

---

# PANViews



*Newsletter of PA Nonbelievers, Inc., affiliated with American Atheists,  
Atheist Alliance International and the Council for Secular Humanism and the Secular  
Student Alliance*

Visit us on the web at [panonbelievers.org](http://panonbelievers.org), like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/PennsylvaniaNonbelievers](https://facebook.com/PennsylvaniaNonbelievers)  
Follow us on Bluesky [@panon-believers.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/panon-believers.bsky.social) or find us on Meetup [www.meetup.com/pennsylvania-nonbelievers](https://www.meetup.com/pennsylvania-nonbelievers)

## ***President's Report***

*Josh CruverKibi*

To be clear, PA Nonbeliever's mission statement and community stands in complete opposition to any and all ideologies and goals of the Heritage Foundation and Project 2025. We support the United States constitution and oppose all efforts by the Heritage Foundation to dismantle and deconstruct the laws and governance of the United States to create an executive branch king or christian nationalist government.

The founders of the United States wrote the first amendment of the constitution to protect against the tyranny of one ruling religion or king. The United States was literally founded on the premise of rejecting the rule of the king of England without representation nearly 250 years ago. We secular intellectuals agree with the idea that the constitution is a living document that can evolve and change over time, but there are lines of realistic change and foundational integrity. The first amendment of the constitution states that, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." Any person intellectually capable and willing to understand the freedom afforded by this statement should understand why this part of our constitutional amendments should be kept, and Project 2025 goals should be rejected.

That being said, part of Project 2025's strategic plan is to try to overwhelm the population by trying to interrupt, pass, and change as many government and social systems as possible to confuse, overwhelm, and get people to give up. Their Project 2025 plan to dismantle and deconstruct the three branches of government and government departments within 180 days was clearly stated and designed to overwhelm <https://www.project2025.org/policy>.

So, how do we keep from falling into their trap to overwhelm and distract? Pick 1 to 3 interests or projects, focus your energy primarily on them, and trust that the hundreds of millions of allies will combine our efforts together with your interests, while covering the rest. Our strength is in our numbers. No one person can empathetically, cognitively, and perfectly focus on hundreds of assaults on decency and logic.

The Heritage Foundation's primary strategy is to exploit what makes us most human. They are banking on each empathetic individual, becoming overwhelmed and exhausted. But people are becoming increasingly aware and concerned about the extreme and fast changes being made without regard for the constitution or our rights. There is increasing coordination by multiple groups to peacefully protest, which is currently protected by the first amendment. The judicial branch, for what it's worth, is currently holding. There are hundreds of court cases right now to challenge multiple unconstitutional policies, many directly from the Project 2025 policy agenda. Several policies have been overturned so far, but it takes time. We can all do our small part, but we as individuals cannot do everything.

To prevent burnout, it is critical for everyone to create a strategy to avoid becoming overwhelmed. A strategy of personal and individualized balance to counteract the intentional Heritage Foundation strategy to overwhelm us and our tendency towards empathy and human values. We need to beat their manufactured algorithms designed to overwhelm us.

Some specific strategies I recommend to everyone, including myself:

-Pick one to three topics or activities you are interested in to focus on at a time. Pick activities of activism and volunteering or topics to research to become more educated and informed.

-Set limits on how much news and digital media you take in a day (15 minutes, 1/2 hour, 2 hours). Whatever appears reasonably balanced to you. If you cannot focus after watching news or digital media, you are likely cognitively or emotionally overwhelmed. By decreasing your exposure time to digital media and news, you decrease the cognitive and emotional fatigue created by the oversaturation of emotions and information in the amygdala and hippocampus. Limiting your time also allows you to clarify and focus your time spent on fewer topics (1-3) to increase your understanding, instead of wasted time 'death scrolling'.

-Take breaks daily from activism to enjoy what you value in life. Make a list of what you value in life separate from activism (pets, kids, significant other, walking in the woods, painting, journaling, etc....) and make sure you spend time daily to weekly with those values.



Pennsylvania Nonbelievers have partnered with the Secular Student Alliance- <https://secularstudents.org> to sponsor a yearly \$1000 scholarship. Secular students in high school, trade school, and college will be able to apply for the scholarship starting in April through July. The winner will be announced in October. We will promote and post the link to apply for the scholarship on all of our digital media sites.

As part of the application, students will need to answer the following questions:

What are your educational, career, and life goals?

What is your secular identity?

How did you come to your secularism and how do you see it remaining a part of your life?

What other aspects of your identity intersect, interact with, or inform your secularism?

What secular activism have you been involved with (on campus or off)?

What intersectional activism have you been involved with (on campus or off)?

What activism plans do you have for this academic year?

What obstacles, barriers, or financial hardships have you faced in pursuing your academic goals? What role would this scholarship have in helping you overcome these challenges?

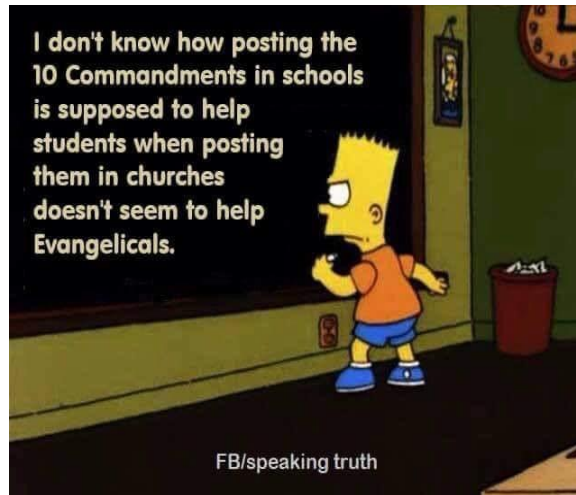
If you qualify and are interested in earning a scholarship through the Secular Student Alliance, please feel free to apply at: <https://secularstudents.wufoo.com/forms/rni3kyf00zagg6>

***Atheist News in Pennsylvania– The Nation – The World!***

**Ten Commandments Silliness Spreads to PA**

Many states, primarily in the south, have required public schools to post the Ten Commandments in schools. Now some legislators in Pennsylvania are trying to do the same thing.

According to the Erie Times-News, goerie.com, former gubernatorial candidate state Sen. Doug Mastriano and state Rep. Stephanie Borowicz, issued a cosponsorship memo announcing Borowicz will introduce a bill to "affirm the God-given constitutional right to display a copy of the Ten Commandments within our Commonwealth schools."



She continued: "Every generation of Americans has recognized the Ten Commandments as the basis of our civilization and a key part of a sound American education." This pronouncement would have come as a surprise to the founding fathers.

But wait, there's more. Mastriano introduced the Creation of Law in Our Schools Act, which would require public schools to display the Ten Commandments along with the Declaration of Independence, and the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions, "to restore historical knowledge, promote civic responsibility and preserve our heritage."

The good news is that it probably won't happen. Courts have repeatedly struck down such laws, as Mastriano and Borowicz, but probably not their constituents, must know.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Scott Perry Fights For the Falun Gong**

The Falun Gong is a religion founded in China in the early 1990s. Its followers practice meditation, and a philosophy based on Buddhist and Taoist traditions. People in the US are most likely familiar with it through its newspaper, the Epoch Times, which among other things, has a wonderful puzzle page.

It is not the type of organization one would expect Central Pennsylvania's conservative, staunchly Christian congressman Scott Perry to support. However, he recently introduced the Falun Gong Protection Act.

The Chinese government virulently opposed the Falun Gong and has persecuted them for years. The Chinese apparently do not want any organization to compete with them for the allegiance of its citizens. The Chinese opposition is probably what attracted Perry's attention.

Perry's introduction to the Falun Gong Protection Act accused the Chinese government of engaging in forced organ harvesting from Falun Gong adherents, among other human rights violations. His bill would direct the Secretary of State to investigate whether the persecution of the Falun Gong qualifies as a war

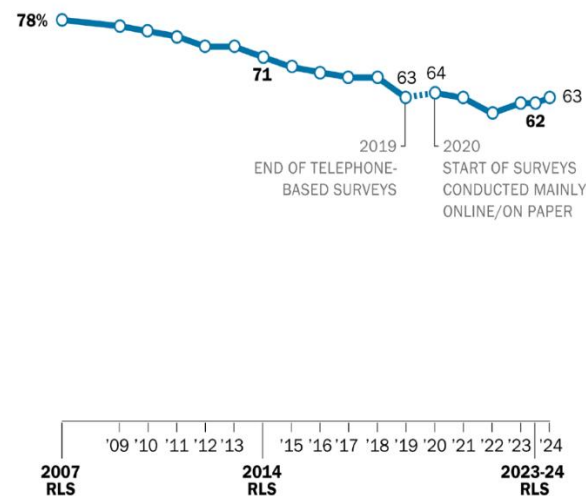
crime or crime against humanity. It would make it US policy to avoid cooperating with the Chinese government if the forced organ transplants are confirmed and continue. More information about the proposed act can be found on Perry’s website, [perry.house.gov/news](http://perry.house.gov/news).

Many sources, going back many years, have reported that China removes organs from Falun Gong members (and executed prisoners) for transplantation. However, it appears there is no definitive proof, although, as these sources point out, given that the Chinese government has not cooperated with any investigations into the matter, proof would be hard to find.

\*\*\*\*\*

**After years of decline, the Christian share of the U.S. population stabilizes**

*% of U.S. adults who identify as Christian*



Note: The 2007, 2014 and 2023-24 data comes from Pew Research Center’s Religious Landscape Studies. Other estimates come from the Center’s random-digit-dial telephone surveys (until 2019), and from the Center’s annual National Public Opinion Reference Survey (since 2020).  
 Source: Religious Landscape Study of U.S. adults conducted July 17, 2023-March 4, 2024.  
 PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Christianity Down, But Not Out**

The Pew Research Center, [pewresearch.org](http://pewresearch.org), first conducted a Religious Landscape Survey (RLS) in 2007. As the chart shows, 78% of the respondents described themselves as Christian. That number trickled downward over Pew’s smaller surveys in the ensuing years. Pew conducted another RLS in 2014, at which point Christianity registered at 71%.

Pew conducted another survey over 2023-24 which showed 62% of US adults identified as Christians. That’s 9 points lower than 2014, and 16 points lower than 2007. However, the figure seems to have stabilized; it hasn’t changed dramatically since 2019. Specifically, Pew reports, Protestant numbers have been stable since 2019; Catholic numbers, since 2014.

Protestants represent 40% of the US adult population, with Catholics at 19%. Other Christian groups - the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jehovah’s Witnesses among others – total about 3% of US adults.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Hasidic School Crackdown**

PANViews has reported the problems with New York’s Hasidic schools before. The schools, operated by the ultra-Orthodox Hasidic branch of Judaism, have been accused of neglecting basic education for religious studies.

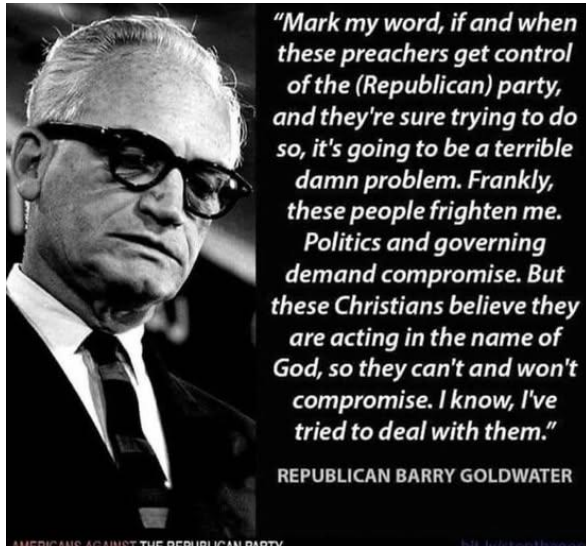
The New York Times, [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com), writes that the New York State Education Department has eliminated funding for two all-boys Hasidic schools in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The Education Department says the schools have “refused to improve.” The schools will close, and the Education Department will make sure their students are enrolled in different schools.

The Hasidic community is powerful in New York. Many of its leaders – and many of the schools’ critics, for that matter – never thought the state would take decisive action against them. Aside from political calculations, the process to eliminate funding is extremely complicated.

The schools have been accused of spending most of the day teaching religion in Yiddish and Hebrew, and spending little time with other subjects, such as English and math. Many other yeshivas have the same issues as the two that were closed. But the leaders of the two closed schools, Yeshiva Talmud Torah of Kasho and Yeshiva Bnei Shimon Yisroel of Sopron, refused to meet with state education officials to discuss any changes at all.

According to an article in the newspaper Yeshiva World News, that's an important point; the schools were closed for not cooperating, not for the quality of the education they provided. New York is apparently still reluctant to take action, despite multiple complaints from graduates of the schools.

\*\*\*\*\*



Goldwater was a Senator from Arizona, and Republican presidential candidate in 1964

### The Bible Tells Him So

Corporal punishment for disabled children?  
Bible approved!

At least according to Oklahoma state senator Shane Jett. According to Newsweek.com, Jett argued against a proposed bill that would outlaw the practice, quoting Bible verses from the Book of Proverbs.

Corporal punishment in schools is not against federal law; the Supreme Court ruled in 1977 that it didn't fall under the description of "cruel and unusual punishment." States are free to set their own rules. 17 states and the District of Columbia have banned it.

The Oklahoma Department of Education prohibited schools from using "physical force" to discipline disabled students in 2020. But a bill that would have made that the law in Oklahoma failed to pass in 2024.

The bill's author, state senator Dave Rader, explained the bill "provides that school district personnel shall be prohibited from using corporal punishment on any student identified with a disability in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act." He listed some of the disabilities that would be protected: autism, deafness, blindness, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, speech or language impairment, visual impairment or orthopedic impairment.

Senator Jett had a lot of questions for Rader, including a request as to how the bill could be reconciled with Proverbs 22:15: "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him."

Rader Bibled him back, saying, "there are going to be times when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we won't have to fear evil because your rod and your staff comfort me." Rader went on to say, "not all discipline needs to be one-way and to deal with special needs takes special discipline." Jett answered with more Bible quotes, concluding, "In Scripture, it's uniformly applied to everyone."

Jett concluded: "This is a top-down, socialist-aligned, ideological, unilateral divorce between parents' ability to collaborate with their local schools to establish a disciplined regimen that includes corporal



punishment. It is in violation of Scripture and ideologically aligned with socialist ideology that should not be part of this body's legislative initiatives."

Despite the Scriptural barrage, the bill passed the Oklahoma Senate, 36-16 and now goes to the House for consideration.

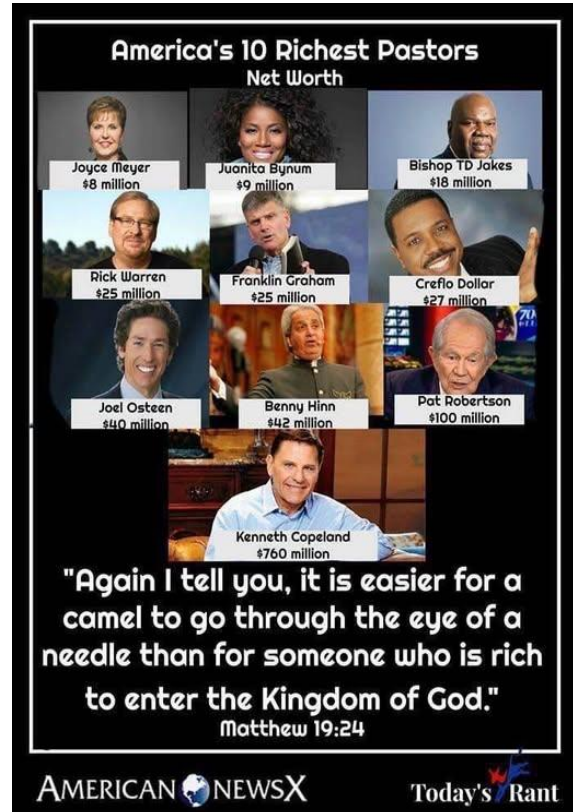
\*\*\*\*\*

### Faith and Immigration

Migrants face a dangerous journey to the United States. A new study has found that a major motivating factor for migrants is their religious faith.

The 2023 study from the University of Texas at El Paso, previously unpublished, reports that nearly 75% of immigrants say they saw a "sign from God" that inspired them to continue their journey. According to USA Today, usatoday.com, most immigrants pray daily. The report's lead author, Jeremy Slack, notes, "The study showed very high levels of faith that (immigration) is a process that will be decided by a higher power."

The report's authors were surprised by how little migrants knew about the US immigration and asylum process. It states, "For many, the process of asylum was perceived as too complex or even random and therefore they decided to place their efforts into faith and religion."



The study had not intended to study the impact of faith and religion on migration, but the authors were so struck how often migrants mentioned religion that they went back and asked participants specifically about the role of faith. Slack says, "God willing, I'll be one of the lucky ones" is how people replied "almost word for word" at the end of every questionnaire.

45% said the regularly attended evangelical services, with 30% attending Catholic services. About 32% didn't think of themselves as "a religious person." But half of the self-identified non-religious said the saw a sign from God on their journey.

These "signs from God" typically weren't miracles, or divine apparitions. Often, they were a single person who did a kind or helpful thing.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Feast Day Expense

The Muslim feast day of Eid al-Adha, the Feast of Sacrifice, is supposed to be celebrated with the slaughter and then consumption of sheep. But in Morocco this year, the economy makes the purchase of sheep too expensive for most people.

The New York Times, nytimes.com, explains that Moroccan King Mohammed VI has given his subjects a way out. He told them they didn't have to have the traditional meal this year. The King, who is also Morocco's religious leader, wrote a letter that was read by Ahmed Toufiq, the Islamic affairs minister, on state-owned television. It said, in part: "Performing it under these difficult circumstances would cause

certain harm to large segments of our people — especially those with limited incomes. I will perform the Eid sacrifice rite, God willing, on behalf of my people.”

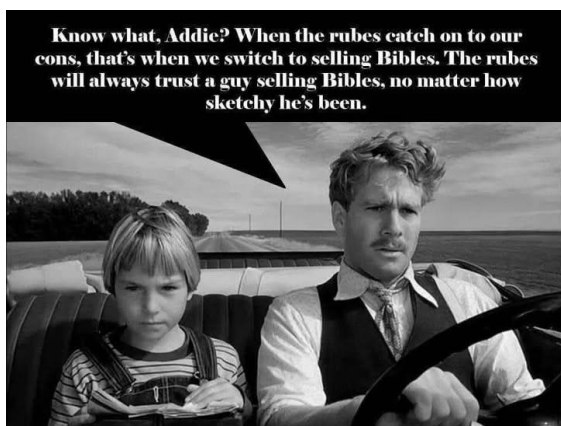
Morocco has endured seven years of drought, interspersed with periods of extreme heat. Rainfall has been 53% lower than the average of the last 30 years. This has resulted in higher food prices. King Mohammed addressed this in his letter: “My concern to enable you to observe this religious ritual in the best circumstances is accompanied by my duty to consider the climate and economic challenges facing our country, which have led to a significant decline in livestock numbers.”

About 37% of Moroccans ages 15 to 24 are unemployed, and 23%, overall, are unemployed or underemployed. The Moroccan Center for Citizenship reports that last year 55% couldn’t afford a sheep for the feast.

The king assumed power in 1999. He’s never let his subjects off the hook for the feast before, although his father, King Hassan II, had done so three times, during similar periods of drought. Morocco recently imported 100,000 sheep to help alleviate the shortage, but the prices remain high.

The festival is called Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Kabir, or “Big Eid.” Families purchase a sheep, then share it with friends and relatives, or people in need. It is meant to commemorate Abraham’s willingness to murder his son Isaac on God’s command.

\*\*\*\*\*



Tatum and Ryan O’Neal, from “Paper Moon”

## God Pods

What’s a God Pod? According to AI, it’s “a colloquial term for prison cell blocks or units that house inmates who are involved in religious activities, particularly those focused on fundamentalist Christian faith-based programs.”

Sage Journal, [journals.sagepub.com](https://journals.sagepub.com), describes how this actually works. Christian educators train “inmate field ministers,” funded by private contributions, without much oversight. Prior God Pod programs had been found unconstitutional because they used government funding to proselytize; the new God Pods avoid that conflict.

Themirror.com gives more details. It explains that inmates on Texas’ death row are turning to religious education to impress authorities, and maybe have their executions overturned. Inmates must become convincingly devout Christians. They attend religious discussion groups, sing hymns, read the Bible, and watch religious videos.

The article quotes Rev. Dr. Jeff Hood who thinks that convicts participating in the God Pod are “playing up to your audience — and in that way, it’s forcing people on the God Pod to become something they’re not, to adopt values, characteristics, traits that they might not adopt otherwise.” He continues, “These guys are giving up their agency, whether they’re aware of it or not, in order to try to be in this pod and try to save their lives. But that’s the only way that they’re going to be able to adopt anything that successfully puts them in a situation where they can successfully plead their case.”

Some of the participating inmates appear on radio shows, playing up their Christianity (which is new for many of them) to win over Texans. Hood notes that God Pod members get better food, with microwaves in their cells, and roomier spaces than the rest of the prison population. They get more recreation time, don’t have to stay in their cells as much, and have freer access to “nicer” spaces, such as the library. They also get to socialize with other prisoners, more than other death row inmates. All of these benefits, Hood says, makes the decision to be part of the God Pod an easy one.

Texas law requires that to impose the death penalty, juries must find the guilty person irredeemable, a perpetual danger. Hood points out that “God’s not a fool-proof construction, a guarantee...” The goal of God Pod participants is to convince officials that they aren’t unredeemable.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Japan Dissolves the Unification Church

A Japanese court officially ordered the Unification Church to dissolve. The church announced that it will consider appealing the order, which would end its tax-exemptions and force it to liquidate its assets.

As apnews.com reports, this is the end result of an investigation into the 2022 assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe by a disgruntled former church member. The government investigation claimed the church used manipulative fundraising and recruitment techniques that hurt members, and their families. The court ruled that the church’s problems were “extensive and continuous,” and that the church was unlikely to reform on its own.

The church originally was part of an anti-communist movement in Japan in the 1960s, which was supported by Abe’s grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi. The man who assassinated Abe blamed the church for his family’s financial problems.

The government found that the church made members by expensive goods and donate beyond their financial means. Japan’s Agency for Cultural Affairs said that the church has reached settlement agreements with more than 1,500 people, involving 20 billion yen, or \$132 million. The head lawyer seeking damages from the church demanded it accept the dissolution, and offer an apology to victims, which has not been forthcoming.



\*\*\*\*\*

### Sock Religious!

A few issues back *PANViews* introduced PAN members to religious socks. The internet has subsequently deluged *PANViews* with lots of ads for religious clothing and knickknacks. Here are a few examples.



This is a basic saint sock, from Sock Religious. Have a particular saint in mind? No problem! The website has a saint finder, with well-known saints and Catholic figures – for example, Dorothy Day, a Catholic social worker (and anarchist) from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.





Sock Religious tries for humor in some of its products. This tee shirt, "Knot a Problem," references Our Lady, Undoer of Knots, which apparently depicts Mary as a problem-solver.



This shirt seems sacrilegious. "S'up, y'all" depicts the Last Supper.



There are also many bad jokes. This "Don't Be a Loser" hoodie depicts St. Anthony, patron saint of lost objects.

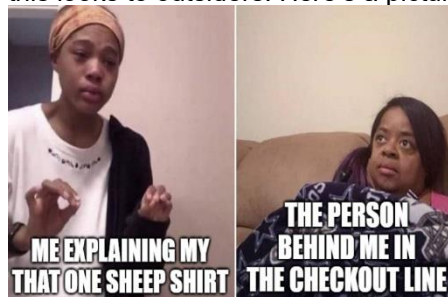


The reference on this onesie is obscure. A third-class relic is one that has touched a first- or second-class relic. A first-class relic is the saint's body; a second-class relic is something that belonged to the saint. So, the baby is going to become a saint?



This coffee mug seems to be striving for a light touch.

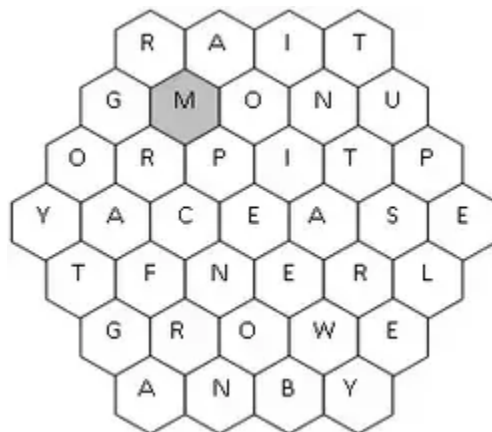
Finally, they do understand how this looks to outsiders. Here's a picture from their website:



# FUN!

Earth Day!





Buzzword #23 Answers at the end of *PANViews*

The shaded M and the six letters surrounding it spell PROGRAM which matches one of the clues below.

In the same way, find a 7-letter word for each of the remaining clues. Keep track of the center letter for each answer you find.

1. broadcast program-M
2. brand-new baby
3. fee for college classes
4. liquid paste for walls
5. to make people obey a law
6. production site
7. arched line of hair above the eye

Find the BUZZWORD for this puzzle by unscrambling all 7 of the center letters to find the answer to this clue:

Frosty, for one \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

## ***PAN News & Updates***

### **SAVE THE DATE:**

**SATURDAY, JULY 12, 2025  
ANNUAL SUMMER SOLSTICE PICNIC  
FOOD & ACTIVITIES  
PLACE & TIME TBD**



**Kitted Thinking Tools Zoom** meeting, every Monday from 5:00 – 6:00 pm. Open to PAN members (or by special invitation). The Zoom link is <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82977312179?pwd=tTTQ8y283hinDTabFOoPQIsCLyq6AK.1> and the passcode to enter the group is: 672806.

**Mark your calendars! Here's PAN's tabling schedule, so far:**

**Dillsburg Pickle Fest, May 10; Olde Annville Days and York Pride, June 14; Jubilee Day, June 19; Lancaster Pride, June 28; Harrisburg Pride, July 26; Red Lion Street Festival, August 9; Pumpkin Fest, October 11 – 12**

**Meetings** – PAN holds in-person and online meetings. Locations, times, and dates below.

**Online meeting:** Fourth Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm. We hope to split the meeting into an hour of chat and an hour of presentation or more structured discussion. Anyone with a book/movie review, discussion topic, or potential guest speaker should contact Dietrich

Dellinger @ [guyinnagorillasuit@gmail.com](mailto:guyinnagorillasuit@gmail.com)

**Chambersburg** – Second Thursday of the month, 6:30 pm, Volcano Japanese Restaurant  
955 Wayne Ave, Chambersburg

**Cumberland/Mechanicsburg** – NEW DAY AND TIME: PAN Cumberland county will change to the 3rd Monday of every month at 6:45., Ever Grain Brewing Co., 4444 Carlisle Pike, Mechanicsburg

**Harrisburg**– First Wednesday of the month, 6:30 pm, Zeroday Brewing Company Taproom, 923 North 3rd Street.

**Lancaster** – Fourth Wednesday of the month, 6:00 pm, Centerville Diner, 100 S. Centerville Rd.

**Lebanon** - This meeting is currently on pause.

**Reading** – Third Thursdays at 7:15pm, 3rd & Spruce Drafthaus, 238 S 3rd Ave, Reading, PA 19611

**York** – First Sunday at noon, Mexitaly Brick Oven Brewhouse, 2440 East Market St.

### ***How to Contribute to PAN***

**Giant Cards** - We will have Giant grocery store cards available for purchase at PAN meetings. You pay face value for the card and use the face value at the store, but Giant lets PAN have 5% of that face value. If you shop at Giant, anyway, use the cards in lieu of cash and help PAN. What could be easier?

**Pennies for PAN** - Finally, we are happy to take money the old-fashioned way. You can give your tax-deductible contribution to a Board Member at one of our meetings or events, you can donate via PayPal on our website, [www.panonbelievers.org](http://www.panonbelievers.org), or you can mail a check to us at PA Nonbelievers, Inc. PO Box 702, York, PA 17405. Remember when you donate you can indicate what fund you want your donation to go to, you can find the list of our funds on the PAN website in the Donate section.

#### **PAN Board of Directors**

Josh CruverKibi, President  
Nick Consoli, Vice-President  
Dietrich Dellinger, Secretary  
Doug Ross, Treasurer

Dabis Camero-Alzate  
Julian Hershey  
Brendan Hillyard  
Elan Lift

Eileen Wolf  
Yen Liang Chen  
Pam Zerba

#### **Buzzword #23**

2. newborn-O 3. tuition-N  
4. plaster-S 5. enforce-N  
6. factory-A 7. eyebrow-W  
Buzzword: SNOWMAN



