

The Secular Circular

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

www.santabarbarahumanists.org

APRIL 2019

Join Us for the April Speaker Meeting at Valle Verde:

What Not To Forget About the Dementia Epidemic

Dr. Robert D. Harbaugh will provide an overview and update about the dementia epidemic, or as some have called it, the “Grey Tsunami.” He will outline what the term “dementia” really means, what the more common causes are, and some history of how we got to this point. In addition, Dr. Harbaugh will touch upon frequently asked questions regarding how to evaluate someone with dementia and the current state of preventive interventions.



Dr. Robert D. Harbaugh.

Source:

www.Cottagehealth.org

When: Saturday, April 20, 2019

Where: Valle Verde. 900 Calle De Los Amigos, Santa Barbara, CA.

Parking: Please park at Veronica Springs Church, 949 Veronica Springs Road. Free shuttle to and from meeting. *No parking at Valle Verde* (except for handicapped parking). Shuttle driver has a dedicated cellphone: 805-679-3660

Time: Doors open at **2.30 pm**. Program begins promptly at **3.00 pm**

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

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After Meeting Buffet Dinner: Join us for dinner at Valle Verde, \$25 per person. We are required to provide a firm count for dinner therefore **please . RSVP to Nan Cisney at cisneynan@gmail.com by noon Wednesday, April 17 if you plan to join us for dinner.**

Parking lot shuttle also available after dinner.

For More Info: Call 805-769-4772

The President's Column

Christian Privilege

By Roger Schlueter

Dunn v. Ray is a case decided by the Supreme Court on February 7, 2019. Jefferson S. Dunn is the Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Corrections and Domineque Hakim Marcelle Ray was a prisoner who had been sentenced to the death penalty in Alabama. By a 5-4 vote, the Supreme Court vacated the stay of execution of the sentence of death entered by the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit with the result that Ray was executed by lethal injection on that same day, February 7.

To be clear at the outset, here I offer no sympathy for Mr. Ray. In 1995 he raped and murdered a 15-year-old girl, Tiffany Harville. He committed a heinous crime, was found guilty in a court of law and was sentenced to die by lethal injection. Whether justice was served by his execution is also not my concern here; that is a matter of debate for another day. My only concern here are the terrible decisions that accompanied his execution and their implications for our society.

Before this decision, the courts had shown some favoritism toward religion as weighed against non-religion. Examples include the (in)famous Hobby Lobby decision which essentially allowed for-profit corporations, themselves, to hold religious beliefs and the many cases where LGBT individuals tried to secure the same rights enjoyed by other citizens.

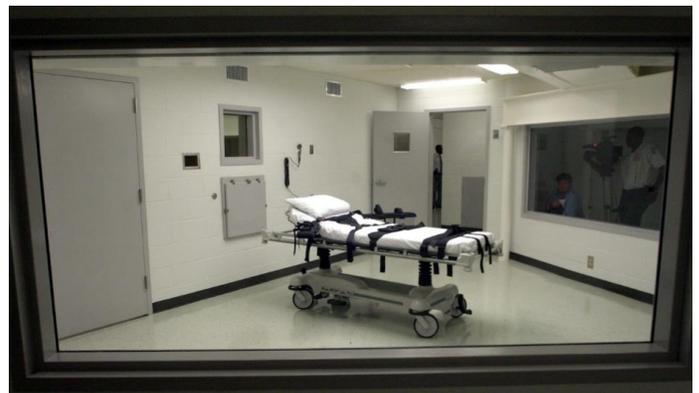
This changed with the *Dunn* decision.

Dunn was a Muslim and had requested that his local imam be allowed to accompany him through the execution process. Alabama had denied his request so, on appeal, the case went to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, upheld the Alabama ruling.

This was a *terrible* decision, one they should have been 9-0 to reject Alabama's position that only Christian chaplains can server the role of counselor to those facing the death penalty. The First Amendment is crystal clear in denying the state any basis for displaying any religious preference.

The conservatives argued that the "last minute" nature of the request was insufficient to prevent the execution to proceed. In other words, a few days delay was more important than reaffirming the central place the First Amendment plays in our society. I hope that execrable logic is absent from future deliberations by the justices.

Imagine a humanist is sentenced to die in Alabama and requests that a fellow humanist be allowed to accompany him during his last hours. Based on this ruling, that would be denied and a Christian chaplain would be assigned the job. What an offensive act that would be.



"Justices Let Alabama Execute Death Row Inmate Who Wanted Imam By His Side." *Source: CNN.com*

This decision may foreshadow similar rulings which would be a blow to the supposed secular nature of our government. I am greatly saddened by this turn of events. It means that we must hold our legislators even more accountable regarding the need to maintain a secular government at all levels.

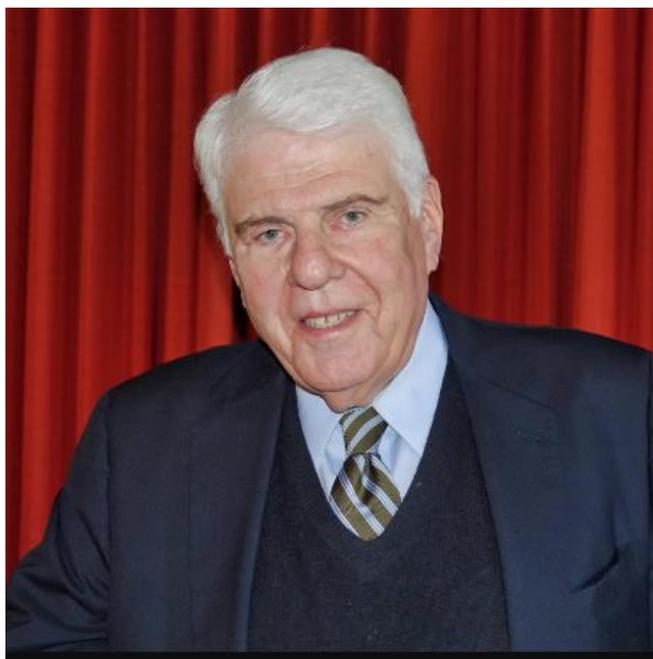
The Assassination of Martin Luther King

Robert Benham 3-16-19

By Robert Bernstein

“New Insights into The Assassination of Martin Luther King” was the listed title of the March Humanist Society talk by retired Judge Robert Benham. Benham offered these possible titles that reflected what he really intended:

“A Memphian’s Recollection of the Causes Leading up to the Assassination of MLK” or, more simply, “The Assassination of MLK: A Personal Recollection”. The talk was interesting and personal rather than about new insights.



Judge Robert Benham. *Photo by Robert Bernstein.*

Benham started his talk with April 4, 1968. He was a 29 year old young lawyer in private practice walking down Linden Avenue in Memphis to the Chisca Hotel for a meeting. An ambulance sped down Main Street, no more than 100 feet away, sirens blazing. Twenty minutes later he learned the ambulance was carrying Martin Luther King from the Lorraine Motel to St. Joseph Hospital, where King died soon after arrival.

Cities across the country erupted in violence. Martial law was imposed in Memphis for weeks.

“Why did this have to happen in my adopted city?” Benham wondered.

He backed up to January 1, 1968, where simultaneous events were occurring 1,800 miles apart. James Earl Ray had escaped prison in Missouri and was working as a volunteer for segregationist presidential candidate, George Wallace. Ray was using the alias Galt, one of many he used. Galt had been “mentored” by Wallace and others. One who indoctrinated Galt was J.B. Stoner who was from Benham’s home town of Chattanooga. Stoner called Hitler a “moderate”, called blacks “apes”, and said that being a Jew should be punishable by death. Galt was also an admirer of Rhodesia’s Ian Smith.

Back to Memphis: On January 1, a new form of government had begun and the outgoing government left the city in a financial mess. Three of the new city council members were black. They were the first elected black officials in Memphis since Reconstruction. Reconstruction was a big deal. Benham had schoolmates whose grandparents lived through it. Back then, the South was solidly Democratic. The few blacks who could vote were Republican. The 1954 Topeka case (*Brown v Board of Education*) flipped everything.



Memphis Sanitation Workers in the 1960s.
Source: PeoplesWorld.org, University of Memphis

February 1, 1968 was a typical rainy day in Memphis. The sanitation workers dreaded rainy days. There were no sealed trash containers. The workers had to take the trash from the rear of residences and businesses in tubs. They carried the tubs overhead. The tubs leaked all over them. It was disgusting. They were paid 90 cents/hour for this work.

Two sanitation workers, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were taking refuge from the cold sleet and rain in the maw of their truck. The compactor mechanism of the truck malfunctioned and pulled these two workers to a horrific death. The result was an unprecedented strike by 1,300 sanitation workers for better working conditions, better pay, better hours, and the right to organize. New mayor Henry Loeb said the strike was illegal.

The moral leader of the strike was Rev. James Lawson who had inspired the lunch counter sit-ins by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). One of the SNCC leaders was now-congressman, John Lewis. Lawson was the only African-American enrolled at the time at Vanderbilt. He had studied Gandhi's teachings in India. It was Lawson who inspired the "I AM A MAN" signs that the sanitation workers wore while on strike.

Black city council member, Fred Davis, negotiated a settlement offer by the strikers on February 22. It was rejected by the city council, even though it was almost identical to the final settlement. The rejection led to a march down Main Street to Mason Temple. The police were supposed to protect the marchers but instead they edged the marchers to the right. A police car ran over the foot of a marcher and police maced the marchers. Only 70 of the 1,000 marchers made it to the Temple. The City got a court order that limited strike activity and stopped negotiations for 26 days.

Back to the West Coast: On March 16 King was promoting the Poor People's Campaign in Los

Angeles. He wanted to pre-empt some who were calling for violent action. On that day, his friend Lawson asked King to come to Memphis to address the sanitation workers. That same day Galt left L.A. and had his mail forwarded to General Delivery in Atlanta. He had never been to Atlanta. King, a native of Atlanta, lived there. In Memphis, King spoke at the Mason Temple: "We are all tied together in a single garment of destiny. It is a crime for people to live in this rich nation and receive starvation wages." He promised to lead a march in support of the sanitation workers.



HSSB President Roger Schlueter & Judge Robert Benham. *Photo by Robert Bernstein.*

On March 21 Galt was heading east. He stayed with friends in New Orleans where he read in the paper that King was to be in Selma the next day. Galt headed to Selma which indicated he was scouting King and his security.

King did not go to Selma since he planned to lead the march in Memphis. But a freak snow storm paralyzed Memphis. Benham remembered that storm well: 14" of snow in spring! The march was rescheduled for March 28. King returned to Atlanta. Galt also went to Atlanta upon learning of King's plans. Galt rented a boarding house room and bought a city map. He circled King's

residence and King's church. There was no doubt now that he was stalking King.

On the morning of March 28, King flew from New York to Memphis. Black students were encouraged to skip school to join the march. Marchers carried "I AM A MAN" signs on sticks from Clayborn Temple down Beale Street to City Hall. Some of the teenage marchers tore the signs off the sticks and used the sticks to smash store windows. They looted the stores. The result was injury, death, and massive destruction. King was overcome with grief. It was the only protest he had led that was not peaceful. He wanted to do it over, peacefully.

Meanwhile Galt traveled to Birmingham and bought a rifle with a scope. He then upgraded to an even more powerful weapon: a Remington .30-06. He arrived in Memphis on April 3 under yet another name: Willard.



"I Am A Man" Signs. Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike.
Source: Libcom.org

A lot was happening on April 3. The Memphis City Attorney received a restraining order to prevent King from leading the march. King's first impulse was to lead it anyway. Cooler heads pointed out the restraining order came from a Federal District Court that had been protecting King. King was given a hearing the next morning, on April 4. He was to be represented by Lucius Burch, an excellent trial lawyer.

That evening there was a meeting at Mason Temple in awful weather. King was not feeling well and sent his assistant, Ralph Abernathy, instead. The crowd demanded King. King arrived in a driving rainstorm to deliver his final speech. He ended the speech saying he wants to live a long life but it is more important to do God's will. He assured people they would get to the Promised Land.

The April 4 hearing ran all day with superb lawyers on each side. Andy Young and Ralph Abernathy were King's main witnesses. Young later became the mayor of Atlanta and a UN Ambassador. Burch asked City witness Holloman (a Hoover lieutenant at the FBI) whether he would rather have King lead the march or someone else. Holloman agreed King should be the one. Judge Bailey Brown agreed to allow the march on April 8 under certain conditions.

That same day Galt (now Willard) obtained a room in a shabby rooming house with a window facing the Lorraine Motel where King was staying on the second floor. The newspaper showed Galt exactly where King was staying.

King learned of the court victory. He was standing on the balcony of the motel with his entourage as they prepared to leave for dinner. At that moment the assassin struck. There was immediate pandemonium followed by rioting, arson, and martial law.

The next day, April 5, the Memphis ministers met under the leadership of Rabbi James Wax. They confronted Mayor Loeb and demanded a settlement of the strike. Loeb refused and the strike continued.

On April 8, Coretta Scott King led the march in peaceful silence. Mayor Loeb still did not give in. The City Council finally asserted its power and agreed to nearly the original settlement offer including a ten cent per hour raise. Memphis could not afford this increase. Memphis leading

citizen, Abe Plough, (president of Plough, Inc. later Schering-Plough) stepped forward to pay the wage increase for all 1,300 sanitation workers with a check for \$60,000. The strike ended.

James Earl Ray (a.k.a. Galt) escaped to Canada, then England, then Portugal, where he tried to get to Rhodesia. He thought he would be welcomed there. This failed and he returned to England where he was apprehended. He was returned to the U.S. where he pled guilty in Shelby County, TN. He was sent to a horrible prison called Brushy Mountain Penitentiary. He briefly escaped but ended up dying there on April 23, 1998.

Benham was asked about blacks voting in the south. “It was very difficult. Whites who tried to register them have been killed.” I asked what he thought of various conspiracy theories behind the King assassination. “Not much.” He said Ray was a low life thug who held up prostitutes. He acted alone.

Jesse Jackson was on the balcony after King was shot. There had been friction between them. Billy Kyles and Abernathy were really with King. Benham noted that Memphis is now majority black!

Book Recommendation

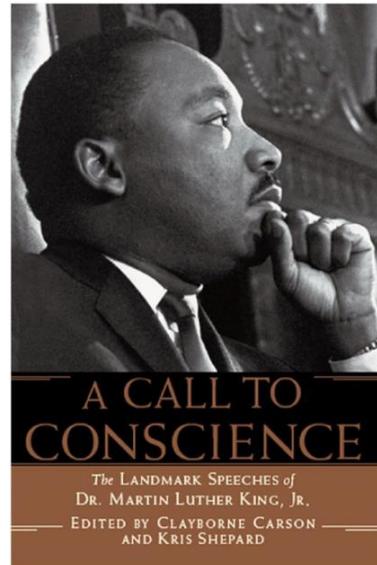
By Judy Flattery

A Call To Conscience: The Landmark Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
(edited by Clayborne Carson and Kris Shepard,
Warner Books Inc., 2001)

About 17 years ago I was catching a flight from Philadelphia to LAX on my way home to Santa Barbara. I stopped at an airport concession stand to find something to read for the long flight. I picked up this recently published collection of MLK speeches. I started reading it as we taxied out onto the runway and the next thing I knew we were landing at LAX. I was

completely absorbed and had finished the entire book on that flight. Tears streamed down my face. The tears were not tears of sadness but tears of wonder, awe, and profound appreciation of a vision of a world where everyone belongs.

Through the chronological reading of his speeches I could trace the development of many of King’s themes from 1955 through 1968. It was interesting to follow the threads of his views on civil rights, social justice, opposition to the Viet Nam War, the legacy of colonization of Africa, etc. from an initial, somewhat unformed mention, to a soaring, inspiring oratory.



What I particularly love about this book is that each speech is placed within its historical context and is individually introduced by someone with close knowledge of the events surrounding the speech—so, in the book, Rosa Parks wrote the introduction to the “Address to the First Montgomery Improvement Association Meeting”, the speech given four days after her arrest on a Birmingham bus. The Dalai Lama wrote the introduction for the speech King gave accepting the Nobel Peace Prize. Andrew Young wrote the introduction to King’s final “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech. Other speeches have introductions written by Representative John Lewis, Ambassador George McGovern, Senator Ted Kennedy, among others.

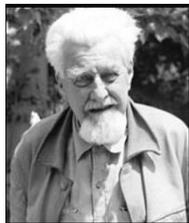
If you appreciated Judge Benham’s talk, which provided such interesting contextual background to the assassination of Martin

Luther King Jr., you may also appreciate reading King's speeches with context provided by his contemporaries. Highly recommended!

Who Was Konrad Lorenz?

By Judy Flattery

This month, in looking for inspiring quotes, I came across several by Konrad Lorenz, such as:



Truth in science can be defined as the working hypothesis best suited to open the way to the next better one.

(Konrad Lorenz)

Source: izquotes.com

Who was Konrad Lorenz? According to Wikipedia, "Konrad Zacharias Lorenz was an Austrian zoologist, ethologist, and ornithologist. He shared the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Nikolaas Tinbergen and Karl von Frisch. He is often regarded as one of the founders of modern ethology, the study of animal behavior." He was known for his work on how birds imprint on their "mother".

[Have you seen the recent CBS News video on Snowflake the Duck who imprinted on Kylie Brown, the little girl from Freeport, Maine? If not please check out this link: [Duck Imprints on Kylie](#). Very charming and cute!]

Here's another interesting Lorenz quote in which he seems to chide the religious concept of sin and vice:



Source: 9quotes.com

Lorenz, however, has a dark past having been a member of the Nazi party during WWII who served as a medic in the German army.

According to *New World Encyclopedia*, "Lorenz joined the Nazi Party in 1938 and accepted a university chair under the Nazi regime. In his application for membership to the Nazi-party in 1938 he wrote: 'I'm able to say that my whole scientific work is devoted to the ideas of the National Socialists.' His publications during that time led in later years to allegations that his scientific work had been contaminated by Nazi sympathies: his published writing during the Nazi period included support for Nazi ideas of 'racial hygiene' couched in pseudoscientific metaphors..."



"When accepting the Nobel Prize, he apologized for a 1940 publication that included Nazi views of science, saying that 'many highly decent scientists hoped, like I did, for a short time for good from National Socialism, and many quickly turned away from it with the same horror as I.'

**WE HAD BETTER DISPENSE
WITH THE PERSONIFICATION
OF EVIL, BECAUSE IT LEADS,
ALL TOO EASILY, TO THE MOST
DANGEROUS KIND OF WAR:
RELIGIOUS WAR.**

- KONRAD LORENZ -

Source: libquotes.com

It seems highly likely that Lorenz's ideas about an inherited basis for behavior patterns were congenial to the Nazi authorities, but there is no evidence to suggest that his experimental work was either inspired or distorted by Nazi ideas."

There are impassioned on-line discussions and arguments about Lorenz, what he really believed, what his views were, how they changed over time, how his science informed his views, and whether or not he redeemed himself by the time of his death in 1989.

Humanist Word Search Puzzle

By Judy Flattery

How quickly can you find the following words and names of interest to Humanists?

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|
| AGNOSTIC | APOSTASY | ATHEISM |
| BELIEF | CURIOSITY | DATA |
| DAWKINS | DOGMA | EVIDENCE |
| ENLIGHTENMENT | FREEDOM | FREETHINKER |
| HITCHENS | HUMANISM | HYPOTHESIS |
| INDOCTRINATION | INGERSOLL | PINKER |
| PROOF | SCHLUETER | SCIENCE |
| SKEPTICISM | | |

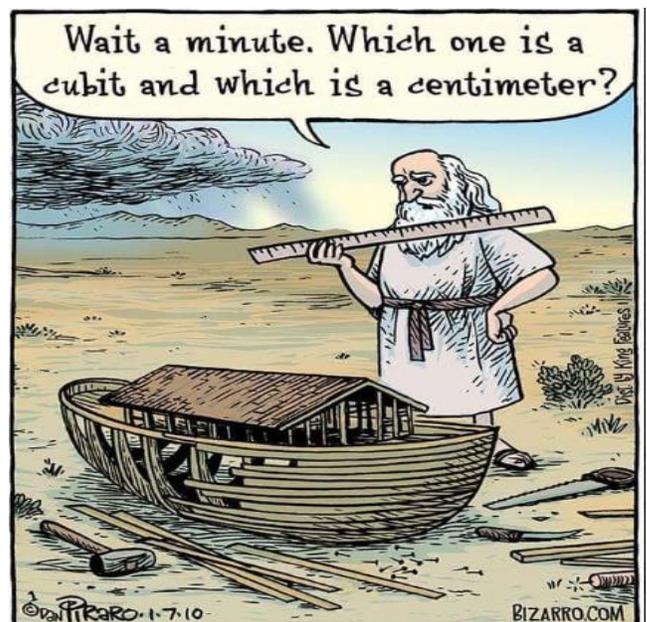
E H M D I S S B D L R B E S T
 C U O O N X N Y E E J N V I E
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 L C D I N G E R S O L L D H A

**This Month From Atheist Republic:
 Israeli Atheists Discuss Jewish Identity**

By Judy Flattery



Consider listening to [this podcast](#) from Atheist Republic published 3/29/19: “We talk to multiple atheists in Israel about atheism in their country, Jewish identity and the influence of religion on their government and society. We get different opinions on this from Israeli atheists.... [The] first discussion is with Daniel Jacoby from The International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism – “Tmura”. [The second part](#) is an interview with Ram Vromen the chairman and founder of “The Secular Forum” in Israel. The interviewer is Armin Navabi, an ex-Muslim and founder of Atheist Republic. He speaks to these two secular leaders in Israel who discuss, among other things, Jewish cultural vs. religious identity, Secular rabbis, and the historical context of Zionism.



Submitted by Diane Krohn

Non HSSB Events of Interest

Upcoming Events in California:

- April 7: Beth Macy: Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors and the Drug Company That Addicted America. Campbell Hall, UCSB. <https://artsandlectures.ucsb.edu/Details.aspx?PerfNum=4072>
- April 10: Jennifer Eberhardt: Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think and Do. Campbell Hall, UCSB. <https://artsandlectures.ucsb.edu/Details.aspx?PerfNum=4065>
- April 23: Michael Pollan: How to Change Your Mind. Granada Theater. <https://artsandlectures.ucsb.edu/Details.aspx?PerfNum=3897>
- May 2: The 2019 Arthur N. Rupe Great Debate: Immigration: A Boon or Bane to US Society. Campbell Hall, UCSB. <https://artsandlectures.ucsb.edu/Details.aspx?PerfNum=4078>
- June 9: SkeptiCal 2019: Northern California conference on science and skepticism. Berkeley. <http://www.skepticalcon.com/>
- July 21: LogiCal-LA: Speakers and schedule TBA. Lakewood. <http://logicalla.com/>

Upcoming Events Outside of California:

- April 19-21: American Atheists 2019 National Convention, Cincinnati, OH. <https://www.aacon2019.org/>
- June 7-9: American Humanist Association's 78th Annual Conference. This is its first ever virtual conference, streamed live at five select university locations: Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA; Rice University, Houston, TX; Pitzer College, Claremont, CA; University of Miami, Miami, FL; and Medgar Evers College, Brooklyn, NY. Attend in-person or online! <https://americanhumanist.org/events/american-humanist-associations-78th-annual-conference/>

HSSB Contact Information

Officers:

President: Roger Schlueter, drrogers@cox.net

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Board Members at Large:

Wayne Beckman, David Echols,
Judy Flattery, Mary Wilk, Nan Cisney,
Clover Brodhead Gowing, Colin Gordon

Newsletter Editor & Submission Deadline

Judy Flattery sbhumanisteditor@gmail.com

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

HSSB Speaker meetings are held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 3:00 pm, in the Theater Room at Valle Verde, 900 Calle De Los Amigos, Santa Barbara. June and December social events are held elsewhere.

Speaker Meeting Parking (with free shuttle service 805.679.3660) is at **Veronica Springs Church**, 949 Veronica Springs Rd., Santa Barbara. **No parking at Valle Verde unless you have a handicapped parking placard.**

Check our web site: www.SantaBarbaraHumanists.org for past issues of SC At meetings, a donation of \$2 from members and \$5 from non-members is appreciated. First-time visitors and students with ID are welcome on a complimentary basis.

Annual HSSB membership dues are \$36 for a single person, \$60 for a couple, \$100 for a Society Supporter, and \$300 (or more) for a Society Patron. Non-members may subscribe to hardcopy of this newsletter for an annual fee of \$20. E-mail copies provided at no charge.

To join HSSB: Send your contact information and a check for your membership dues to HSSB, P.O. Box 30232, Santa Barbara, CA 93130, Attn: Mary Wilk. For membership information contact Mary Wilk at mwilk@cox.net.

For any information about HSSB, call 805-769-4772. Copies of this and past newsletter are posted on the HSSB website.

Like us on Facebook





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

HSSB Calendar

Tuesday April 16: Board Meeting. 5:30 p.m. Home of Mary Wilk. Members are invited to attend.

Saturday April 20: Monthly Meeting 3:00 pm. Speaker: **Robert D. Harbaugh, MD.** “What Not to Forget About Dementia: An Update on a Growing Epidemic.” Location: Valle Verde Theater, 900 Calle De Los Amigos, Santa Barbara.

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

Saturday May 18: Monthly Meeting 3:00 pm. Speaker: UCSB Distinguished Professor Laura Kalman. “Nixon’s Court—and Ours.” Location: Valle Verde Theater, 900 Calle De Los Amigos, Santa Barbara.

Tuesday June 11: Board Meeting. 5:30 p.m. Home of Mary Wilk. Members are invited to attend.

Saturday June 15: Annual HSSB Summer Solstice Picnic. SAVE THE DATE!