



THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

www.SBHumanists.org

FEBRUARY 2012

February Program Speaker: **Tom Mates** Subject: **Judeo-Islamic America**

Gain a better understanding of America's political faiths as Tom Mates leads a lively discussion of politics, religion, and American history, introducing his new book *A Judeo-Islamic Nation: The Evolution of America's Political Theology*.

Throughout the last 30 years of religious political activism, the activists have relentlessly claimed that religion is a vital source of moral absolutism. But the personal nature of religious belief gives the lie to this claim.

Thomas E. Mates, Ph.D., is a materials scientist at the University of California, Santa Barbara. After completing his scientific education he began to study the history and public applications of religion. Several of his articles on religion and society have appeared in *The Humanist* and *Free Inquiry* magazines; this is his first book.



Tom Mates' appearance at HSSB is sponsored by an anonymous contributor.

When: Saturday, February 18th, 2012. Doors open at 2:30 pm, program begins at 3:00 pm

Where: Patio Room at Vista del Monte

Please park only in spaces behind the church marked "VDM"

Fee: Optional donation: \$2 for members, \$5 for non-members

Dining: At Vista Del Monte. Hot and cold hors d'oeuvres plus wine and soft drinks, coffee, etc. Reservations are required and cost \$11 per person. Please confirm your participation to Patricia Hiles at:

Activities@santabarbarahumanists.org or 687-5321.

For more info: 769-HSSB (769-4772)

Welcome New Members!

Kymerly Williams-Evans, Santa Barbara
Nancy Freeman, Santa Barbara
Soosan Marshall, Santa Barbara

HSSB Book Club Marty Shapiro

Here's up-to-the-minute info about our Book Club's happenings, some of it so unprecedented that even I am impressed. We are announcing our book selections in advance. Here's our first, and hopefully not our last, schedule: (Note: **all meetings start at 1:30pm.**)

Feb. 15. Nick Di Croce's Home. 2179 Holly Ln., Solvang. (We will Carpool to Solvang – Meet at Dick's Home at 12:30). 688-7813
The Age of American Unreason. Susan Jacoby

Mar. 21. Carol Weingartner's Home. 157 Santa Elena –Montecito. 969-1558
Towing Jehovah. James Morrow (God is Dead and the corpse has to be towed to the Arctic)

Apr. 18. Judy Fontana's Home. 259 Moreton Bay #2 Goleta. 967-7911
Monuments Men. Robert Edsel

May 16. Marty Shapiro's Home. 249 Savona, Goleta. 968-0478
Origins of Political Order. Francis Fukuyama

June 20. Dick Cousineau's Home. 505 Allegria 687-2371
Species Seekers. Richard Coniff

July18 TBA
Assembling California. John McFee

New members are always welcome!

Humanists Support Group Claudia Solé

Spring has sprung early and we are well on the way through the procedures to become a "spiritual counselor" at Cottage hospital. However, know that we are here to help at any time and trust and know us by now to feel comfortable calling when in need or just feeling a bit too alone in the world.
solemio@verizon.net

From the President Ron Kronenberg

Stuart Bechman, National Affiliate Director of American Atheists attended our January Board meeting. We modified our usual agenda so that we could discuss the ways the American Atheists could help our Society. Till now all of our national affiliations have been paper ones, with no real interaction.

We discussed an article in our January Secular Circular by Bart Ehrman who had been presented with the Religious Liberty Award at the American Humanist Association's 70th annual conference. He was speaking about how Humanism can have a greater impact on our Society. We closely examined his idea that:

"Humanism must make a positive impact on people's lives and be looked upon, even by outsiders, as a good and healthy phenomenon. Among other things, humanists need to provide social outlets that mirror what believers have in their churches. When someone leaves the womb of the church, they need to have somewhere else to go. They need warm, loving, welcoming, safe communities of like-minded people where they can establish social networks and find fellowship with people who share their world views, their loves, hates, concerns, passions, and obsessions. They need context within which they can discuss the big issues of life, not just politics but also life-and-death issues. They need places where they can celebrate what is good in life and where they can work to overcome what is bad."

Would we be more influential in our community if we strove toward this model of organization? Would this model make humanism be more influential in our own lives? Do we need warm, loving, welcoming, safe communities of like-minded people where we can establish social networks and find fellowship with people who share our world views, our loves, hates, concerns, passions, and obsessions? Obviously all of us will not answer these questions in the affirmative, after all we are Humanists.

As the AA representative, Stuart has promised to help us in these three areas:

- Have AA consider developing a 'circuit tour' of well-recognized speakers through California (or at least the Southland), with the cost of those tours being spread among multiple groups to make it as affordable as possible (and including direct subsidy by AA);
- Volunteer development training;
- Curricula for short-term, volunteer-led home discussion groups, with "anti-science" being the first requested topic.

The Board needs input from our membership to get direction on increasing the activity levels of our Society. Letters to the Secular Circular or talking to our Board members is appreciated and necessary to help with this endeavor. We are planning to expand the number of Board members at our February Board meeting, so we can work on developing more programs. Think about the ways you can become a part of a more dynamic HSSB!

January Meeting Report: Barney Brantingham Robert Bernstein

Barney Brantingham filled the Faulkner. He made it clear he would not talk much about the Santa Barbara News-Press though he had worked there for 46 years. He preferred to talk about how much

he likes being at the Independent, where he has been writing for almost six years. But the News-Press refused to run an ad for this event, so apparently Barney made a lasting impression there!

This event happened because one day Barney was desperate to write a column and decided to write about how hard it would be for an atheist to be elected president in the US. And he said he is an atheist. But he got many letters from people saying they would vote for him if he ran and **Dick Cousineau** invited him to speak to the Humanist Society. Barney had never heard of the Humanist Society, but he read our pamphlet and said what we stand for sounds good to him.

He talked mostly about growing up in Chicago and what journalism was like in those days. He would ride the El to Navy Pier and read two morning papers on the way. And then two more papers on the way home. In those days Chicago was a great newspaper town. Gangsters and crooked politicians and four papers. Now, just two papers and a few shady politicians.

The Chicago Tribune used to cover the entire Midwest and was run by Colonel McCormick. He was a hard line Republican and his paper proudly showed it. He had a quixotic plan to "modernize" spelling by, for example, spelling "photograph" and "phonograph" with an "f". He hated the UN and would show the UN flag as a spider web.

Out of the army, Barney worked for a Chicago area newspaper. Their policy was never to show a Democrat on the front page. Chicago is not the same now and the papers are more mainstream now.

He talked about Mike Royko who wrote for three Chicago papers. He wrote 7,500 columns in his career, a biography of Mayor Daley, and he won a Pulitzer Prize. Royko's parents were Polish and Ukrainian immigrants and they lived in an apartment over a bar. It was a tough neighborhood and he was a tough kid, playing softball with no glove. He became the voice of the blue collar working man.

Once a woman came up to Royko in his favorite bar, the Billy Goat, and complained about his column. He handed her a quarter to refund her money.

One time Frank Sinatra came to Chicago and was given 24-hour security. Royko wrote this was a waste of taxpayer money. Sinatra wrote him a letter calling him a pimp. The letter is now worth \$15,000! Then Barney opened it up for questions.

One woman was part of the Occupy movement and was upset that the press does not give good coverage of Occupy or Occupy's issues. She talked of being injured by police with no coverage. Barney's answer to this and similar criticisms: There is more diversity than ever of news sources. More radio, TV and Internet sources, even as the number of newspapers declines.

But many were not satisfied with this answer. In particular, there is a sense that people are not getting the news that matters. And that there is little money to pay for investigative reporting. On the latter point he agreed this is a problem. And on the former point he seemed to blame the people more than the media for being uninformed. He especially blamed young people for not buying enough papers anymore.

He said we are fortunate to live in a time when there are so many sources. Bias is a problem that can be remedied by seeking different sources. The old days of McCormick or Storke telling us what news is are gone and that is good. Asked to name on-line sources he respects he named Politico and agreed that Slate is another. Interestingly, he did not name Democracy Now, which this author finds to be the best single source of news.



Barney Brantingham

Photo by: Robert Bernstein

He warned against spending too much time just following news and getting depressed. Best to allot some time to following news, but also allot some time for positive action. Bill Moyers was raised as a rare, disappearing breed of watchdog journalist. Barney said watchdog journalism has gone up and down in history. The public needs to be better informed and the media needs to do a better job.

He was also asked about interesting people he met in his writing. Barnaby Conrad came to mind right away. He says we should bring him to speak. Conrad is a painter and writer, and was a spy in Europe and a bullfighter.

He also mentioned Pearl Chase as a top pick. Also Julia Child. He took her to lunch and she was happy to go to a small café. She would eat anything, not just the fine cuisine she was known for. And writer Margaret Millar was another special person for him.

How does he decide what to write with just one column each week? He keeps many issues in mind at any given time. He often has to wait until deadline to wait for late developments, right to the last minute!

Famous Humanists: Charles Darwin (1809-1888) Dick Cousineau

Here follows an Autobiographical sketch of Darwin with an introduction by the late Christopher Hitchens.

Charles Darwin, the founder of modern biology, was another of those who did not abandon his religious views with a light heart. At Cambridge University he was proud of the fact that he occupied the same rooms as had William Paley,

whose book *Theology*, was the foundation text of the argument from design of God's existence. Darwin even considered the priesthood as a young man, and embarked upon his study of the natural world in the belief that it demonstrated the glory of God. Having voyaged to South America and the Galapagos Islands on board the good ship *Beagle*, he found himself confronting the evidence of evolution by natural selection. His *Origin of Species*, published in 1859 was very reluctant to accept its own implications and referred throughout to "creation" without mentioning "evolution". He himself feared that those very implications, if followed, would be like committing murder. By the time that he published *The Descent of Man* in 1871, Darwin felt able to be a little more explicit, but the religiosity of his wife Emma, was continued inhibition, and it was only in his *Autobiography*, from which this excerpt comes, and to a few letters to trusted friends, that he admitted that his work and his life had slowly abolished his faith.

During the past few years (1836-1839) I was led to think much about religion, Whilst on board the *Beagle* I was quite orthodox and I remember being heartedly laughed at by several of the officers for quoting the Bible as an unanswerable authority on some point of morality. I suppose it was the novelty of the argument that amused them. But I had gradually come by this time to see that the Old Testament was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos. The question then continually rose before my mind and would not be banished-It is incredible that God would be connected to Vishnu, Siva, etc as Christianity was connected to the Old Testament. This appeared to me to be utterly incredible.

The more we know of the fixed laws of nature the more incredible do miracles become and that the Gospels cannot be proved to have been written simultaneously with the events mentioned. I gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation. But I was very unwilling to give up my belief but this disbelief crept over me at a very

slow rate and at last was complete. The rate was so slow that I felt no distress.

The old argument from design in Nature, as given by Paley, which formerly seemed so conclusive to me, fails, now that the law of natural selection has been discovered. There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic things that in the course which the wind blows.

There is much suffering in the world no one disputes. Some have attempted to explain this with reference to mankind by imagining that it serves for his moral improvement. But the number of men in the world is nothing compared with all the other sentient beings, and they often suffer greatly without any moral improvement. At the present day the most usual argument for the existence of an intelligent God is drawn from the deep inward conviction and feelings which are experienced by most persons. Formally I was led by feelings such as those I felt standing in the grandeur of Brazilian forest to a firm conviction of the existence of God. But now the grandest scene would not cause any such conviction, and I cannot see that any inward feelings are of any weight as evidence of what actually exists. The state of mind which great scenes formally excited in me did not essentially differ from that which is called the sense of sublimity and it can hardly be advanced as an argument for the existence of God any more than the vague yet powerful feelings excited by music.

Thus when reflecting I feel compelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to man, but with time and contemplation such reflections have become weaker and weaker. I cannot pretend to throw the least light on such abstruse questions. The mystery of the beginnings of all things is unsolvable by us, and I for one am quite content to remain an agnostic.

Where's Andrew?

We get many inquiries asking the whereabouts of **Andrew Hankin**, chief correspondent emeritus. Andrew is on extended leave with plans to travel for

an unknown duration to unknown places around the planet.

Periodically, mysterious messages arrive at our Secular Circular offices, clearly from Andrew, but we have no idea where he is at any one time. If you read of a new uprising brewing somewhere in the world, it's quite possible that Andrew is involved in it.

We hope to print a full report on his activities if and when he returns. *Ed.*

The Truth about 'Secular' America **Steve Chapman, Chicago Tribune** **January 8, 2012**

Why is Rick Santorum running for president? Because America is in trouble and he knows why. Faith and family are under attack. "Moral relativism," he warns, is breeding "aberrant behavior." Gay rights advocates are bent on "secularization." Liberals have brought about a "decaying culture." Santorum insists that gay marriage will destroy the family, "the very foundation of our country." Lamenting the scandal of pedophile priests, he wrote in a Catholic publication: "When the culture is sick, every element in it becomes infected. While it is no excuse for this scandal, it is no surprise that Boston, a seat of academic, political and cultural liberalism in America, lies at the center of the storm."

It's a familiar line of argument among religious conservatives, and it has the virtues of clarity, simplicity and plausibility. But there is one notable weakness in his case: a mass of evidence that amounts to a thunderous refutation.

Santorum takes it for granted that religious belief, at least of the Christian variety, is a powerful force for moral behavior. That's not apparent from looking at this country. He thinks America has been on a downhill slide for many years, thanks to feminism, gay rights, pornography and other vile intruders. But where is the evidence that the

developments cited by Santorum are producing harmful side effects?

In the past couple of decades, most indicators of moral and social health have gotten better, not worse. Crime has plummeted. Teen pregnancy has declined by 39 percent. Abortion rates among adolescents are less than half of what they were. The incidence of divorce is down. As of 2007, 48 percent of high school students had engaged in sex, compared to 54 percent in 1991. What decaying culture is he talking about?

It sounds obvious that when people practice a religion that preaches strong morality and responsible conduct, they will behave better than people who follow their own inclinations. But what is obvious is not always true. America is a good place to judge the value of faith in promoting virtue. There is a great deal of variation among the 50 states in religious observance — and a great deal of variation in social ills. It turns out that religiosity does not translate into good behavior, and disregard for religion does not go hand-in-hand with vice. Quite the contrary.

Consider homicide, which is not only socially harmful but a violation of one of the Ten Commandments. Mississippi has the highest rate of church attendance in America, according to a Gallup survey, with 63 percent of people saying they go to church "weekly or almost weekly." But Mississippians are far more likely to be murdered than other Americans.

On the other hand, we have Vermont, where people are the most likely to skip church. Its murder rate is only about one-fourth as high as the rest of the country. New Hampshire, the second-least religious state, has the lowest murder rate.

These are no flukes. Of the 10 states with the most worshippers, all but one have higher than average homicide rates. Of the 11 states with the lowest church attendance, by contrast, 10 have low homicide rates.

Teen pregnancy also tends to follow a course precisely the opposite of what Santorum preaches. Almost every one of the most religious states suffers from more teen pregnancy than the norm — while the least religious ones enjoy less.

What impact does gay marriage have on how kids handle sex? Massachusetts, the first state to legalize it, has less teen pregnancy than the country as a whole. Connecticut, Iowa, New Hampshire and Vermont, which have also sanctioned same-sex unions, are also far better than average.

Does gay marriage undermine the health and stability of heterosexual marriage? Not so you can tell. Massachusetts has the nation's lowest divorce rate. Iowa and Connecticut are also better than most. Vermont and New Hampshire are about average. In the Bible Belt, by contrast, marriages are generally more prone to break up.

Santorum presents himself as a man of faith who insists on confronting stark facts that many people would rather ignore. In fact, in his indictment of tolerance, individual conscience, sexual freedom and secular morality, he is not telling truths but spinning sanctimonious fairy tales. American culture is not sick, and Santorum is no healer.

Preachers Who are Not Believers **Ray Stone**

Besides being a prominent New Atheist author, Daniel Denett is Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University. With the help of a grant from a small foundation, he and Linda LaScola, a clinical social worker, psychotherapist and researcher, set out on a pilot study to find and interview active clergy who did not believe in God, to answer the question: What is it like to be a pastor who doesn't believe in God?

The researchers managed to identify five brave pastors, all still actively engaged with parishes, who were prepared to tell their stories. All five were Protestants, with master's level seminary education. Three represented liberal denominations and two came from more conservative, evangelical

traditions. Their report (see below) details how the five were located, and goes on to describe the upbringing and education of each.

Two of the clergy lost their faith, in part, by reading new atheist books by Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens. Even Bill Maher's movie, *Religulous*, influenced one of them.

"I tell you, the book that just grabbed my mind and just twisted it around, was Christopher Hitchens' *God is Not Great*. It was shocking, some of that stuff — the throws and jabs against faith and stuff. I would think, 'He's crazy.' But then I'd say, 'No. Step back and read it for what it is.'

The road to eroded faith often involved exposure to Biblical scholarship at the seminary or graduate school. Faced with the notion that the Bible is a human construct, and not the inerrant word of God, several of these preachers began to question everything.

These preachers stayed on the job mainly for three reasons. One is financial: what else could they do with their training if they left the ministry? Often they have neither equity (living in church-owned houses) nor pensions. Another, and perhaps more important, is that an admission of unbelief would shock and disappoint their friends and family. This is a very powerful motive, for facing the truth would rip asunder your network of social and family support. Finally, many of these preachers like their work, especially the part of the job that involves helping troubled people.

The full 28-page report can be found at:

<http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/Non-Believing-Clergy.pdf> .

On the Subject of Books

A Reddit.com user posed the question to Neil deGrasse Tyson, the astrophysicist, director of the Hayden Planetarium, and popularizer of science:

"Which books should be read by every single intelligent person on the planet?" Here is his list:

- 1.) **The Bible** - "to learn that it's easier to be told by others what to think and believe than it is to think for yourself."
- 2.) **The System of the World** by Isaac Newton - "to learn that the universe is a knowable place."
- 3.) **On the Origin of Species** by Charles Darwin - "to learn of our kinship with all other life on Earth."
- 4.) **Gulliver's Travels** by Jonathan Swift - "to learn, among other satirical lessons, that most of the time humans are Yahoos."
- 5.) **The Age of Reason** by Thomas Paine - "to learn how the power of rational thought is the primary source of freedom in the world."
- 6.) **The Wealth of Nations** by Adam Smith - "to learn that capitalism is an economy of greed, a force of nature unto itself."
- 7.) **The Art of War** by Sun Tsu - "to learn that the act of killing fellow humans can be raised to an art."
- 8.) **The Prince** by Machiavelli - "to learn that people not in power will do all they can to acquire it, and people in power will do all they can to keep it."

Tyson concludes: "If you read all of the above works you will glean profound insight into most of what has driven the history of the western world."

(The above article is reprinted from PIQUE, the newsletter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York, February, 2012 issue.)

Rating the US Congress

The Secular Coalition For America just released their 2011 Congressional Report Card, and according to their criteria, this class of

Representatives "overwhelmingly failed." The report card scores U.S. Representatives on seven bills and amendments important to the secular and nontheistic communities.

- RC 93: Would have eliminated all federal funds to Planned Parenthood Federation of America.
- RC 204: Would have expanded federal funding for religious schools in D.C.
- RC 236: Would have acknowledged Congress accepts climate change is occurring.
- RC 601: Would have amended the Securities Act of 1933 to allow certain church plans to be exempt from registration and disclosure requirements.
- RC 673: Would have established a special envoy to promote freedom of religious minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia.
- RC 816: Would have reaffirmed "In God We Trust" as national motto and encouraged all public buildings to display such motto.
- HR 473: Would have required the conveyance of specified land to the Boy Scouts of America. This was a voice vote.

Grades were calculated by the number of "correct" votes—as determined by the Secular Coalition—and divided by the total number of votes taken, up to seven, by each individual member. Not all members voted on all seven issues and their scores were adjusted accordingly.

Grades earned by Representatives were:
 Grade "A" (>69%): 17 Democrats, 0 Republicans
 Grade "B" (>59%): 55 Democrats, 0 Republicans
 Grade "C" (>39%): 110 Democrats, 6 Republicans
 Grade "D" (>29%): 5 Democrats, 5 Republicans
 Grade "F" (<30%): 3 Democrats, 230 Republicans

Santa Barbara Representative Lois Capps received a "B" rating, receiving a 67% rating for voting "incorrectly" on RC816 and HR473.

For more details on the legislation and grading, and to find out how other Representatives voted, check out: <http://secular.org/node/578>.

We the People?

We love our Country but we can see that it is not a democracy.

The two parties here that set the rule are either the Elephant or the Mule but both have to answer in the end to the powers that do set the trend. No matter what, they have to dance to the business tune of high finance. It is sad to say but it is the case that big money puts them in their place, so this will influence their vote and they'll avoid to rock the boat.

Another player in the action is the ultra right religious faction. They do not want to see a diction that is not based on mythical fiction. What they believe in is the right to oppose clear reason in their fight. They want a change and set their sights to chop away at our Bill of Rights and then remove that what they hate the wall that separates Church and State.

I hope that we will realize that to reason is not dumb but wise and if we want to set the pace to do what's right for the human race than we have to change our course of action and have a different election where one with no church affiliations and does not depend on big donations can be elected and lead our land into a future that is really grand!

John Coppejans

"Prayers are to men as dolls are to children. They are not without use and comfort, but it is not easy to take them very seriously." -Samuel Butler, poet (1612-1680)

News from FFRF

According to the Freedom From Religion Foundation, on January 11 last, a federal judge ruled in favor of a teenage atheist who sought the removal of a prayer banner from her Rhode Island high school. Attorneys for Jessica Ahlquist, 16, argued that a banner on display in Cranston High School West's auditorium titled "School Prayer" and addressing "Our Heavenly Father" is a violation of the Constitution and the Supreme Court's 1962 decision banning state-mandated prayer in school.

Lawyers for the school district argued that the banner had hung in the school since the 1960s and was more secular than sacred. U.S. District Judge Ronald Lagueux disagreed and ruled that the banner should be removed immediately. He also upbraided school officials for holding community meetings about the mural that "at times resembled a religious revival." At one meeting, several school officials read from the Bible or declared their faith. Ahlquist needed a police escort to exit one meeting. Other reports said she ultimately had to leave the school after threats to her and her family, including drive-by shoutings. Full story at:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/14/judge-prayer-banner-high-school_n_1205627.html

Interview with Jessica Ahlquist at:

<http://www.ffrf.org/publications/freethought-today/articles/teen-stands-tall-for-first-amendment>

Cast Your Ballot for the Dumbth-Of-The-Year 2011 John Rafferty

Come on, it's the second most important election of 2012, isn't it – after "American Idol", right? Cast your vote for chowderhead of the year. Who gets the not-so-coveted horse's-ass trophy (at our Darwin Day/Anniversary banquet February 10) for the most spectacularly wrong-headed or clueless statement of 2011?

Bill O'Reilly told American Atheist Group president David Silverman that religion wasn't "a scam" because: "Tide goes in, tide goes out. It always comes in, and always goes out ... You can't explain that."

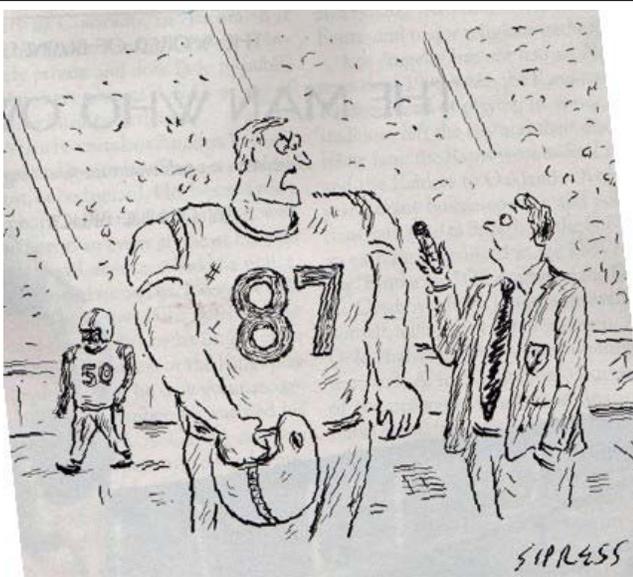
Newt Gingrich offered the contradictory illogic that unless America turns rightward, we could become "a secular atheist country, potentially one dominated by radical Islamists".

Sarah Palin thinks the American Revolution was about the Second Amendment, and that Paul Revere's famous ride "... warned, uh, the British that they weren't gonna be takin' away our arms ...".

Michele Bachmann, convinced that God sent a hurricane and an earthquake to Washington, said, "I don't know how much God has to do to get the attention of politicians ..." even though Congress, including her, was out of town.

Herman Cain wrote that Jesus Christ, "the perfect conservative", was condemned to die by "a liberal court".

Vote Now, deadline is February 8. – Send to: editor@shsny.org



"First, I'd like to blame the Lord for causing us to lose today."
(New Yorker, January 16, 2012.)

Non-HSSB Events of Interest

Diane Krohn

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

Upcoming Events in California:

- February 12: Dr. Andy Thomson: *Why We Believe in God(s): A Concise Guide to the Science of Faith*. CalTech, Pasadena.
<http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/>
- February 17-18: *Confronting Religion with Reason*: Promoting science, reason, and secular values among a religious majority. Speakers include John Shook, Eddie Tabash, Louise Antony, and Doug Geivett. CFI West, Los Angeles.
<http://www.cfiwest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#three>
- February 19: John Shook: *Why Debates on Atheism and Religion Matter*. CFI West, Los Angeles and Costa Mesa.
<http://www.cfiwest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#four>
- February 23, 7 pm: *Nuclear Weapons and Humanity's Future*: A lecture by Daniel Ellsberg. Lobero Theater, 33 E. Canon Perdido, Santa Barbara.
- February 26: Dr. Peter Diamandis: *Abundance: Why the Future Will Be Much Better Than You Think*. CalTech, Pasadena.
<http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/>
- March 4: Adam Winkler: *Gunfight: The Battle over the Right to Bear Arms in America*. CFI West, Los Angeles.
<http://www.cfiwest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#four>
- March 11: M.G. Lord: *The Accidental Feminist: How Elizabeth Taylor Raised Our Consciousness and Lowered the Boom on the Roman Catholic Censors*. CFI West, Los Angeles and Costa Mesa.

<http://www.cfiwest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#four>

- March 11: Dr. Eric Topol: The Creative Destruction of Medicine: How the Digital Revolution Will Create Better Health Care. CalTech, Pasadena.
<http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/>

Upcoming Events Outside of California:

- March 1-4, 2012: Moving Secularism Forward. Annual joint conference for the Council for Secular Humanism and the Center for Inquiry. Speakers include Daniel Dennett, Tom Flynn, PZ Myers, Victor Stenger, and Eddie Tabash. Orlando, FL.
<http://orlandocon.secularhumanism.org/>
- March 24, 2012: The Reason Rally, sponsored by many of America's largest secular organizations. Speakers include Richard Dawkins, PZ Myers, James Randi, among others. Washington, DC.
<http://reasonrally.org/>
- March 25-26, 2012. American Atheists Annual Convention. Speakers include Richard Dawkins, Jamila Bey, Greta Christina, Darrel Ray, and many others. This occurs right after The Reason Rally, so you can get a "twofer" if you are in the Washington DC area. Bethesda, MD.
http://atheists.org/events/2012_National_Convention
- April 13-15, 2012: Global Atheist Convention 2012. Speakers include Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Brian Keith Dalton (Mr. Deity), Eugenie Scott, Tanya Smith, and of course many others. Melbourne, Australia.
<http://www.atheistconvention.org.au/home/>

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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 sponsor. 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

HSSB Calendar

Saturday, February 18. Monthly meeting. Tom Mates. "Judeo-Islamic America". At Vista Del Monte.

Sunday, February 25 (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, March 17. Monthly meeting. Michael Newdow. "My Day at the Supreme Court"

Saturday, April 21 Greta Christina

Saturday, May 19 Barbara Forrest

Saturday, June 16 Summer Solstice Picnic

Saturday, July 21 Meeting of Minds II



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