



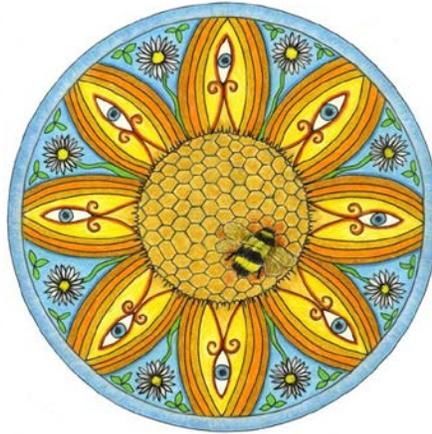
The Secular Circular

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

www.SBHumanists.org

JUNE 2016

Summer Solstice Party: Games, Stimulating Conversation and Food!



Join us for the annual Summer Solstice Party!

When: Sunday, June 19th at 1:00 p.m.

Where: Stow Grove Park, Area 3, 580 N. La Patera Lane, Goleta

What to Bring: An appetizer or dessert to share – nothing that requires refrigeration; lawn chairs (if desired) and sun hats

Cost: \$15 per person (HSSB members or guests). You can pay at the event.

Catering will be provided by Woody's Barbeque:

Tri-tip, chicken, beans, and salad

Water, wine and sodas will be provided by HSSB



Please email **Anne Rojas** with your name and number of people attending no later than

Wednesday, June 15th.

annehrojas@gmail.com

If you cannot email Anne, call and leave a message: 805-564-6086

Activities

Join us for annual Summer Solstice Party on Sunday, June 19th at Stow Grove Park, Area 3, in Goleta. See Page 1 of this newsletter for information. Please RSVP to Anne Rojas with name, and the number of people attending no later than **Wednesday, June 15th**. annehrojas@gmail.com

If you cannot email Anne, call and leave a message for her at 805-564-6086.

President's Column: Looking Out at a Sea of Gray Colin Gordon

We don't need 20-20 vision to see that the average age of our members is a little on the high side. Some of us have regrets about it. We think the age distribution of our members should be more representative of the general population and we should make more efforts to attract younger people. But it's more complicated than that; there are many possible reasons why we have a surfeit of older people.

Young folk have many more distractions and things to do nowadays than in the past, and joining societies is low on their list of priorities. Our tastes in music and entertainment have taken great leaps forward, or backwards, depending on your point of view. We have gone from Beethoven to the Beatles, from Bach to Beyoncé and our senses are assailed with rock groups dressed in outlandish garb prancing around the stage clutching microphones. At one time a concert meant a performance by a symphony orchestra, now a rock group. Am I showing some prejudice here against the values of the new age? I am not alone; it just goes to show that there really is a generation gap.

Their social lives are well-catered for by the cell phone, ipad and other electronic devices which keep them in touch with their friends. Such

social media as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, allow instant communication of messages, quotes, photos and almost anything else. The video phone that was once in the realm of science fiction is now available on Skype or Facetime. Gone are the days of taking a reel of film to the photo shop to be developed and printed. Now we take high quality pictures with our cell phones and within seconds they are sent anywhere we wish and some places we don't wish. It's all because we of the older generation learned how to fit vast numbers of transistors onto a tiny silicon chip. It is we who have developed this new technology and we should not be aggrieved if it is used in ways we could not have foreseen. The rock groups could not function without their wireless mikes and their powerful solid-state amplifiers. Large flat-screen TVs hold many young people captive for sporting events and sitcoms. Animated movies are beginning to displace human actors.

It is said that wisdom comes with age and we would like to think that's true. Perhaps the wisest move we all have made is to distance ourselves from religious organizations. But religious doctrines are instilled in most of us in our youth and are hard to shake off. In our younger days when raising a family, many of us did not like to put down religion. Atheism is a minority opinion and we feel that we should allow our offspring to be exposed to the majority views. No harm done and they can reject it later if they wish. Joining the Humanist Society amounts to "coming out," declaring oneself to be atheist, and many young people would rather hedge their bets by remaining "nones," with no religious beliefs but reluctant to come out and say so. Our Publicity chair, David Echols, is already making every effort to spread the word of humanism at UCSB, but with limited success.

There are undoubtedly generation gaps in society as a whole, not just in our Society. The experiences of one generation are supplanted by a new set of events that shape the new

generation. Many of us had good relations with our parents and teachers, but there is rarely a camaraderie in the same way as we have with our contemporaries. So society divides itself approximately into cohorts whose values are different, as are their life styles, political aspirations and world views. And if it is any consolation, we can be sure that the young generation will itself be replaced by another, with values that will seem to them equally outlandish.

So instead of lamenting the ageing of our Society, we should perhaps accept some of the blame. We are responsible for, or at least complicit in, the generation gap. As I have previously remarked, the times they are a-changin' and the older generation is not too successful in involving younger people in our Society. But let's not feel guilty about it; it is part of the bigger picture that we see in society as a whole. We should welcome young folk if they come to our meetings but not feel too bad if they don't.

Note: Thanks to Ray Stone for suggesting this subject.

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--\$250 per month, depending. Please call David Echols at 805-685-0552 and leave a message, or email: personaltoursltd@gmail.com

Member News

Joan Malette died on April 8, 2016. Joan and her husband started HLM Air Services in Oregon, a business that specialized in aircraft accident reconstruction and salvage. After her husband's death, Joan relocated to Santa

Barbara and volunteered as a librarian and at Planned Parenthood. Her obituary is here:

<http://www.independent.com/obituaries/2016/may/13/joan-malette/>

“Actually I’m an Atheist” Three Years Later Kate Simonson

On May 20, 2013, an EF5 tornado destroyed Rebecca Vitsmun's home in Moore, OK, and almost killed her and her young son. Later, while standing in the ruins, she was interviewed by Wolf Blitzer in a clip that has since become famous. As he asked her repeatedly if she thanked the Lord for her survival, Rebecca answered with calm grace, “Actually, I'm an atheist.”

Her experience as a disaster victim was a light-bulb moment for her. “I could see the difference between the infrastructure the religious community already has in place and that of the atheist community,” she says. “It doesn't seem like our community is prepared to handle something like this should the religious institutions disappear overnight.”

A short three years later, much has changed. Led by Rebecca, the Foundation Beyond Belief's first Humanist Disaster Recovery (HDR) Team had their initial deployment in January to an area of South Carolina ravaged by flooding from Hurricane Joaquin. The group trained, demolished the interior of a home, performed mold remediation, and worked to put the structure back together...

Read the entire article here:

<https://foundationbeyondbelief.org/actually-im-atheist-three-years-later-tornadoes-hdr-teams/>

**May Program:
HSSB Members Speak Out
Robert Bernstein**

(Our scheduled May speaker had to cancel at the last moment. Thanks to Ron Kronenberg who organized the May meeting for our members. – Ed.)

The May meeting was a chance for HSSB members to introduce themselves to each other, to tell how they came to be a part of HSSB, and how they came to be Humanists. Then, to talk about what they like at HSSB and things possibly to change at HSSB.

We broke into four groups of eight people each. The idea was to let each person speak for up to five minutes with no interruption, then to have discussions within the small groups.

At the end, we regrouped to report back. Two of the four groups got so involved in the introductions that they never really did much discussion! But two groups did have a report.

A common theme was a lack of getting to know each other, and a need to recruit younger members.

Wearing name tags was seen as helping people to get to know each other and recognize each other. HSSB does have social events designed for getting to know each other, such as the after-talk dinners, and the Sunday brunches. Perhaps we could have a directory where people have the option to include more about themselves.

Having young people keeps the organization going and injects fresh new ideas, although young people may be turned off by our venue at a retirement community.

UCSB does have its own group called SURE: Scientific Understanding and Reason

Enrichment. In the past we have collaborated with them on events (*Note: This group is no longer active. –Ed.*)

We also could advertise in the UCSB and SBCC campus newspapers. Young people want to meet and mingle and they may be happy for new opportunities.

When I was a teen, I belonged to the Ethical Society in Washington, D.C. They had a Sunday School that I participated in. They also did youth events, including an overnight trip to the beach. Perhaps if we had a Sunday School, we could encourage young families to participate.

Social justice and activism was suggested as a way to energize the group and to attract younger members.

Almost everyone said they came because of the interesting speakers and talks, even if they did not always agree with the view points or topics. People generally liked a wide range of speakers and topics, not just about religion. Science was named as a good topic, especially by those without a science background, even if they could not follow everything, they liked learning new things.

Some people said they learned of HSSB because of big visible events. William Edelen's talks at a local school and SBCC were examples.

A number of people mentioned that they came off and on depending on the speakers. When they were invited to join, they felt more commitment to come regularly and participate in other ways.

The background of our members is quite diverse. Some came from liberal, humanist backgrounds. Many came from conservative, religious backgrounds and were delighted to find fellow thinkers through Humanism and HSSB!

Paul Weisman had an interesting bit of history in his own family. His grandfather, Sidney Weisman, formed the first Humanist Society in Chicago in 1914! Paul suggested sending emissaries from the Humanist Society to other groups.

Jan Kettler noted that the Live Oak Unitarian minister has proclaimed that she is an atheist. We might send a speaker there and collaborate in the future. Sylvelin Edgerton suggested we might invite her to speak to HSSB.

Susan Plummer noted that we could collaborate at the Karpeles Manuscript Museum and send speakers there. Perhaps we even could meet there.

I noted that there are formal principles of Humanism that are unknown to many of our members. I am submitting a separate short article about this.

It was suggested we also discuss this deeper history of Humanism, where it came from and where it is now.

One other suggestion: An annual debate, perhaps with a Westmont person.

Humanist Principles Robert Bernstein

At our May meeting, I noted that there are formal principles of Humanism that are unknown to many of our members.

In particular, there is a Humanist Manifesto which is now in its third version! Here is the full text of the *original Humanist Manifesto* published in 1933:
<http://americanhumanist.org/humanism/humanist-manifesto-i>

This was published in 1933 during the Great Depression. There was widespread awareness

that unregulated profit-driven capitalism was antithetical to Humanist goals. Note this section of essentially socialist principles:

FOURTEENTH: The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.

The *current Humanist Manifesto* is version #3 and is notably different, but still retains the same basic core:

<http://americanhumanist.org/humanism/humanist-manifesto-iii>

In addition to the Humanist Manifesto there is "*The Affirmations of Humanism: A Statement of Principles*" which is available here
<https://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php/12>

This often appears inside the Free Inquiry magazine cover. I highly recommend this magazine to all of our members.

When I want to share what it means to be a Humanist, this one page set of principles is what I usually show people.

Editor's note: There is a summary of the Humanist manifesto on our website:
<http://www.santabarbarahumanists.org/humanism-and-its-aspirations>

Summer Science Camp Roger Schlueter

As Judy Fontana mentioned at our March 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 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.

Vinyl Records In Search of a Good Home Pat Coppejans

My husband, John, enjoyed music and thus had a large collection of vinyl records of classical and operas, plus a few jazz records.

Members of HSSB are welcome to come and select from his collection of about 500 records for their musical enjoyment.

Please call 967-0929 if you are interested.



Non-HSSB Events of Interest

Upcoming Events in California:

- June 5: *Prophet's Prey: The Documentary About Warren Jeffs and the Fundamentalist Mormon Church*. Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles.
http://www.centerforinquiry.net/la/events/prophets_pre_documentary_6-5-16/
- June 19: Jim Stein: *Romance, Crime, and Math: The Most Fun You'll Ever Have at a Math Talk*. Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles.
http://www.centerforinquiry.net/la/events/romance_crime_and_math_6-19-16/

Upcoming Events Outside of California:

- June 2-5: The Reason Rally, Washington, D.C. (Note: American Atheists is a major sponsor of this rally.)
<http://www.reasonrally.org/>

Do you have a minute to talk about our lord and saviour Edgar Allan Poe?



HSSB Contact Information

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urbanfollies@gmail.com

Treasurer: Ron Kronenberg

ronkronenberg1@gmail.com

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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 June 14: Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. Home of **Mary Wilk**. Members invited to attend.

Sunday June 19: Monthly Meeting: Summer Solstice Picnic at Stow Grove Park, Goleta. Food catered by Woody's Barbeque. Meet at 1:00 p.m. for games, conversation, and good food. See Page 1 of this newsletter for details.

Sunday June 26: (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 July 12: Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. Home of **Mary Wilk**. Members invited to attend.

Saturday July 16: Monthly Meeting: HSSB member Tom Mates speaking on his book *A Judeo-Islamic Nation*; 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.