



The Secular Circular

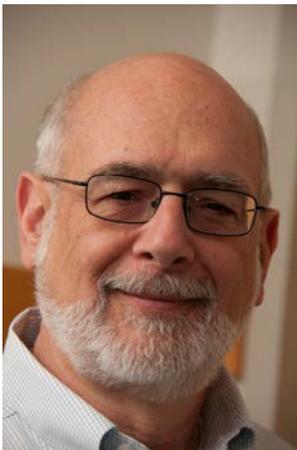
Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

www.SBHumanists.org

APRIL 2016

**April Program:
Ted Anagnoson:
From Nixon's Abuses and the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act
to Today's 501(c)(4):
The Influence of Money on Elections**

This presentation will begin with a brief history of attempts to regulate campaign contributions and spending, leading up to the abuses of the Committee to Re-Elect the President in 1972 and the resulting amendments to the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act. At that point, most of the action shifts to the U.S. Supreme Court, which in a series of cases from *Buckley v. Valeo* to *Citizens United* to *McCutcheon v. the Federal Election Commission* has severely limited what can be done to regulate campaign spending. The court has a peculiar notion of what "corruption" means and an even more peculiar notion that since spending = speech, political speech must not be limited.



Professor Anagnoson will also talk about the court cases that gave rise to SuperPACs and 501(c)(4) nonprofits being involved in politics and what the impact of that kind of "independent" spending means for candidates and campaigns. Finally, he will discuss the options citizens have for limiting spending, as well as their political feasibility.

Ted Anagnoson is professor emeritus of political science at Cal State LA, where he taught from 1983 to 2010. He was also a health policy analyst and acting director of health financing policy in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C. from 1995 to 1997. He is currently the editor of the CSU retired faculty newsletter, curriculum committee chair for Vistas Lifelong Learning in Santa Barbara, a co-author of *Governing California in the 21st Century*, and a visiting professor of political science at UCSB, where he has taught one or two courses most years since 2008. He also taught at the University of Rochester, where he got his PhD, Alfred University, the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

When: Saturday, April 16th, 2016

Where: Patio Room, Vista del Monte (**Park ONLY in spaces marked "VDM"**).

Time: Meet at 2:30pm for socializing and light refreshments provided by HSSB. Program begins at 3:00 pm

Donation: \$2 members/\$5 non-members. Students with ID are free.

Optional Buffet Dinner: Dinner buffet at Vista del Monte. \$25 includes tax and tip. RSVP to judithannfontana@yahoo.com or 805-967-7911.

For More Info: Call 805-769-4772 (769-HSSB)

Activities

Judy Fontana

Come join us for the buffet following the meeting at Vista del Monte on April 16th. Good food, good friends, great conversation. This month's menu is mixed green salad with assorted dressings, wheat rolls, chef's fresh catch, roasted pork loin, bulgur pilaf, mashed potatoes, green beans, vegetable blend, carrot cake, beverages and wine. Price per person is \$25, which includes tax and tip. Be sure to make reservations by contacting Judy Fontana at judithannfontana@yahoo.com or calling 967-7911. Hope to see you there!

Summer Solstice Party: Don't forget to mark your calendar for the annual Summer Solstice Picnic on Sunday, June 19th, at Stow Park in Goleta. Catering will be provided by Woody's Barbecue. Once again, there will be intellectually stimulating activities, as most of us are too challenged to participate in physically challenging activities. We do what we do best! So once again come for the fun, food and camaraderie. Time and cost will be provided at a later date.

Age and Gender Survey: Thanks to everyone who was willing to share their age and gender with us at the March meeting. We know that there is a fair amount of grey hair at our meetings and we wanted to find out what our actual age distribution really is. Sixty people responded, 29 women and 31 men. They ranged in age from 45 to 96! So, how old are we? In statistics, mean is the average of all the data. The median is the middle value of the set of data and mode is the one that occurs most often in a set of data. The difference between the largest and smallest data is the range. Here are the results:

- Total number of people responding: 60
- Mean (average): 74.3 years

- Median: 75 years (half of the people were older than this, half were younger)
- Mode: 65, 73 (these two numbers were more frequent than any other numbers)
- Range: 45 to 96 years, for a range of 51 years
- Number of males: 31
- Number of females: 29

So, we are definitely an older crowd but appeal to a wide range of ages and an equal number of men and women.

President's Column: Change Colin Gordon

It was Bob Dylan who, way back in 1964, made the profound observation, "The times they are a changin'." How right he was, and they have never stopped a changin' since.

But change means adjustment to new circumstances and that becomes increasingly difficult as we get older. How do we decide if a change is for the better or worse? We tend to think that most change is bad. How we yearn for the good old days when life was a lot simpler than it is now, when we rode public transport and milk came in bottles with a layer of cream on the top.

My current car has more than 200 horsepower, and a mind of its own. It locks and unlocks the doors when it thinks I would like that, turns the lights on and off at the right times, issues a warning if it thinks I want to change lanes and a car is in the way, and tells us politely but firmly to fasten our seat belts. To start or stop the engine you just push a button. It has a vast array of push buttons, it beeps if I make the slightest mistake and complains if its tire pressures are low or if it feels the need for service of any kind. It tries to please but it's a needy car.

My first car was an Austin Seven that had all of 13 horsepower and went up hills very slowly. But it got there in the end. To start the engine, you set the controls and went round to the front where there was a crank handle that you turned until it started. Then you leaped back into the car, reset the choke and flipped the gas pedal until it was running happily. All this under the critical gaze of the occupants. It did have a sun roof, but on rainy days it was necessary to sit awkwardly to avoid the drips. No radio and no heater. But that car took us into the countryside for picnics and hikes and we got as much pleasure from it as we do from our current behemoth.

Not just cars but gadgets of all kinds have increased in number and complexity from what they were in 1964. We are familiar with the youth of today sitting with their cell phones in hand, thumbs a blur of motion as they text their friends. Fifty years ago a computer filled a large room but had not nearly the power of that cell phone. If you want to find an address you just enter it into your GPS and it will guide you turn-by-turn to your destination. Wonderful! It uses earth satellites to guide you, plus a vast database of maps. Most everyone now has a desktop or laptop and we communicate by instant email instead of the old fashioned snail mail. And Google, or Siri, is always there waiting to answer any questions that come to mind.

When I was at Kings College we had a speaker address the Math department. His name was Arthur C. Clarke, virtually unknown at that time, and his talk was on launching satellites into orbit around the earth, including synchronous orbits so the satellite would appear fixed in the sky. No one had launched anything at that time so we chuckled at this strange person and dismissed his ideas as science fiction. Now we have put men on the moon and are planning manned missions to Mars.

One bright spot is provided by the advances in medicine. Diseases that once were fatal or debilitating are now curable with a magic bullet, a drug or surgical procedure that did not exist fifty years ago. So we can keep people alive longer. But the world's population is rising rapidly and there are already shortages of the necessities of life in some countries. There is another example of change for the good. The number of non-religious people in the U.S. is growing steadily as a percentage of the population, now exceeding the number of Catholics, and our Humanist Society is prospering in every way.

The change that poses the greatest threat, we are told, is that of the climate. The earth is getting warmer, sea level is rising, storms are increasing in frequency and magnitude, and it's all because we are burning fossil fuels. Wind and solar power will save the day, except that on a calm cold night we will still need those big old power plants.

So how do we adjust to change? For many of us, with difficulty. Bob Dylan can have the last word:

*And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command...
For the times they are a changin'*

Storage Space Wanted

Storage and/or personal office space in a spare room, garage or shed. Requirements: at least 100 square feet, private entrance, and electric power. Will pay \$150--\$200 per month, depending. Please call David Echols at 805-685-0552 or leave a message.

**March Program:
Andrew Seidel:
Defending Jefferson's Wall of
Separation
Robert Bernstein**

Recently a public school girl was beaten, accused of being a witch who needs to be burned. One of her two brothers was attacked in school and threatened with having his toes cut off, his eyes gouged out and being hung over a fire until he admits that Jesus is his savior. The public school refused to do anything. What prompted these vicious attacks on these well-behaved elementary school students? Someone let it slip that their mother Christine is an atheist.

Such cases show why the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) is very much needed.

In this case the brothers, who were good students, received F grades from their teachers. The middle brother got it for using "Xmas" instead of "Christmas" in a holiday story. The teacher said this is "Xing out the savior."

The older brother got it for refusing to transcribe Bible verses. After the mother complained, the teacher said he could transcribe Dante's *Inferno* instead. So he would know where he is going.

Only the intervention of the FFRF stopped this behavior.

FFRF is a 501(c)3 organization, founded in 1976. It has 24,000 members. FFRF has two purposes:

- 1) To educate about Freethinkers. This includes atheist, agnostic and humanist views.
- 2) To take legal action as needed to protect Jefferson's church/state wall of separation.

FFRF has an "I'm secular and I vote" campaign. Andrew Seidel notes that 7% of Americans identify as atheist or agnostic, and 25% identify as "Nones."

This is three times the number of Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus combined!

FFRF has been running billboards, including 60 in Sacramento. They show photos of local people who are secular to show they are "Good without God."

His own billboard reads: "Sorry, Jesus, you died for nothing. I take responsibility for my own mistakes."



Our March speaker, Andrew Seidel. Photo by Robert Bernstein.

The Pew Research Center looked at people who had changed from not accepting gays to accepting gays. The biggest factor in acceptance? Just knowing a gay person. The idea is to duplicate that success for non-believers.

Defending the church-state wall of separation takes many forms. Forced prayer in schools and in government is an ongoing problem.

FFRF challenged the National Day of Prayer. They won, but their case was overturned at the appeal level for "lack of standing." Seidel is

guessing if the prayers were to Allah, then the case would have had a different outcome.

One infamous case is *Town of Greece v. Galloway*. The Supreme Court ruled that City Councils not only can have prayers, but that they can make those prayers specific to Jesus. But the ruling said that if a Christian prayer is allowed, then other prayers must also be allowed. In those cases, FFRF was happy to produce “others.” In one Arizona case, they got a Satanic group to offer their prayer. That quickly ended all prayers!

The Town of Greece is limited to city councils and is not the worst prayer decision. *Marsh v. Chambers* in 1983 was worse. Senator Ernie Chambers is the longest-serving state senator in the history of Nebraska. The case involved taxpayer-funded chaplains. The lower courts ruled with Chambers that this was unconstitutional. But the Supreme Court overturned that, saying it had an “historical tradition”! Of course, slavery was also an historical tradition!

It was also just bad history. FFRF spends much effort correcting such bad history with the facts that our Constitution explicitly forbids government establishment of religion. A large body of supporting documents of our Founders makes this separation clear.

Pismo Beach was a case where the city chaplain simply made stuff up about history. He invented a quote where Madison said our government is based on the Ten Commandments. That George Washington said we needed God. That he prayed at Valley Forge. The latter myth was invented by the same Pastor Weems who invented the cherry tree myth.

(Note to readers: You can read about the Pismo Beach case here:

<https://ffrf.org/legal/challenges/highlighted-court-successes/item/19358-ffrf-sues-pismo-beach-over-prayers-chaplain>)

The bigger lie is that the United States was founded on Judeo-Christian values. In fact, those values are in direct conflict with the U.S. founding principles. For example, the Ten Commandments are about allegiance to a specific god of the Bible. The Constitution explicitly forbids such favoritism.

The Church-State separation phrase came from a Jefferson letter. The Supreme Court adopted it as the interpretation of the First Amendment Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause in 1878. Roger Williams, founder of Rhode Island, was probably the original source who used the term “hedge of separation.”

“In God We Trust” was slipped onto U.S. coins in 1863 by a pastor who became Treasury Secretary. “Under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance came during the Cold War in the 1950’s and Seidel is confident a future court will rule it to be unconstitutional.

Religion is not just about belief. Money is at stake. Not only are churches tax-exempt, but tax law currently allows ministers to be paid arbitrarily high salaries through an enormous “parsonage allowance” loophole.

Former Mayor Sheila Lodge reminded the Humanist Society crowd why the U.S. is a secular nation: Because of the centuries of bloody wars in Europe over religion.

Seidel noted Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists. Connecticut was a Congregationalist state. Jefferson assured the Baptists that there is a “wall of separation between Church and State.”

What about the current election? Rubio talked of God's plans for him. Trump's pastor said that Senator Bernie Sanders has to accept Christ.

Cruz's pastor Kevin Swanson supports stoning gays. Scott Walker said God called on him to run. FFRF invoked a law that requires disclosure of communications with public officials. So far, Walker has not produced the God communication.

Seidel did the heroic feat of debating Bill O'Reilly of Fox News. He practiced by playing TV commercials at high volume and speaking in the tiny gaps. He got O'Reilly to admit that George Washington did not say "so help me God" when he was inaugurated.

Seidel was asked about religion in the military. He said it is a big problem due to power inequity. If your commander is inviting you to Bible study, it looks a lot like an order. The military is very opaque to finding out what is going on. FFRF stays with it, but it took four years just to get an answer to one question.

Religion and sports is another ongoing area of complaints. In school, the biggest sources of forced religion are from high school coaches and math teachers!

"The Good News Club" insidiously worms its way into the schools spreading Bible messages. They claim to be non-denominational and tell students they will go to Hell if they don't believe. FFRF is set to respond with its own "Better News Club"! The law says any group can rent a room in a school. But FFRF has used public records laws to show that religious groups often do not pay rent, which is a direct violation.

Faith is belief without evidence, so evidence is of little value in battling believers.

Seidel started out as a neuroscience major. Why did he not pursue becoming a neurosurgeon? Because he hates bullying, which is why he spends so much time fighting the bullying from religion.

(Note to our readers: You can listen to Andrew Seidel's talk on our website:

<http://www.santabarbarahumanists.org/article/8640-audio-of-seidel-march-2016-talk-about-ffrf>)



Secular Sonnet Mary Wilk

Imagine if you can a world at peace,
Without opposing armies waging war,
Where bloody terrorist attacks would cease,
And suicidal bombers were no more.

Fort when religious fervor fans the flame
Too many choose to kill, not asking why,
Urged on by ruthless leaders who proclaim
That martyrs go to heaven when they die.

How many deeds of vengeance will be done
Before men learn there is no need to hate
All those of different faiths, or those with none,
No need to fight to prove their God is great.

So peace will never come within this life
Until the ending of religious strife.

Member News

Many of us know that HSSB Member Adrian Wenner's wife, Hilda, had Alzheimer's disease. Hilda died on February 5th from complications of Alzheimer's. Hilda led quite an interesting life, was an accomplished musician and teacher, and she was very involved in social causes. Read about her life in this memorial to her: <http://www.independent.com/news/2016/mar/31/hilda-wenner-1935-2016/>



Hilda and Adrian. Photo by Marian Shapiro.

Summer Science Camp Roger Schlueter

As Judy Fontana mentioned at our previous general meeting, the Humanist Society Board has decided to make one or more efforts to expand our humanist values out into the larger Santa Barbara community. One opportunity right now is to provide financial support for financially needy kids to attend Summer Science Camp at Elings Park.

Elings Park has hosted science camps each summer, but they've never had scholarships to help families with the cost to attend. We Humanists support scientific endeavors in general and especially scientific learning for younger kids. Thus, there is an obvious match made in heaven (sorry) that the Humanist Society is going to take advantage of.

The Board has decided to start a John Coppejans Summer Science Camp Scholarship Fund and "seed" it with \$1,000. In addition, Pat Coppejans has contributed another \$1,000 in John's name. Thanks a lot, Pat. That is very generous of you and we deeply appreciate the contribution.

And here is where you can join in. The cost of sending one kid to summer camp is \$125. The Humanist Society will set aside every penny of contributions to the Fund and not mix that money with our general budget. In addition, Elings Park will not take any cut out of the money we contribute to their science camp. Further, the families who apply for scholarships will be evaluated (at no cost) by the Santa Barbara Police Activities League (PAL). Thus, you can be confident that every dollar you contribute will go directly to help a kid in real financial need to attend summer camp this year.

We do not plan to spend the entire Fund this year. We intend that the John Coppejans Summer Science Camp Scholarship Fund will be available on an annual basis to support needy kids. If you want to contribute to the Fund, just make a check out to "Humanist Society" and write "Summer Camp" in the memo field. And you can contribute any amount you feel comfortable with. Any contribution of any size will help the kids who need it most.

One of the things I like about the Humanist Society is that we don't endlessly bug you for contributions to our group; pay your annual dues and you're a member in good standing. But any money you give goes 100% to the intended use, not to us. Please contribute to this Fund and help extend a humanist helping hand to a very worthy cause. Contact any member of the Board if you have any questions.

Humanist Pen Pal

An inmate from the California Correctional Institute in Tehachapi, CA, has contacted our organization in hopes of corresponding with people who are humanists/atheists. His name is Johnny Mora and he is serving a life sentence with the possibility of parole. His hobbies are drawing and writing poetry, with interests in reading about humanism, atheism, philosophy, and history. If any member wishes to correspond with Johnny, you can write him at the following address:

Johnny Mora #H71071
CCI A-Bldg-2 C/202
P.O. Box 1902
Tehachapi, CA 93581

Don't Forget About the Freethought Alliance Conference!

The Orange County Freethought Alliance annual conference is Saturday, April 30th. The registration fee prior to April 27th is only \$50 and that includes a buffet lunch. Registration with dinner is \$85. The conference is at the Howard Johnson hotel in Fullerton, CA. There will be 15 speakers, including Mr. Deity, Donald Prothero, The SciBabe, Phil Zuckerman, Jim Underdown, Ross Blocher, and Bill Zuersher. If you don't care to drive to Fullerton, the Amtrak train (both the Pacific Surfliner and the Coast Starlight) has stops in Fullerton.

Please consider attending this conference! There are not too many freethought conferences in southern California, and it is a great way to meet other atheists/humanists in the area, and also listen to a good variety of speakers. Diane and Wayne hope to see some of you there.

<http://freethoughtalliance.org/fta/annual-conference/>

Needed: A Treasurer for HSSB!

Have you ever had that urge to control the purse strings of a large and powerful corporation? Here is your chance (sort of)! HSSB is not large or powerful, but we are incorporated!



The HSSB Board is in need of a Treasurer. Our by-laws require this position, so please volunteer a few hours per month of your time. This does not require fancy accounting skills; if you can approximately balance your checkbook, you could be just the person we need to keep our organization going.

If you are interested, please talk to our current treasurer, Ron Kronenberg, or any of our former treasurers: Richard Martin, Colin Gordon, or Ray Stone.

“Religion has actually convinced people that there's an invisible man living in the sky who watches everything you do, every minute of every day. And the invisible man has a special list of ten things he does not want you to do. And if you do any of these ten things, he has a special place, full of fire and smoke and burning and torture and anguish, where he will send you to live and suffer and burn and choke and scream and cry forever and ever 'til the end of time!

But He loves you. He loves you, and He needs money! He always needs money! He's all-powerful, all-perfect, all-knowing, and all-wise, somehow just can't handle money!”

---Comedian George Carlin

Non-HSSB Events of Interest

Upcoming Events in California:

- April 10: Dr. Janna Levin: *Gravitational Waves, Black Holes and the Nature of the Cosmos*. Skeptics Society, Cal Tech, Pasadena.
<http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/>
- April 17: Richard Carrier: *If Jesus Didn't Exist, Why Did They Invent One?* Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles.
<http://www.centerforinquiry.net/la/events/if-jesus-didnt-exist-why-did-they-invent-one-4-17-16/>
- April 30: Orange County Freethought Alliance Annual Conference. Speakers include Mr. Deity, The SciBabe, Phil Zuckerman, and Jim Underdown. Fullerton.
<http://freethoughtalliance.org/fta/annual-conference/>
- May 1: Jamie DeWolf and Chris Shelton: *The Scourge of Scientology: Perspectives by a Hubbard Relative and a Former Scientologist*. Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles.
<http://www.centerforinquiry.net/la/events/the-scourge-of-scientology-5-1-16/>

Upcoming Events Outside of California:

- May 26-29: American Humanist Association 2016 75th Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
<http://conference.americanhumanist.org/>
- June 2-5: The Reason Rally, Washington, D.C. (Note: American Atheists is a major sponsor of this rally.)
<http://www.reasonrally.org/>

HSSB Contact Information

Officers:

President: Colin Gordon

colin3@juno.com

Secretary: Suzanne Spillman

urbanfollies@gmail.com

Treasurer: Ron Kronenberg

ronkronenberg1@gmail.com

Board Members at Large:

Wayne Beckman

Anne Rojas

David Echols

Roger Schlueter

Judy Fontana

Pat Ward

Diane Krohn

Mary Wilk

Newsletter Editor:

Diane Krohn

djkrohn@cox.net

Newsletter Deadline:

Deadline for submissions to the Secular Circular is midnight, the last day of each month.

HSSB meetings are held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 2:30 pm, usually in the Patio Room of Vista del Monte, 3775 Modoc Rd., Santa Barbara. More information is available at our web site: www.SantaBarbaraHumanists.org. At meetings, a donation of \$2 from members and \$5 from non-members is appreciated. First-time visitors are welcome on a complimentary basis. Students are free with a Student ID.

Annual HSSB membership dues are \$36 for a single person, \$60 for a couple, and \$100 (or more) to become a Society Supporter. One may subscribe to our newsletter only for an annual fee of \$20.

To join HSSB, please send your contact information and a check for your membership dues to HSSB, PO Box 30232, Santa Barbara, CA 93130, Attn: Mary Wilk. For membership information contact Mary Wilk at 805-967-3045 or mwilk@cox.net

Copies of this newsletter are posted on the HSSB website. Photos are on the website and available via the link

<http://picasaweb.google.com/Humanist.Society.of.Santa.Barbara>

See us on Facebook





Humanist Society of
Santa Barbara
PO Box 30232
Santa Barbara, CA 93130

HSSB Calendar

Tuesday April 12: Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. Encina Royale, 250 Moreton Bay Lane, Goleta . Members invited to attend.

Saturday April 16: Monthly Meeting: Ted Anagnoson will speak on Money in Politics; the Patio Room at Vista del Monte. Meet at 2:30 p.m. for socializing and light refreshments. Talk starts at 3:00 p.m. Optional buffet dinner after the talk at Vista del Monte.

Sunday April 24: (and the last Sunday of every month), 10 a.m., **Secular Sunday Brunch** for humanists, atheists, agnostics, skeptics, freethinkers, singles, couples and families without religion. No cover charge; membership not required. Pay only for your food, drink and tips. Cody's Cafe, 4898 Hollister Ave. in the Turnpike Center, Goleta in the room to the right as you enter the restaurant. For information phone Board member, Mary Wilk at 805-967-3045.

Tuesday May 17: Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. Home of **Mary Wilk**. Members invited to attend.

Saturday May 21: Monthly Meeting: a speaker from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) will speak about exoplanets; the Patio Room at Vista del Monte. Meet at 2:30 p.m. for socializing and light refreshments. Talk starts at 3:00 p.m. Optional buffet dinner after the talk at Vista del Monte.