



The Secular Circular

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

www.SBHumanists.org

FEBRUARY 2017

February Program:

Jim Stubchaer:

The History of Water Resources in Santa Barbara County

Jim Stubchaer's talk will review and discuss geography and water sources, the history of water use and water projects, drought issues, and the politics of water.

Jim was a member of the California Water Commission from 1988-1992; and Member and Chair of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Board from 1982-1992. He has worked in the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District from 1958 to 1989, and the Santa Barbara County Water Agency (1979-1989).



Additionally, Jim has worked as a consulting engineer and Consultant-Manager with the Central Coast Water Authority (1989-1992) and has been on the California State Water Resources Control Board as a member, and then chair, from 1992 to 2000.

His interests include travel, computers, history and aviation.

When: Saturday, February 18th, 2017

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: Dinner buffet at Vista del Monte. \$25 includes tax and tip. RSVP to Nan Cisney by 12 noon on Thursday, February 16th: cisneynan@gmail.com

For More Info: Call 805-769-4772 (769-HSSB)

Activities

Remember to reserve your place for the buffet dinner following the Saturday program on February 18th. The menu is not yet available at this time, but will include salad, two entrees, two vegetables, dessert, and red and white wine. Cost is \$25 per person, which includes tax, tip and wine. RSVP to cisneynan@gmail.com no later than 12 noon, Thursday, February 16th. You can submit your payment to Nan before 3 p.m. on Saturday, before the program begins. If you are paying by check, make it payable to Humanist Society. **Please note:** It is very important to RSVP for the dinner and then attend it if you have signed up for it; otherwise, HSSB has to pay for no-shows.

President's Column: 7 Mountains Roger Schlueter

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

- *The King James Bible*, Genesis, Chapter 1, Verse 28

Few of us take the Bible literally and, I'd venture to say, no Humanist does. But about 30% of Americans do see the Bible as the word of God and that it is to be taken at face value. Some smaller, but unknown number of those literalists pursue their bible beliefs beyond their own selves, seeking to impose their views on the larger American society. Let's take a closer look at the organizations and people who want to remake the USA into a "Christian Nation."

The first thing that becomes clear is that those striving to impose Christianity on the USA do not fit into a well-organized, structured

monolith. In fact, it is very difficult to nail down who is involved and which organizations should be considered as part of the movement. Some have asserted that the "Christian right" broadly defines them but I disagree because it sweeps in too many who are conservative and Christian but who are (wisely, in my view) leery of a theocratic nation.

I'm not going to make any attempt to find a precise definition and simply label all those who believe that the USA should be a Christian nation and act upon that belief as Dominionists, inspired by the above quote from the Bible, and label their beliefs as Dominion Theology. Both terms are not original with me but are widely used in literature on the subject and provide a good starting point for internet searches if you want to follow up on the subject.

The one clear statement that can be made about Dominionists is that Catholics are excluded. For example, Christian Reconstructionism is clearly an adherent to Dominion Theology and has its roots in Calvinism.

One prominent group currently active in politics is the American Family Association whose Statement of Faith begins with "We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God" and includes statements against homosexuality, same sex marriage and adultery. Another well-known group is Focus on the Family, founded by James Dobson, which is also heavily involved in culture war issues such as homosexuality, teaching of creationism, abstinence-only sex education and similar issues. These and other groups do not explicitly state a belief in Dominion Theology but their statements of faith leave no doubt that they are strong adherents to the notion of a Christian nation.

At first glance, The 7 Mountains seems like a harmless I'm not sure what to call it. Labels such as movement or ideology or organization

all seem to be applicable to a greater or lesser extent. Their web site states that (their bad English, not mine):

The 7 mountains are 7 sectors in society that mold the way we think, that is our culture is shaped by these spheres or mountains. Society is changed/transformed through all 7 mountains.

The 7 mountains are:

1. The home
2. The church
3. Schools
4. Government and politics
5. The media
6. Arts, entertainment, and sports
7. Commerce, science, and technology

This all seems rather banal until god (the Christian God, of course) is completely infused throughout the 7 mountains. Their motto, if I can call it that, is "Fulfilling Your God Given Assignment" and they believe god directs and controls every aspect of their lives. But their goal is for god to direct and control each and every one of those mountains in your life. In fact, their vision is driven by a quote from Deuteronomy 1:8:

All of this is the land which I, the LORD, promised to give to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to their descendants.

Their own addition to this passage gives me the chills:

Go and occupy it. BEYOND SALVATION IS OCCUPATION

In summary to this point, I've discussed the nature of some fundamental Christian beliefs and a few groups that promote these beliefs. Next month, I'll take a look at some of the individuals and discuss why this all matters.



"Religion is fundamentally opposed to everything I hold in veneration--courage, clear thinking, honesty, fairness, and, above all, love of the truth."

--- H. L. Mencken

**January Speaker:
Dr. Marc Rayman on NASA's Dawn
Mission to Vesta and Ceres
Robert Bernstein**

JPL's Marc Rayman delivered a riveting, educational and entertaining speech on NASA's Dawn Mission. His slides were peppered with little cartoons of animated rocket ships and super heroes such that you never wanted to take your eyes off the screen.

For me, none of that was necessary, as I think scientific exploration is the peak of human achievement and expression. I loved that Dr. Rayman even included a scene from *Star Trek* to compare its futuristic ideal of ion drive with the reality of Dawn's actual triple ion drive! Which also surpasses the *Star Wars* TIE fighters' use of "Twin Ion Engines"!

Before explaining Dawn's mission, Dr. Rayman needed to provide some startling history that was new to me. In 1800, there were just seven planets known in the Solar System: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus.

But, on New Year's Day in 1801, Giuseppe Piazzi discovered a new planet. No, not one you might be expecting. He discovered Ceres, which lay between Mars and Jupiter. Ceres was named for the Roman goddess of agriculture, grain crops, fertility and motherly relationships.

The next year, Heinrich Olbers discovered another body in that same region. And in 1807, he discovered Vesta in that same region; named for the Roman virgin goddess of home and hearth.

Huh? How come you never heard of these planets? Well, they were demoted from being called planets by the 1850's, when it was established that these were just two among many objects in what we now call the "asteroid belt."

So, don't feel so bad about the demotion of Pluto. It has happened to other planets before.



Our January speaker, Dr. Marc Rayman. Photo by Robert Bernstein.

So, what was Dawn's mission? Remember Dawn? Dawn set out to explore Vesta and Ceres. And in the process, it set a number of important firsts.

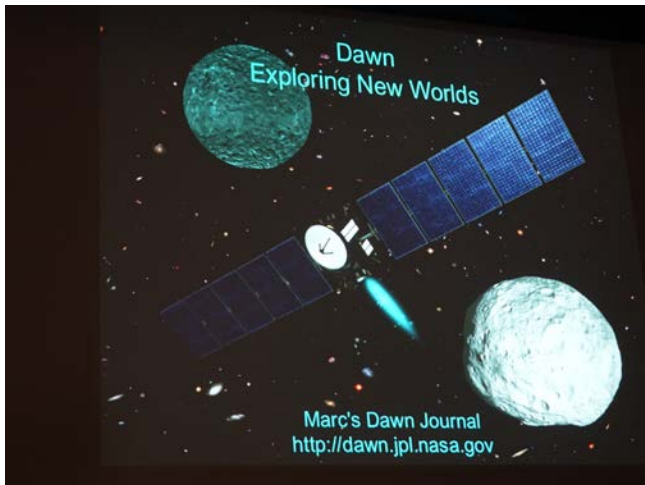
First of all, there is that ion drive. Rockets work by throwing stuff out the back to propel themselves. Kind of like an astronaut whose cable has broken throwing a wrench to get back to the ship. Ordinary rockets have to throw a lot of wrenches and they don't get them back.

Ion drive allows those wrenches to be tiny particles electrically thrown at enormous velocity. Normal chemical rocket exhaust comes out at around 4,000 to 10,000 miles per hour. But Dawn's ion drive electrically accelerates xenon atoms at speeds over 90,000 miles per hour! This allows a small amount of material to deliver ten times as much propulsive force per bit of matter as a regular rocket!

And it is a small amount of material. The xenon atoms flying out at 90,000 MPH only deliver a force comparable to the weight of a sheet of

paper on your fingers. It would take eight weeks to expel just one gallon of xenon.

So it can do so for weeks or months on end. Not just for a matter of seconds as when a rocket "blasts off." The result is that Dawn is able to accelerate (slowly) to the fastest speed ever achieved by any spacecraft with its own propulsion system! 25,000MPH! All powered by 65 foot wingspan solar panels.



Dawn, Ceres, and Vesta. Photo by Robert Bernstein from Dr. Rayman's presentation.

These solar-powered ion engines allow another first: The ability first to orbit Vesta, then to break out of orbit and enter the orbit of Ceres. No other mission had ever orbited two different non-Earth bodies before. It is not easy, and it would be impossible with conventional rockets.

It takes precise planning to make every xenon atom count. People normally think of arriving at a planet as requiring a powerful burn to decelerate into orbit. But Dawn's elegant maneuvering with ion propulsion allowed the spacecraft to match Vesta's orbital speed around the sun so precisely, the relative arrival speed was just 55 MPH!

But what is this all for? It turns out that if we study these asteroids, we are actually studying the "dawn" of our solar system, thereby

learning about the formation of Earth and the other planets. Vesta and Ceres were formed in the first million or so years of the 4.6 billion year history of the Solar System. And that history is preserved even now.

Ceres may be a "dwarf planet" like Pluto. But it is still big. Its surface area is 37% of the area of the continental U.S. One third (1/3) of Ceres' mass is frozen water. It has a "cryo-volcano" that stands 13,000 feet high.

The Hubble Space Telescope had a crude image of Vesta that begged for a more detailed investigation. Vesta was hit by a powerful impact a billion years ago. This created fragments that make up 1/16 of all of the meteorites that land on Earth! Only the Moon and Mars are other identified sources for Earth meteorites. The rest are from unidentified sources. The impact also resulted in a Vesta mountain twice as tall as Mt Everest! Only Mars has a taller mountain.

Dawn was launched September 2007. It then received an orbital boost from Mars. Stealing that energy makes Mars orbit one inch less in 180 million years. From July 2011 to September 2012, Dawn orbited Vesta. Since March 2015, Dawn has been orbiting Ceres where it will remain for millennia to come.

For a few years, the Apollo mission took humans to the moon, which is 240,000 miles away. Since then, humans have stayed in low Earth orbit -- about as far as driving from Santa Barbara to San Diego.

Dawn crossed the orbit of the moon after just one day and it is now 1,500 times further away than that. Dawn is now four times as far from us as we are from the Sun. And Dawn is now on the opposite side of the Sun from us.

Dr. Rayman is proud of the collective effort that such space missions represent. And I totally agree. In my opinion, if we really want to "make

America great again," we should massively be investing in a wide range of scientific exploration, research and discovery.

While manned missions receive much glory, unmanned missions are far more valuable for their scientific value in Dr. Rayman's personal view. Certainly, per dollar spent, that is true. Dr. Rayman did note, however, that human missions accomplish objectives other than science.

And Dawn almost didn't happen for lack of money. Dawn was canceled in 2003, revived in 2004, and then canceled again in 2006 and revived again that same year. Politics and science are a challenging mix. Fortunately, Dawn has exceeded all of its original objectives.

Dr. Rayman emphasized that an important part of a mission like Dawn is the thrill of exploring alien worlds. People misleadingly think of Vesta and Ceres as just asteroids, as if they're just chunks of rock. They are more properly called protoplanets. Vesta is more closely related to the terrestrial planets than to asteroids, and Ceres is a dwarf planet.

In his words to me later, "I think exploring alien worlds is fascinating and inspiring. There is the clear scientific value, but I think missions like this enrich us all. That's what I tried to express with my remarks about how everyone participates in such a mission. It is not only for scientists but for everyone who feels the burning desire for a noble adventure, everyone who has ever looked at the night sky in wonder, everyone who longs to know the cosmos." I totally agree!

Please visit <http://dawn.jpl.nasa.gov/> for more details about the Dawn mission and even more amazing photos than Dr. Rayman had time to show us.

Women's March, Saturday, January 21

Several of our HSSB members attended the Women's March on January 21, 2017. Here are their reports.

Marian Shapiro

The Women's March on Saturday, January 21, inspired people throughout California and throughout the world. Huge crowds--perhaps as many as 750,000 people--turned out for the march in Los Angeles. People of both genders and all ethnicities, some in wheelchairs and walkers, cheered and demanded that we pay attention to the issues that now confront us.

I was one of 900 marchers from Santa Barbara. Fourteen buses, each carrying 60 people, plus others in cars, all joined the throngs of marchers--many enraged at our newly elected narcissistic, misogynistic President and his unqualified cabinet appointments. In spite of this, everyone was amazingly peaceful and friendly.

Los Angeles officials were unprepared to handle the large numbers of enthusiastic people that descended on their city. Blocks from Pershing Square, where our bus had planned to drop us off, traffic was in gridlock. We finally got off the bus, but marchers were packed like sardines for blocks and blocks, unable to move forward, backward or sideways, all trying to get to Pershing Square, which was way too small to hold that many people. Instead of feeling irritated that we were stuck, we felt exhilarated that so many people shared our strong feelings about this disastrous President. There was not one incident of violence and I saw no law enforcement officers!

From Pershing Square, the crowd slowly walked on to City Hall where a program of speakers addressed the crowd. I recognized

the voice of our Senator Hannah Beth Jackson on the loudspeaker. We couldn't see the stage or the speakers, but we heard her, and, as usual, her words were inspirational and almost every sentence was wildly applauded.

Senator Jackson started by telling the crowd, "The future belongs to you and it is our duty as grandparents and parents to tell you about the America that we know, that we have seen, that we believe in, that will be a future again, after we get rid of this nightmare." She quoted the late historian Kevin Starr, who said that "California is the state that invents the future." "So I say to you, Mr. Trump: We are indeed a sore spot for you, because two out of three Californians did not vote for you. Because we know that we stand for what is better and what is good and what is just and what is right in this country. We are a place that welcomes people from all walks of life, from all places around the globe. Because we are not only big enough to support all those different points of view, we relish it and we thrive on it."

The marchers displayed their creativity through clothes and costumes, signs and slogans. Here are a few of the more hilarious ones:

*George Washington: "I cannot tell a lie."
Richard Nixon: "I cannot tell the truth."
Donald Trump: "I cannot tell the difference."*

*Tinkle, tinkle, little czar,
Putin put you where you are.*

No, you can't take my rights. I'm still using them.

It was an exhausting day, and it was just a beginning. As a result of this historical turnout, so many of us have been inspired to work harder for hope and justice. If you are not already on my email list to get alerts of things we all can do, send your email address to: marian Shapiro@cox.net. Or call me if you have any questions: 805-968-0478

I'll end with something Gloria Steinem said: "Remember, the Constitution doesn't begin with, 'I, the president.' It begins with, 'We, the people.'"

Judy Fontana

When I heard of the Women's March in Los Angeles I knew that I had to be there and I immediately made the commitment to attend. My husband didn't question my motives but questioned whether marching would do any good and that it would just play into Trump's tiny, yellow hands. I said that I just wanted to add my body to that number of marchers to show the world that there were those of us in the United States who had a better vision of America and who were willing to push back against Trump and the Republican agenda.

For me, the Women's March started at 6 a.m. in the parking lot below Santa Barbara City College. Just to be there in the early morning cold and darkness and see the large numbers of people who had and turned out and the size and number of buses was truly awe inspiring. All went smoothly until we arrived in downtown LA and saw large numbers of people, including women, men, children, grandparents, children in strollers, people in wheelchairs, people with canes and walkers all trying to converge on Pershing Park.

One was immediately confronted with hundreds of wonderful signs, some serious, some funny, many unbelievably clever. Because of the crowds the bus eventually came to a halt and we disembarked to make our way forward on our own. Placard in hand I made my way to join up with a group of Unitarian-Universalists from Southern California and we started to march as group within a well-behaved mass of supporters of liberal democracy.

I personally did not want to view myself as a protester at that point in time, but rather in terms of what I was marching for, not against. I think it is important to be clear in one's mind

the difference of being for something as opposed to being against something. It gives us a different focus for what we need to do and how to accomplish it.

The march quickly came to a halt as the streets continued to fill and quickly the police moved to close off adjacent streets to traffic to accommodate us. The many inconvenienced drivers and passengers were patient and the only horn honking was supportive. Using cell phones to communicate with other marchers, we were able to change course and make our way to LA City Hall from the side. Along with thousands of others we were never able to get close enough to hear any of the speakers but that didn't matter. The spirit of the crowd was respectful of others, there was never any pushing or shoving, we were energized by the presence of other like-minded people and most of all we had all made the effort to bring our bodies together at some effort, inconvenience and expense to make a statement that was both seen and heard across the nation and around the world.

At the end of the day I, along with probably thousands of others, was overwhelmed by the turnout and the sense of maybe we can get through this together. I am a different person for having attended and now have a greater sense of commitment to become more actively involved in what only now be described as the Resistance. Do marches make a difference? Yes, they motivate, they energize and they make us see that we are not alone. If only five percent of the people who attended the marches across the country returned home to become actively involved politically then it made a difference.

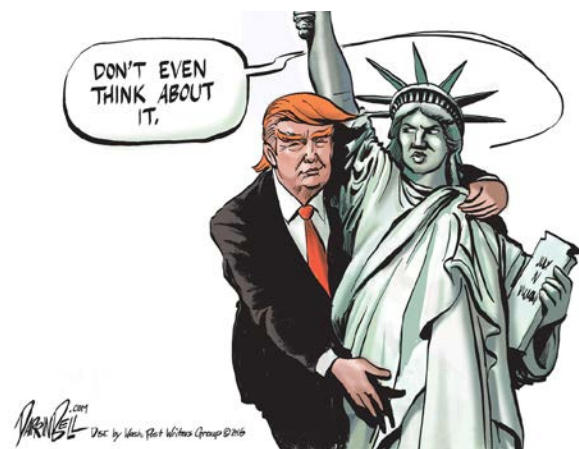
I hope that sometime in the future my seventeen-month old granddaughter can tell her friends that her grandmother marched in the 2017 Women's March in Los Angeles and that we helped save democracy. The alternative is too horrible to contemplate.

Pat Ward

It was clear, sunny and crisp. We were at the Metroliner in South Pasadena at 8 a.m. Surely it was more than enough time. One...2...3...4 trains with 4 cars each passed us by so jammed with people the doors did not even open. Now what? We crossed to the other side of the platform and took the train going in the other direction to the end of the line to start from the beginning. Please, do not let us miss the whole march.

When we all spilled from the train at the station it was 10:45 am! We walked 4 blocks to get to City Hall, which was jammed with people barely moving, listening to music and speeches, which were difficult to hear. It was so exciting to see the diversity of ages, so many young people, so many different colors, races, and so many wonderful signs—some that took a lot of work, others just done on the spur of the moment—and most of all so much energy and camaraderie—so much support of each other. There is nothing like being in such a crowd to invigorate one to action once home. The LA papers said the size of the crowd was 750,000!

Look Out-- Here We Come!



Non-HSSB Events of Interest Upcoming Events in California:

- February 8: Robyn Blumner: *Atheist Stigma and Science Denial in the United States – And What Can Be Done About It*. Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles. <http://www.centerforinquiry.net/la/events/atheist-stigma-and-science-denial-2.8.17/>
- February 12: Dr. Amy Parish: *Sex, Bonding, and Dominance in Bonobos: Reflections on Our Closest Living Relatives and Ourselves*. Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles. <http://www.centerforinquiry.net/la/events/sex-bonding-and-dominance-in-bonobos-2.12.17/>
- February 19: Dr. Carol Tavris: *Mistakes Were Made (But Not By Me)*, Skeptics Society, Science Salon #10, Pasadena. <http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/mistakes-were-made/>
- March 8: Judith Freeman: *The Latter Days: The Case Mormon Influence in America Now*. Center for Inquiry West, Los Angeles. <http://www.centerforinquiry.net/la/events/the-latter-days-3.5.17/>
- March 26: Dr. Lawrence Krauss: *The Greatest Story Ever Told...So Far: Why Are We Here?* Skeptics Society Science Salon #11, Pasadena. <http://www.skeptic.com/upcoming-lectures/the-greatest-story-ever-told-so-far/>

“It used to be, everyone was entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts. But that's not the case anymore. Facts matter not at all. Perception is everything.”

---Stephen Colbert

HSSB Contact Information

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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 805-967-3045 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





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

HSSB Calendar

Wednesday February 15: Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. Home of **Mary Wilk**. Members invited to attend.

Saturday February 18: Monthly Meeting: Jim Stubchaer will speak on The History of Water Resources in Santa Barbara County; 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.

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

Saturday March 18: Monthly Meeting: Officer Keld Hove of the Santa Barbara Police Dept. will talk about restorative policing; 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.