



THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

www.SBHumanists.org

JANUARY 2013

January Program:

Jonathan Young

"Supernatural Tales of Chosen People: Mythic Perspectives on Religious Traditions"

Jonathan Young, Ph.D. -- storyteller and psychologist -- assisted Joseph Campbell at seminars and served as the founding curator of the Joseph Campbell Archives & Library. His books and articles focus on personal mythology. Many of his articles are posted at www.folkstory.com. Dr. Young teaches mythology at the Pacifica Graduate Institute and appears frequently on History Channel documentary series. He has been a certified Humanist Minister since 1979. He lives with several wise cats in an old house in the Oak Park neighborhood.



Dr. Young's talk is an exploration of familiar religious images, stories, and ideas as essentially mythological in nature. He will draw on his work with Joseph Campbell to expose the roots of beliefs, rituals, and stories. We will discuss the sources and meanings of such themes as the promised land, the journey through the desert, pilgrimage, and the belly of the whale. Come hear surprising Humanist views of the stories behind the stories

When: Saturday, January 19, 2013

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

Time: Doors open at 2:30pm. Program begins at 3:00 pm

Cost: \$2 members/\$5 non-members

Dinner: Vista del Monte. \$22 includes tax and tip. RSVP judithannfontana@yahoo.com or 967-7911.

For More Info: Activities@SantaBarbaraHumanists.org or call 769-HSSB

Defending Secular Humanism by Roger Schlueter

On December 25th, the Santa Barbara News-Press printed a guest editorial by Andy Caldwell, Executive Director of COLAB (Coalition of Labor, Agriculture & Business) that asserted that “secular humanism and atheism” were the sources of many of the nation’s ills and that the USA was certain to continue its decline unless Christianity was restored to its leading role as the exemplar of our national values. The editorial contained several factual errors and substantially misrepresented secular humanism.

I am sure that anyone with a secular perspective who read this was appalled by it. It really was that bad. As a result, Helen Gorden submitted a letter to the editor (see below) that summarized her personal dislike - to put it mildly - of the editorial. Prodded by Dick Cousineau, the Board decided that our Society as an organization needed to respond as well. Thus, I submitted the following letter to the News-Press on behalf of the society. At the time this newsletter was published, it had not been printed.

Andy Caldwell makes numerous factual errors in his December 25th editorial. I’ll address the most egregious here.

Prayer has NOT been taken out of schools. This is a favorite stalking horse designed to rally the religious right. Kids pray in school every day class is in session. Before the school day begins, before tests, before the big football game, etc. What has rightly been taken out of school is forced recitation of sectarian (especially Christian) prayer led by teachers and administrators. Andy would almost certainly approve of this if a Muslim teacher began each school day with a prayer to Allah.

But the most hilarious (or depressing) claim made is that Humanists have banished “...wishing someone a merry Christmas”. What a completely unrealistic assertion. Merry Christmas rings out around the nation - indeed the world -

every year at this time. Even those dreaded atheists and secular humanists use it to communicate good will and best wishes. I, a secular Humanist AND atheist used the phrase more than once on Christmas day.

There’s so much more wrong in this editorial that I could go on for pages. Suffice it to say that Andy would benefit by escaping the right wing echo chamber that he is part of and come join us in the real world.

Merry Christmas, Andy.

Roger Schlueter
Acting President, Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

Defending Secular Humanism, cont’d

The following letter to the SBNP Editor was not published either.

To: Editor, Santa Barbara News Press

Andy;
The ship has left the port..... some fifty years ago. You missed it. Sorry it ain’t coming back for you. We the People of the USA have accepted the ethics and morals of Secular Humanism because they are more reasonable, believable, tolerant, forward-looking, democratic, welcoming, non-discriminating, religiously neutral, and generally much more humane than any ancient belief system. A major shift to these values has taken place gradually since the 1960s, especially by the youth of this country and Europe, and alas, you were nodding off. No longer does the morality of We the People depend upon religious “heritage” and privilege. We have moved on to a life stance based upon individual moral behavior, tolerance and openness, intelligent choice, and personal responsibility; the system that secular humanism encourages and supports.

As we grow in knowledge of nature and science we have put away the tribal myths and the tales and

superstitions of childhood to face our human condition with courage and with joy, not guilt. We have begun to amend the words of our ancestors' writings to reflect the needs of today's conditions: an existential morality.

As proud humanists we glory, not in the workings of a silent and unknowable god story, but rather in the advances of the human mind in the fields of science, medicine, communications, and the betterment of lives of more and more people throughout the world. These advances were not brought about by the beliefs of supernatural forces or the mindless acceptance of ancient and irrelevant myths, but in belief in the power of We the People.

Sincerely yours
Richard Cousineau

Notable Humanists Award Roger Schlueter

Our Society has begun a new effort to recognize notable Humanists. Recipients will be local people who have made significant and noteworthy contributions to Humanism and our Society. Our initial focus will be on members of our Society who are not on the Board or serve formal roles such as Program Chair, Newsletter Editor, etc. However, should someone who is not a member of our Society make an important contribution to the principles we believe in, we will be happy to recognize them. We plan to recognize our selection at our general meetings. This will occur periodically but no set timetable has been established.

The program will be overseen by a standing committee composed of ex-Presidents of the Society who are willing and able to be a part of the committee.

Currently members of this committee are
Charlotte Carver,
Dick Cousineau, Ron



Josette and Lou Barsky

Kronenberg, and **Roger Schlueter.** We have identified several members who are deserving of recognition and are quite open to suggestions from other members of the Society; contact any one of us to nominate someone.

Since it was a festive occasion, we announced our first recipients at the Winter Solstice party. They are **Louis** and **Josette Barsky.** You meet them every month at the sign-in table where they offer a smile, a warm greeting and take your money! They have been reliably providing this service for several years; we have come to count on their help and we have never been disappointed.

Congratulations, Lou and Josette. Thanks for your support. You are fitting recipients of our inaugural Notable Humanists award!

Christmas in America Charlie Archibald

Roger opened our after dinner Solstice Party by stressing that this season was really a generic secular holiday called CHRISTMAS, celebrated uniquely in each person's traditional way. What's wrong with pretending to celebrate the Pagan Solstice holiday instead? Because this transparent gesture only draws attention to the Christian origins of the word and to us as an intolerant minority. Is that what we want to accomplish?

Actually most people think no more of the creche than they do of the Pagan origin of most of our symbols, and of course the central figure is the Jolly Old Elf in the Red Suit from the North Pole, created in 1823 by the American Clement Clarke Moore in his children's fantasy tale beginning "Twas the Night Before Christmas....", purely secular. Incidentally, Santa Claus has nothing in common with the Catholic St. Nicholas, who was real.

So it's up to you, whatever you're most comfortable with. But for me, I'm with Roger, and I tell the same

to my Unitarian Universalist Humanist majority, as we take pride in accepting each person WITH THEIR UNIQUE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, rather than suggesting any one of the thousands in the world as THE TRUTH (only 1/3 are Christian). So we would be even worse than intolerant, we'd be hypocritical ! So you don't have to accept their beliefs, but you couldn't go wrong trying to practice the secular Golden Rule on them.

Rev. Charlie Archibald, Minister
UU Community of Cambria

January 16: Religious Freedom Day John Rafferty

[Reprinted from January 2013 issue of Pique, newsletter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York]

Each year, the Religious Freedom Day website announces, the President declares January 16th to be Religious Freedom Day, and calls upon Americans to "observe this day through appropriate events and activities in homes, schools, and places of worship".

The day is the anniversary of the passage, in 1786, of the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom. As Barack Obama said in his 2012 Proclamation, "Drafted by Thomas Jefferson, the Virginia Statute formed the basis for the First Amendment, which has preserved religious freedom for both believers and non-believers for over 220 years."

Bill Clinton, who started the tradition in 1996, never mentioned non-believers, but in true Clintonian form, patted himself on the back for the religious-freedom accomplishments of "my administration" in six consecutive Proclamations. George W. (remember him?) of course also never mentioned non-believers in his eight Proclamations, and in 2002, 2003, and 2004 (Yes, I read them all) was mostly worried that some churches weren't getting enough money from his Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

But whatever problems we have with Obama let's remember than he remembers us. His first, 2010

Proclamation included the statement that, "Long before our Nation's independence, weary settlers sought refuge on our shores to escape religious persecution on other continents. Recognizing their strife and toil, it was the genius of America's forefathers to protect our freedom of religion, including the freedom to practice none at all."

And in 2011 he said, "The writ [the Constitution] of the Founding Fathers has upheld the ability of Americans to worship and practice religion as they choose, including the right to believe in no religion at all."

And that's an improvement. See www.religiousfreedomday.com, and on January 16 feel free to be free of religion all day long.

Secularists Add New Holiday to December Calendar: Humanlight

Kimberly Winston, Religion News Service
Published by Huffington Post, 12/22/2012

Add another holiday to the December dilemma -- HumanLight.

In addition to Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, secular humanists have added a new celebration to the crowded calendar. HumanLight, observed on or about Dec. 23, is a secular celebration of human potential that is growing in acceptance.

This year, at least 18 groups, from New Jersey to Florida and Pennsylvania to Colorado, have ceremonies planned. And at least one government building that displays holiday scenes has added HumanLight to the roster: the county courthouse in Wabash, Ind., displays a yellow, white and red HumanLight banner on the same lawn as the Christian creche.

"The key to understanding HumanLight is to understand it is a holiday that is humanity-based," said Patrick Colucci, one of the creators of the holiday. "It is about celebrating and experiencing a positive vision of the future that we believe humans

can build together by working for a more just, more peaceful and a better quality of life for all."

HumanLight evolved from meetings of the New Jersey Humanist Network, of which Colucci is a member. In the late 1990s, members began asking each other what they could do to celebrate during December.

"The December holiday period is always a discussion for those of us who are nontheistic," Colucci said. "What are we going to do if our families want us to go to church? Should we celebrate Christmas even though we don't want to? The question came up: How come there is no holiday for the nonreligious?"

They also wanted a way to celebrate that did not involve a man in a big red suit.

"It was an issue when families in our group started to have young children," Colucci said. Try explaining to a five-year-old why you don't celebrate Christmas, or Hanukkah.

"That is why HumanLight has a very strong focus on family and community and building that among humanists and the nonreligious," Colucci said.

In 2001, the group held its first HumanLight celebration with a communal meal. It has evolved to include the lighting of three candles that represent reason, compassion and hope. A fourth candle represents the holiday itself.

"To help express the meaning of this holiday, we light candles, rather than curse the darkness," Colucci read last weekend (Dec. 16) as he lit the candles for 70 HumanLight celebrants gathered in a New Jersey community center. "We light candles to symbolize lighting the way forward to a better future for humanity and for each other."

After the first HumanLight observance in 2001, other humanist groups adopted it, too. There are no set practices, so many groups have developed their own. Today, HumanLight celebrations include science book exchanges, charity auctions, musical

performances, and magicians and clowns for children. There are even HumanLight cards, ornaments and "carols."

"O come, all ye doubters," goes one lighthearted version. "Joyful and united, O come ye, O come ye, to share HumanLight. Come to our potlucks, born of many recipes."

In Grand Junction, Colo., a group called Humanists Doing Good will mark the holiday by packaging food and hand-knit items for the homeless and distributing them in person on Christmas Day. Last year, for their first observance of the holiday, they delivered treats to people who had to work on Dec. 25.

"It was clear that it was often not necessarily the gifts that were making people's day brighter," said Jesse Bond, a member of Humanists Doing Good, "but the act of simply having people go out of their way to notice them and talk to them. It was also nice to feel like we were not being perceived as being engaged in any 'war on Christmas' or raging against the nativity scene."

Observances of HumanLight are still few and far between -- only 30 groups reported celebrations in 2010 -- but it's growing. Leaders of several national nontheist organizations have recently endorsed the holiday, including Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association.

HumanLight, Speckhardt wrote, "provides a unique opportunity to show our religious neighbors that humans don't need supernatural religious beliefs in order to live a good, ethical, and meaningful life."

Not everyone is rushing to light the candles. Tom Flynn, executive director of the Council for Secular Humanism and author of "The Trouble With Christmas," recently listed six reasons the nonreligious should shun all December holidays.

Among the reasons, fears of conformism.

"Nonreligious people make themselves disappear when they cling to a 'me too' holiday so as not to

be seen with nothing special to do towards the end of December," Flynn said.

"We'd further increase our visibility by ignoring the holiday and pressing our employers to leave the office open on December 25."

Atheists Post Billboard in Times Square

<http://atheists.org/winter-billboard-launched-times-square-0>

Cranford, NJ—American Atheists' latest billboard, located in the heart of New York City, was launched December 11, 2012. Strategically positioned in Times Square (across from the M&M store), the billboard displays images of Santa and Jesus with the message, "Keep the merry! Dump the myth!"

David Silverman, President of American Atheists stated, "We know that a large population of 'Christians' are actually atheists who feel trapped in their family's religion. If you know god is a myth, you do not have to lie and call yourself 'Christian' in order to have a festive holiday season. You can be merry without the myth, and indeed, you should."



Mr. Silverman continued, "We encourage people to be honest with themselves and their families this year. If you don't believe in god, tell your family—honesty is the greatest gift, and they deserve it."

Teresa MacBain, Communications Director and a former pastor stated, "The true beauty of the season—family, friends, and love—have nothing to do with the gods of yesteryear. Indeed, the season is far more enjoyable without the religious baggage of guilt and judgmentalism. Dump the myth and have a happy holiday season."

The billboard will remain in Times Square through January 10, 2013.

Chuck McPartlin - A Tour of the Observable Universe Robert Bernstein

[This article is a report on our November 17 meeting.]

Chuck McPartlin is one of my local heroes. He brings his passion for astronomy to thousands of people of all ages each year and has done so for many years. His Santa Barbara Astronomical Unit outreach events have brought him national recognition because they reach more people than those of major cities! It was a special treat to hear him speak to the Humanist Society!

Chuck began his talk very down to earth and personal by passing around a piece of the nickel-iron Campo Del Cielo meteorite, found in the 1500s. At 4.5 billion years old, "It is the oldest thing you will ever hold."

He then began his tour of the observable universe with our closest neighbor, the Moon. Just 1.3 light seconds away, only twelve people have gone there and it is as far as people have yet gone from home. We left valuable instruments there, including seismometers that have given us a CAT scan of what is inside. We also left six US flags behind that had been bought from Sears!

Then on to the nearest star to the Earth, our Sun. You could put a million Earths inside it. And even though it is mostly hydrogen and helium, at the center its density is 14 times that of lead. It takes over 100,000 years for a photon to bounce its way from that interior to the outside of the sun. And then just eight minutes to get to the Earth.

Mercury and Venus are relatively close to Earth, but very difficult to observe with spacecraft. In contrast, we have explored Mars with a variety of craft. Most notably now with the car-sized Curiosity rover. It is enough like Earth and has water, so that we may find evidence of life there, past or present.

Liquid water and/or methane found on some moons of Jupiter and Saturn offer the next chances to search for life in our solar system.

Saturn itself is less dense than water, so it would float. "But it would leave a big ring," Chuck adds with his Astronomical Unit humor. (It should be noted that the name Astronomical Unit itself is an astronomy joke, representing the distance from the Earth to the Sun.)

After the solar system, Chuck went on to the stars and constellations in our own Milky Way galaxy, commenting on the legends of the constellations found in diverse cultures from our local Chumash, to the Iroquois and the ancient Greek and Arab astronomers.

But our galaxy is just one speck in a vast universe. Chuck finished with a deep field image from the Hubble telescope. A tiny patch of sky the size of a grain of sand at arm's length. Yet packed with galaxies at the edge of our observable universe.

Chuck also pointed out that our casual observable universe is greatly diminished by light pollution from man-made lighting that wastefully spills into the sky. \$3 billion a year could be saved in electricity by eliminating this wasteful light pollution.

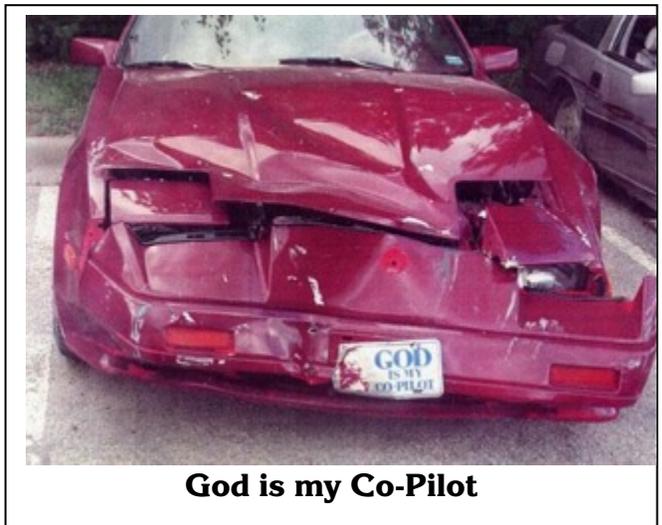
With so many planets in our own galaxy, Chuck quoted Fermi who asked, "Where is everybody?"

Chuck replied that we seem to be doing our best to kill ourselves here on earth with weapons and resource depletion. But we search.

Roger Schlueter asked if any moons have moons and the surprising answer is none have been observed so far.

I was surprised that we can see 60% of the moon even though only one side faces the Earth. Chuck explained we can see more than half because the moon wobbles.

Whether you enjoyed Chuck's talk or whether you missed it, be sure to check out the other events of the Santa Barbara Astronomical Unit! Thanks to Chuck, you never have to wait long for the next one!



God is my Co-Pilot

New Congress More Religiously Diverse, Less Protestant

David Gibson, Religion News Service
Published by Huffington Post, 11/20/2012

Three Buddhists, a Hindu and a "none" will walk into the 113th Congress, and it's no joke. Rather, it's a series of "firsts" that reflect the growing religious diversity of the country.

When the new Congress is sworn in next January, Hawaii Democrat Tulsi Gabbard, an Iraq war veteran, will become the first Hindu in either

chamber on Capitol Hill. The 31-year-old Gabbard was born in American Samoa to a Catholic father and a Hindu mother, and moved to Hawaii as a child. She follows the Vaishnava branch of Hinduism, which venerates the deity Lord Vishnu and his primary incarnations. Gabbard takes over the seat held by Rep. Mazie Hirono, who won a Senate race on Nov. 6 and will become the first Buddhist to sit in the upper chamber. There were already two other Buddhists in the House of Representatives, both of whom won re-election: Rep. Hank Johnson, a Georgia Democrat, and Rep. Colleen Hanabusa, a fellow Hawaii Democrat.

An analysis of the incoming Congress by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life also notes that Kyrsten Sinema, an Arizona Democrat who narrowly won a seat in the House, is the first member of Congress to publicly describe her religion as "none" -- the popular name of a fast-growing category of Americans who say they have no particular religious affiliation.

After Sinema's win was heralded by nontheist groups, her campaign said she does not consider herself an atheist but rather "secular."

The Pew Forum says that about one in five U.S. adults describe themselves as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular." Ten other members of the 113th Congress (about 2 percent) do not specify a religious affiliation, Pew says, up from six members in the outgoing 112th Congress.

The next Congress will also see significant shifts among the mainstays of the American religious landscape. Protestants will still comprise the majority, with about 56 percent of the members in both chambers. But that continues a steady decline since 1961, when 75 percent of members were some variety of Protestant.

Jews in Congress will see a decline, going from 39 seats to 32 seats -- though at 6 percent that is still a significantly larger share than their proportion in the overall U.S. population, which is just under 2 percent. And even though Mitt Romney, the Mormon standard-bearer, lost the presidential

election, the number of Mormons in Congress remains the same, at about 3 percent, or 15 seats overall.

Roman Catholics appear to be the big winner from the Nov. 6 vote, edging up from about 156 seats, or 29 percent of Congress, to 161, or just over 30 percent. That compares with the 22 percent of the wider U.S. population that identifies as Catholic. Catholic Democrats outnumber Catholic Republicans in the House by a 73-61 margin, and by an 18-9 margin in the Senate.

Two Muslim members of the House -- Minnesota's Keith Ellison and Indiana's Andre Carson, both Democrats -- will return to Capitol Hill in January.

Often war is waged only in order to show valor; thus an inner dignity is ascribed to war itself, and even some philosophers have praised it as an ennoblement of humanity, forgetting the pronouncement of the Greek who said, "War is an evil in as much as it produces more wicked men than it takes away." - Immanuel Kant, philosopher (1724-1804)

Social Justice Committee Report

Jean Olsen, Chair

Needless to say, in light of the tragedy of Newtown, CT, many of us may be looking anew at what Humanists can do regarding gun control and the senseless ability to take lives so easily. My heart is heavy and I wake each day with the parents and other town members instantly in my thoughts. One cannot believe in human rights and social justice without taking a serious look at where we stand and what we can do, individually and collectively, to help prevent this from happening again.

The Social Justice Committee will be meeting in early January ...ASAP...and gun control will be at the top of my list for discussion. Please feel free to email your thoughts, concerns and action on this important issue. I am hoping that Humanist Clubs across the country will stand together and support

individuals and groups seeking serious restrictions on gun purchase.

In the meantime, the Social Justice Committee will look at other issues on our list and move forward.

Helen Gordon has completed an excellent paper on how to recognize misinformation, how to check facts of forwards and other pieces of information you receive, how to cope with junk, chain, hoaxes, other type of emails, and hacking/safety on the internet. Her paper will provide resources for fact checking. It is a valuable contribution from the Social Justice Committee to every Humanist member. Soon to be in your hands. Thanks Helen.

Please read the letters to the News Press printed in this issue. Ray has thoughtfully included them here for all of us to read. Thanks to Roger, Helen, Dick and Hugh for sending out so quickly.

Happy New Year to each of you. PLEASE get involved in 2013 ... MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE!

National Atheist Party Convention **Roger Schlueter**

Did you know there is a political party just like the Republicans and Democrats called the National Atheist Party (NAP)? Well, "just like" if you ignore the fact that the NAP is smaller than the mainstream political parties by a factor of hundreds of thousands and has, as far as I can tell, virtually no political power at all. Nevertheless, NAP is having their national convention on March 9th in San Francisco. Why a political party would hold its convention soon after an election escapes me but, be that as it may be, more information about NAP is [here](#) and details about NAPCON2013 is [here](#). If you're interested, it might be fun to participate. If you do go to the convention, please write all about it in the April edition of the *Secular Circular*.

HSSB Book Club **Marty Shapiro**

Just a reminder of what we mentioned in last month's Secular Circular. At our next meeting, January 16, 2013, we'll be discussing Michael Shermer's *The Believing Brain*.

The meeting will be at 1:30 p.m. at the home of **Jean Olsen**, 5328 Traci Drive, in Sunrise Village (near Cathedral Oaks and Patterson). Call 967-1745 for directions.

Letters to Editors

To: Editor, Santa Barbara NewsPress

December 27, 2012

Andy Caldwell shows a misunderstanding of First-Amendment principles. The U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom to exercise one's own religious beliefs, not to impose those beliefs on others.

The Declaration of Independence says that "to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." That's why we vote.

There was no religious freedom in the Europe that our founding fathers and mothers were fleeing. King Henry VIII demanded that all English citizens become Protestants, and he closed Catholic monasteries to confiscate their property. His daughter, "Bloody" Mary, established Catholicism as the national religion, executing many Protestants for heresy. Spain's bloody inquisition did not make its people more godly, just more fearful of monarchs and priests who used religion to achieve the purpose of absolute power. Persecution of Jews was deemed acceptable.

But in America, should a Jewish child be forced to say a Christian prayer in a public school? Should Christian symbols be allowed on military crosses but not other religious symbols? Thank God for the wise colonials who understood why government

should not favor any one religion or to pit citizens of various faiths against each other.

Helen Gordon

To: voices@newspress.com>

What a perfect metaphor—the picture on page A1 (Dec. 15) of teachers telling school children to close their eyes to the dreadful carnage—then on Friday (Dec. 21), in an attempt to tell the American public to close its eyes to the truth of what virtually unregulated access to firearms can create, a statement by NRA President Wayne LaPierre that yet more guns are the answer to our safety!

All of this made possible by the bizarre interpretation of the Second Amendment by the Republican nominated justices of the US Supreme Court.

We must do more than hope that President Obama's comment "It has to stop, these senseless deaths", will lead to real change. We must demand of our Congress and Courts that reasonable controls be established over what firearms can be possessed and by whom. We must actively work to open the eyes of the American public, and the Supreme Court, to the fallacy of the gun lobby's arguments.

Hugh Smart

Vote For Dumbth-Of-The-Year 2012 **John Rafferty, SHSNY**

It's time to decide: Which nationally-recognizable personality was most spectacularly wrong-headed, denying or clueless about reality in 2012?

"Dumbth" is the coinage of the late secular humanist and humorist Steve Allen. In 1992, PIQUE Editor Warren Allen Smith proposed that SHSNY give Dumbth Awards to "those who deserve to have their illogic pointed out". Mr. Smith suggested, as an example:

"A person who falls five floors down an elevator shaft, is rescued by a policeman who crawls into the dark hole unaided, is saved by EMS personnel who rush to the scene, is operated on by a skilled surgeon, is nursed back to health by therapists, and who then credits God with 'a miracle'."

Here, in the order of their nominations, are 2012's contenders.

Returning champion Newt Gingrich proposed a logic-defying plan in March to track and find illegal aliens wherever they're hiding in America: "We send a package [via UPS or FedEx] to everyone who's here illegally and when it's delivered we pull it up in a computer, and we know where they are."

Pastor Charles Worley of the Providence Road Baptist Church in Maiden, North Carolina, earned his nomination on the basis of pure, mean-spirited stupidity. In May he offered this stupefying "solution" to the "homosexual problem" in America. "Build a great, big, large fence – 150 or 100 miles long – put all the lesbians in there ... Do the same thing for the queers and the homosexuals and have that fence electrified so they can't get out ... and you know what, in a few years, they'll die out ... do you know why? They can't reproduce!"

The early-betting favorite is, of course, Representative Todd Akin, the Republican Senate candidate from Missouri who gave the American English language a new definition of violent sexual assault when he said, on camera: "From what I understand from doctors [pregnancy caused by rape] is really rare. If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down."

Don't count out perennial Dumbth hopeful Rush Limbaugh. When presented with the (bogus) news on an obscure website that "Italian researchers" had found that the size of male genitalia has decreased about 10 percent over the past fifty years, and that air pollution may be the reason, America's Favorite Fathead offered his own explanation: "I don't buy this. I think it's feminism. I think if it's tied to the last 50 years, the average size

of a member is 10 percent smaller ... it has to be the feminazis.”

Finally, in a campaign debate in October, Indiana GOP U.S. Senate candidate (Thank Thor, he lost) Richard Mourdock made national headlines when he confirmed his no-exceptions opposition to abortion by declaring that: “I think that even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that it is something that God intended to happen.”

Cast your vote by email to editor@shsny.org.

A Muslim bloke was bragging that he had the entire Koran on DVD. Being interested, I asked him to burn me a copy. Well, talk about getting upset!

Non-HSSB Events of Interest

Diane Krohn

Upcoming events that may be of interest to humanists, atheists, skeptics, and freethinkers:

Upcoming Events in California:

- January 5: Dr. Jared Diamond: *The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn From Traditional Societies?* Skeptics Society, Cal Tech, Pasadena.
<http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/>
- January 19-21: Skeptics Society Geology Tour: Death Valley Redux. Join the Skeptics Society for a fun 3-day trip from Las Vegas to Death Valley to Red Rock Canyon. Tour package includes charter bus, meals, lectures, museums, park fees, and donation to the Skeptics Society.
http://www.skeptic.com/geology_tours/2013/Death-Valley-Redux/
- January 20: Dr. W. Patrick McCray: *The Visioneers: How a Group of Elite Scientists Pursued Space Colonies, Nanotechnologies,*

and a Limitless Future. Skeptics Society, Cal Tech, Pasadena.

<http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/>

- January 20: Ian Ruskin: *To Begin the World Over Again: The Life of Thomas Paine.* CFI West, Hollywood.
<http://www.cfivest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#ruskin>
 - February 10: *Darwin Day Celebration*, celebrating the 204th birthday of Charles Darwin. Various activities planned. CFI West, Hollywood.
<http://www.cfivest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#darwinday1>
 - February 12: Special presentation of the documentary film *The Revisionaries*, in celebration of Darwin Day. CFI West, Los Angeles and Costa Mesa.
<http://www.cfivest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#revisionaries>
 - May 30-June 2: American Humanist Association 72nd Annual Conference. Speakers include Katherine Stewart, Eddie Tabash, Sean Faircloth, Phil Zuckerman, among others. San Diego.
<http://conference.americanhumanist.org/>
- Note:** Can't make it to Caltech for a *Skeptics Distinguished Science Lecture*? Watch the live stream of these lectures for free online, broadcast live from Caltech!
<http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/>

Upcoming Events Outside of California:

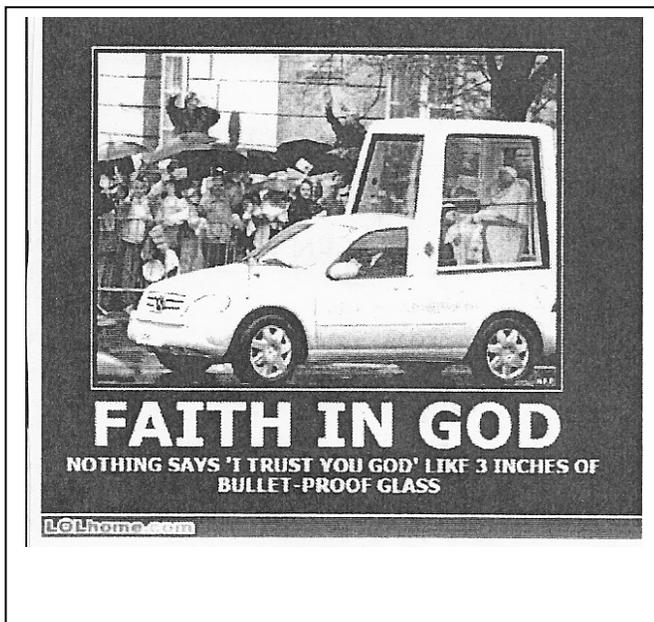
- March 28-31: 2013 American Atheists National Convention. Featuring Katherine Stewart, Dave Silverman, Richard Carrier, Hector Avalos, plus lots more. Austin, TX.
<http://www.cvent.com/events/2013-american-atheists-national-convention/event-summary-fd39ce1320da4d0989c10cb348433a43.aspx>
- May 17-19: *Imagine No Religion 3*, sponsored by CFI Canada, the James Randi Foundation,

and the Kamloops Centre for Inquiry. Speakers include Daniel Dennett, Victor Stenger, Christina Rad, Taslima Nasreen, others, plus a skeptics magic show! Kamloops, Canada.

<http://imagineoreligion.ca/>

- May 17-19: *Women in Secularism 2: A Center for Inquiry Conference*. Speakers include Jennifer Michael Hecht, Greta Christina, Amanda Marcotte, Teresa McBain, Jamila Bey, and many others. Washington, D. C.

<http://www.womeninsecularism.org/>



HSSB Contact Information

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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 or by contacting any board member. At meetings, a donation of \$2 from members and \$5 from non-members is appreciated. First-time visitors are welcome on a complimentary basis.

To send a copy of this newsletter to someone interested in our Society, please send their contact information to: PO Box 30232, Santa Barbara, CA 93130, or contact Mary Wilk at 967-3045, or mwilk@cox.net. Newsletters are also available at the above web address.

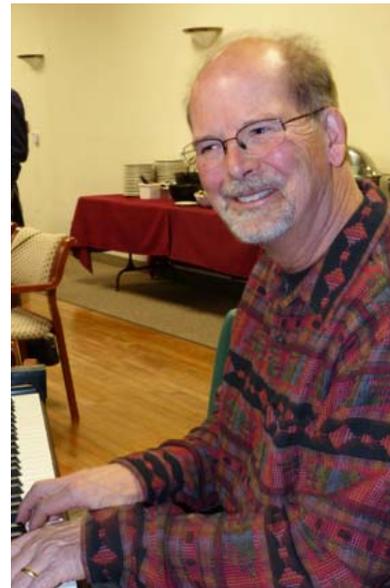
Annual HSSB membership dues are \$36 for a single person, \$60 for a couple, and \$100 (or more) to become a Society Supporter. One may subscribe to our newsletter only for an annual fee of \$20.

Link to HSSB Photos:

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

HSSB Phone: 769-HSSB





2012 Solstice Party Photos by Robert Bernstein

HSSB Calendar

Tuesday, January 15. Board Meeting, 5:30pm. Home of **Mary Wilk.** Members invited to attend.

Wednesday, January 16. Book Club. 1:30pm. Michael Shermer's *The Believing Brain*. 5328 Traci Drive.

Saturday, January 19. Jonathan Young, "The Mythological Basis for Current Religions"

Sunday, January 27. (and the last Sunday of every month), 10am, **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.

Saturday, February 16. Monthly meeting. Eddie Tabash, speaker.

Friday, March 9. "Speak of the Devil". A play about Robert Green Ingersoll, produced by HSSB. 7:30pm. Unitarian Church, 1535 Santa Barbara St.

Saturday, March 16. Monthly meeting. Dr. Nancy Segal, speaker. Subject: Twin Studies.



Humanist Society of
Santa Barbara
PO Box 30232
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