



# THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

FEBRUARY 2010  
www.sbhumanists.org

## February Program

**William Meller, MD, will talk about his book *Evolution Rx*:**

- The Primal Diet -- our Stone Age body's wants and needs.
- Germ warfare, allergies, and the dirt age -- taming our hyperactive immune system.
- Toxins -- the good, the bad, and the indifferent.
- The urge to merge - dating, mating and reproduction.
- Evolution from the neck up -- sorting out the mental toolbox.
- Flawed heritage -- when good genes go bad.
- Living longer -- evolution and aging well.



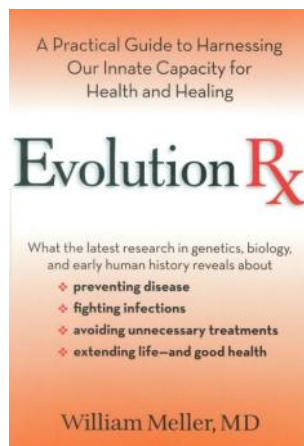
William Meller, MD

*Evolution Rx* website <http://www.evolution-rx.com>

Dr. William Meller is a board certified internist as well as one of the nation's leading practitioners of evolutionary medicine.

Having explored health customs and traditions in Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand, Myanmar, China, Mongolia, Peru, Argentina and many other countries, Meller has discovered new connections between ancient indigenous medical practices and our evolutionary roots in the robust, nomadic tribes of the Stone Age. He integrates these discoveries along with the most up to date medical research into his practice at the MedCenters of Santa Barbara, a California health facility with three offices and some 36,000 patient visits annually.

He is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and teaches a pioneer course in Creative Studies at UCSB and his



of the American College of Physicians and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He served as a clinical instructor at Southern California for more than a decade and now co-teaching a course on evolutionary medicine in the College of Medicine at UCSB. Meller received his undergraduate degree from Georgetown University and his M.D. from the Georgetown University School of Medicine.

**Saturday, February 20th in the Patio Room at Vista del Monte, 3775 Modoc Road** (Las Positas exit off Hwy. 101, midway between UCSB & SBCC) in Santa Barbara. Information phone 805-259-6432.

Join us for socializing @ 2:30 p.m.

**Program starts promptly @ 3:00 p.m.** Q+A to follow

## Contact Information

### Board of Directors 2009-2010

#### Officers:

*President:* Roger Schlueter  
962-6316 [drrogers@cox.net](mailto:drrogers@cox.net)

*Secretary:* Hugh Smart  
961-8191 [hughsmart@aol.com](mailto:hughsmart@aol.com)

*Treasurer:* Ray Stone  
682-2123 [rstone@west.net](mailto:rstone@west.net)

#### Board Members/At Large:

Wayne Beckman  
Dick Cousineau  
Andrew Hankin  
Diane Krohn  
Jim Balter  
Nancy Wahl  
Adrian Wenner  
Mary Wilk

#### Committee Chairpersons/Other Contacts

Membership: Mary Wilk  
967-3045 [mwilk@cox.net](mailto:mwilk@cox.net)

Publicity: Andrew Hankin  
965-3739 [Publicity@SantaBarbaraHumanists.org](mailto:Publicity@SantaBarbaraHumanists.org)

Programs: Dick Cousineau  
687-2371 [Programs@SantaBarbaraHumanists.org](mailto:Programs@SantaBarbaraHumanists.org)

Activities: Joe Navarro  
963-2128 [Activities@SantaBarbaraHumanists.org](mailto:Activities@SantaBarbaraHumanists.org)

Social Justice: Marian Shapiro  
968-0478 [marianshapiro@cox.net](mailto:marianshapiro@cox.net)

Book Club: Marty Shapiro  
968-0478 [martinshapiro@cox.net](mailto:martinshapiro@cox.net)

Newsletter Editor: Neal Rosenthal  
[HSSB\\_Editor@cox.net](mailto:HSSB_Editor@cox.net)

Web Master: Wayne Beckman  
569-5503 [hssbwebmaster@cox.net](mailto:hssbwebmaster@cox.net)

## America Loves Twits

by Marcia C. Sherman, Ph. D.

America loves twits; witness George W. Bush and Sarah Palin! There are numerous examples on our national broadcasting systems. None seem to have a brain in their head; but, since they think they're the greatest thing to materialize on this planet since sliced bread, millions of people *Love Them!* Well, there are a few exceptions.

What is it about Americans that we worship people who have no ability to discern truth, intelligence, integrity or reason. The fact that none of these people can finish a complete sentence, that they fake, twist, turn, invent, lie, confuse and manipulate speeches and conversations to cover the fact that they really don't know what they're talking about seems to fascinate a large population of the American public. It's almost like a mental disease is sweeping our country. It is a characteristic of humans to pay attention to loud noises, but that's actually because our brain is supposed to be telling us that loud noises usually mean there's danger!

It's as though we want to deliberately be deceived. But it isn't just Americans that like clowns as leaders and entertainment. I recall that back in the Roman days there were a few deranged rulers and I can't imagine how watching Christians being torn apart and eaten by lions was a whole lot of fun. The problem is these vacuous fools seem to attract vicious, sadistic people and fascist friends with delusions of grandeur into their entourage. I have heard that Hitler was entertaining. But I don't think Stalin was.

Years ago, when I lived in New Jersey, I came to the conclusion that Americans like mediocrity. That's what the majority seems to strive for in every facet of our lives, including marriage, education, career, politics, information and spirituality. And when something goes wrong, we can just point fingers at almost anybody and they're automatically guilty. We actually do not like people who are really good at what they do; it puts too much pressure on the rest of us to keep up and we don't want to be bothered. And we especially hate people who call this to our atten-

*(America Loves Twits continued on page 8)*

## News About Members

by Andrew Hankin

**On Friday, January 20th**, HSSB members Andrew Hankin and Neal Rosenthal attended a forum by Healthcare For All California in the SB Library's Faulkner Gallery. There was a presentation by journalist TR Reid about healthcare systems around the world; screenings of upcoming ads featuring personalities like Lily Tomlin as Ernestine, the health insurance claims-denier; and upcoming actions to bring Universal Single Payer Healthcare to all Californians, a policy supported by HSSB. Information website: <http://healthcareforall.org>

**On Monday, January 25th**, HSSB members Andrew Hankin, Parkie Parker, Robert Bernstein and Neal Rosenthal attended an event in the SB Library's Faulkner Gallery by the Pro-Choice Coalition to mark the 37th anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision. In remarkable contrast to the two pro-choice religious speakers was that the conservative Christian broadcast *Focus On The Family*, which frequently rails against abortion rights, has TWICE as many listeners as NPR! Newspaper report and commentary: <http://www.independent.com/news/2010/jan/30/religious-leaders-mark-roe-v-wade-anniversary>

**On Tuesday, January 26th**, HSSB Sponsor and local transportation advocate Robert Bernstein had his letter published in the SB Daily Sound, pointing out that a recent story was wrongly written as if a bicyclist had crashed into a vehicle, whereas what actually happened was the motorist opened his car door into the cyclist.

## Obituary

by Dick Cousineau

A long term member, Dr. Art Brody, died last month at Serenity House. Art was an ardent golfer and reader who graciously hosted the Humanist Book Club at his home for many years. His wife, Elaine, died last summer. They will be missed.

## Obituary

by Andrew Hankin & Neal Rosenthal

Our member, Tonia Juach, died peacefully at her home in Goleta on January 14, 2010 at the age of ninety-four. Tonia was active in the Peace movement and very involved in the community.



A memorial service was held at Live Oak Unitarian Universalist Congregation on Sunday, January 31.

Read further info in the Independent:

<http://www.independent.com/obits/2010/jan/25/tonia-juach>



## Membership Notes

Humanist Society meetings are usually held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 3 pm in the Patio Room of Vista del Monte, 3775 Modoc Rd., Santa Barbara, CA. More information is available at our web site:

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

or by contacting any of the board members listed in the left-hand column of this page.

If you would like a copy of this newsletter mailed to a friend or someone who might be interested in our Society, please send their contact information to: PO Box 30232, Santa Barbara, CA 93130, or call Mary Wilk. Alternatively, all of our newsletters are available at the web address shown above.

## A Society Milestone

by Roger Schlueter

The Humanist Society of Santa Barbara will celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> birthday in May, 2010. This is a significant milestone for us and a cause for celebration. So celebrate we will.

Led by one of our “Founding Fathers,” Dick Cousineau, a small group of volunteers has begun planning efforts for a gala celebration. We anticipate having a grand event to include good food, renowned speakers and engaging secular comradery. So put May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010 on your calendar. You won’t want to miss it.

Our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration included nationally known personalities Tom Flynn, editor of *Free Inquiry* and Eddie Tabash, a prominent First Amendment advocate and long-time Board member of the Center for Inquiry. Our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration will continue this tradition by featuring Dan Barker, co-president of the *Freedom from Religion* Foundation as one of our speakers. Other notable personalities are being considered as participants in our festivities.

As details of this celebration are finalized, the *ad hoc* 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary planning committee will keep you apprised. Do you have any thoughts on what we should include in our event? If so, please let Dick know.



## Caperton v. Massey

by Roger Schlueter

Early in this decade, Hugh Caperton and other small coal miners in West Virginia sued mining giant Massey Coal Company alleging “fraudulent misrepresentation, concealment, and tortuous interference with existing contractual relations.” The jury found in Caperton’s favor and awarded plaintiffs \$50 million in damages.

Knowing that his company would appeal to the state Supreme Court, Don Blankenship, Massey CEO, supported a challenger, Brent Benjamin, over an incumbent judge in the 2004 West Virginia judicial elections. He spent \$3 million on

the campaign, more than all the other candidates combined, and bought a narrow victory for his candidate.

To put this in local perspective, think back on the 2009 Santa Barbara municipal elections where an outcry was raised by Randall von Wolfswinkel spending roughly \$700,000 on three city candidates and Proposition B. Imagine the righteous indignation if von Wolfswinkel had spent nearly \$1 million on a single judgeship race. Would you then have confidence in that same judge were he to hear a case brought against von Wolfswinkel? No, neither would I.

In West Virginia, Caperton moved to disqualify now-Justice Benjamin under the Due Process Clause. Justice Benjamin himself denied the motion. The state Supreme Court then reversed the \$50 million verdict. During re-hearings, Justice Benjamin twice more refused to recuse himself and filed concurring opinions in the Court’s decision.

Caperton appealed to the United States Supreme Court and won. But the very frightening aspect was that it was a 5-4 decision with, as usual, Justice Kennedy serving as the swing vote. With the switch of just one single vote, the highest court in the land could have found that “buying a judge” was perfectly acceptable.

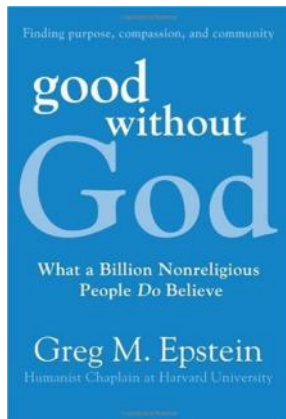
As an aside, in a dissenting opinion, Justice Scalia made reference to the Talmud and wrote, “Divinely inspired text may contain the answers to all earthly questions, but the Due Process Clause most assuredly does not.” Justice Scalia does not belong anywhere on the federal bench, much less on the Supreme Court.

I raise this case as a harbinger of what may lie in the future as a result of the Supreme Court ruling in the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* case. Many commentators have written far more eloquently on this case than I can, so I will simply state my view as informed by Humanist Principles. The democracy we enjoy in the USA is in peril of being drowned by a flood of corporate, monied interests who have agendas not congruent with the best interests of the United States or its citizens. I fervently hope President Obama follows through with his stated goal of addressing this judicial disaster through the legislative process.

## Book Club

by Marty Shapiro

Greetings, all. The next meeting of our Humanist Book Club will take place on **Wednesday, Feb. 17, at 1:30 p.m.**, at the home of Dick Cousineau - **505 Alegria Rd** (off Las Positas). Our Best Selling (it may be sold out locally) selection is the well-received *Good Without God*, by Greg Epstein. Epstein is “the Humanist chaplain/rabbi at Harvard University. He has a B.A. in Religion and in Chinese, and also a Master of Arts in Judaic Studies, both degrees from the University of Michigan. He’s a musician and has played in a rock and roll band.” It seems to me that *Good Without God* offers a kind of “post-religious” way of thinking - no arguments about the existence, or not, of God. He simply gets on with the business of considering a code of morality based on Humanistic beliefs (how to be Good Without God).



Here is a more knowledgeable review from Amazon.com:

★★★★★ **Infidels - Sunny Side Up**, Nov. 30

By [Kenneth Snow Rowe](#) (Washington, NC USA)

Harvard's Humanist Chaplain, Greg Epstein, has performed an enormous mitzvah for not only the humanist/freethinker/atheist/agnostic minority, but also for majority/believer/religious folks who are curious enough to read this important and positive work -- *Good Without God: What a Billion Nonreligious People Do Believe* Whether one is a person wallowing in negativity, having internalized the majority's stereotype of those whose beliefs fall outside the norm, or a person who cannot fathom how a “non-believer” can possibly aspire to lead an ethical life, one can benefit from reading Epstein's cogent exploration of what non-religious people do believe, and where the beliefs of “infidels” and the faithful may intersect to provide heretofore untapped opportunities for social progress.

## Atheist Bliss

by Roger Schlueter

Now really, how often do you have a chance to have a bit of creative fun, get to express your humanist/atheist/freethought worldview and contribute to a worthy cause all at once? Well, now’s your chance by attending our February meeting and participating in the Atheist Bliss project. If you’re interested, read on.

[Eric Paul Erickson](#) is a photographer based in Los Angeles who is working on a book project called *Atheist Bliss* that will feature nontheists with signs that express their feelings on religion, atheism, god, etc. He is motivated by the idea that nontheists are constantly told they can't truly know happiness because they don't know a god's love and his intent is to refute that notion.

The book will feature pictures of people with signs expressing their viewpoint with a pithy thought, quote or saying. The pictures will be designed around each individual, highlighting their story, career, place in life, etc. This picture is one example. Go [here](#) for more examples. The text accompanying each photo will focus on these questions:



- What do you do for a living? How central to your identity is your career?
- How would you describe yourself?
- Was there a moment you began to identify yourself as an atheist/freethinker?
- Have you had difficulties when people find out? Friends? Family?
- An argument used very often by believers is that free thinkers can't truly be happy. Are you happy? Tell me about it...

Eric would like anyone who wants to participate to give some thought to these questions, answer

(*Atheist Bliss continued on page 10*)

## Upcoming Events

### HSSB Social Brunch...

is a secular gathering for humanists, atheists, agnostics, skeptics, freethinkers, singles, couples and families without religion, on the last Sunday morning of every month. No cover charge – pay only for your food + drink. Bring your friends, because membership and reservations aren't necessary.

**10 a.m. February 28th** and the last Sunday of every month, at **Cody's Cafe**, 4898 Hollister Ave. in the Turnpike Center, Goleta, in the room to the right as you enter the restaurant. For information call 805-967-3045. (Membership Chair, Mary Wilk, is a regular attendee: e-mail [mwilk@cox.net](mailto:mwilk@cox.net).)

### Dining Out

Please join us for dinner (5:00 PM) after the February 20, meeting (“Evolution Rx”) at the

**Del Pueblo Café**  
**5134 Hollister Ave.**  
**Magnolia Center**

**Cerveza, Mole, and Guacamole!**

**(Crucifixes optional)**

Click here for menu: <http://www.delpueblocafe.biz/>

Please let me know if you plan to attend by responding to [activities@santabarbarahumanists.org](mailto:activities@santabarbarahumanists.org)

Hope to see you there!  
 Joe Navarro  
 Social Activities Guy

### Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be held Tuesday, February 16th, 5:30pm at the home of Mary Wilk; 4384 Via Presada, Santa Barbara. Wayne Beckman will host.



## Non-HSSB Events of Interest

### Local Events

♦ **INHERIT THE WIND** by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, a monumental courtroom story portraying a dramatic account of the Scopes Monkey Trial -- a clash between faith and science that is intense and electrifying.

Play directed by Ed Giron; presented by DIJO Productions and Virtual Theatre Company. Feb. 11 (Preview), 12 (Opening), & 13 at 8pm; Feb. 14 at 2pm & 8pm; Feb. 19 at 8pm; Feb. 20, 21 at 2pm & 8pm; Feb. 25, 26 at 8pm; Feb. 27 at 2pm & 8pm.

Center Stage Theater, upstairs at the Paseo Nuevo Mall, downtown Santa Barbara. General Admission \$24; Students \$17. Information phone 805-964-0408 or website <http://www.centerstagetheater.org>

♦ **Freefall – America, Free Markets, and the Sinking of the World Economy** with Nobel Prize-winning economist and author Joseph Stiglitz, discussing his incisive new book *Freefall*, which boldly argues that the current global financial crisis carries a “made in America” label. Drawing on his academic expertise, his years spent shaping policy in the Clinton administration and at the World Bank, and his more recent role as head of a UN commission charged with reforming the global financial system, Stiglitz outlines a way forward:

- restore the balance between markets and government;
- address the inequalities of the global financial system; and
- demand more good ideas (and less ideology) from economists.

8pm Friday, February 19th in the Victoria Hall Theater, 33 West Victoria St. Santa Barbara. \$10 general, \$8 students. Information phone 805-893-3535 or web page <https://artsandlectures.sa.ucsb.edu/Details.aspx?PerfNum=1697>

### California Events

♦ **February 14:** Center for Inquiry West, Los An-

*(Events of Interest continued on page 7)*

## What's Love Got To Do With It?

by Jim Balter

In January, Tom Scheff, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at UCSB, explored with us the emotional and relational world of pop songs and why people spend so much time listening to them, peppering his talk with personal anecdotes as well as snippets from songs by Ella Fitzgerald, Leona Lewis, Bob Dylan, and the Beatles. Tom, who has both a B.S. in Physics and a Ph.D. in psychology, has studied and written extensively on human emotions, particularly shame, which is just one of the emotional elements of these songs.

Tom observed, from his 51 years with college students, that pop songs are like a religion for them. His scientific bent led him first to ask them why: they invariably answered that it's because they make them feel better. His next question was again "Why?," and he set out to try to find out. His answer is rooted in the notion of emotional detachment.

The Gershwin song *You Can't Take That Away From Me* is about a "warts and all" sort of love, but most "Top 40" love songs are about heart-break, quarrels, infatuation ... but rarely requited love. Both the Gershwin song and the modern song *Bleeding Love* refer to "they," but it's incidental in the former whereas the latter involves a sort of Bonnie and Clyde "you and me against the world." This is a notion that Tom refers to generally as "bimodal alienation" -- engulfed within but isolated without — which can be seen, for example, in academic in-groups, cults and nationalism — with sometimes tragic consequences for civilization, leading to wars where "we" are united together and the other side doesn't count.

Tom discussed the emotions commonly found in pop love songs: grief, which we hear in songs of loss; anger, as in Bob Dylan's *Don't Think Twice, It's All Right* (cool, sarcastic anger); and shame, as in the Beatles' *You've Got to Hide Your Love Away*. He noted that modern society is covert about emotions, especially shame; we use passive language, or euphemisms such as "pissed off" rather than "angry."

Another emotion, fear, is not found so much in pop songs, but in movies ... or roller coasters. This is safe fear, that we can quit or walk away from. The key point is detachment — we can experience our emotions without being overwhelmed by them. Pop songs can act in the same way, by allowing people to experience and process their emotions while listening to the songs — the emotions belong to the characters in the song, not to the listener, allowing emotional distance and detachment. This is Tom's answer to the question of why people feel better by listening to these songs.

The Q&A session was quite lively — it seems that we're all experts on emotion in a sense. There was also some concern that the songs that young people are listening to today are louder, with lyrics that don't make sense, and that headsets are alienating; some kids have music in one ear and a cell phone in the other and aren't interacting with those around them. It struck this observer however, that the generational gap, which seems to occur between all generations, may be yet another example of bimodal alienation.

(Events of Interest continued from page 6)

geles. Seth Shostak: *When Will We Find ET?*  
<http://www.cfiwest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#Lecture3>

- ♦ **February 21:** Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles. Victor Stenger: *What Can Science Say About God and the Afterlife?* <http://www.cfiwest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#Lecture3>
- ♦ **February 28:** Skeptics Society, Cal Tech, Pasadena. Dr. Jared Diamond: *Natural Experiments of History*. <http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures>
- ♦ **March 7:** Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles. Brian Fagan: *Cro-Magnon: How the Ice Age Gave Birth to the First Modern Humans*. <http://www.cfiwest.org/calendar/FeedYourBrain.htm#Lecture3>
- ♦ **March 14:** Skeptics Society, Cal Tech, Pasadena. Does God Have a Future? A debate between Deepak Chopra and Jean Houston vs. Michael Shermer and Sam Harris. <http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures>

## Getting to Know You: Sandy Garcia by Meredith McMinn

Is Santa Barbara your ideal place to live? Apparently it is for Sandy Garcia. Dissatisfied with the way things were turning out in Puerto Vallarta where she was selling real estate, post divorce, she found a web site called “pickyourspot.com”. There she filled out a questionnaire of some 50 questions about her preferences in everything from politics to the weather and it pointed her to Santa Barbara. In the middle of 2005, she picked up and moved here, confident she could get a place to live and a job and make friends. Of course, she did. Given Sandy’s abilities, energy and personality, that was a foregone conclusion.

Initially, Sandy had to commute to Ventura to work, but now she’s happily ensconced as a Certified Court Interpreter in Santa Barbara, doing simultaneous Spanish/English interpreting in criminal proceedings. It’s a challenging job that also often calls on Sandy’s background as an actress to convey not merely words in appropriately idiomatic form and nuance, but something of the emotions of the speaker in high stakes situations.

Sandy came by her current job by a circuitous route, but one that makes perfect sense. She grew up in Mexico City, where her father worked for the FBI. Much later, among her various jobs and experiences, Sandy worked in Lake Tahoe as a Peer Counselor in sexual assault and a Domestic Violence Coordinator. There she encountered many women who spoke only Spanish, and she often went to court as an advocate for such clients. As there was no certified interpreter in the courts there, she was encouraged to go to a class and become one. It’s extremely difficult to qualify for certification: the pass rate is lower than that for the notoriously tough California Bar. After months of studying on her own



while also working full time, she did it. She also passed the FBI exam—but she’s glad she never actually worked there.

Her route to atheism was considerably shorter. Not raised religious, she was, nevertheless, sent to a “somewhat religious” school her junior year of high school. She says that her becoming an atheist at that age could be seen as a form of teen rebellion—more against the school’s restrictions than religion itself. But her “conversion” had deeper roots in reason and her conviction was reinforced during her adult life. Growing up in a country where the innately superstitious nature of Catholicism was exaggerated to extremes, she couldn’t understand believers.

Sandy says that she saw—close-up and too often—the ill-effects such faith could have.

From there to HSSB was not such a great distance. While still in Puerto Vallarta, Sandy was researching the place that she’d chosen to be her new home and found the HSSB web site. It was only during the last year or so that she has finally been able to become a member, but already her confident presence, attractive face and friendly openness have drawn attention. I’m sure she’s going to be a real asset to the HSSB.



*(America Loves Twits continued from page 2)*

tion.

We don’t want people to tell us the truth, we seem to have a collective revulsion towards anyone who even gets close; we might have to be bothered to engage in a bit of introspection about who we are and what we’re doing. It’s much more fun to spend the day mindlessly working at some routine for your life that you have created and then flop in front of a television screen and be entertained because: 1) you’ve just spent most of your energy working so somebody else can buy a mansion; or 2) it’s easier to let somebody else take responsibility and do the thinking for you; or 3) we like to see people getting away with things which gives us permission to do the same thing.

*(America Loves Twits continued on page 9)*

## Evolutionary Developmental Biology and the American Creation-Evolution Controversy

by Robert Bernstein

PZ Myers is a rare person who knows evolutionary biology and has the patience to wade through creationist arguments and rebut them. Thus he packed UCSB Embarcadero Hall January 20th.

He summarized the Creationist argument in three lines: Complexity can only be created by design. Biology is complex. Hence, biology was created by design.

He was told he needed to read the latest Intelligent Design (ID) literature. He waded through over 500 pages of *Signature in the Cell* and found it was basically those three lines repeated in different ways.

The ID people refer to “specified complexity” without ever defining it. If we saw Mount Rushmore we would indeed know humans designed it. But biology did not set out to design squids, rabbits or humans or anything else in particular.

However, biology does explain spontaneous growth of complexity as it is defined by established complexity theory.

Myers goes on to show how the single-celled organisms like choanoflagellates (a type of protozoa thought to be similar to the unicellular organism from which all animals evolved) evolved key mechanisms that are used later in evolution for very different purposes. Ion channels, vesicles, switches and membrane fusion proteins that we use for our complex nervous system evolved originally for digestion.

“We didn't arise out of a vacuum. We find bits of our ancestry floating around in the ocean.”

But evolution also creates anew. The icefish evolved a protein anti-freeze. The protein came from an error in the gene for trypsinogen that we have in our pancreas. The nylonase enzyme evolved in bacteria to digest newly invented nylon. Again, from a “frame shift mutation” of an existing gene.

Nature is not an engineer with intelligent designs, intentions and blueprints. Instead, evolution creates complexity through chance, modularity, multi-functionality, incremental tinkering and contingency.

You know you had ancestors. You may not know the detailed sex life of your 16th century ancestors, but you know you came from couples doing things and popping out babies. We seek the details of evolutionary processes through patient research and we know more every year.

Thank you to PZ Myers for his patient research in evolution and in debunking anti-evolution nonsense. And thank you to the UCSB student group SURE (Scientific Understanding and Reason Enrichment) for organizing this event and making it all happen!



*(America Loves Twits continued from page 8)*

From a Transpersonal Psychology and Sociological perspective, twits are people who hang out in their right brain as five year olds who never stop talking; they appear to have no depth and can be quite narcissistic in their behavior. They learn how to function in our left brain world as children who never grew up, and that's their attraction. They don't appear to understand or care about boundaries, cooperation, team work or the importance of silence; but a more important component is their inability to learn or integrate outside information from watching and listening to others. This results in an unbalanced perception of their own self importance, which is essential for leadership but highly destructive because of their lack of intelligent information. It's similar to the Jesus messianic rapture that is the make-up of many religious fanatics.

Of course, the major question is, “What is stopping these people from maturing into well-balanced adults?” But that's going way too far into the depth of personal and family life for the largely superficial society we have created in this country over which they reign as kings and queens.

Unfortunately, a Democracy cannot function

*(America Loves Twits continued on page 10)*

*(America Loves Twits continued from page 9)*

without the participation of an informed public. Adults who don't know how to reason are extremely dangerous, especially if they get into a place of leadership and power over other people. Relationships and mental laziness aside, twits are the Pied Pipers of the world, leading us all to destruction.

*(Atheist Bliss continued from page 5)*

them and email their answers and a snapshot of any kind to [him](#). He will provide blank signs and pens so all you have to bring to our February meeting is your creativity and inspiration.

The worthy cause associated with this project is the [Freedom from Religion Foundation](#). Proceeds from sale of the book will be donated to the *FFRF* which is a leading organization that advocates for the separation of church and state. Many HSSB members are also *FFRF* members; the HSSB is a lifetime organizational member.



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