



# The Secular Circular

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

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

JUNE 2014

## June Program:

### Summer Solstice Picnic!



**Date:** Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

**Place:** Stow Grove Park, Area 3 (different from last year). Stow Grove Park is at 580 N. La Patera Lane, Goleta.

**Time:** Meet at 12:00 noon for fun, games, libations, book sale. BBQ lunch is served at 1 p.m. by Red Lopez.

**Menu:** Tri tip, chicken, bread, beans, salad, beer wine, and soft drinks.

**Price:** \$15.00

If you wish, you may bring hors d'oeuvres or dessert to share.

RSVP to [judithannfontana@yahoo.com](mailto:judithannfontana@yahoo.com) or call 967-7911 to leave a message. Please RSVP by June 4<sup>th</sup>.

## Activities

### Judy Fontana

Come and enjoy the annual Summer Solstice Picnic, when we celebrate the longest day of the year and contemplate our pagan past.

**Date:** Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Place:** Stow Grove Park, Goleta on La Patera Lane, north of the 101 freeway; Area 3 (different from last year).

**Time:** Meet at noon for fun, games, libation, book sale and BBQ served at 1 p.m. by Red Lopez.

**Menu:** Tri tip, chicken, bread, beans, salad, beer wine, soft drinks.

**Price:** \$15.00

Those of who would like to may bring hors d'oeuvres or a dessert to share.

Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

RSVP to [judithannfontana@yahoo.com](mailto:judithannfontana@yahoo.com) or call 967-7911 to leave a message. **RSVP by June 4<sup>th</sup>.**

## President's Column: The HSSB: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

### Richard Martin

The paragraphs in quotations below are from Dick Cousineau's article "A Short History of HSSB" that appeared in the 2007 membership roster produced by Ray Stone.

"In the mid-1990's a gentleman by the name of Keith Bailey began to place monthly ads in the local newspaper concerning the thoughts and sayings of the 'Great Agnostic' Robert Ingersoll, which had to do primarily with the evils and hypocrisy of Organized Religion in America."

"In May of 1995 Dick Cousineau contacted Keith to ask him if he had any replies to his ads, and he replied that he had collected over two dozen, just from people in Santa Barbara. Dick and Keith then sat down and wrote to each one

inviting them to a preliminary discussion about forming a group of like-minded individuals to discuss issues raised by Keith's ads. Eight people showed up in June of 1995, namely: May Smith, James Kimberly, Anne Rojas, Steve Nuttall, Mike Daly, Russ Boggie, plus Dick and Keith. From this initial meeting "The Santa Barbara Rationalist" organization was formed and agreed to meet once a month in each other's homes. Word of mouth, a few well-placed advertisements, published columns and Letters to the Editor all combined to raise community awareness of the group."

Dick served as President the first fiscal year (July 1995 - June 1996), and Keith Bailey became editor of the first publication, *The Freethought Newsletter*, which helped to boost the membership to 39 by the end of the year. Other people who joined in the first three years and are still members today are Mary Wilk and Colin Gordon (Jan. 1996), Parkie Parker (Feb. 1996), Sydney and Hope Smith (July 1997), Ellen Jackson (Aug. 1997), Roger Schlueter (July 1998), and Suzanne Spillman (Sept. 1998).

"From individual homes we began to meet in the small Blake Lounge at the Unitarian Society, then onto the larger Jefferson Hall as our membership grew. The early years witnessed many sterling speakers and events, together with a few dreadful and embarrassing performances, but somehow we muddled through with dedication and foresight to create an interesting and dynamic organization. In late 1999 our founder Keith Bailey died, but his memory lives on and an appreciative plaque was placed in his honor at Chase Palm Park."

"Some major jumps in membership were experienced when major speakers were brought to Santa Barbara; speakers such as William Edelen, Paul Kurtz, Ellen Johnson, William Sloan, Michael Shermer, Sam Harris, Mark Juergensmeyer, Wendy Kaminer, Susan Jacoby, Jennifer Hecht, Michael Newdow, Charles Darwin (just kidding), and many, many

more, and not forgetting The Great Scambini. In 2005 we celebrated our tenth anniversary of existence with a full house attendance of about 125 people at a local hotel, with national speakers and a delightful party."

Over the years we have been fortunate to have had dedicated leadership that has given the HSSB an excellent national reputation in the secular community. Our past Presidents (multiple years are shown, otherwise served one year) are Dick Cousineau (3½ years), Roger Schlueter (4½ years), Ron Kronenberg (3 years), Paul Koehler, Charlotte Carver, Bob Michael, Jim Alexander, Bob Perry, and Adrian Wenner.

Special recognition is due Mary Wilk, who has done so much for the HSSB over the years. Mary became Membership Chair in 1999, and has continued in that role to the present day. Mary has kept meticulous membership records, sent annual renewal notices to each member (repeatedly if necessary!), updated membership information, and deposited member checks and often admissions income into our bank account. All during that time Mary has arrived early at the monthly meetings, bringing the cash box for admissions money, notices, sign-in sheets, members badges, and secular literature. Mary is usually sitting at the admissions table, encouraging visitors to become members, and she has missed only about four meetings during the last 15 years! And Mary has graciously hosted all the Board meetings at her home for the last three years.

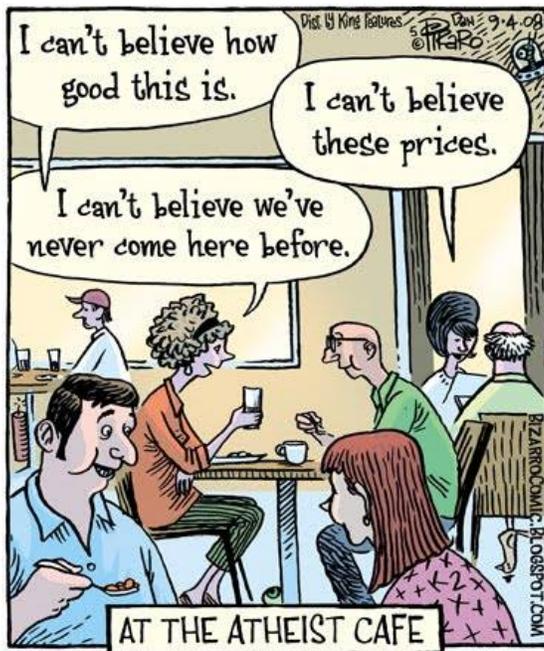
Today, as the only Humanist or freethought organization on the South Coast north of Ventura, we provide interesting, entertaining, educational, and often inspirational programs, Solstice parties, and a sense of community for our members as well as frequent visitors. Mary's records show our membership growing from 13 in 1995 to the mid 170's in 2006, and settling in the 150-170 range since. There is

ongoing concern on the Board to keep the membership above the bottom of this range, and to raise it near the top or higher.

This year we placed a glossy flyer insert in the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, and found that advertising the HSSB as an organization *per se* was not at all effective. I think that going forward we should focus on the quality of activities offered to our members; on a more effective publicity program for those activities (especially on the internet); and on more development of our new website (which is in progress) to promote our activities and membership, and serve as a communication center for our members.

After I set up an HSSB Meetup website last July, and publicized it via email, meeting announcements, and in the *Secular Circular*, I found there was very little interest. What I had in mind was that it could serve as a communication center for our members, making it easy to schedule and/or see the RSVP's for various member events such as the last Sunday brunch, a book club, salon, party, etc., as well as publicizing our monthly meetings. Meetup is used by many secular groups in California to run their programs. For two examples, go to the Humanist Community in Silicon Valley site (339 members) [www.meetup.com/humanistcommunity](http://www.meetup.com/humanistcommunity) and the Backyard Skeptics (Orange County) site (787 members) [www.meetup.com/Backyard-Skeptics](http://www.meetup.com/Backyard-Skeptics).

In my opinion, expanding our internet presence to attract new younger members is essential for the future of the HSSB. Hopefully our new website can fill that need. Or perhaps our website could also link to an HSSB Meetup site to provide for the membership communication function and as a second site of access to the HSSB by the public. In any case the internet is not the future, it is the present, and we need to catch up.



### More from the American Atheists National Convention Diane Krohn

The American Atheists convention had so many interesting speakers and topics, so here is another installment with summaries of some of the presentations.

**Denise Stapley:** *The Unexpected Gifts of Survivor.* Denise Stapley is the winner of *Survivor: Philippines* and is a licensed mental health counselor and certified sex therapist. Denise talked about her experience on the television show *Survivor*. She was a non-believer in a group of strong believers, and they knew she was a non-believer. Denise's experience on the show taught her that it was important to accept your authentic self, not alienate others with your belief or non-belief. She tried to enter conversations out of curiosity and not contempt. In one situation on the show, Denise had gotten bitten by something and was in a lot of pain (though it was not life-threatening). A husband and wife couple in her

tribe was strongly religious, and wanted to pray for Denise's pain to go away. Denise agreed to this (not that she believed in prayer), but it was more of a way to allow them to show their concern for her. No, the prayer did not work, but as it was a self-limiting pain, probably caused by a centipede sting, it did go away on its own.

**Amanda Knief:** *Two Atheists Walk into a Bank....* Amanda is the Managing Director and In-House Counsel of American Atheists. Her talk was actually about why atheists need to plan for dying, but before she started her talk, she gave us an interesting story about a recent experience: Amanda and David Silverman (President of American Atheists) went to a bank in New Jersey to get some forms for American Atheists notarized. The notary, a bank employee, looked at the documents and then started asking them about the organization. (Note: Notaries are just to confirm that you are who you say you are; they are not to determine if your documents or organization meet with their approval.) Amanda explained briefly what the organization does. The notary then said that she was unwilling to notarize for "personal reasons." "She got another bank employee, who was at his lunch break, and he did notarize the documents.

After the notarizing was completed, David questioned him about the first bank employee's refusal to do the notarizing, saying, "If she had refused us because we were Jews or Muslims, she would have been fired and thrown out of here." The bank employee responded by stating: "She's allowed to refuse on personal reasons. If you're unhappy, that's why there are so many banks to go to." (Amanda's and Dave's reaction: WTF??)

The bank has claimed that it was a matter of miscommunication. Amanda has drafted legislation with the goal of enacting a law to ensure that this type of discrimination does not

happen in the future to those at American Atheists, or anyone else.

Read the story here:

<http://news.atheists.org/2014/03/27/american-atheists-responds-to-td-banks-statement/>

Next month, even more from the American Atheists convention!

### **Atheists in the Bible Belt: A Survival Guide**

**Raleigh, North Carolina (CNN)** – Back home, they erase their Internet histories, look over their shoulders before cracking jokes and nod politely when co-workers talk about church.

But in a hotel ballroom here on a recent weekend, more than 220 atheists, agnostics, skeptics and freethinkers let it all hang out.

The convention was called “Freedom From Religion in the Bible Belt,” and it was part celebration of skepticism and part strategy session about surviving in the country’s most religious region.

They sang songs about the futility of faith, shared stories about “coming out” as nonbelievers and bought books about the Bible – critical ones, of course.

“Isn’t it great to be in a room where you can say whatever you want to whomever you want without fear of anyone criticizing you for being unorthodox?” asked Dan Barker, co-president of the [Freedom From Religion Foundation](#), as he opened the two-day convention.

The Wisconsin-based foundation co-sponsored the event with the [Triangle Freethought Society](#), which draws its members from this state’s tech-heavy Research Triangle.

The nonbelievers came from as far afield as Ireland and France, but most described themselves as refugees from the heart of the South - atheist anomalies amid fiercely devout friends, family and neighbors...

See the rest of the article here:

<http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2014/05/24/atheists-in-the-bible-belt-a-survival-guide/>

### **May Speaker:**

#### **Rick Roney: Increasing Public Safety by Reducing Recidivism Helen Gordon**

Rick Roney gave a very enlightening program on “Increasing Public Safety by Reducing Recidivism” at Vista Del Monte in May.

Recidivism, says Mr. Roney, is a kind of revolving door in the criminal justice system. Historically, about 70 per cent of released prisoners return to prison within three years of their release. The urgency of the problem was recognized by the Criminal Justice Realignment Act of 2009. Prison crowding must be addressed, not only at state prisons but at local jails that are now being impacted by transfers from state prisons.

If we can reduce the recidivism by changing behavior and ways of thinking, it will serve a great purpose in saving the prisoners for more satisfying and healthful lives. It will also reduce the costs of law enforcement and social services. One example of success in rehabilitation is a prisoner who had been in and out of jail 14 times, but after participating in a program of counseling and training, he is now a student at Santa Barbara City College.

One of the problems is that crime is committed locally, but sentences are often served in state facilities far away from the local community. About 1400 people per year return from state

prison to Santa Barbara County. Sometimes parole violations occur because the released prisoner cannot get to the parole officer to make the required check-in.

After being inspired by a friend who was helping “lifers” to make the changes they wanted to improve their lives even in confinement, Mr. Roney became interested in helping other prisoners to change before it is too late. In 2005, he began a local effort that has since evolved into the Santa Barbara County Reentry Project.

Is rehabilitation possible? Mr. Roney stresses that it is not only possible, but the results can be measured. His background in manufacturing has taught him to measure results for quality control. He raised some private funds to get started, which enabled the project to hire a manager (director) who has been an addict and understands the needs of inmates. A steering committee includes a deputy sheriff and parole officer as well as the director and Mr. Roney. They sent letters to inmates who were scheduled for release in about four months, asking them “What will you need when you get here (in Santa Barbara County)?”

One important need is for rental housing, temporary quarters until the released man can get on his feet. The program provides 100% of the rental fee for the first month, 50% for the second month, and only 10% for the third month. Some funds that had been set aside for long-term housing would be better spent on the short-term rents the men need.

Individuals are assessed and assigned to resources according to their needs and risk assessment. A score below 20 is low risk. A score of 20-30 is moderate risk; and 30-40 indicates high risk. Average entrant is in the range of 31-32. Seventy-five percent of those who stay in their prescribed program will succeed. Courses include:

1. Cognitive Therapy – gets at core values, how you think, and how to think better.
2. Anger management
3. Substance abuse
4. Community service. The participants are placed in job-like situations, such as:

Habitat for Humanity, Food Bank, help for the homeless, etc. This eases the transition to paid jobs.

To reduce overcrowding, California had to reduce prison population from 170,000 to 130,000. Re-defining a felony punishment to “technical violation” has helped. Those eligible for early release must meet 3 criteria: Non-violent offense, non-sexual offense, and non-serious crime.

The Santa Barbara County Reentry Project now has a staff of 7 people in the North county, and 7 in the South; and it has proven the success of the program using scientific measurements and control groups. Violent crime is down, but non-violent crime is increasing. The Project is getting some help from the Affordable Care Act by putting eligible men on Medi-Cal. The Project still needs public support and encouragement.

## **A Year Without War Update** **Joe White**

Greetings 2020 AYWW Supporters,

As I've mentioned in previous correspondence, 2020 AYWW has the very good, on-going problem of being extremely popular and thus having the daily challenge of simply keeping up. So, you may receive the attached invitation to our June 6 Reception more than once. [Note: A reception will be held Friday, June 6, 5-7

*p.m., at SBCC La Playa Stadium Press Box.]*  
 Please RSVP to Dr. Dulcie Sinn at the address on the Invitation [dulcie@ayww.org]. We are having a number of our students and their programs on view during the reception to allow informal conversations and all of our wonderful, generous and visionary supporters to learn first-hand where AYWW is going presently.

In brief, a new AYWW website is coming up, there has been much activity in the Middle East, especially Jordan; Stockholm, Sweden; our cities Proclamations of Support Program is robustly underway and our middle school bullying/AYWW program is unfolding along with the United Nations Association work. And there's more...

(Ed. Note: Also check out this video):  
*We Are Your Children - A Year Without War.*  
 See it here:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59G4D23ml2g&feature=youtube\\_gdata](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59G4D23ml2g&feature=youtube_gdata)

### Book Sale

We will be having a book sale during our Summer Solstice picnic, Sunday June 22. Bring those books that you have read, and buy others that you've always wanted to read (but maybe you didn't know until you saw them). Books about skepticism, freethought, non-belief, etc., are especially appreciated. The books that are not sold will be donated to the Santa Barbara County jail.

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When I told the people of Northern Ireland that I was an atheist, a woman in the audience stood up and said, 'Yes, but is it the God of the Catholics or the God of the Protestants in whom you don't believe?'

— Quentin Crisp

### Poem John Coppejans

"It is god's will" was the reply  
 on questions that some kids and I  
 would ask the nuns who ran the school.  
 "He is the King and sets the rule  
 we live by and we should obey  
 his sacred words and never stray."  
 We were expected to accept as truth  
 these teachings because as youths  
 we thought that they be in the know  
 when even priests would tell us so.  
 But many things sounded so odd,  
 Like a man who came to earth as the son of God  
 who walked on water and raised some dead,  
 fed many people with few loaves of bread.  
 A talking snake, a woman and man,  
 the two who started the human clan.  
 Or about a man who built a boat  
 To keep thousands of animals afloat.  
 And there was another crazy tale  
 about a man inside a whale.

But I was lucky, 'cause I had a dad  
 Who told me, "don't take for granted what's  
 being said,  
 Read books that tell a different story  
 and you'll appreciate the glory  
 of nature evolving through all the ages  
 and made life go through different stages."  
 And so I did and it cleared my mind  
 Of superstition's fog that made me blind  
 to what is true and I felt free  
 of dogmas and I could see  
 that the book of life is so much better  
 than stated in any religious letter.  
 I wish that everybody on this globe  
 could throw away this binding robe  
 of superstition that prevents clear thought  
 so they can see the damage that these creeds  
 have brought.

*(I was born in the Netherlands, but for some reason I do not want to go into, I had to attend a Catholic school 'til I was 12 years old, even though my father was a freethinker.)*

## Interfaith Workday at Habitat for Humanity Project

### The Canon Perdido Affordable Homes Project—Saturday, June 28

Habitat for Humanity seeks to be environmentally responsible in our construction and the Canon Perdido homes are being built to the Santa Barbara green build level 4. One building will be Passive House certified, making it the first affordable housing development in Southern California to achieve this certification. Our goal is to achieve "near zero" energy usage on these homes by combining passive components such as window placements, insulation, Energy Star appliances and building wrap with "active" components such as solar thermal and photovoltaic systems. The homes will have 70-80% reduction in energy use over the current energy code requirements. Thanks to many donations of materials, labor and resources, we are able to incorporate these green features into the affordable project. Habitat for Humanity broke ground on the 12 new homes on December 12, 2012. Above ground construction began in June of 2013 and construction will continue through the summer of 2014.

**Where:** 822/824 Canon Perdido (near Milpas and the old McConnell's with the cow on top). Car pool to worksite.

**When:** Saturday June 28, 2014 – Arrive at 8:30 a.m. and ends between 2:30 and 4:30 depending on the tasks of the day, lunch at noon at which time there will be an opportunity for participants to share what this experience is like for them. Historically this has been a peak experience for participants.

**Who:** Those who want to make a difference in the lives of others through helping build housing. Everyone is welcome whether motivated by religious belief and/or desire to help others. Minimum age – 16 with parent/guardian consent and accompaniment, 18 for anyone else. Thirty working slots are available.

**What will you be doing?** The 12 townhomes will be in their final stages of completion and we will be doing painting and other work that is necessary during the finishing stages.

**Future townhouse home owners will be working alongside us** and you will have the opportunity to get to know them. This is a part of their sweat equity that Habitat requires from the people who will live in these units.

**What skills are required?** No Construction Experience Necessary - Just a willing heart! Unskilled workers will be paired with a skilled lead who will guide small groups working on specific elements of the project. A site manager will guide us through the work during the day.

**What to bring.** Bring your own lunch, a water bottle, sunscreen, wear closed-toe shoes, and long pants.

#### I am not able to work on the project – what can I do?

Publicize/organize a work group from your organization.

Donate to the Habitat – show your support for Habitat and the workers for the day with a donation of \$20 or more per worker.

#### What you need to do to become a worker on Saturday June 28, 2014

1. Complete the simple registration at - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PQZ5NFP>
2. Print out, complete and bring the Waiver Form - <http://volunteerup.com/Waivers/SoSantaBarbaraWaiver12.pdf>
3. Show up (let's car pool from Live Oak at 8:10 a.m.) ready for work on Saturday June 28, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. **Wear long pants and clothes that may get paint that is not removable on them and closed-toe shoes.**

If you have questions or need help: Contact Rose Cohen, Program Coordinator at: 805-692-2226  
Email: [rose@sbhabitat.org](mailto:rose@sbhabitat.org)

Or for questions specific to the Interfaith involvement – contact Marty Jenkins, [RespectfulDialogue@cox.net](mailto:RespectfulDialogue@cox.net) – 805-964-2550

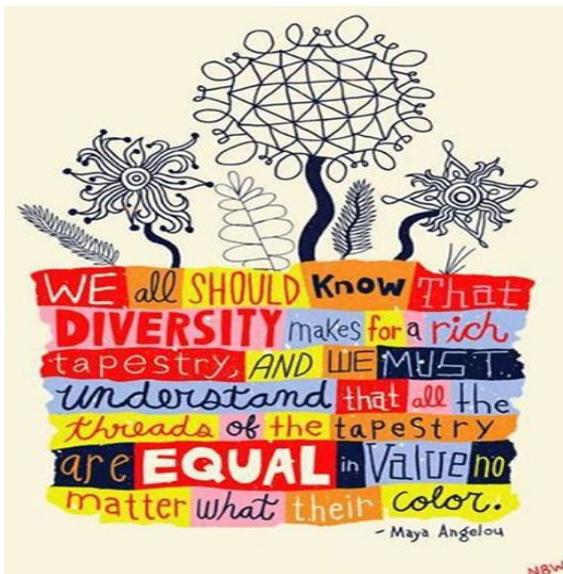
## Non-HSSB Events of Interest

### Upcoming Events in California:

- June 8: Dr. Rebecca Newberger Goldstein: *Plato at the Googleplex: Why Philosophy Won't Go Away*. Skeptics Society, Cal Tech, Pasadena.  
<http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/>
- June 15: Bob Blaskiewicz: *Quackbusting: Skeptics Fighting for Cancer Patients*. CFI West, Los Angeles.  
[http://www.centerforinquiry.net/LA/events/quackbusting\\_skeptics\\_fighting\\_for\\_cancer\\_patients/](http://www.centerforinquiry.net/LA/events/quackbusting_skeptics_fighting_for_cancer_patients/)

### Upcoming Events Outside of California:

- June 5-8: American Humanists Association 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference. Speakers include Dr. Eugenie Scott, Barney Frank, Natalie Angier, many others. Philadelphia, PA.  
<http://conference.americanhumanist.org/>
- July 10-13: The Amaz!ng Meeting 2014. Speakers include James Randi, Daniel Dennett, Karen Stollznow, Eugenie Scott, and lots of others! Las Vegas, NV.  
<http://www.amazingmeeting.com/>



--Maya Angelou, 1928-2014

## HSSB Contact Information

### Officers:

*President:* Richard Martin

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

*Secretary:* Suzanne Spillman

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### Board Members at Large:

Wayne Beckman

David Echols

Judy Fontana

Mary Wilk

### Newsletter Editor:

Diane Krohn

[Editor@santabarbarahumanists.org](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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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). At meetings, a donation of \$2 from members and \$5 from non-members is appreciated. First-time visitors are welcome on a complimentary basis.

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

To join HSSB, please send your contact information and a check for your membership dues to HSSB, PO Box 30232, Santa Barbara, CA 93130, Attn: Mary Wilk. For membership information contact Mary Wilk at 967-3045, or [mwilk@cox.net](mailto:mwilk@cox.net).

Copies of this newsletter are posted on the HSSB website. Photos are on the website and available via the link

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

See us on Facebook::



## HSSB Calendar

**Tuesday, June 17: Board Meeting:** 5:30 p.m. Home of **Mary Wilk**. Members invited to attend.

**Sunday, June 22: Summer Solstice Picnic!** Stow Grove Park in Goleta, 1-4 p.m.. Food, fun, and books for sale.

**Sunday, June 29:** (and the last Sunday of every month), 10 a.m., **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.

**Tuesday, July 15: Board Meeting:** 5:30 p.m. Home of **Mary Wilk**. Members invited to attend.

**Saturday, July 19: Monthly Meeting:** Mark Edward, critic of pseudoscience, at the Patio Room at Vista Del Monte, 2:30 p.m. for socializing and light refreshments. Talk starts at 3:00 p.m. Dinner after the talk at Vista Del Monte.



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