



The Secular Circular

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

www.SBHumanists.org

MAY 2015

May Program:

The Unbreakable Miss Lovely: How the Church of Scientology Tried to Destroy Paulette Cooper

Presented by Tony Ortega and Paulette Cooper

In 1971, a magazine freelancer in New York named Paulette Cooper published her first book entitled *The Scandal of Scientology*, the first popular book that gave the public a view into this secretive organization. She nearly paid for it with her life.



Paulette Cooper



Scientology has always been controversial but has never been covered with such intense and thorough media exposure as with the release of the movie *Going Clear* and the book *The Unbreakable Miss Lovely* by our speaker, Tony Ortega.

Tony will discuss Scientology with Paulette Cooper, the central subject of Tony's book. Paulette has a unique, personal insider view of the Church.

Tony Ortega

When: Saturday, May 16th, 2015

Where: Patio Room, Vista del Monte (**Park ONLY in spaces marked "VDM".**)

Time: Meet at 2:30pm for socializing and light refreshments provided by HSSB. Program begins at 3:00 pm

Donation: \$2 members/\$5 non-members. Students with ID are free.

Optional Buffet Dinner: Vista del Monte. \$25 includes tax and tip. RSVP to Judy Fontana, judithannfontana@yahoo.com or 967-7911.

For More Info: Call 769-HSSB (769-4772)

Activities

Judy Fontana

Don't forget to sign up for the buffet following the meeting on May 16th at Vista del Monte. This month's menu is tossed green salad, herbed bread sticks, baby back ribs with BBQ sauce, fresh catch of the day, rosemary potatoes, capri vegetables, acorn squash, assorted desserts, beverages and wine, and all for the unbelievably low price of \$25 per person, tax and tip included. RSVP to judithannfontana@yahoo.com or call 967-7911.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS-Sunday, June 21st at 1 p.m., Stow Grove Park, Goleta, for the Annual Summer Solstice Picnic. This year's picnic will cost \$10 and will be catered by Woody's. Look forward to fun, games and great food and celebration.

Welcome to Our New Members!

Betsy Wulinger, Santa Barbara

President's Column: The Guiding Star Colin Gordon

In the year 1789, the United States Constitution came into force, and on April 28 of that year another much smaller rebellion took place in the south Pacific Ocean. Led by acting Lieutenant Fletcher Christian, a group of disaffected crewmen aboard H.M.S. *Bounty* seized control of the ship from their captain Lieutenant William Bligh and set him and some loyal crewmembers adrift in an open boat. They had freed themselves from the perceived abuses of the captain. But as the euphoria faded, they realized that they had taken on a heavy load of responsibility. Having cast the captain adrift there was no one at the helm. They must scramble to take control of the ship. "And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her

by" (Masefield, *Sea Fever*). But which star, and where would it lead them? Where exactly were they in this vast ocean, where did they want to go, and how do they steer a course between the rocks to get there?

When a young person first leaves home, escaping parental control and forsaking the nurturing environment (assuming she was fortunate enough to have one) for the freedom of a college dorm room, the details of life that had previously seemed trivial now loom large. Then she had only to put clothes in the bin and they quickly reappeared neatly folded in the drawer. Now the bin just seems to keep filling and eventually she has to brave the mysteries of the laundry room and wrestle with those strange, unfriendly machines. "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul" (Henley, *Invictus*), but not doing so well with the washer and dryer.

Our mutineers eventually find the Pole Star, with a little help from Ursa Major, and sail for distant destinations, while our freshman soon navigates through the intricacies of college life. Meanwhile, another rebellious crew has mutinied and formed the Santa Barbara Humanist Society, casting adrift previous captains, Jesus, Moses and so on. But we are a little different. It's not so much that we felt oppressed as that we believe our captains were just superfluous and we can manage the ship quite well without them. So casting them adrift was more a relief than a traumatic experience.

What precipitated this differs from one member to another, each worthy of a story in itself. For this crew member, one of the principal causes of discontent was the power, or lack thereof, of prayer. The idea is that, apart from offering up worship and praise, for which an almighty, all powerful God surely has no need, if you really want something you ask God to please provide it. I tried it in my pre-mutiny days with little success. That red fire-truck in the toy store looked great, but since I was

judged undeserving, I decided to go right to the top and offered up a heartfelt prayer. Nothing, not even an out-of-stock message. Later it was a ten-speed bicycle - same result. He may be all powerful but he does not communicate well. Excusable perhaps in the days of land-lines and snail mail, but with all the resources of modern electronics one might expect him to have a Facebook account or to tweet occasionally, or even to have an email address. I sent a message to god@heaven.org but it bounced. Maybe I should have tried .edu or even .com.

We are definitely on our own now and place our trust in the guiding star of the scientific method; that is, the application of reason and logic to the many problems that confront us. It works quite well for an individual, although sometimes reduced to the application of probability theory by spinning a coin when the options seem equally attractive. We believe that it would be effective on the larger scale too, for example in government which seems to be run largely on the basis of sentiment and emotion. But the pragmatic approach which we espouse will work only if applied in concert by those trying to achieve results. Humanists are still in a minority, even if a growing one, but we need to show the religious majority the error of their ways and convince them that pragmatism will win over spirituality every time.



What Would a Secular Foreign Policy Look Like? Luis Granados

(Excerpted from Rules Are For Schmucks, at TheHumanist.com)

The most badly bungled episode in American foreign policy since the Vietnam War has been our fumble of the opportunity presented by the “Arab Spring.” For a brief moment, there was a real chance for permanent, positive change in a part of the world that could sorely use it—a chance to move toward a democratic, pluralist, downright humanist ordering of society. Instead, we wound up with ISIS. This resulted, in my unprovable view, from the administration’s obsession with cozying up to religion, and to Islam in particular, as a cynical political strategy.

What if we tried something completely different? What if we tried a principled, consciously secular foreign policy, recognizing that the single biggest factor undermining world peace today is the failure to separate church and state? What would a secular foreign policy look like?

Back Secular Governments - Tunisia should be the centerpiece of our new posture. That’s where the Arab Spring got started, and that’s where voters have installed a progressive, secular government. As last week’s massacre demonstrates, they need our help....

Unfriend Israel and Pakistan - The billions of dollars of aid we’ve wasted on these two countries have bought us nothing but trouble. Cutting off both at the same time would send a clear message: we’re not against Muslims, we’re not against Jews, but we *are* against theocratic regimes, especially when they foster religion-based violence...

Close the Vatican Embassy - It’s not possible to have a foreign policy based on promoting

separation of church and state while at the same time recognizing a church itself as a state. The whole idea of the Vatican City “nation” is ludicrous, and we should abandon it immediately...

America is far from perfect. But compared to the rest of the planet, we’ve done a good job of allowing people to worship (or not worship) as they choose in near-total peace and harmony. The reason for that is not because we’re better people, but because we have a First Amendment, and we are, for the most part, serious about carrying it out. There seems little chance that any prominent politician would advocate extending First Amendment principles as a central theme of American foreign policy as described here—and equally little chance that the world will soon begin to experience the religious peace that America has enjoyed since its founding. Why not give a secular foreign policy a chance?

Read the entire article here: <http://thehumanist.com/news/all/rules-are-for-schmucks-what-would-a-secular-foreign-policy-look-like>

April Speaker
Ann Reid:
The Science Denial Playbook
Robert Bernstein

Ann Reid spent most of her life as a working scientist, but sometimes being a mother gave greater insights into scientific thinking.

Her son told her about a very non-Disney film *Species*, where a guy kisses a girl... and his tongue comes out the back of her head. "All the other kids saw it except me." Reid asked him, "So what did you tell the other kids?" "That I saw it, too." Her response: "Think about that. Maybe none of them saw it." He got it.

Richard Feynman said, "The first principle is that you must not fool yourself, and you are the easiest person to fool." Science keeps us from fooling ourselves, Reid said.

Reid's career included work at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (20 years) where she sequenced the 1918 influenza virus to understand its virulence. On to the National Academy of Sciences which she calls a “treasure.” Then to the American Society for Microbiology.

They produced a report *Microbes Can Feed the World*. The Microbiology of Beer was the most popular report. She thinks college students could be motivated to learn much science if it centered around beer!



Our April speaker, Ann Reid. Photo by Robert Bernstein.

Moving to the National Center for Science Education (NCSE), she was in awe of trying to fill the shoes of Eugenie Scott, former Executive Director of the NCSE.

Ann urged us all to join NCSE. They regularly defeat anti-science bills, keep creationism and intelligent design out of schools as unconstitutional and oppose climate denial in schools.

But she was concerned that NCSE, like FEMA, was largely reactive.

The new strategy: Building the next generation of science-savvy students. Creating local science booster clubs. Scientific-society partnerships. A teacher engagement campaign bringing together educators, scientists and community members.

The Science Denial Playbook basic idea: It doesn't come from ignorance. They have a motivation:

- 1) Money. E.g. the tobacco or fossil fuel industry.
- 2) Religion. Main cause for evolution denial.
- 3) Ideology. Big problem for climate change. "No climate tax" pledge in Congress.

Their strategy:

- 1) Cast doubt on science
- 2) Cast doubt on scientists
- 3) Make people afraid
- 4) Appeal to "fairness"

With climate change, deniers cherry-pick data to find relatively flat intervals among clear long term rising trends. They claim there is never enough evidence (as Behe does with evolution.)

Darwin once speculated that whales evolved from a land animal like a bear. Because he was (slightly) wrong about this (hippos are closest to whales), they claim Darwin was wrong about all of evolution.

Deniers create false dichotomies: Either you reduce carbon or you have economic prosperity. In fact, there are many other good reasons to reduce carbon pollution and move to sustainable transportation and energy.

Laughably, deniers claim that "scientists are in it for the money."

Fear is a powerful motivator. "*Reductio ad Hitlerum*" always works. Climate denier William Happer actually said, "The demonization of carbon dioxide is just like the demonization of the poor Jews under Hitler."

The "fairness" strategy:

- 1) Make a false claim, such as "sea ice expanded last year."
- 2) A scientist will refute it.
- 3) This shows there is a "controversy."
- 4) We have to teach the controversy.

Science is not about debates. It is about evidence.

What to do?

- 1) Seek out reputable sources,
- 2) Be wary of conspiracy theories and smear tactics.
- 3) Recognize scare tactics.
- 4) Reject false "balance."

What doesn't work? "Educating" them. Evidence only works with trust. Vaccine-denier parents are acting out of love and fear. Ask them questions. Listen respectfully. Point them to reputable sources. Vaccine trusting parents can help.

Don't try to deal with full-time deniers; get NCSE to talk to them!

The discussion showed that it is not only conservatives and religious zealots who deny science. Vaccine deniers and GMO fears are based on similar misunderstandings of science, Reid claimed. Monsanto may indeed do terrible things, but that is separate from whether GMO crops will hurt you. We must avoid "*Reductio ad Monsanto*."

What about the health and diet claims that seem to change all the time? Reid said these studies are often very preliminary and the media run with them before they are validated with larger samples.

Science is not everything when it comes to human interests and activities. But when it comes to making policy, we have no better tool.

 Note to HSSB members and other interested readers: You can listen to Ann's talk on our website:

<http://www.santabarbarahumanists.org/article/6936-audio-of-april-2015-ann-reid-talking-about-science-deniers-tactics>

A Letter From Ann Reid: How to Join NCSE

April 2015

Dear Santa Barbara Humanist Society,

Thank you for your warm welcome at your April meeting. I so enjoyed meeting all of you! Many of you asked how you can help NCSE combat the problem of science denial in schools. The best way to help, and to stay informed is to become a member of NCSE.

To join, please visit NCSE.com/join, or send a check for \$35 to:

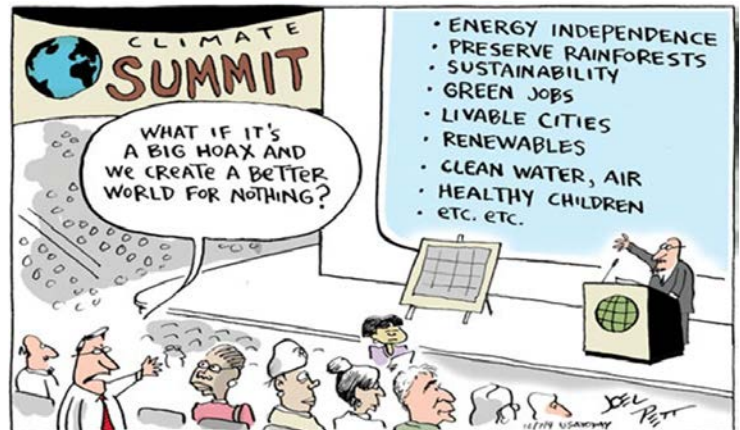
National Center for Science Education
 420 40th Street, Suite 2
 Oakland, CA 94609-2688
 Your membership includes 6 issues/year of Reports of the National Center for Education.

Contact me at reid@ncse.com if you have any questions.

A Book Recommendation Diane Krohn

In conjunction with our May speaker and topic, I recommend reading *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, & the Prison of Belief*, by Lawrence Wright. This is the book that the HBO

documentary, *Going Clear*, is based upon. I was fairly unfamiliar with Scientology and L. Ron Hubbard's writings and background before reading this book, and it provides a very thorough background of the history of Scientology, plus describing how the organization works. Interesting and scary!



HSSB 20th Anniversary Update

The HSSB 20th Anniversary party committee worked diligently on figuring out a suitable venue for the celebration. But when a venue was finally located, a remodeling schedule meant that our party could not be reasonably scheduled to coincide with the anniversary date (May, 2015), or even within the next few months. The Board decided to forgo the party and we will plan on having an extra-special 25th Anniversary party instead.

HSSB Board Elections

The election for HSSB Board positions for the upcoming fiscal year is approaching. HSSB members will receive a ballot by email (or by snail mail for those who don't have email). Be sure to check your (e)mail box for the ballot. Contact Colin Gordon or Roger Schlueter if you have questions about the election or ballots.

HSSB Movie Night

For May, the HSSB movie night will be **Friday, May 29th**, at Madeline's home in Goleta. All HSSB members and interested friends are invited to join us.

Enjoy a pot-luck supper and conversation beginning at 5:00 p.m.; bring something ready to share. Or just come for the movie at around 6:30 p.m. RSVP for the address and directions. Phone: 806-681-1105 or mmoreaux@dock.net

The May movie will be *The Ledge*. The plot of the movie involves a love triangle between a Christian, his wife, and an atheist; and a moral dilemma that ensues.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1535970/>

On movie night, we also collect paperback books for donation to the jail's recreational library. The books should be paperback, in good condition from well-known publishers. They should have no previous owner's names or notes written inside the books. Small markings could be erased or blacked out. There should be no underlines or page notes. No pornography or anything racially provocative. The inmates can borrow 2-4 books a week from the sheriff's recreational library. They like to read novels, westerns and murder mysteries, etc.

Meet Your Board Members! (Part of a continuing series)

Diane Krohn, Board Member at Large and *Secular Circular* editor:

Perhaps you have seen Diane around town, riding that weird recumbent bicycle. But it's comfortable, practical, and in the minority, sort of like being a humanist.

Diane is currently on the Board as a member at large and is editor of *The Secular Circular*

newsletter. She has been a member of HSSB since 2001, after attending a talk by Paul Kurtz. It's the various note-worthy speakers that attracted Diane to HSSB, and it's the speakers and constant inquiry that keep her interested in HSSB (well, that and the nice people in the group).



Diane was born and grew up in Los Alamos, New Mexico, "the atomic city." Her parents had moved to Los Alamos as part of the Manhattan Project, and they have many interesting stories about life in Los Alamos in the early days. Her father was one of the few to observe the atomic bomb detonation near Alamogordo, N.M. Diane's family was not particularly religious, but they did attend church regularly, probably because it was what families were expected to do.

Diane attended college at the University of New Mexico, and then transferred to UCSB, where she met her partner, Wayne, in the Mountaineering Club. One of her favorite classes at UCSB was an Entomology class, taught by one of our own HSSB members, Adrian Wenner. She obtained a B.A degree in Biological Sciences, and then took additional classes in microbiology, clinical chemistry, immunology, and other related courses at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo.

While in high school and a couple of years of college, Diane considered herself Christian and believed in a god, but after meeting Wayne (ever the skeptic), she became agnostic. After further study of religions and religious belief, she now considers herself to be atheist.

Currently, Diane is self-employed as consultant microbiologist for medical device companies, helping out in the areas of sterilization, environmental monitoring, and biocompatibility testing. Her interests include recumbent bikes, camping and hiking, travel, and motorcycle travel. She and Wayne have traveled by motorcycle to every U.S. state except Iowa (and Hawaii, but that's a bit challenging on the motorcycle). The next trip, in May, is to Chicago for touring and then returning on Old Route 66 back to California.

Biological Baloney: The Glaring Contradiction at the Heart of the Anti Gay Marriage Argument William Saletan

(Excerpted from Slate.com)

Tuesday morning, during the Supreme Court's oral arguments in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg raised a good question. What should states do, she asked, when a 70-year-old straight couple asks for a marriage license? "You don't have to ask them any questions," she pointed out, to "know they're not going to have any children." If marriage is for procreation—and gay couples are excluded for that reason—why aren't old couples excluded, too?

The man to whom Ginsburg posed the question, an attorney representing states that forbid gay marriage, had no good answer. And his inability to explain the discrepancy cuts to the heart of the issue, because the states whose laws have been challenged in *Obergefell*—Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, and Tennessee—have staked their case on reproductive biology.

Last fall, in its ruling on *Obergefell*, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals bought the biology argument. Marriage, the court reasoned, is "an incentive for two people who procreate together to stay together for purposes of rearing offspring." In excluding same-sex couples from this institution, the court concluded, states had simply accepted "the biological reality that couples of the same sex do not have children in the same way as couples of opposite sexes. ... That explanation, still relevant today, suffices to allow the States to retain authority over an issue they have regulated from the beginning..."

If Ohio and other states want to limit marriage based on procreation, they'll have to treat age the same way they treat sex. And Ginsburg's hypothetical cutoff—age 70—is way too lax. Any marriage application on which a woman reports her age as 60 or older would have to be rejected...

...Fine. We'll accept the correlation between male-female intercourse and procreation, if you'll accept the correlation between age 50 and procreation. Amend your laws to prohibit the marriage of any woman beyond that point. Or extend marriage rights to all infertile couples, whether gay or old.

Read the entire article here:

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/frame_game/2015/04/the_glaring_contradiction_at_the_heart_of_the_anti_gay_marriage_argument.2.html

"I see Atheists are fighting and killing each other again, over who doesn't believe in any God the most. Oh, no. wait.. that never happens."

— Ricky Gervais

Non-HSSB Events of Interest

Upcoming Events in California:

- May 3: Dr. Beth Shapiro: *How to Clone a Mammoth: The Science of De-Extinction*. Skeptics Society, Cal Tech, Pasadena.
<http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/>
- May 3: Wendy Thomas Russell: *If You Teach Critical Thinking, Will Your Kids Become Secular?* CSI West, Los Angeles.
<http://www.centerforinquiry.net/la/events/if-you-teach-critical-thinking-will-your-kids-become-secular/>
- May 3: Orange County Skeptics Freethought Alliance Conference. Speakers include Ryan Bell, Hemant Mehta, and others. Fullerton.
<http://freethoughtalliance.org/fta/annual-conference/admission/>
- May 17: Dr. Leonard Mlodinow: *The Upright Thinkers: The Human Journey From Living in Trees to Understanding the Cosmos*. Skeptics Society, Cal Tech, Pasadena.
<http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/>
- May 29-31: *In the Year 2525: Big Science, Big History, and the Far Future of Humanity*. A conference at Cal Tech, with speakers Jared Diamond, Donald Prothero, Lawrence Kraus, many more.
<http://www.skeptic.com/lectures/conferences/in-the-year-2525/>

Upcoming Events Outside of California:

- May 7-10: American Humanists Association 74th Annual Conference. Denver, CO.
<http://conference.americanhumanist.org/>
- June 11-15: Reason for Change: A CFI International Conference. Speakers include Tom Flynn, Kendrick Frazier, Harriet Hall, David Gorski, Phil Zuckerman, and many others. Buffalo, NY.
<http://reasonforchange.centerforinquiry.net/>

HSSB Contact Information

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urbanfollies@gmail.com

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Mary Wilk

Newsletter Editor:

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Newsletter Deadline:

Deadline for submissions to the Secular Circular is midnight, the last day of each month.

HSSB meetings are held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 2:30 pm, usually in the Patio Room of Vista del Monte, 3775 Modoc Rd., Santa Barbara. More information is available at our web site:

www.SantaBarbaraHumanists.org. At meetings, a donation of \$2 from members and \$5 from non-members is appreciated. First-time visitors are welcome on a complimentary basis. Students are free with a Student ID.

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.

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 May 12: Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. Home of **Mary Wilk**. Members invited to attend.

Saturday May 16: Monthly Meeting: Tony Ortega, author of *The Unbreakable Miss Lovely*, will be joined by Paulette Cooper and they will discuss the Church of Scientology's "Fair Game" retaliation schemes; the Patio Room at Vista del Monte. Meet at 2:30 p.m. for socializing and light refreshments. Talk starts at 3:00 p.m. Optional buffet dinner after the talk at Vista del Monte.

Friday May 29: HSSB Movie Night: We will be watching *The Ledge*. Meet at 5:00 p.m. at Madeline's house. Bring a potluck dish to share and a couple of paperback books for donations to the jail. Call Madeline for information and directions: 806-681-1105 or mmoreaux@dock.net

Sunday May 31: (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 June 16: Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. Home of **Mary Wilk**. Members invited to attend.

Sunday June 21: Summer Solstice Picnic. We are meeting at Stow Grove Park, Goleta, at 1 p.m. for our annual summer solstice party. Food, games, good conversation. The cost is \$10 per person.



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