



The Secular Circular

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

www.SBHumanists.org

JULY 2015

July Program:

Deborah Rogers: Prisons, Profits and a Little Bit of Politics: Visiting Immigration Detainees

Did you know our undocumented neighbors risk detention for months or even years in for-profit prisons with no right to an attorney, no legally protected right of visitation, no free calls -- all hundreds or thousands of miles from family and friends? All of these conditions, and more, exist at Adelanto, a privately-operated federal prison in Adelanto, San Bernardino County, California. Owned and operated by the GEO Group, Adelanto is the Immigration and Customs Service's newest and largest prison in California.

For a year and a half, HSSB member Deborah Rogers visited detainees at Adelanto, three hours from Santa Barbara in the high desert near Victorville. She met with people fighting their cases from behind bars and has brought their stories back to share.



When: Saturday, July 18th, 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 by July 16th: judithannfontana@yahoo.com or 967-7911.

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

Activities

Judy Fontana

Please join us for a great buffet following the meeting on July 18th. The menu this month is tossed green salad with assorted dressings, honey wheat rolls, pork tenderloin with pork gravy, fresh catch of the day, red roasted potatoes, mashed potatoes with gravy, vegetable blend with herbs, assorted desserts, beverages, and wine. Cost is \$25 per person, which includes tax and tip. Do plan to stay for the meal as there is always lively conversation and a great way to meet and interact with other humanists.

RSVP to judithannfontana@yahoo.com or leave a message at 967-7911. Deadline for reservations is 10 a.m., Thursday, July 16th. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Welcome to Our New Members!

John Carpenter, Ojai
Mike Daly, Santa Barbara
Donna Lewis, Santa Barbara
Tom and Cezanne Totton, Goleta

President's Column: Social Justice Colin Gordon

In the last few days we have seen two decisions by the Supreme Court that have advanced the cause of Social Justice; First, the medical insurance program known as Obamacare survived a challenge; and, second, marriage equality was declared to be the law of the land. It's safe to say that both these measures have the approval of the majority, especially within our society, but there are dissenters who vow to overturn the laws and some states will simply ignore them until forced to toe the line. Social Justice is essentially a controversial area

since what is justice to some is injustice to others. Obamacare brings more Americans under the umbrella of medical insurance but some, mostly the conservative element, regard it as redistribution of wealth, which to them are bad words. Marriage equality opponents are mostly, but not all, religious groups who quote the Bible in support of their views, which cuts no ice with us humanists.

So social justice is not so clear cut as we might like. It's not easy to decide which issues fall in the categories of justice or injustice. Our Humanist Society has a Social Justice Committee, which is dormant at this time, but we do sometimes endorse a movement that we think is particularly meritorious; our latest being the Compassion and Choices group, which advocates for the right to die with dignity.

Dominating the news recently has been the oil spill off the Refugio Beach which coated the sands with black goo and led to the deaths of many animals and seabirds. It's obvious that we need to get oil out of the Santa Barbara area - or is it? Closing down the offshore oil rigs and the pipe lines that move the oil to refineries would presumably prevent future oil spills, but we need oil and its many byproducts to keep the wheels of our high-tech society turning, and shutting down local oil just moves the problem elsewhere. In our oil-based society we need to get it from somewhere and it seems selfish to shift our problems to somewhere else. We would hope that they don't get the same idea and shut down their production facilities too. So where is justice in this complex situation?

Although the U.S. spends much more per capita on health care than any other country and has the highest proportion of specialist physicians, survey findings indicate that from the patients' perspective, and based on outcome indicators, the performance of American health care is severely lacking. There is a strong streak of individualism here and distrust of

bureaucracies that impedes progress towards a single-payer government-controlled system of the kind that exists in most other advanced countries. However, Health Care for All - California is working to achieve universal health care through a publicly financed single-payer system, and we have a chapter here in Santa Barbara.

Branching out now to the world arena, there are many problems that need to be addressed, particularly relating to environmental issues. The world's fish stocks have been seriously depleted by overfishing and many species are near extinction. Bluefin tuna have completely disappeared from the North Sea and in the Atlantic there are only very small numbers remaining. The herring fisheries have dwindled to the point where the fishing industry is near collapse. Save the whales has been a popular cry for some time but now krill, a small shrimp-like creature which is their main source of food, is being fished in large quantities owing to its high nutritional value. So they evade the harpoon only to be assailed by failing food supplies.

But these are world problems, too large for our small society and perhaps outside the bounds of social justice. We can express our disapproval of worldwide child labor, poverty, climate change, and our approval of any efforts to correct them but our small society can have little effect, so perhaps we should act locally even if we think globally. There is plenty of social injustice to be addressed in our area. Poverty, drug use, child abuse, all need attention if we are serious about making changes for the good. For example CALM (Child Abuse Listening Mediation) does a fine job in countering child abuse and would welcome support in the form of volunteers or donations.

We need to consider the role of our Humanist Society in local social justice issues.

Footprints at Laetoli **A Play About Mary Leakey** **Meredith McMinn**

I'm going to be playing Mary Leakey in a wonderful new play by Darlene Cravioto that should be of interest to my fellow Humanists and HSSB friends. *Footprints at Laetoli* tells the story of Mary Leakey's discovery of a timeless archeological landmark and her unresolved relationship with her late husband, Louis. It's the centerpiece of the inaugural season of On the Verge, a summer repertory festival of new plays in Santa Barbara in July.

We're a non-profit company making our plays available to everyone with "suggested donation" admission (\$10 for adults; \$5 for students—hard to beat that!). Further information on the Festival, the play and the company, can be found on our web site:

www.onthevergefest.org

Information about *Footprints at Laetoli*:

Performances are at 8:00 p.m. Wednesday July 22, Thursday July 23 and Friday July 24, in the lower courtyard of the Santa Barbara Historical Museum, 136 E. De La Guerra Street, at the corner of Santa Barbara Street. There is free parking across Santa Barbara Street in the Santa Barbara School District lot, right on the corner. The suggested donation: \$10 general; \$5 students/seniors (cash or check) at the door. Reservations are strongly recommended; you can order by phone: 805-455-5598, or online here:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/footprints-at-laetoli-tickets-17329957369>

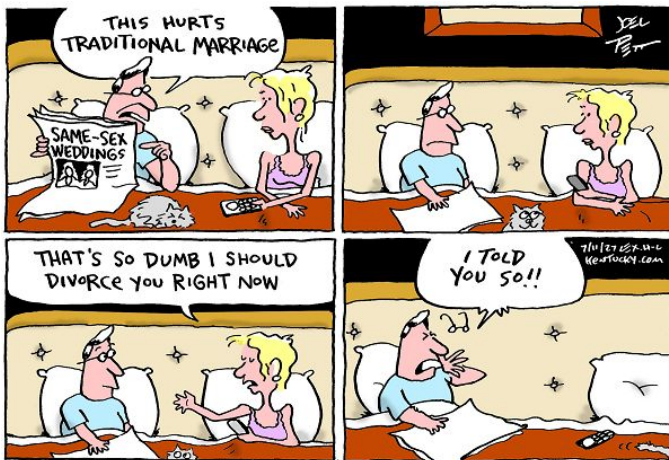
Wine will be available for purchase both before the performance and at intermission.

Note: If you'd like to donate via credit card, you can choose **General Admission for ONE ONLY + Online donation** on the Eventbrite site and

add any additional reservations, since all others are simply free and you're asked to donate at the door. You can also donate at our IndieGoGo link. Two tickets for the performance of your choice is a perk offered for a minimum \$20 donation there:

<http://igg.me/p/on-the-verge-santa-barbara-summer-rep-festival/ema/2995879>

This is such a great script and a well rounded and challenging character—actually, all the roles are well-written, and they're filled by an outstanding cast of actors--I just want everyone to see it!



The Real Reason Why Conservatives Like Ross Douthat Oppose the Gary Marriage Ruling Amanda Marcotte

(Excerpted from *Talking Points Memo*, TPM Cafe, June 29, 2015)

Of all the sour grapes conservatives chewed this past weekend over the same-sex marriage ruling, perhaps Ross Douthat's was the sourest. While other conservatives moved on to incoherent babbling about "religious liberty", Douthat used his *New York Times* column to dig his heels into the argument soundly rejected by Anthony Kennedy's opinion in *Obergefell v.*

Hodges: that same-sex marriage is somehow an assault on traditional marriage.

Kennedy argued that the case for same-sex marriage "strengthened, not weakened" the institution of marriage by affirming that it upholds "the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family." Douthat, however, remains skeptical, complaining that "approval of divorce, premarital sex, and out-of-wedlock childbearing" is on the rise and that younger Americans, in particular, take "a more relaxed perspective, in which wedlock is malleable and optional, one way among many to love, live, rear kids—or not." This sense that marriage is optional offends Douthat greatly, as he sees it as an immoral shunning of duty.

This argument, that same-sex marriage somehow undermines "traditional" marriage, never really made sense to many Americans, for good reason. Since conservatives would rarely define what they meant by "traditional"—saying that it's about a man and a woman and declining to elaborate beyond that—it ended up sounding like they were saying that if gay people were allowed to marry, then straight people would all get divorced or something. This makes conservatives sound like idiots and ended up backfiring on them, helping many fence-sitters to figure if that's the best they've got, then they must have nothing.

In reality, however, there was a subterranean argument that actually is logical and makes perfect sense. It was never just about man-woman marriages. The tradition that is disappearing is the belief that marriage is a duty, especially for women...

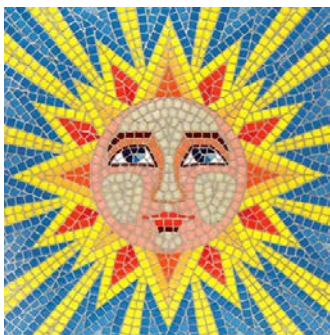
Read the rest of the article here:

<http://talkingpointsmemo.com/cafe/gay-marriage-scotus-ross-douthat-oppression-vs-love>

June Summer Solstice Picnic Photos by Robert Bernstein



Our Summer Solstice picnic was held at Stow Grove Park. A lovely summer day, with good food provided by Woody's BBQ. Great conversation, games, and fun.



HSSB Board Election Results

Fifty two (52) ballots were returned, and the smallest number of votes for any nominee was 46. There were no write-in votes. The results are as follows:

President: Colin Gordon
Secretary: Suzanne Spillman
Treasurer: Ron Kronenberg

Members at Large:

Wayne Beckman, David Echols, Judy Fontana, Diane Krohn, Anne Rojas, Roger Schlueter, Pat Ward, and Mary Wilk.

Don't forget – Board meetings are open to all HSSB members. See the Calendar on page 10 of this newsletter for Board meeting dates and times.

Auditions! Ray Stone

HSSB will be staging another production of "Meeting of Minds" at our October 17th meeting. This time the conversation will be between Charles Darwin, Emily Dickinson, Galileo Galilei and Attila the Hun, in addition to Steve Allen, or another male or female host.

Auditions for the all-HSSB-members cast will be held during early August, the time and location yet to be decided. To try out for one of the roles, please notify Ray Stone, by email at rstone@west.net or by phone at 805-682-2123. No theatrical experience is necessary.

In the interest of full disclosure, the role of Emily Dickinson is tentatively precast, but tryouts for that role are still welcome. If you would like to assist in producing the event, please also contact Ray.

Letter to the Editor

I assume you had a chance to see President Obama's eulogy delivered in South Carolina on YouTube or TV. This was an example of religious belief at its best. Grace is a powerful force in religious life as explained by Obama. If practiced as he explained in the eulogy, it is a powerful force for good. We as Secular Humanists need to better understand this positive aspect of religious belief, if we have any hope of religious people understanding our Humanist values. As an atheist I can appreciate the religious message delivered by the president in his church eulogy.

--Ron Kronenberg

Good News for Science Diane Krohn

Governor Jerry Brown signed into Law SB 277 on June 30, 2015, ending vaccine exemptions for reasons of conscious or religious belief. The law applies to students attending any public or private school in the state, so parents who choose not to vaccinate children for non-medical reasons would need to homeschool their children. The only other states with similar immunization policies that do not allow any non-medical exemptions are Mississippi and West Virginia.

"The science is clear that vaccines dramatically protect children against a number of infectious and dangerous diseases," Brown wrote in his signing message. "While it's true that no medical intervention is without risk, the evidence shows that immunization powerfully benefits and protects the community."

Brown's decision Tuesday also aligns with the opinions of two-thirds of Californians, who believe children should not be allowed to attend public school unless they are vaccinated, according to a recent Public Policy Institute of California poll.

Member News

Judy Cousineau is living in the San Diego area. If you would like to send her a card or letter, you can reach her at:

Judy Cousineau
699 North Vulcan Avenue, #52
Encinitas, CA 92024

Eight (8) Awesome Atheist Leaders Who Aren't Richard Dawkins or Sam Harris Greta Christina

(Excerpted from Alternet, June 17, 2015)

If you've read anything about the blossoming atheist movement, there's a good chance it was about Richard Dawkins or Sam Harris. And if you're a reasonably progressive person who cares about sexism and racism, and you've read about Dawkins or Harris, there's an excellent chance that the top of your head came off.

There's this pattern with media coverage of organized atheism. When a media outlet decides that atheism is interesting and important, they all too often turn to Dawkins or Harris. Then, when Dawkins or Harris puts their foot in their mouth -- again -- the reporter cries out, "Atheism needs better leadership! Why doesn't atheism have better leaders?"

Atheism does have better leaders. Plenty of them. Organized atheism has hundreds of leaders, arguably thousands -- leaders of support organizations, charitable organizations, advocacy groups, online communities, local groups, and more. I'd like to introduce you to eight of them...

Rebecca Hensler
Debbie Goddard
August E. Brunsmann IV
Muhammad Syed
Sarah Morehead

Mandisa Thomas
Noelle George
Amanda Metskas...

Read the entire article here:

<http://www.alternet.org/belief/8-awesome-atheist-leaders-who-arent-richard-dawkins-or-sam-harris>

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"Today is some of the darkest 24 hours in our nation's history." -- Sen. Ted Cruz, commenting on marriage equality on the Sean Hannity show.

Really? Really? What about 9/11? What about the Passage of the Indian Removal Act? Pearl Harbor? The Oklahoma City bombings? The revelation that torture was used on detainees?
--Ed.

"Same sex marriage is not gay privilege, it's equal rights. Privilege would be like gay people not paying taxes. Like churches don't."
--Ricky Gervais



Saving Raif Badawi Roger Schlueter

Raif Badawi desperately needs the help of all people who believe in the principle of free speech to assist him to be released from prison and to literally survive his current imprisonment. Please take the actions listed below. It will only take a few minutes of your time and may save the life of a principled man.

For those of you who do not recognize his name, Raif is a Saudi Arabian writer and activist and the creator of the website *Free Saudi Liberals*. He is currently 31 years old, is married and has three children, ages 8, 11 and 12. His family lives in Quebec.

To briefly summarize, Raif was arrested in June, 2012, on a charge of insulting Islam by blogging and creating his *Free Saudi Liberals* web site. Six months later he was also charged with apostasy and, if convicted, would *automatically* receive the death sentence.

In July, 2013, Saudi media reported that Raif had been sentenced to seven years in prison and 600 lashes *just for facilitating through a web site the ability of ordinary Saudis to express their views*. This is unconscionable.

But the story only gets worse. In May, 2014, Raif was resented to 1000 lashes and ten years in prison. He also received a fine of about \$267,000. In addition, Badawi's lawyer, Waleed Abulkhair was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, followed by a 15-year ban on travel for "inciting public opinion" and "insulting the judiciary."

On January 9, 2015, Badawi was flogged 50 times before hundreds of spectators in front of a Jeddah mosque, Subsequent floggings have been postponed purportedly because his wounds had not healed and his health condition is poor.

The Saudi Supreme Court has upheld the sentence so there are no appeals left for Raif. He still faces a death sentence for the crime of apostasy.

Far more complete information is available on [Raif's Wikipedia page](#) and in the links to other resources on that page.

There is some evidence that the international outcry over this barbarity has been instrumental in the repeated postponement of Raif's flogging. But the pressure on the Saudi government must be maintained. That's where you come in. Please help Raif and Waleed to be freed from Saudi Arabia's awful judicial system by doing the following:

- § Contact Senators [Boxer](#) and [Feinstein](#) and Representative [Capps](#) requesting that the US government demand the release of Raif and Waleed. These links take you directly to their email pages.
- § Send an [email](#) to the King of Saudi Arabia requesting action on Raif and Waleed.
- § Send an [email](#) to the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the US (Ambassador Adel A. Al - Jubeir)

In all your correspondence, please be polite but firm. Raif and Waleed must not be punished for simply speaking their minds.

Thank you.

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"As soon as a thinker starts to reveal his ideas, you will find hundreds of fatwas that accused him of being an infidel just because he had the courage to discuss some sacred topics. I'm really worried that Arab thinkers will migrate in search of fresh air and to escape the sword of the religious authorities." -Raif Badawi

Non-HSSB Events of Interest

Upcoming Events in California:

- July 19: Dr. Peter Whybrow: *Enlightened Experiments: Adam Smith and the Market in the Brain*. Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles.
http://www.centerforinquiry.net/la/events/enlightened_experiments_adam_smith_and_the_market_in_the_brain/
- August 16: Dave Zobel: *The Science of TV's "The Big Bang Theory."* Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles and Costa Mesa.
http://www.centerforinquiry.net/la/events/science_of_tvs_big_bang_theory/

Upcoming Events Outside of California:

- July 16-19: The Amazing Meeting 2015. Various speakers, workshops, and panel discussions. Las Vegas, NV.
<https://www.amazingmeeting.com/>
- October 9-11: Freedom From Religion Foundation 2015 Convention. Speakers include Ron Reagan, Dan Barker, Kevin Kruse, Steven Hewett, and others. Madison, WI.
<http://ffrf.org/outreach/convention>



6-7-07

HSSB Contact Information

Officers:

President: Colin Gordon
colin3@juno.com
Secretary: Suzanne Spillman
urbanfollies@gmail.com
Treasurer: Ron Kronenberg
seelberg@cox.net

Board Members at Large:

Wayne Beckman	Anne Rojas
David Echols	Roger Schlueter
Judy Fontana	Pat Ward
Diane Krohn	Mary Wilk

Newsletter Editor:

Diane Krohn
djkrohn@cox.net

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 July 14: Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. Home of **Mary Wilk**. Members invited to attend.

Saturday July 18: Monthly Meeting: Deborah Rogers: Prisons, Profits, and a Little Bit of Politics: Visiting Immigration Detainees; 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.

Sunday July 26: (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 August 11: Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. Home of **Mary Wilk**. Members invited to attend.

Saturday August 15: Monthly Meeting: Marty Adamian will be talking about Supreme Court decisions. Valle Verde, 900 Calle De Los Amigos, Santa Barbara. Talk starts at 3:00 p.m. Optional dinner after the talk at a location TBD.



Humanist Society of
Santa Barbara
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Santa Barbara, CA 93130