evangelical, non-denominational megachurch—it's like you're asking them if they support Trump. Because that's what church is now. It's not about Jesus. It's not about the Sermon on the Mount. It's about culture wars and right-wing politics.

That's the Faustian bargain that Christian leaders made when they sold their souls to prevent Hillary Clinton from getting into the White House. (To be fair, they lost their credibility long before then, but if there were any shreds of it left, they're gone now.)

People under 30 have been watching all this play out their entire adult lives, so it doesn't surprise me that nearly half of them now say Trump has dissuaded them from going to church. Most church leaders—certainly white evangelical and Southern Baptist ones—have never done enough to condemn this administration. In some cases, they avoided doing so because they didn't want to alienate their already shrinking congregations.

If pastors can't speak out against the moral atrocities of this administration when it's this damn obvious, why would anyone trust their judgment on spiritual matters? If people went to church because they thought it would provide a moral backbone to their lives, the Trump administration has blown that argument right out of the water.

Even as Trump makes life harder for immigrants through his (mis)use of ICE, and even as National Association of Evangelicals President Walter Kim stressed that the administration's deportation policies were literally harming churches, many Christian leaders with large platforms have either remained by Trump's side or said nothing of value.

If you want to look for moral clarity these days, you'll have a far easier time looking to the Muslim mayor of New York City than a Southern Baptist preacher in Texas.

Even if we can't see the underlying research that says many young people are turned off of church because of Trump, we already know that that the push toward theocracy generates backlash wherever it happens, whenever it happens.

Christian Nationalists believed they could use their power to codify their beliefs into law. They never stopped to think about whether those policies were any good or whether Americans—including young people who might have been Christian leaders in the future—might be turned off by their willingness to cede moral authority to the least moral person to ever occupy the White House.

This isn't going to end well for them. But instead of admitting they went down the wrong path, you can bet good money that Christian leaders will just double down on their support of Trump and his allies in the future. At this point, even they don't care about the long-term success of their religion. They just want to cling to whatever power they can.

Photos From July 4th Social

Here are a few photos of our July 4th social, held at the home of Heather Drinkwater. Thanks very much to Heather and Don for their hospitality on a very hot July day!



Tuesday Night Dates Planned for August Social

On Tuesday, August 18th, we'll gather in Freedom Park by Jumpin' Jacks 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. The team competes across the Northeast and has won National Championships. You won't want to miss this team perform.

Bring a chair, a picnic dinner or buy something at Jumpin' Jacks. They have great burgers, ice cream, and fried dough. How can you resist?

If the weather doesn't cooperate for the 18th, we'll try again on the 25th.

Email Dee Fuller at candacelf13@gmail.com if you plan to attend. If you decide last minute to join us, that's ok, too, for this social.

If you're not sure how to get there, use this address in your GPS system: 5 Schonowee Avenue, Scotia, NY 12302.

NON SEQUITUR Wiley Miller



Join the bunch for lunch! We'll be revisiting the Blue Ribbon Family Restaurant, 1801 State Street, Schenectady 12304 (<https://restaurant.blueribbonrestaurant.com/>) on August 20th at 12:00 Noon. In September, we'll meet on Thursday the 17th. Please let Rosina Ansaldo know by Wednesday evening if you'll be joining them.

NOTE: If you know of a great local eatery, please don't be shy; recommend it! We'd like to give our local restaurants a chance by rotating them every few months and returning to the ones that get enthusiastic thumbs up. Please send ideas to Rosina Ansaldo. Thanks!

Recommendations from Election Safeguards Response Network

Responding to Trump's Desperate Rant

(via email from the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County, July 27, 2026)

The Election Safeguards Response Network (ESRN) is a non-partisan convening and collaboration space: a coalition of national, state, and local-based partners at the forefront of identifying, planning for, and responding to those trying to undermine our elections. Below are some guidelines that will be useful in personal conversations and on social media:

- **DO NOT TAKE THE BAIT. RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO ADDRESS EACH OF HIS CLAIMS OR TO SIMPLY LIST FACTS.** The regime's intention is to plant seeds of doubt. When we get into proving them wrong, we are fighting feelings with facts. And when we fight feelings with facts, we lose. Instead, name the actions and explain what it's for: manufacturing a pretext to reject the 2026 results before votes are even cast.
- **DO NOT REPEAT THE LIE(S).** Due to the illusory truth effect, the more we repeat something — even in an effort to debunk or fact-check it — the more believability it gains.
- **DO NOT REPEAT CLAIMS ABOUT NON-CITIZEN VOTING, EVEN TO DISPUTE THEM.** Once we start repeating the words “non-citizen voting,” we are giving them free air time and having the debate on their playing field.
- **EMPHASIZE THAT THE SPEECH WAS DESPERATE AND RIDICULOUS.** This is an act of desperation, bordering on the absurd.
- **USE SIMPLE AND ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE.** Avoid legal jargon. We need to communicate this in terms all Americans can understand (and repeat).

For more information about ESRN, visit the website at: <https://esrn.net/>.

More from the League of Women Voters

We Won! Victory for New York Voters: Federal Court Dismisses DOJ Lawsuit Seeking Private Voter Data

In a victory for voters, a federal judge dismissed the US Department of Justice's (DOJ) lawsuit seeking New York state's complete voter file, which contains voters' driver's license numbers, partial Social Security numbers and other private information. The League of Women Voters of New York State, represented by Campaign Legal Center and the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law, had intervened in the suit to protect voters in the Empire State. The ruling marks the 12th time a federal district court has rejected a DOJ lawsuit seeking to gain access to voters' confidential information. A 13th case was dismissed in West Virginia on July 14th.

"The people of New York should never have to choose between exercising their fundamental right to vote and protecting their personal information," said Erica Smitka, executive director for the League of Women Voters of New York State. "When voters fear their private information will be exposed or misused, it undermines confidence in our elections and discourages participation. The League of Women Voters of New York State will continue standing up for voters and pushing back against efforts that threaten the privacy, security, and freedom every eligible voter deserves."

LWV National Day of Action

Saturday, August 8 will be a nationwide Day of Action as the League of Women Voters commemorates the anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Through our Unite & Rise initiative, we're building on this legacy by mobilizing communities across the country in collective action and highlighting the ongoing fight for a stronger, more inclusive democracy. For more information regarding the National Day of Action, go to: <https://www.lwv.org/riseforvotingrights>.

3rd Annual Chapter Gathering

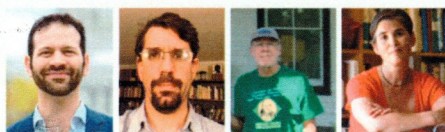
Sunday, Sept. 20, 2026 10am - 4pm, Albany, NY

Optional Saturday Dinner Sept. 19, 5:30pm

**Exclusive for FFRF members
plus ticketed guests**

\$85 Tickets include coffee/tea, hot buffet luncheon, Albany Institute museum access with private freethinking overview and recorded music by Dan Barker.

Optional Hilton Albany hotel room discount code in tickets.



Keynotes: FFRF's Washington D.C. Governmental Affairs Director, **Mark Dann** and **David Hoffman, PhD**, author of *American Freethought*, plus Ingersoll Birthplace spotlight by Jeff Ingersoll with intros by Kate Cohen.

***Proceeds support our FFRF chapter. Join or donate at unyft.org**

Questions? Email info@unyft.org or call/text 585-454-9921

Don't miss this
opportunity!
Join us!

**Buy tickets at
unyft.org/go**

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Tell the National Park Service What You Think About The "Triumphal Arch"

The National Park Service is still open to comments from the public about the proposed 250-foot "Triumphal Arch", which has been approved by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts.

The National Park Service opened a 20-day public comment period on July 10, 2026, with the deadline for accepting comments set for July 30, 2026. To review the report and submit a comment, click [here](https://www.nps.gov/ncr/planning). Comments can also be submitted through email at ncr_planning@nps.gov.

HOW BIG BUSINESS IN AMERICA GETS WHAT IT WANTS — AND LETS EVERYONE ELSE PAY THE PRICE WITH TRUMP IN POWER, CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM IS A BIG PART OF THE STORY.

by Katherine Stewart, the *Contrarian*, July 21, 2026

Recent news reports alleged the explosive outbreak of cyclospora-induced diarrhea in 34 states could be traced to lettuce produced by Taylor Farms, the largest producer in the country. (In the past day the FDA has walked back its claim tying the lettuce to Taylor Farms, but some people, noting that Taylor Farms has donated substantially to GOP-aligned PACs, are skeptical.) It is also increasingly clear that the Trump administration's cuts to federal services and disease management specifically, under the guidance of Elon Musk's DOGE, have hampered the national response to the crisis and made it harder to understand the sources and spread of the parasite. So, it seems like a good time to explore the political and ideological commitments of at least some members of the family behind Taylor Farms. This is a story about big business in America getting what it wants — and letting everyone else pay the price.

I first learned of Taylor Farms as I was researching my 2020 book *The Power Worshipers: Inside the Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalism*. In 2019, I attended the 20th anniversary celebration dinner for a politically focused evangelistic outfit called Capitol Ministries, which took place at the World Ag Expo in Tulare, an agribusiness hub in California's Central Valley.

To understand the worldview of the Taylors I met at that dinner, it helps to know something about the missionary work of Ralph Drollinger, the founder of Capitol Ministries and the leader of Bible study prayer groups active among Republicans in Congress and the Trump White House. Steve Taylor, a late scion of the multigenerational family that controls Taylor Farms and former CEO of the agri-business company Fresh Express, served on the board of Drollinger's outfit from 2013 until 2020.

At that gathering, which also functioned as a fundraiser, I spotted Steve in jeans and a sport coat. Also present was his brother, Jeff (also since deceased), who came in late and was seated at my table for stragglers and misfits. Jeff led a chorus of "hallelujahs" from our corner of the tent, clapping for emphasis and firing off multiple rounds of "praise the Lord!"

At the core of the belief system that Drollinger and his acolytes share is the view that "Bible believers" should seek to dominate government at all levels and should govern in accordance with "biblical" principles.

"Scripture is replete with illustrations, examples and commands to underscore the importance of winning government authorities for Christ," Drollinger has written. "A movement for Christ amongst governing authorities holds promise to change the direction of a whole country.... Lawmakers must be men and women who are willing to be informed by Scripture." Since the 2024 election, Drollinger reports that he has resumed Bible study and prayer groups in the new Trump White House and among congressional Republicans, as well as focusing on outreach to political leaders overseas.

I wrote about Capitol Ministries for The New York Times [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

Drollinger has very specific ideas about what biblical leaders will do once they control government. One thing they won't do is offer government assistance to the poor. The guiding idea of the Social Gospel — that Christianity has something to do with loving thy neighbor and standing up for the meek — is an "aberrant" theology that improperly "infiltrated" mainline Protestantism, according to Drollinger. Social welfare programs "have no basis in Scripture," he maintains. "The responsibility to meet the needs of the poor lies first with the husband in a marriage, secondly with the family (if the husband is absent) and thirdly with the church." Your meek neighbor, he insists, will find no justification for state or even private-sector support in the Bible: "Again, nowhere does God command the institutions of government or commerce to fully support those with genuine needs."

Drollinger has words of wisdom for laborers, too. In a Bible study titled "Toward a Better Biblical Understanding of Lawmaking," he cites 1 Peter 2:18-21, "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable." Here, Drollinger explains, "The economy of Rome at the time of Peter's writing was one of slave and master. The principle however, of submitting to one's boss carries over to today."

Drollinger's spiritual wisdom and evident longing for relations of dominance and submission also extends to his "biblical" understanding of gender relations. Women, he has maintained, should not be allowed to teach — or be placed in positions of leadership over — men in church. "If you look in the Bible all the leaders are male. It may not be what I would choose," he has said with an air of feigned helplessness, "but that's what God wants."

(Continued on page 8)

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

Members receive our publication, *The Humanist Monthly*, and vote 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.

Before his death at age 67, Steve Taylor was unambiguous in his support of Drollinger. In a “ministries update” on the Capitol Ministries website, Steve Taylor said, “I have worked with candidates who have become U.S. Senators and House of Representatives members and God really impressed upon me the importance of speaking spiritual truths into their lives. It became apparent that is what Ralph [Drollinger] is doing every day.” Steve also served for at least five years on the board of directors of the Family Policy Alliance, the public policy arm of Focus on the Family, a well-funded Christian organization promoting socially conservative, often political viewpoints and policies. His involvement in both Capitol Ministries and the Family Policy Alliance was unsurprising, as the two entities pursue largely similar agendas in many areas.

What does any of this have to do with Taylor Farms, which is presently run by the surviving brother, Bruce Taylor? Though Taylor Farms has made mega donations to GOP-aligned PACs, as noted earlier, there is no evidence that brother Bruce shared the Christian nationalist preoccupations of his late siblings. But whatever the spiritual benefits of Drollinger’s program, it isn’t hard to see that it meshes well with the interests of agribusiness conglomerates like Taylor Farms. According to a report by the California-based investigative journalism outfit Capital & Main, first published in 2014 and updated in 2017, “Taylor represents the platinum standard for corporate industries that seek to maximize profits by treating their workforce as someone else’s problem—whether they be the temp labor contractors or the taxpayers who must pick up the tab when it comes to providing workers’ medical care, food stamps and other social services.”

The equation is nothing new. As the historian Kevin Kruse detailed in his book *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America*, the alliance between large, oligopolistic, resource-extracting industries and reactionary religion flourished in the midcentury era when fossil fuel corporations and other big businesses threw their lot in with the Spiritual Mobilization movement that sought to unite God, country, and big business as a means for obtaining government blessing for exploitive economic arrangements.

The vision for the spiritual renewal of government, as Capital & Main’s prescient analysis makes clear, is not to eliminate government altogether. Rather, it is to eliminate those parts of government that threaten to regulate businesses such as Taylor Farms. The programs that keep workers alive even while they work for low wages with minimal labor rights are — at least implicitly — supported.

As for the rest of us — those who must live in a world of contaminated lettuce and disempowered workers — well, Rep. Mark Alford (R-Bible), an avid member of Drollinger’s Bible Study group on the Hill, summed up the message well at an infamous town hall meeting. Facing constituents angry with DOGE’s demolition job, he assured the audience that “God has a plan” for the fired federal workers. Presumably the same divine beneficence will be at work among those now suffering from the gastrointestinal effects of cyclospora.

Katherine Stewart is an award-winning author and journalist who has covered politics, religion, and the rise of the anti-democratic movement, for over 17 years. Her New York Times bestselling book Money, Lies, and God is on Foreign Affairs’s list of Best Books 2025.



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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 | _____ |
| ☐ Life Member | one-time contribution of \$1000 or more | _____ |
| ☐ Additional tax-deductible donation | \$ _____ | _____ |

Please make checks payable to CDHS

☐ Please send me additional information