



# THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

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

AUGUST 2011

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## August Program: A Renegade History of the United States featuring Thaddeus Russell

**Program:** Most Americans believe that the weekend and vacations are good things. Most believe that dancing and popular music are not evil. Nearly all think that women should be able to walk in public without a male chaperone, earn high wages, and own property. And though some Americans believe that sex outside of marriage is wicked, most do not. In our August program, we will meet our cultural ancestors who are the unacknowledged pioneers of American freedom: drunks, prostitutes, lazy workers, shiftless slaves, and what John Adams called the "vicious," "vile," and "depraved" of early America. Founding Fathers, indeed!

**Speaker:** Thaddeus Russell is a historian and cultural critic and the author of "A Renegade History of the United States". He teaches American history and cultural studies at Occidental College and has taught history, American Studies, and the history of philosophy at Columbia University, Barnard College, and the New School for Social Research. Born and raised in Berkeley, California, Russell graduated from Antioch College and received a PhD in history from Columbia University.



**Thaddeus Russell**

He is a frequent contributor to The Daily Beast and has written for The Huffington Post, New York Magazine, The Los Angeles Times, The Boston Globe, The Christian Science Monitor, Salon, and The Atlanta Journal Constitution. Russell has appeared on the History Channel, Al Jazeera, Fox News, and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart. His website is: [www.thaddeusrussell.com](http://www.thaddeusrussell.com)

**When:** Saturday, August 20, 2011

**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 donation.

**Dinner Following:** At Vista Del Monte. Cost: \$22 includes wine. Email your reservations by August 15 to:

[Activities@santabarbarahumanists.org](mailto:Activities@santabarbarahumanists.org)

**For More Information, call:** 805-769-HSSB

**Humanist Society Website:** [santabarbarahumanists.org/](http://santabarbarahumanists.org/)

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

## Welcome, New Members!

Jerar & Nancy Andon, Santa Barbara

### HSSB Book Club by Marty Shapiro

It's Old Home Week for your Book Club, as we return to some well-trodden fields - Atheism, Agnosticism, Is God For Real?, etc. And why are we back to discussing these old concerns? Vincent Bugliosi. Yes, the universally respected trial prosecutor (Charles Manson, O.J. Simpson) and writer, is coming to speak to us, on September 17, in the Faulkner Gallery. And in honor of his appearance, the Book Club will be reading Bugliosi's latest work, "Divinity of Doubt: The God Question" - as V.B. discovers non-religion, and explores it at great length.

We'll be exploring this Best-seller on Wednesday, August 17, at 1:30 p.m., at the home of **Richard Martin**, 1400 Mission Canyon Rd. 687-3563. Come join us!

### Humanists' Support Group by Claudia Solé

Last meeting we had a last minute request for a ride that we were able to respond to. It would help if we had advance notice of need whenever possible. Know that we are here for you for moral, physical support of all kinds from like-minded people. Don't forget we're the Humanists' Support Group. Keep the aspidistra flying!

**Claudia Solé** (chair) 682-8292  
e-mail: [solemio@verizon.net](mailto:solemio@verizon.net)  
**Patricia Hiles** 687-5321  
**Roger Schlueter** 962-6316

## From the President by Ron Kronenberg

"I find it very disconcerting that serious candidates for the US presidency say that God speaks to them and advises them on the important decisions, even the decision to run for president of the USA. If they became president, would they still follow God's advice? Just as one example, a woman's right to obtain an abortion. If their message from God contradicts the law of the land, what will they do? Can you expect them to act against their God's advice? How does one resolve this conflict if you rely on God speaking to you for important decisions? I expect my president to uphold our Constitution and established laws of the land, without any reservations. Can serious candidates honestly take an oath to uphold the Constitution, facing this religious/political conflict?"

The statement above is a letter to the editor I wrote that appeared in the July 12, 2011 *Santa Barbara News Press*. We can become more effective as a Society by getting our Humanist separation of church and state positions out there and understood as the sane option. As an educational Society we need to educate ourselves and the public. Both the *News Press* and the *Independent* have cooperated and printed letters that members of our Society have submitted. We are heard more often when you, our members, participate in submitting articles. Separation of church and state needs to become the default position of the voting public. We must underscore this Constitutional precept because our country is moving in the opposite direction during this campaign season.

As the election draws closer we can expect the religious right to explode with theocratic rhetoric. Our response is important. Oaths of religious piety are not a part of our democratic traditions and must be exposed for their true impact on the democratic process. Our members love our country. Let's participate in the democratic process to achieve a society that keeps our heads held high, so that we can feel proud to be Americans. It requires an educated electorate to achieve

democracy. Let's help our Society educate people as part of the solution.

Obviously, electronic media is an effective tool that reaches a larger, usually younger, following. It is the message that is important, regardless of the media used to convey it. The advantages of church-state separation can even be tweeted and/or posted on Facebook. If you, like me, are horrified by the injection of religion into our government institutions, speak up, be heard in any way you can. We have a democracy to protect!

### **Letter to the Editor, Santa Barbara News Press. July 17, 2011**

Michele Bachmann's claim that God told her to run for President reminds me of the same claim made some years ago by Pat Robertson. I never could understand, though, why God then told all those other people to vote against him.

**Ray Stone**

### **Report on July "Meeting of Minds" by Robert Bernstein**

The "Meeting of Minds" presentation at our July meeting drew a full house at the SBCC Fe Bland Auditorium. This re-enactment of a re-enactment (originally by Steve Allen) had **Dick Cousineau** as host Steve Allen, **Andrew Hankin** as Bertrand Russell, **Ray Stone** as St Augustine, **Roger Schlueter** as Thomas Jefferson and **Meredith McMinn** as Empress Theodora of the Byzantine Empire.

Few had heard of Theodora before, not even Meredith, but she was a big hit. Both Theodora and Augustine each had become devout Christians after a very un-Christian youth. In the case of Theodora it was poverty that forced her into a life of prostitution and acting. In those times, an actor was of equally low status as a prostitute. Augustine was something of a playboy with a number of mistresses before finding his God.

Augustine supported the unification of Church and State brought about by Constantine, while Jefferson showed how it is never good for the minority. Christians did not like it when they were the persecuted minority so it is clear Christians should not be persecuting others when they are the majority. Theodora did not agree and sided with Augustine on that issue.

Theodora recounted her story how she met Justinian who fell not only for her beauty but also for her wit. They were married and just two years later (in the year 527) Justinian was declared Emperor. And she was his Empress. In many ways she was the brains behind him. She talked of how they waged war to maintain the empire, which led to a discussion of the ethics of war.

Augustine said he is not a pacifist; it depends on the causes. Jefferson agreed and when Augustine claimed that even offensive wars could be justified, Bertrand Russell interjected that today's terrorists would no doubt agree. But Augustine deplored the horrors of war, saying that wars of pure power to maintain empire are not justified. Theodora pointed out to him that it was imperial war by Constantine that allowed Christianity to spread. Augustine reiterated the horrors of war and the joyousness and vengeance of soldiers when inflicting misery. Just when Jefferson thanked him for pointing this out, Augustine went on to say that the people must still obey the orders of the state!

He then debated Russell on the evils of following leaders like Nero, Hitler or Stalin. When Augustine pointed out that one can morally oppose one's leaders while peacefully submitting, Russell countered that the innocent still suffer the horrors of war regardless of any peaceful moral opposition. Augustine pointed out that we should be wary that history books, like today's news broadcasts, emphasize the bad and evil while ignoring the good that happens daily. Christian atrocities, which without question occurred, are carefully detailed, while the everyday good deeds of millions of Christians are ignored.

On the question of government power, Jefferson said that people should be free to be heretics. Augustine believes that governments must be coercive because men are sinful. Russell said OK, but there are matters of degree. Jefferson envisioned a government for his times and felt that each generation must choose its own government. Times change and government must stay abreast of new discoveries and new truths.



**Robert Bernstein in Summer Solstice Parade**

[Reprinted by permission of Lauren Hanson, Photographer, and Noozhawk ([www.noozhawk.com](http://www.noozhawk.com)).]

On religious issues, Augustine believes that man will reform only in the grace of God. When asked why this had not yet occurred, he admitted to be as perplexed as the others. When Russell pointed out the many inconsistencies in the bible, Theodora accused him of hating God, but Russell answered that he does not hate God, just doesn't believe in him. Augustine agrees that there is much that a believer cannot explain, but says non-believers have the same problem. Jefferson pointed out that religion does not grow while non-believers can grow.

When asked by Theodora if he finds anything good in Christianity, Russell replied that some Christians are good, but are probably so just by nature.

On the issue of Faith and Reason, Augustine said reason has its limits and cannot even decide among Christian beliefs. He described how, in the year 320, Arius claimed that God is the one uncreated being that is the source of all other creation. Hence anything created is inferior to God, including Jesus. This was opposed by Athanasius who came up with the idea of the Holy Trinity. Jefferson challenged the idea of mutually contradictory versions of truth all deserving respect. Augustine disagreed, saying this just shows that it all is true within the one Christian faith. Russell countered that faith is subject to delusion.

According to Jefferson, education and discourse is what allows us to progress and become more humane. Theodora pointed out that since most people live a life of hunger and poverty they never know education. Augustine challenged the right to spread falsehoods, but Jefferson, given the last word, declared that the answer to published falsehoods is to publish truths.

Indeed, this event showed the value of a most refreshing and enlightening discourse!

### **Responses to "Meeting of Minds"**

"I enjoyed the Steve Allen session very much. I would like to see this as an annual occasion with different, famous historical figures."

"Delightful and the readers were really good. Loved the head gears!"

"TERRIFIC!! I really enjoyed each of them and the whole thing. Thanks to everyone involved."

"Everyone did a good job; this was a nice change of format program."

"Wonderful, enjoyable performance, entertaining, smart....but who the hell is Theodora?"



"It was a great event. Would have been OK if a few minutes shorter."

"Steve Allen's concept of famous people in history who could never have met each other, having a conversation across the table is brilliant. It was fun and educational. So proud of all our local humanists on stage and Steve Allen, one of the most famous of atheists."

"I think it's safe to say that, whoever attended the Meeting of the Minds re-creation Saturday had a

fantastic time, of historic proportions. Thanks to all of the dedicated folks who helped put this masterpiece onstage."

"I was there along with two guests, and they enjoyed your program very much. I wish you could have used the same style microphones used at regular meetings, but it might have been impossible to have five devices. I am hearing impaired and only heard the Empress clearly; one of my friends had trouble hearing Augustine and Russell. But all in all, everyone deserves a well done, and a very big thank you."

"I found it entertaining, stimulating, witty and amusing. It was refreshing to be exposed to both sides of the religious debate. Seeing atheists dressed in bishop's garb was a treasure in itself."

"I cannot be considered a competent observer because I have difficulty hearing. For me this is typical for such presentations. The costumes were good, especially those of the empress."

"My husband and I both thoroughly enjoyed the performance. We did not think it was too long, as I heard a couple of people say. Sometimes it was hard to hear Augustine and Jefferson. Russell was terrific. We would go to another. Thanks for all your hard work."

"It was a tremendous effort and I can't imagine how many hours of preparation it would have taken. The empress gave it life and it wouldn't have been

much fun without her. I'm old enough to remember the original Steve Allen series. They would make a wonderful series of fund raisers. Hooray for the cast!"

"I enjoyed the production immensely, as did my sixteen year old grandson (miracles do happen). I think Mark Twain and maybe Will Rogers would have found it amusing but maybe not threatened. Thanks to all."

#### Abandoning God

Only ten when I decided to ask.  
The church door was open  
But no one was there.  
I marched right up to the altar,  
Righteous steps, strong and firm.  
I had to bend my head way back  
to see the cross on the wall above.  
"Well?"  
I asked, "Are you there, God?"  
"You have a minute to answer me!"

What does a ten year old know of minutes?  
It must have been only 15 seconds, really.  
There was no Answer.  
Strong, firm steps carried me out.  
Out into a world I believed I must conquer  
myself.  
A world full of believers  
Who never thought to ask.

by Susan Palmer

Susan W. Palmer, a grandmother, lives in Colorado and creates art, poetry, and short stories. She's been published in several print magazines and belongs to the Colorado Poets Society. "Abandoning God" was published in *Above Us Only Sky, Atheist Poetry, Volume Two, Incarnate Muse Press, 2008.*

Michelle Rhea, Poetry Editor of the Secular Circular, can be reached at: [michellerhea@cox.net](mailto:michellerhea@cox.net)

**Famous Freethinkers of the Past:  
Edward Osborne (EO) Wilson  
1929-Still going strong  
by Dick Cousineau**

Ed Wilson was born 72 years ago in Birmingham, Alabama and grew up mostly in the area of Mobile Bay and the panhandle of Florida, where he became intensely interested in natural history. During a fishing trip as a youngster he pulled back on a catch of needle-spined perch so hard, they entered his pupil to permanently blind his left eye. So much for studying large animals. It left him with only the smallest view: ants. When he was 18 he began a survey of all the ant species in Alabama which eventually led him to be the foremost myrmecologist in the world.

He received his BS and MA at the University of Alabama; then to Harvard for his Ph.D. Wilson is a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Non-Fiction Literature. To his peers he is known as the “Father of Sociobiology”, “Darwin’s Natural Heir”, and for his environmental advocacy and secular humanist beliefs. Currently he is Professor of Entomology at Harvard, a Fellow of the Committee of Skeptical Inquiry (CSI), and Humanist Laureate at the International Academy of Humanism, (\* see below). He has used sociobiology and evolutionary principles to explain the behavior of social insects, then to understand the social behavior of other animal species, including humans.

While the world of Biology was content for Evolution to explain why and how new species are created and how they might behave, the human mind remained ‘off limits’ to them; it was the reserve of social scientists, theologians, philosophers, anyone but biologists. Wilson put

forth the argument that all animal behavior, including humankind, is the product of heredity, environmental stimuli, and past experience. Free will therefore is an illusion! The human mind has been shaped as much by genetic inheritance as it is by culture, if not more. The truth is that the two are intensely connected. It is not nature or nurture; it’s both, together,

Politically and religiously, Wilson’s sociobiology ideas have offended both liberals and conservatives who favor the idea that human behavior is culturally based. Many religious thinkers said “sociobiology has the potential of becoming a religion of scientific materialism”. In response he created the phrase “Scientific Humanism”- a world view compatible with science’s knowledge of the real world and the laws of nature. His personal beliefs, he has

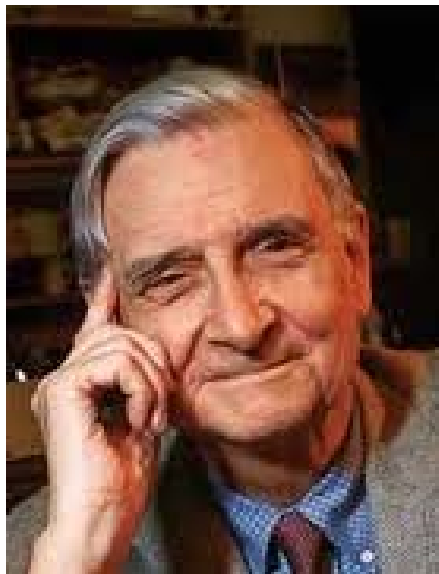
explained, have been a long trajectory away from traditional religions. Mankind has created tens of thousands religions, each one true at the time to its followers. “It is an illusion to think that Secular Humanism and scientific learning will dispel or replace religious belief, for mankind would rather believe than know”, he says

E.O. Wilson is a scientific humanist who embraces the diversity of human achievement, (including religion, which he sees in evolutionary terms), who is searching for a sound ethical basis for ecological thinking.

Fundamentally he is a rational optimist who shows us the beauty and awesomeness of life on earth, proving that materialism need not be a bleak view, but rather an ethical and humanistic one.

Some of his thoughts are worthy quotes on their own:

□ We live in a delusional state, he says of the West, and America in particular imposes a horrendous burden on the world to require our



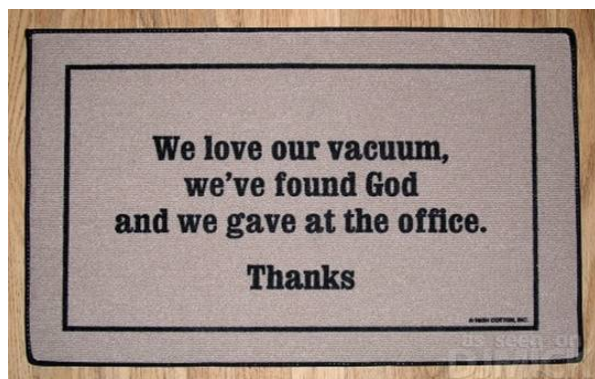
**Edward O. Wilson**

wonderful standard of living at such an enormous cost.

- To bring the world's 6.2 billion people, using today's technology up to the level of the average American family would require four more Planet Earths.
- The education of women is the best way to save the environment, by bringing population under control. It may take 150 years to make an impact however.
- There is a central role for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) because there doesn't seem to be any other way to create a truly green revolution which would improve the economic situation of the majority and save as much of the planet as we can.

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 \* **Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI)** was founded in 1976 (as CSICOP, Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal; named changed to CSI in 2006) to promote scientific inquiry, critical investigation, and the use of reason in examining controversial and extraordinary claims. It publishes "Skeptical Inquirer". Some of the founders were, Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, Paul Kurtz, James Randi, Martin Gardner. <http://www.csicop.org/>

**International Academy of Humanism**, a program of the [Council for Secular Humanism](#), was founded in 1980 to recognize distinguished humanists and to disseminate humanistic ideals and beliefs. Some of its members: Steve Allen, Richard Dawkins, Betty Friedan, Salman Rushdie, George Soros.



**Door Mat of the Month**

## "Texas Gov. Rick Perry's Misguided Day of Prayer" Beware those who seek political power claiming God is on their side. By Lawrence M. Krauss

[Reprinted from the Los Angeles Times, July 25, 2011.]

Texas Gov. Rick Perry is dancing closer and closer to a bid for the U.S. presidency. He's talking to his wife (she's counseling him, he says, to get out of his comfort zone), to potential fundraisers and, presumably, to God. On Aug. 6, Perry will convene a Christian day of prayer and fasting to "seek God's guidance and wisdom in addressing the challenges that face our communities, states and nation."

Perry's call came in the form of an official proclamation from the office of the governor urging "Americans of faith" to pray on Aug. 6, but his press release narrowed that down: The event at Reliant Stadium in Houston, dubbed the Response, would be a "Christian prayer service." Moreover, according to the website created for it, the meeting "has adopted the American Family Association statement of faith," including the infallibility of the Bible, the centrality of Jesus Christ and the eternal damnation that awaits nonbelievers.

Claiming affiliation with Christian values often guarantees immunity from serious public or media backlash, but it shouldn't. Not when that claim, once you get to the details, means that about 21% of the adult U.S. population (including nonbelievers and those unaffiliated with any faith, and non-Christians, according to the most recent Pew Religious Landscape Survey) are excluded from a quasi-governmental event that will, among other things, proclaim their eternal damnation.

Let's imagine how the public would respond if Perry were a Muslim, and an essential part of his exclusionary day of prayer included the claim that Christians and Jews are infidels who, if they are not

converted (possibly forcibly) in this life, are guaranteed to suffer eternal damnation in the next.

Or imagine what is an even more unlikely scenario. What if Perry were an atheist who called for a day of secular discussion of solutions to the many challenges we face as a nation, and as a sidelight pushed the notion that the faithful should not play a role in the discussion?

The Constitution's establishment clause was designed to protect freedom of religion by protecting us from one religion, authorized by the state. But the noxious nature of the governor's proposal does not merely hinge on the question of its constitutionality.

It is at best inappropriate for religious zealots to claim a unique mantle of righteousness. But when those empowered by the electorate to govern suggest that governance should be based not only on a religious premise but the premise of one religion in particular, to the exclusion and derision of those whose spiritual inclinations may differ, we must be on guard.

The challenges facing this country are numerous and manifest. Threats to national security, the economy, public health and welfare, the environment, energy security and more are well known. Those who want our government to address these issues head on, and not with fairy tales - religious or otherwise - should not stand idly by and let the debate or public policy be hijacked by those who claim to know the truth before the relevant questions have even been asked.

Like it or not, the claimed doctrines of the world's major religions are not only incompatible with each other, but sometimes also with the evidence of reality. For these reasons alone we should not cede the debate on public affairs or the "solutions to the challenges" that face us to one group that asserts any specific divine support for its cause.

Perry's proclamation, and the Response website, seek cover with a timeline of historical calls for national prayer, quoting John Adams and George

Washington beseeching a Christian God's forgiveness and guidance with days of prayer stretching back to the Continental Congress in 1775. One can argue about the spiritual intent and theological inclination of the founders, but if they had felt that the Bible was sufficient to govern the affairs of men and women, they would hardly have felt it was necessary to draft the Constitution.

There is a reason theocracies are found at the bottom of the world's economic and opportunity ladder. Successful public policy cannot be based purely on doctrines established before we knew the Earth orbited the sun. The modern world is changing, and only an approach to dealing with real-world problems that recognizes the fluidity of both material and spiritual conditions can change along with it.

We can only hope that Perry's gambit, which many people think is designed to aid him in a quest for the presidency, will backfire. Even the faithful should recognize that truth is not the dominion of a single religion - and that the problems we face as a nation are too important to be left to those who have nothing more to offer than the claim of having God on their side.

*[Lawrence M. Krauss is director of the Origins Project at Arizona State University. His newest book, "A Universe From Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather Than Nothing," is scheduled to be published in January.]*

### **Letters to Editor, Los Angeles Times, July 28, 2011.**

**1.** Lawrence Krauss writes: "Even the faithful should recognize that truth is not the dominion of a single religion." But isn't that the very problem?

Whatever the religion, true believers hold their particular faith above reason, evidence be damned (along with all nonbelieving infidels).

History abundantly shows us that all religions, and even their sects, kill others over ideas that have no resolvable conclusion.



Science, on the other hand, is a rigorous and demanding evidence-based system that holds itself up to constant challenges, accepting nothing on faith. Science helped lead humankind out of the horrific Dark Ages. However, sterile science lacks humanity.

The genius of our Founding Fathers was that they wrote into the Constitution tolerance and respect for people and their ideas. We need science, and we need humanity. Without these we will revisit the Dark Ages.

Phil Beauchamp  
Chino Hills

2. Krauss needs to know that contrary to his thinking, truth is the dominion of a single religion: Christianity.

The only way to get to heaven is through the Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me."

Dennis Kinney  
Santa Ana

## What's Going on Here? by Andrew Hankin, Chief Roving Reporter

☑ The national state/church watchdog Freedom From Religion Foundation has filed a court motion asking U.S. District Judge Gray H. Miller to order Texas Governor Rick Perry to stop allowing use of his name, recordings and invitations to promote a prayer rally in Reliant Stadium. FFRF is asking that Perry be barred from participating "in his official capacity as governor as a speaker at the event" and to rescind his proclamation calling August 6th, 2011, a "day of prayer and fasting for our nation's responses."

Judge Gray has already scheduled oral arguments

over the request and asked for the state's response. FFRF filed suit asking the court to direct Perry "to take affirmative steps to disassociate himself from promoting, sponsoring and endorsing the scheduled prayer rally." The Foundation doesn't seek to stop Perry from attending the rally privately. Full story

<http://ffrf.org/news/releases/ffrf-seeks-restraining-order-against-gov.-perry>

[See "Late Breaking News" below for more on this story. Ed.]

☑ American Atheists celebrated the full spirit of July 4th, including their campaign to achieve full social equality that featured an armada of flying banners declaring: "God-LESS America - atheists.org" and "Atheism is Patriotic - atheists.org". Planes featuring the provocative banners took off in 26 states. "This campaign would have been unthinkable just a few years ago," said Dave Silverman, President of American Atheists.

"Non-believers -- atheists, freethinkers, humanists -- are in the fastest growing demographics in the United States . There's still a dark side here, though: we tried hard to have our peaceful banner campaign in all fifty states, but we encountered companies that refused our business, and pilots who said they were either afraid to fly planes with an atheist message, or simply refused to do so on sectarian religious grounds."

Blair Scott, Communications Director for American Atheists, observed that despite successes like pride events, conventions and the popularity of atheist-themed books, "we still face a serious uphill battle in being accepted as 'worthy' Americans. Polls show that regardless of qualifications, more than fifty percent of Americans would not vote for an atheist candidate running for public office. So, it's no surprise that some companies do not want our money, or that even pilots would refuse to do their job. Imagine if an atheist openly refused to do business with, say, a Catholic or Jew or a black person. There would be a justifiable public outcry!" Full story:

[http://atheists.org/press\\_releases/atheist\\_banner\\_campaign\\_a\\_success](http://atheists.org/press_releases/atheist_banner_campaign_a_success)

☑ An Austrian man has won the right to be photographed for his driving license wearing a pasta strainer on his head, on grounds of religious freedom. Niko Alm announced the decision saying that after three years of struggle a psychologist had passed him fit to drive, so he could wear the kitchen implement for the official picture.

A self-styled 'Pastafarian', Mr Alm said he belongs to the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, which lampoons religion. "Today I was able to get my new driving license, and in it you can clearly see that I'm wearing a colander on my head to demonstrate my allegiance to the Flying Spaghetti Monster. My headwear has now been recognized by the Republic of Austria."

The spaghetti church was founded in 2005 in opposition to pressure on the Kansas school board in the United States to teach the theory of intelligent design in biology classes as an alternative to evolution, and since then it has engaged in a light-hearted campaign against religion.

Key to the beliefs of Pastafarians is that the world was created by the Flying Spaghetti Monster, but owing to the monster being inebriated at the time of creation, it has a flawed design. Original story: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/8635624/Pastafarian-wins-religious-freedom-right-to-wear-pasta-strainer-for-driving-licence.html>

## **Late Breaking News! Judge tosses attempt to stop Texas prayer rally**

HOUSTON, July 28, 2011 — A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit that sought to stop Gov. Rick Perry from sponsoring a national day of Christian prayer and fasting, ruling Thursday that the group of atheists and agnostics did not have legal standing to sue.

U.S. District Judge Gray H. Miller said the Freedom From Religion Foundation argued against Perry's involvement based merely on feelings of exclusion, but did not show sufficient harm to merit the injunction they sought.

"The governor has done nothing more than invite others who are willing to do so to pray," Miller said.

Rich Bolton, who argued for the group, said he was considering an appeal.

"I wonder if we had a Muslim governor what would happen if the whole state was called to a Muslim prayer," said Kay Staley, one of five Texas residents named as plaintiffs in the suit. "I think the governor needs to keep his religion out of his official duties."

Staley said she would be at the prayer rally to protest.

The Freedom from Religion Foundation argued in the lawsuit that Perry's involvement in the day of prayer and fasting would violate the First Amendment's establishment clause. The event, which is called The Response, is scheduled for Aug. 6 at Houston's Reliant Stadium.

Perry invited the Obama administration, the nation's governors and Texas lawmakers to attend the event. The Republican governor is moving closer to jumping in the race for the White House.

Full story at: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/huffwires/20110728/us-prayer-day-lawsuit/>

### **Quote of the Month**

A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties and needs; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death. -Albert Einstein, (1879-1955)

## 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:

**August 7:** Vincent Bugliosi: Divinity of Doubt: An Agnostic's Challenge. CFI West, Hollywood.  
<http://www.cfiwest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#bugliosi>

**August 21:** Celebrate Science: A special screening of No Dinosaurs in Heaven. CFI West, Costa Mesa.  
<http://www.cfiwest.org/groups/orange.htm#schiller>

**August 21:** Atheist Film Festival, San Francisco.  
<http://sfatheistfilmfestival.org/>

### Upcoming Events Outside of California:

**An Alaskan geology cruise! August 7-14:** Glaciers and the Science of Climate Change. Sponsored by The Skeptics Society. Details can be found at the website:  
[http://www.skeptic.com/geology\\_tours/2011/Alaska-Cruise/](http://www.skeptic.com/geology_tours/2011/Alaska-Cruise/)

**October 7-9:** Freedom From Religion Foundation, Annual Conference 2011, Hartford, Connecticut.  
<http://www.ffrf.org/outreach/convention/>

**October 27-30:** CSI Conference 2011, New Orleans, LA. Speakers include Barbara Forrest, Benjamin Radford, James Randi, Jim Underdown, and Tom Flynn.  
<http://csiconference.org/accomodations>

## HSSB Contact Information

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["mailto:treasurer@santabarbarahumanists.org"](mailto:treasurer@santabarbarahumanists.org)

### Board Members at Large:

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Claudia Solé

Dick Cousineau

Nancy Wahl

Roger Schlueter

Mary Wilk

### Newsletter Editor:

Ray Stone

<mailto:Editor@santabarbarahumanists.org>

### 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

**Wednesday, August 17**, at 1:30 p.m. at the home of **Richard Martin**, 1400 Mission Canyon Rd. 687-3563. The Book: Vincent Bugliosi's "**Divinity of Doubt: The God Question**"

**Saturday, August 20**. Monthly Meeting. "**A Renegade History of the United States**" featuring Thaddeus Russell. 2:30pm. Patio Room of Vista Del Monte. Dinner at VDM to follow.

**Sunday, August 28** (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, September 17**. Monthly meeting. **Vincent Bugliosi**. Author "Agnosticism". Faulkner Gallery.

**Saturday, October 15**. Monthly meeting. **Prof. Joe White**. Primer on Ignorance and Stupidity.

**Saturday, November 19**. Monthly meeting. **Sanjiv Bhattacharya**. Secrets of Wives-Mormon Polygamy.

**Saturday, December 17**. Winter Solstice Party, at Valle Verde.



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Santa Barbara  
PO Box 30232  
Santa Barbara, CA 93130