



# THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

[www.SBHumanists.org](http://www.SBHumanists.org)

MAY 2011

## May Program: **So You Think You Know About Street Gangs?**

A Community Forum with **JP Herrada** of Palabra after-school programs. Topics covered to include:

- The current gang situation: growing, steady, or media-hyped?
- Why youths become involved in street gangs, and an insider's report on their activities
- Intervention, education and alternatives to gang life
- The effectiveness, fairness and constitutionality of the recent Gang Injunction
- Breaking away from gang membership and into productive adulthood

**Juan Pablo "JP" Herrada** was born in Mexico and migrated to the United States with his family at 6 years old, although he continued to live half-time in his birth town. He joined a Goleta neighborhood gang at 12 years old, and later dropped out of school to work and support his family, while trying for a G.E.D.

By age 18, JP had started his own family, but continued in and out of gang life, eventually generating a criminal record which impacted his ability to raise his children. This motivated him to turn his life around, so he and his brother JC formed a nonprofit called Palabra, referring to "one's word as a man, one's honor".



Now all local High Schools and some Junior Highs have a Palabra program. The Herrada brothers meet with different at-risk groups in Santa Barbara and Goleta twice a week, both at schools and outside them. The program's curriculum has group discussions every week, from gang violence and drugs, to law enforcement and knowing one's rights. The brothers also hold one-on-one talks with the students, who are encouraged to call them at any time to talk.

**When:** Saturday, May 21

**Where:** The Patio Room at Vista del Monte, 3775 Modoc Road

**Time:** Doors open 2:30pm for socializing; meeting starts 3pm

**Fee:** Optional \$2 student, \$5 general donations appreciated.

**Dinner Following:** Ming Dynasty, Kmart Shopping Center

**For More Information:** 805-689-2716

**Website:** <http://santabarbarahumanists.org/>

**Please Park only in spaces behind the church marked "VDM"**

## Welcome, New Members!

**Laurence Brockway** - Santa Barbara

**Dr. Toni Frohoff** - Santa Barbara

**Judy Richards** - Santa Barbara

## Election Time

The month of May is HSSB Voting Month. Nine members are running for the nine-member Board. The new Board will elect club officers at their first meeting, in early July.

Those running for the Board are:

**Wayne Beckman**

**Dick Cousineau**

**Patricia Hiles**

**Diane Krohn**

**Ron Kronenberg**

**Roger Schlueter**

**Claudia Solé**

**Nancy Wahl**

**Mary Wilk**

There will be room on the ballot for write-in candidates. Please fill your ballot out and send it in before the end of May.

## Club Roster

As announced in earlier issues of the Secular Circular, a club roster will be available by email to members in mid-May. If you would like a roster sent to you, please notify Mary Wilk, at <mailto:mwilk@cox.net>.

## HSSB Book Club by Marty Shapiro

Good news, fellow Humanists. Now that we can be reasonably sure that President Obama is, in fact, legitimate ("Thank you, Donald Trump"), we can focus our energies on some of the more important issues that we're facing, such as - How can we revitalize our ailing nation, both materially and spiritually?

Well, that just happens to be what our Book Club is reading about right now - the book is "**Rebooting the American Dream**", by Thomas Hartmann, the well-known progressive-radio talk-show host. We'll be meeting on Wednesday, May 25, 1:30 p.m. at the forested home of **Richard Martin**, 1400 Mission Canyon Road. Call 687-3563 for driving instructions.

## From the President by Ron Kronenberg

The objective morality debate between Theists and Atheists has grown in importance with the development of the Atheist position of Evolutionary morality versus the Theist position of God centered morality.

I recently listened to The God Debate between William Lane Craig, a theologian, and Sam Harris, an Atheist, at <http://www.samharris.org/blog/item/the-god-debate>. Craig's main point, as I understand it, is that God is the greatest good as relayed through His commandments and that His standard of goodness is above human possibility. Harris showed that the Bible is a very poor example of a moral code, and moral standards are possible without a God. For Harris, improving the human condition is a viable standard for an Atheist morality. Craig is a very skilled debater though I find his argument weak. Harris does a very credible defense of the Atheist position and I'm sure you will get a great deal from the debate.

You may remember that we had Sam Harris as our speaker about four years ago, before he was so famous. We would love to have him again; if you have any inside track to contacting him let us know. It would be a real coup, and a stimulating event, to have him speak to us again. I believe that inviting well-known speakers is a very worthwhile goal of our Society. Everyone's input in finding ways to attract good speakers is most welcome. Dick Cousineau will be our new program chair and needs the help of all of our members.

Living our values is a lifelong struggle. A few days ago I saw a Netflix movie called "The Power of Song" the life story of Pete Seeger. His lifelong goal of getting the people of the world to sing the 'right' songs together was his way of promoting world peace. Even though some of his politics were controversial, his goals and commitment were admirable. His success in raising awareness concerning the pollution of the Hudson River demonstrated his commitment to address local issues of great importance. I recommend the movie to see how well he lived his non-religious values and how principled a life he lived. Because of some of his misguided politics we don't often count Pete Seeger as a Humanist hero. I grew up on his pro-labor, environmentally-conscious anti war music. I look forward to hearing your opinions about the God-debate or the Pete Seeger film.

### **A Kind and Generous Offer by Dick Cousineau**

According to Rev. Harold Camping of Family Radio, Oakland California: The Rapture will happen exactly 7000 years from the date God first warned his people about the Noahan Flood which Rev. Camping said took place on May 21, 4990 BC. God gave Noah one week to build the 300 foot long Ark, gather up all the pairs of animals, and set sail. Since one week equals 1000 years in God time, that means that there is a 7000 year interval between the Flood and the Rapture. Simple enough. Look it up yourself in Ezekiel 33:3.

Do we live in great times or what? On our next meeting date, May 21st, 2011 the Rapture to Heaven will occur, Jesus Christ will return, and we will not need our meeting place (nor anything else) any longer. (The Actual End of the World will occur on October 21st.) It is important to cash in your long term bonds and send the proceeds to the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara, PO Box 30232 S.B. 93130- Attn: Dick Cousineau, who will also be available to manage your checking account(s) and your cats. Do not hesitate!

*[Watch for an announcement of the Cousineau Lost Cat Sale, coming soon. Ed.]*

### **My Life by John Coppejans**

On September of the year 1919, I was born in the Netherlands where I lived till the year 1950. For reasons that I do not want to go into, I had to go to a Catholic school and church till I was 12 years old. My father was a freethinker, and in my opinion the



most honest and intelligent person I knew. Starting in my early school years, he and I took long walks together in the woods while he talked about the importance of thinking for myself and not take for granted what I was taught in school. I'll be forever grateful to him for giving me a chance to recognize the silliness of what

the nuns in school told us to accept as the truth.

After I reached the age of 12, I went to a normal public school. My father was the general manager of a company that organized carnivals, etc. When he died after being hit by a motorcycle in 1936, I was devastated and missed him very much. He was not only my father but my friend and mentor. After his death the company he worked for invited me to work for them. I started to work in the office trailer that followed the rides to the different towns but became voluntarily involved with the building and breaking down of the different rides and enjoyed the manual labor that developed my muscles.

In early September of 1938 I was drafted into an infantry unit of the Dutch armed forces. Like my father I did not like the military establishment with their pomp and regimentation but when the Nazis invaded the Netherlands in May of 1940, I was gung ho to fight them. The fighting I was involved in lasted for three days and we lost many of the guys I had trained with. The Netherlands being a small and densely populated country, the high

command decided to capitulate after the complete destruction of the city of Rotterdam by German bombs.

The following years we lived under the cruel heel of the occupation forces. I got involved in the resistance and played a minor part by falsifying the signatures of some German commanders who could give out papers that allowed men to stay in Holland and not be sent to a German slave labor camp.

I do not want to cover the five years that the war lasted, but in early April of 1945, I was caught as being part of a resistance group and was going to be transported to Amsterdam to be interrogated and shot, so they told me. Half way between the town where I was arrested and Amsterdam I was taken before a German officer who interrogated me and checked all the papers they had found in my room and then told me that it was quite dumb to be arrested so close to the end of the war since it would be over within two weeks. I did not know if he meant that it was dumb of me or of those who arrested me, but it floored me when he told me to go home. What was his reason for this decision I do not know but it meant life for me.

To make a long story short I emigrated to the USA and ended up in California after living a year in Louisiana. In Santa Barbara I met the treasure of my life, this girl named Patricia and we have been happily married for forty years. We both joined the Humanist Society in 2001 and it was like a breath of fresh air to meet people who, like us, recognize the harm that organized religion has done. So different compared to the close mindedness that I had encountered in Louisiana in the early 1950's.

**Quote of the Month:**

There are three truths: my truth, your truth, and the truth. -Chinese proverb

**April Meeting Report:  
Dr. Toni Frohoff, Wildlife Biologist  
by Ray Stone**

Dr. Toni Frohoff is a wildlife biologist who has been studying marine mammal behavior and communication for over 20 years. She specializes in behavior, stress and welfare in captive and free-ranging dolphins in response to human activity. Speaking at our April meeting, Dr. Frohoff asserted: "there's far more than a drop of humanity in a sea of whales."

Referring to research begun in the 1970s, she cited "myriad expressions of intelligence, emotion and sentience in whales, dolphins and many other species" observed since then. Using video clips she illustrated that dolphins will frequently touch each other, indicating a highly affectionate nature, and that some dolphins will seek the company of humans swimming in their waters. She showed a clip of a gray whale mother bringing her newborn calf to a boatload of researchers and wouldn't leave until they were touched. She emphasized that not all dolphins or whales react to humans in this way and encounters between humans and other mammals should be left under the control of the mammals.

A new era of research in the study of free-ranging mammals indicates that their intellectual and emotional capabilities are far beyond what was previously thought. Dolphins in captivity exhibit many different and more stress-related behavior patterns than those who are free-ranging.

Pointing out that we are the only species that threatens the existence of all, she asks: What has happened to our humanity? Has our technology run amok? She believes that free-ranging mammals she has studied, older than us in evolutionary terms, demonstrate a certain wisdom about how to survive on this planet that humans can learn from.

Examination of dolphins' brains have identified a highly developed limbic system, the seat of emotions, which indicates they may have the

capacity for joy, hardship, etc. Experiments on dolphins and whales, she showed in video clips, demonstrate mammals' self-awareness.

Dr. Frohoff told the story of a group of researchers swimming among a group of dolphins. When one of the researchers developed a leg cramp and fell behind the rest of the group, the dolphins, as if by direction of some communication among them, suddenly disappeared and reassembled around the disabled woman as if to protect her.

Dolphins, like humans, exhibit distinct personalities. Some have been observed to have shorter tempers, while others are more patient. One well-known dolphin, in Irish waters for many years, is known to have a mischievous nature. Another likes to collect objects and keep them stored in a "treasure trove" under her own personal rock.

Some elephants "often show great compassion". A disabled baby elephant was shown to be supported by a herd of elephants, some of who even lifted the baby up to nurse. Of note was that not all of them were genetically related.

Charles Darwin was one of the earliest researchers in animal emotions, having written a book entitled: "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals".

In summarizing her work and life Dr. Frohoff said: "To my surprise, I've been given a glimpse of my own human potential, the best possible part of my own humanity reflected back in the eyes of these magnificent creatures. So could it be that it is in species other than ourselves we will turn to for insights into the restoration of our own humanity as well as for our shared environment."

## **THOMAS JEFFERSON 1743-1826** by Dick Cousineau

After George Washington, Thomas Jefferson is our most famous National Icon. Author of the Declaration of Independence, third President, second Vice-President, Minister to France, Secretary of State, founder of the University of

Virginia, author of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, Defender of the Separation of Church and State and the list of his accomplishments goes on and even to..... " a Human being with failings, and often with feet of clay"; contradictory regarding the slave issue, arbitrary with a streak of vindictiveness, and inconsistent in many issues regarding diplomacy.

As founder of the Republican-Democratic Party he even encouraged followers to smear opponents, and while devoted to the improvement of mankind, he had little interest in particular people. Many members of his generation kept detailed diaries of their feelings during the anti-British and revolutionary times, Jefferson maintained letter-perfect records of grocery bills, daily temperatures, measurements, etc., and spent himself and his heirs into deep debt. He was a man of science not a student of mankind.



But what better to describe his actions than a line of Shakespeare sent to him by Abigail Adams: "There is a tide in the affairs of man, which taken, leads to success...And we must take the current when it serves or lose our ventures". Jefferson took it in his own manner and helped give birth to the first democratic republic in the world. A severe introvert, his demeanor and speech was mostly non-confrontational but his writings would serve as lightning bursts of wisdom to his fellows and the new nation. His elegant words ending the Declaration of Independence, "We mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our Sacred Honor", would inspire the American Spirit as no one, Franklin, Adams, or even Jefferson himself, could have foreseen.

Another side of Thomas Jefferson was his untiring efforts to obtain clarity in our national discussion regarding religion. He said: "I contemplate with

sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared in the Bill of Rights that their legislature should "make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ... thus building a wall of separation between church and State".

During Adam's presidency and Jefferson's vice-presidency, a Treaty between The United States and Tripoli was signed which has aroused much recent discussion because of the statement: "As the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion... ". This treaty was ratified unanimously by Congress and became the Law of the land on June 10, 1797.

The debate over national secularity is still with us 200 years later as religious forces attempt daily to increase their influence over public policy. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson would be turning over in their graves.

Be sure to attend our Meeting of Minds session on July 16, where President Jefferson will be an honored guest and active participant.

### **Is God in Our Genes?** by Joseph Navarro

For those of us who reject the idea of an omnipresent, omniscient, creator of the universe, supreme being, the question of why humans ever came to believe such nonsense is puzzling. Numerous theories abound, but among the more interesting are those that ask whether belief in supernatural entities is somehow rooted in our very being.

Are humans *by nature* creators and believers in god? Among scientists there appears to be some disagreement. Some argue that belief in god/s is rooted in our genetic makeup whether we like it or not; others argue that belief in gods, and the accompanying religions, developed as a by-product of evolution—an *exaptation* in technical lingo.

Those who follow the genetic line of thought propose that during the evolution of our species,

believing in supernatural agents gave us a reproductive advantage. Those who were believers somehow had an advantage over those who weren't believers so believers survived to reproduce in greater numbers until belief in gods eventually became universal.

Those who argue that god-is-in-our-genes generally fall into two camps: supporters of *group* selection and advocates of *individual* selection (selection as in *natural selection*—the engine of biological evolution). The former argue that shared religious belief gave some *groups* of humans a survival advantage over those groups of humans who didn't have religious beliefs. (For example, it unified groups such that they became better fighters with the ability to withstand conquest or be conquerors). The opponents of this view argue that selection of traits doesn't operate at the group level--only at the individual genetic level (see Richard Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene*). Individual belief in gods bestows some advantage that makes that individual more successful at reproducing and passing on the "belief gene."

Among those who argue religion gave humans an *individual* survival advantage is Jessie Bering's *The Belief Instinct*. Bering's theory avoids the pitfalls of group selection theory and claims that individuals who believed that invisible spirits were watching their every move would avoid doing embarrassing things and therefore not spoil their chances at reproducing.

However, I find this line of thinking--and all thinking that claims belief in supernatural entities is genetic--flawed. It doesn't matter whether the group *or* the individual is the conveyor of the "belief gene" because there *is* no belief gene!

We arrived at our present human nature, in Africa, about 200,000 years ago. During that process we acquired language and an incredible intellect. Intellect and language gave us the ability to think abstractly and convey those abstractions to others. This newly acquired trait made us very clever and cleverness ensured our survival; it also knew no boundaries. We became uniquely creative among

our fellow animals--enough to invent mythological things and places like spirits, gods, and heaven. Why we created these things is a topic for another article (see Pascal Boyer's *Religion Explained* for a good start). Suffice it to say we didn't create god/s out of a need to survive; our gods were created from our newfound imagination to fulfill some other desire or need not related to basic reproduction and species survival.

When we left Africa about 60,000 years ago, we already had these mythic creations in mind, which explains why religion is perceived as universal. Religious expression varies around the world because all kinds of external factors (cultural and ecological) came into play when people were inventing their particular brand of religion.

The good news is, as a species we're not stuck with god or religion. We're not genetically compelled to believe any of this stuff. To realize this freedom we must begin to unravel the historical factors that brought us to the present state of self destructive, regressive religious-political affairs. Only then can we strive to undo, rework, and replace the mythic infrastructure of our various global belief systems and create a scientifically based, universally beneficial theoretical foundation for the continued survival of our species.

## **Why do Americans Still Dislike Atheists?**

**by Gregory Paul and Phil Zuckerman,**

*[Reprinted from the Washington Post, April 29, 2011]*

Long after blacks and Jews have made great strides, and even as homosexuals gain respect, acceptance and new rights, there is still a group that lots of Americans just don't like much: atheists. Those who don't believe in God are widely considered to be immoral, wicked and angry. They can't join the Boy Scouts. Atheist soldiers are rated potentially deficient when they do not score as sufficiently "spiritual" in military psychological evaluations. Surveys find that most Americans

refuse or are reluctant to marry or vote for nontheists; in other words, nonbelievers are one minority still commonly denied in practical terms the right to assume office despite the constitutional ban on religious tests.

Rarely denounced by the mainstream, this stunning anti-atheist discrimination is egged on by Christian conservatives who stridently — and uncivily — declare that the lack of godly faith is detrimental to society, rendering nonbelievers intrinsically suspect and second-class citizens.

Is this knee-jerk dislike of atheists warranted? Not even close.

A growing body of social science research reveals that atheists, and non-religious people in general, are far from the unsavory beings many assume them to be. On basic questions of morality and human decency — issues such as governmental use of torture, the death penalty, punitive hitting of children, racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, environmental degradation or human rights — the irreligious tend to be more ethical than their religious peers, particularly compared with those who describe themselves as very religious.

Consider that at the societal level, murder rates are far lower in secularized nations such as Japan or Sweden than they are in the much more religious United States, which also has a much greater portion of its population in prison. Even within this country, those states with the highest levels of church attendance, such as Louisiana and Mississippi, have significantly higher murder rates than far less religious states such as Vermont and Oregon.

As individuals, atheists tend to score high on measures of intelligence, especially verbal ability and scientific literacy. They tend to raise their children to solve problems rationally, to make up their own minds when it comes to existential questions and to obey the golden rule. They are more likely to practice safe sex than the strongly

religious are, and are less likely to be nationalistic or ethnocentric. They value freedom of thought.

While many studies show that secular Americans don't fare as well as the religious when it comes to certain indicators of mental health or subjective well-being, new scholarship is showing that the relationships among atheism, theism, and mental health and well-being are complex. After all, Denmark, which is among the least religious countries in the history of the world, consistently rates as the happiest of nations. And studies of apostates — people who were religious but later rejected their religion — report feeling happier, better and liberated in their post-religious lives.

Nontheism isn't all balloons and ice cream. Some studies suggest that suicide rates are higher among the non-religious. But surveys indicating that religious Americans are better off can be misleading because they include among the non-religious fence-sitters who are as likely to believe in God, whereas atheists who are more convinced are doing about as well as devout believers. On numerous respected measures of societal success — rates of poverty, teenage pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, obesity, drug use and crime, as well as economics — high levels of secularity are consistently correlated with positive outcomes in first-world nations. None of the secular advanced democracies suffers from the combined social ills seen here in Christian America.

More than 2,000 years ago, whoever wrote Psalm 14 claimed that atheists were foolish and corrupt, incapable of doing any good. These put-downs have had sticking power. Negative stereotypes of atheists are alive and well. Yet like all stereotypes, they aren't true — and perhaps they tell us more about those who harbor them than those who are maligned by them. So when the likes of Glenn Beck, Sarah Palin, Bill O'Reilly and Newt Gingrich engage in the politics of division and destruction by maligning atheists, they do so in disregard of reality.

As with other national minority groups, atheism is enjoying rapid growth. Despite the bigotry, the

number of American nontheists has tripled as a proportion of the general population since the 1960s. Younger generations' tolerance for the endless disputes of religion is waning fast. Surveys designed to overcome the understandable reluctance to admit atheism have found that as many as 60 million Americans — a fifth of the population — are not believers. Our nonreligious compatriots should be accorded the same respect as other minorities.

Gregory Paul is an independent researcher in sociology and evolution. Phil Zuckerman, a professor of sociology at Pitzer College, is the author of "Society Without God." He spoke to HSSB, July 2010.

### **Newt Gingrich wins his Third Dumbth-Award Nomination**

[Reprinted from the May 2011 issue of PIQUE, newsletter of SHSNY, the Secular Humanist Society of New York.]

Give Newt credit, he keeps trying, determined to win the SHSNY horse's-ass trophy. In 2008 he announced: "There is a gay and secular fascism in this country that wants to impose its will on the rest of us, is prepared to use violence, to use harassment." In 2010, he shocked even Chris Wallace on Fox News with, "The secular socialist machine represents as great a threat to America as Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union once did."

Unfortunately for Newt, there have been candidates even crazier or dumber than him. Tying together secularists, fascists and violent gays didn't win for him, and neither did conflating secularism and socialism (with Nazi and communist comparisons hovering over), so a desperate Newt has abandoned any attachment to reality and logic, and upped the ante.

Speaking on March 27 at the Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, the megachurch run by John Hagee, the way-to-the-right-of-Genghis-Khan pastor whose "Thank God for Hitler" sermon in 2008 frightened away Presidential candidate John



McCain, the Newt worried out loud that: ... the U.S. could become "a secular atheist country, potentially one dominated by radical Islamists."

Wow, an atheist country run by Muslims! Who could have seen that coming?

My daughter in Baptist Youth  
for Brenna, age 12

Sometimes I throw out words,  
casual, not an issue,  
words like Maia, Athena, Mara,  
names of goddesses.  
Words like myth and story  
when we speak of these old tales  
and dictums, histories of magic  
and supernatural cruelties,  
campsite tips - things we are  
told to live our lives by  
Sometimes, her faith  
held tight in her young heart,  
she balks, challenges,  
walks away, hurt and tearing.  
And so I keep it easy, thrown in,  
aside. The myths an option,  
all the other stories - tidbits,  
tastes of all belief,  
the names sprinkled in like salt.  
Sometimes, on a spring night,  
we come together, blissful,  
around a leaping fire,  
roast marshmallows and  
admire the flowers resurrected  
after winter.  
Celebrate Beltane, her birthmonth,  
bring in the May.

~Anita M. Barnard

Anita M. Barnard, co-editor of five poetry anthologies, lives in Fort Worth and spends weekends tending her rural land in NE Texas where she hopes to someday have a retreat for writers and artists. Her still-evolving website is 13moonsgrove.com. She writes about art, poetry,

food gardening, education and other topics at 13moonsart.blogspot.com.

## What's Going on Here?

by Andrew Hankin  
Assistant Deputy Editor

☑ A panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in Chicago ruled 3-0 on April 14 that the Freedom From Religion Foundation and its plaintiffs (**American citizens**) **do not have legal standing to continue their challenge of the 1952 Congressional Act declaring an annual National Day of Prayer**, which requires the President to issue a proclamation exhorting citizens to pray. FFRF announced immediately it will seek a rehearing *en banc* by the entire Seventh Circuit.

The appeals court overturned the Federal District Court's strong ruling in April 2010 favoring FFRF's challenge. In FFRF v. Obama, U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb ruled the National Day of Prayer as enacted by Congress was unconstitutional, "In this instance, the government has taken sides on a matter that must be left to individual conscience. The same law that prohibits the government from declaring a National Day of Prayer also prohibits it from declaring a National Day of Blasphemy."

Crabb noted a National Day of Prayer was no more within the purview of government to declare than encouraging "citizens to fast during the month of Ramadan, attend a synagogue, purify themselves in a sweat lodge or practice rune magic."

FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor condemned the appeals court decision as cowardly. She said it is clear that had the appeals court panel ruled on the merits instead of throwing the case out on standing, the Foundation would have won, as it did in federal district court. Full story: <http://www.ffrf.org/news/releases/ffrf-to-seek-en-banc-rehearing-on-national-day-of-prayer-ruling-in-7th>

☑ The US Department of Justice has filed a complaint against a South Carolina sheriff for letting one of his prisons bar inmates from reading anything but the Bible. In the complaint, the Justice Department said requests by numerous inmates at Berkeley County Detention Center for everything from correspondence course materials and magazines to legal newsletters have been denied by the office of Sheriff H. Wayne DeWitt.

"Indeed, the only book, magazine, newspaper or religious publication that defendants consistently permit prisoners to possess is the Bible," the complaint read. Prison officers even hand out King James Bibles free to prisoners, but a Jewish prisoner who asked for a Torah and two Muslim inmates who requested copies of the Koran were told they could only have them if family members personally delivered the holy books to the jail.

When one of the Muslim inmates arranged for his girlfriend to bring a Koran to the prison, the sheriff's office refused to pass it on to the prisoner.

Full story:

<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/18/20110415/tod-bible-only-reading-at-us-jail-f62056d.html>

☑ David McAfee, who spoke to HSSB in January 2011 about his book *Disproving Christianity*, has received an official rejection letter from the UCSB Department of Religious Studies (which had no specific details regarding the application). Professor Ann Taves suggested that she didn't recommend David for the graduate studies program because of grades in two classes that he had taken with her years earlier: a B+ and a C+. Professor Taves, a former Professor and Dean at Claremont Theological School, insisted that he wouldn't be considered as a potential Graduate Student because he is "an atheist activist with an axe to grind." Full story:

<http://davidgmcafee.wordpress.com/2011/04/19/an-atheist-activist-with-an-axe-to-grind>

☑ Christopher Hitchens, sober and passionate, explains decent behavior and morality without god, to an audience during a Q+A at

Georgetown University.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQcGXBo8HP8>

☑ "They can't handle my truth, which, in case you missed it, is that there is no truth; it simply does not exist. In my spare time, I invented a brand-new philosophy around this premise. It resolves the age-old conundrum that has long confounded people with too much time on their hands: Is the truth, in fact, knowable? And if so, how can we know if we know it? I'm working on a marketing campaign—"What not to believe in, for people who already don't believe in God"—that should be out soon. Kind of like a Mountain Dew commercial for Xtreme Atheists." Nick Welsh in his weekly column, the "Angry Poodle BBQ" in the Santa Barbara Independent on Thursday, April 21st. Full article:

<http://www.independent.com/news/2011/apr/21/let-sleeping-dogs-prevaricate>

## Non-HSSB Events of Interest by Diane Krohn

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

### Upcoming Events in California:

- May 15: Orange County Freethought Alliance Conference 2011. Orange County Airport Hilton. Speakers include Mr. Deity, Sean Faircloth, Jim Underdown, and others.

<http://www.freethoughtalliance.org/2011conf.html>

- May 15: Dr. Donald Prothero: *Catastrophes! Earthquakes, Tsunamis, Tornadoes, and Other Earth-Shattering Disasters*. Skeptics Society, Cal Tech, Pasadena.

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

- May 15: Karl Zimmer: *Viruses: The Dangerous Myths and the Startling Truths*. CFI West, Hollywood; and the Orange County Airport Hilton.

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

- May 21-22: West Coast Rapture Party, sponsored by American Atheists. Oakland.

[http://atheists.org/events/Rapture\\_RAMS](http://atheists.org/events/Rapture_RAMS)

- June 5: Sikivu Hutchinson: *Moral Combat: Black Atheists and the Values Wars*. CFI West, Hollywood. <http://www.cfiwest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#gordon>
- June 19: Professor David Goldfield: *America Aflame: Evangelicism and the American Civil War*. CFI West, Hollywood; and Costa Mesa. <http://www.cfiwest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#gordon>
- June 24-26: *Science Symposium: 100 Years of Adventures in Science and Pseudoscience*. Hosted by Michael Shermer and featuring James "The Amazing" Randi, Bill Nye the Science Guy, and Mr. Deity (Brian Dalton). Skeptics Society, Cal Tech, Pasadena. [http://shop.skeptic.com/merchant.mvc?Screen=SYMP&Store\\_Code=SS&Product\\_Code=symposium2011](http://shop.skeptic.com/merchant.mvc?Screen=SYMP&Store_Code=SS&Product_Code=symposium2011)

#### Upcoming Events Outside of California:

- May 13-15, 2011: International Freethought Film Festival, Tampa, FL. The program of the International Freethought Film Festival will include 10 different film screenings of independent feature and short films, selected from film submissions that best reflect the mission statement of promoting reason, critical thinking and freedom of inquiry. Narratives, documentaries and animations will be screened to present a spectrum of artistic interpretations of freethought concepts through film. [http://www.freethoughtfilmfest.org/index.php?p=1\\_34\\_GOING-THERE-](http://www.freethoughtfilmfest.org/index.php?p=1_34_GOING-THERE-)
- May 19-22, 2011: Secular Coalition for America, Biennial Strategic Summit, Washington, D.C. *This is a one of a kind participatory meeting of leaders, activists and thinkers all from within our secular movement. You will collaborate, network, and strategize with them to improve our Secular Decade plan.* <https://www.secular.org/civCRM/event/info?reset=1&id=18>
- July 14-17. The Amazing Meeting 2011, Las Vegas, NV. An annual celebration of science, skepticism, and critical thinking, with James Randi, Richard Dawkins, Penn & Teller, Eugenie Scott, and many others. <http://www.amazingmeeting.com/>

### HSSB Contact Information

#### Officers:

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#### Board Members at Large:

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Patricia Hiles

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Joe Navarro

Sandy Garcia

Ray Stone

Andrew Hankin

Mary Wilk

#### Newsletter Editor:

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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](http://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](mailto: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 Calendar

**Saturday, May 21**, 2:30pm. **Monthly Meeting**. JP Herrada of Palabra after-school programs will speak on Gang activities in Santa Barbara. Patio Room, Vista Del Monte.

**Wednesday, May 25**, at 1:30pm, the **HSSB Book Club** meets at the home at **Richard Martin**, 1400 Mission Canyon Road. Call 687-3563 for driving instructions. The book is: "Rebooting the American Dream, by Thomas Hartmann".

**Sunday, May 29** (and the last Sunday of every month), 10am, **Secular Sunday Brunch** for humanists, atheists, agnostics, skeptics, freethinkers, singles, couples and families. No cover charge; membership not required. Pay only for your food and drink. 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.



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