



The Secular Circular

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

www.SBHumanists.org

APRIL 2020

Please join us for our April Speakers: TWO EVENTS On ZOOM!

Update on Corona Virus Models

Saturday April 4, 2020 at 3pm via Zoom

Our Speaker: Dave Flattery is a Certified 6-Sigma Master Black Belt with extensive experience in statistical modeling of physical processes. Dave presented his initial COVID-19 Model at our February 15 meeting and updated his predictions during our on-line March 14 meeting. Join us on Zoom for the latest updates & predictions.



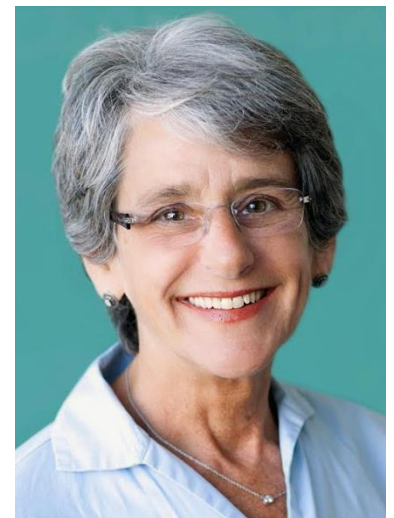
HSSB Member & Math
Modeler, Dave Flattery

When, Where & How: Saturday, April 4, 2020. On-line meeting opens at 2:30 pm, program begins at 3pm. **If you are unfamiliar with Zoom, join at 2:30 to familiarize yourself with how it works.** From your computer, tablet or smartphone log in to this website: <https://zoom.us/j/443691806> to connect with both video and audio. For those ONLY joining with phone audio, dial 1-669-900-9128 then enter meeting id 443691806#.

Central Coast Pandemic Response, and Legislative Priorities

Saturday April 18, 2020 at 3pm via Zoom

Our Speaker: Hannah-Beth Jackson is a former prosecutor and practicing attorney, educator, and small business owner. She was elected to the California State Senate in 2012 to represent the 19th Senate District, which includes all of Santa Barbara County and western Ventura County. In the Senate, she is chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee and serves as a member of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water, the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee, Senate Human Services Committee, and the Senate Public Safety Committee. She is a past chair of the California Legislative Women's Caucus. She was named by Huffington Post as one of 11 women around the country "blazing new trails" in American politics. Log in to hear Hannah Beth Jackson share the latest with HSSB members.



California State Senator,
Hannah Beth Jackson

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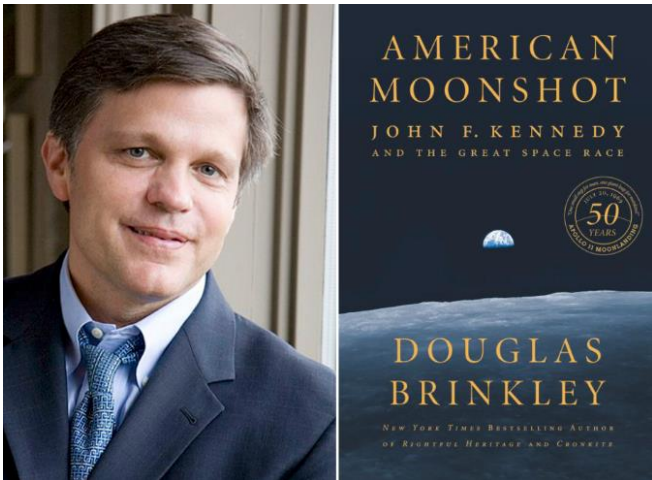
American Moonshot – Douglas Brinkley at UCSB Arts and Lectures 12/5/19

By Robert Bernstein

[Robert Bernstein accompanied the winner of our October door prize, which was a pair of UCSB Arts & lectures tickets to see author & historian Douglas Brinkley. Robert summarized the talk. Thank you, Robert! –ed.]

How much did the moon landing cost? Douglas Brinkley said it cost \$185 billion in today's dollars.

Brinkley grew up in Perrysburg, Ohio near Toledo and he was 8 ½ years old for the moon landing. Neil Armstrong grew up down the road in Wapakoneta, Ohio.



Neil Armstrong was almost a hermit in Ohio after the moon landing. Brinkley would send books to him and politely ask for an interview. Armstrong would politely say no. But then, after six years, Armstrong called Brinkley. Armstrong said he was turning 70 and he wanted Brinkley to do an oral history of him for NASA. He was the only astronaut who hadn't yet done one.

This was in 2001. Then 9/11 happened and all commercial flights were grounded. Armstrong never cancels anything. He flew himself for the interview. It was to be an 8 hour interview with no restrictions.

Brinkley is a humanities guy. He wants to know things like "what did it feel like".

Armstrong was chosen for the mission because he is unflappable. Brinkley asked him, "Did you ever look at the moon and think 'I will be standing there'?" "No."

Very different than astronaut William Anders who took the famous photos of Earth during the Apollo 8 mission.

Brinkley is a professor at Rice University. In 1962 President Kennedy gave his famous "We choose to go to the Moon" speech at Rice University. "We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win."

JFK said that space is the new ocean. He wanted the country to pull together for a single purpose.

JFK was born in 1917 in Brookline, MA. The Wright Brothers had flown in 1903. WWI really pushed aviation. Going to the moon was a big question.

Robert Goddard was not far from where JFK was growing up and he was the only one figuring out the details of how to put a projectile in space 62 miles up.

Goddard knew it had to be liquid fuel. Others were thinking it would be some kind of cannon as Jules Verne had proposed back during the time of the US Civil War. Verne actually got a lot of it right, though. It would be three Americans going to the moon in a three stage rocket. Verne thought it would be launched from Tampa in Florida.



Dr. Robert H. Goddard and his liquid oxygen-gasoline rocket circa 1926, at Auburn, Mass. It flew for only 2.5 seconds, climbed 41 feet, and landed 184 feet away in a cabbage patch. *Photo credit: NASA*

Goddard was arrested at one point for making too much noise with his rockets. In 1926 he made the first successful launch of a liquid-fueled rocket using gasoline and liquid oxygen. It was launched from his Aunt Effie's farm and landed in a cabbage field. At this time Goddard was a physics professor at Clark University. Unfortunately, the New York Times wrote an article calling him a "quack" and his funding dried up. The New York Times apologized in 1969, long after Goddard died.

Goddard moved to Roswell, New Mexico. Germany was funding rockets, but the U.S. was putting its money in the Manhattan Project. The plan was to deliver the atomic bomb with an Air Force bomber and the Air Force had no interest in rockets.

Many German rocket scientists fled as WWII approached. But not Wernher von Braun. Von Braun built the first true Weapon of Mass Destruction. He worked out of a top secret base on the Baltic to create the V2 rocket. They



Hitler's V-2 Rocket. *Photo credit: DailyMail.com*

broke the 62 mile barrier. They rained V2 rockets on London late in the war.

Churchill was forced to move government operations underground [*Note: Churchill's underground war room in London is open to the public, essentially unchanged since the end of WWII. -ed.*].

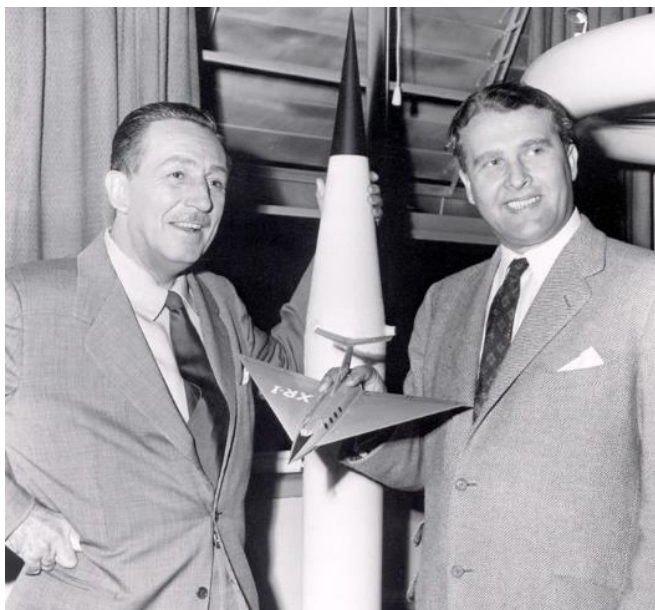
The V2s had no precision. They might land in the English Channel or on a farm. It was lucky that the war ended before the guidance systems were perfected.

The V2s were built at the Buchenwald concentration camp with Jewish slave labor. Von Braun realized the war was lost for Germany. He knew that the British would have him tried for war crimes and if he were to be captured by the USSR he would be forced to serve Stalin.

Wernher convinced his brother, Magnus, to bicycle 100 miles to offer his surrender to the U.S. Operation Paperclip was a U.S. operation to smuggle over 1,600 German scientists, engineers, and technicians to the U.S. from 1945 to 1959 despite the fact that many of them were members, and even leaders, of the Nazi Party.

Von Braun was taken to Fort Bliss, Texas to work for the U.S. Army. This had significant moral implications and there were protests when it was discovered that von Braun was living and working in the U.S.

Von Braun went on to design the Saturn V rocket that went to the moon. Walt Disney promoted von Braun.



Walt Disney & Wernher von Braun. *Photo credit: Space.com*

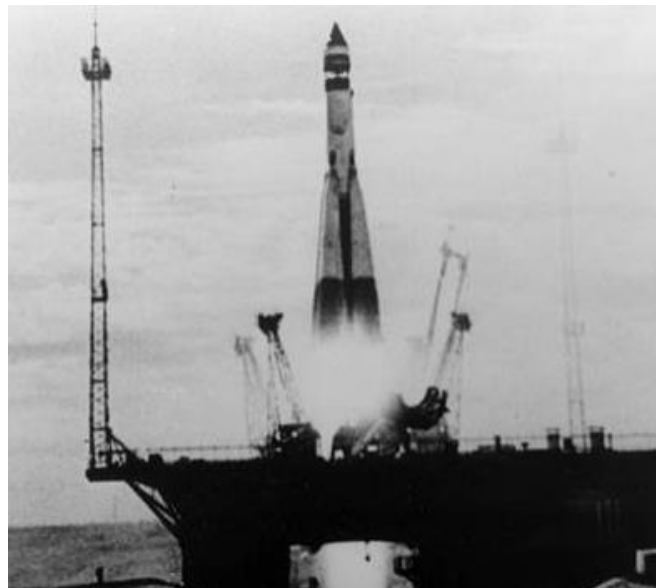
From 1945-49 the U.S. had a nuclear monopoly; after which the USSR had both Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) and nuclear weapons.

Von Braun moved to Huntsville, Alabama and was provided significant financial support for his rocket work. Eisenhower hated von Braun and his complicity with the Nazi death camps. Eisenhower was an Army man. He directed funding to the Navy to stifle von Braun.

Brinkley noted that Huntsville lived under Jim Crow laws discriminating against black Americans.

1957 was a big turning point with the launch of the Soviet satellite, Sputnik. Democrats accused the Republicans of losing the space race and allowing a "missile gap" to give the Soviets an advantage.

JFK was a WWII war hero. His older brother died trying to make a drone to destroy von



Launch of Sputnik in Kazakhstan on Soviet R-7 rocket.
Photo credit: Novosti via AP & NBC.com

Braun's weapons. JFK had never lost an election, starting with his first run in 1946. He met von Braun in 1953. Von Braun was on the [cover of Time Magazine](#) on February 17, 1958.

JFK held no grudge against von Braun. Brinkley said JFK had more distaste for leaders born in the 19th century, notably Churchill and Stalin.

JFK pushed for going to the moon. Brinkley said that in 1958 Eisenhower was forced to create NASA. He wanted it to be a civilian agency.

The 1960 presidential debates pitted JFK against Nixon. JFK won on the space issues. Nixon had told Khrushchev that the U.S. led the Soviets on kitchen appliances and color TVs. JFK said we need to lead in rocket thrust.

JFK was in office just a few months when, in April 1961, the USSR succeeded in launching Yuri Gagarin into orbit. JFK did not want incremental "tit for tat" with the Soviets. He wanted to leapfrog past them. Von Braun told JFK he could get us to the moon if he was given the money.

The USSR was not focused on safe returns. In 1957 they launched the dog, Laika, into. Laika died in orbit.



Laika, the first dog in space. *Photo credit: Animalwisdom.com*

Alan Shepard was the first American in space on May 5, 1961. His sub-orbital flight lasted just 15 minutes but he was an instant hero.

Then, on May 25, 1961 JFK called a joint session of Congress to announce that we will go to the moon. NASA thought it was crazy. McGeorge Bundy called it "grandstanding".

Money invested in technology could be a big win for all. In 1960 there were no computer science departments. By 1963 every major school had one. The money for the moon mission attracted the best and brightest.

LBJ was from Texas. The South had been solidly Democratic before the Civil Rights movement. Then came the Freedom Rides and Robert Kennedy pushing for integration. JFK anticipated that the Democrats would lose the South. His solution: massive "pork" spending in the South. NASA money went to Houston, Huntsville, Brevard NC, Florida, and Louisiana.

LBJ wanted to be the space czar. He and JFK despised each other. Former FCC Chair Newton Minow said if Alan Shepard had died, JFK would blame LBJ. No. LBJ would replace Shepard!

Walter Cronkite was covering John Glenn's space flight as the first American to orbit the Earth. Glenn's mother was excited for the chance to meet Walter Cronkite!

A big sell of the space program was the idea of technology spinoffs. It was giving us defibrillators. Firefighting suits. Helmets.

George H. Bush praised the money the space program brought to Texas. No money had yet come to Dallas. JFK prepared to give a speech at the Dallas Trade Mart on November 22, 1963. He would talk about the economic value of satellites for communication and weather forecasting. JFK never gave that speech as he was assassinated en route. John Glenn was a pallbearer at JFK's funeral.



John Glenn, JFK, & LBJ. *Photo credit: Washington Post.*

LBJ asked Jackie Kennedy what she wanted. Jackie said to keep the moon dream alive. He said he would and he would name the space center for JFK.

A big question was the prioritization of funding. LBJ wanted funding for public schools, ending

poverty and for his escalation of the U.S. war in Vietnam. Goldwater wanted money for an Air Force (vs. civilian) presence in space instead.

In 1967 the dream almost died with the Apollo 1 disaster. People questioned if the moon landing really had to be in this decade, but too much was already invested.

Nixon was not particularly enthusiastic about the moon landing program. He dreaded the possibility of a disaster.

Neil Armstrong was selected because he was not a military man. Thirteen women trained to be astronauts for the mission as well. They passed all the tests. Physician Randy Lovelace trained them. He thought they would be better suited to space travel than men in part because they were smaller and lighter than men. The group was called "Mercury 13" but was never an official part of NASA. It wasn't until 1983 that the first U.S. female astronaut, Sally Ride, made it into space. *[Note: Netflix released a documentary on the [Mercury 13](#) program in 2018 – ed.]*

TV newsman Edward R. Murrow had become the director of the United States Information Agency, in charge of fighting the Cold War on the "hearts and minds" front. He had argued that sending a black man into space would be a huge public relations boost for the U.S. NASA vetoed that idea.

There was a movement to name the rocket to the moon after JFK. Nixon's Chief of Staff Haldeman said no.

Neil Armstrong is remembered for his famous line upon stepping onto the surface of the moon: "That's one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind." Armstrong told Brinkley that he came up with that line in his kitchen.

When they left the moon, Armstrong asked Aldrin, "Did you leave the packet?" The packet referred to three medals for the three Apollo 1 astronauts who had died.



Apollo 1 Mission Patch. Photo credit: NASA.

After that? There were 12 people total who walked on the moon. TV ratings dropped. Nixon slashed funding for the last part. The U.S. switched funding to the Space Shuttle.

Where is the space program going now? NASA wants to go to the moon in 4-5 years. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi wants to see women on the moon.

The discovery of ice on the moon is a great motivator for another moon mission. This water could allow an extended stay. The moon is mainly the same composition as the Earth. The space camps are divided. Some are pushing to return to the moon while others are pushing for Mars. Astronauts Aldrin and Collins are still alive and would like to see us focus on getting to Mars. Jeff Bezos views the moon as a necessary launch pad to go on to Mars.

Others want to see that money used here on Earth to solve the Climate Crisis.

Mars will be a chance for a multi-national cooperation. Do we want to go to Mars in

collaboration with other countries or be more like the JFK sports metaphor to "beat them"?

Brinkley ended by taking quite a few questions. I will note a few highlights from his answers.

He said that there are many today who claim that the entire moon landing was a fraud. He said that *70% of Russians believe it was a fraud.*

Brinkley offered his opinion that landing people on Mars is 40-50 years away. Brinkley teaches classes on the 1960s. He said the students used to be interested in the social activism of the era. Now they are more excited at the prospect of space travel.

Regarding the Climate Crisis, Brinkley said that we have the technology to go beyond fossil fuels right now. The obstacle is not technology but vested interests who have political power.



[Note: On December 20, 2019, 2 weeks after this talk, the United States Space Force was founded as a space warfare service branch of the U.S. Airforce – ed.]

Movies for Humanists: The Best of Enemies

By Diane Krohn

The time is 1971, the place is Durham, North Carolina, and the fight is school integration. Ann Atwater (Taraji P. Henson) is a local civil rights activist who is frequently at odds with the city council and local judges. When Ann's daughter's school catches on fire, the city must decide whether to have multiple shifts in the partially-damaged school or to allow the black students to attend the white school. Durham has a strong Ku Klux Klan presence, and local

resident C.P. Ellis (Sam Rockwell) is the Exalted Cyclops of the North Carolina branch of the KKK (as an aside, where does the KKK come up with such titles?).

The local judge realizes that he cannot get away with a ruling against school integration, so he calls in a black community organizer from Raleigh, Bill Riddick (Babou Ceesay), to oversee a charette, a



community meeting. Ann and C.P. are appointed co-chairs of the charette; she is willing, but he is reluctant until he realizes that his input (as a KKK leader) is important to prevent school integration.

Somewhat predictably, both have an open dislike for each other, but certain small occurrences and actions take place that slowly change opinions. No spoiler alerts for this movie—other than to say it is based on actual events and people, and Ann and C.P. did eventually become friends and traveled the country talking about their experiences.

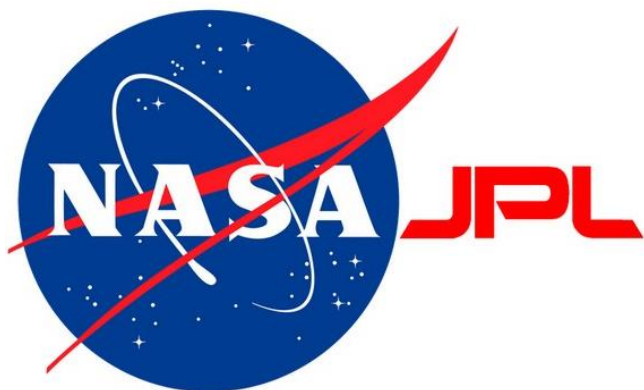
It's interesting to note that this movie did not get a lot of good reviews. Personally, I think it is worth watching to learn about some little-known history and people; and to see how small actions can sometimes make big differences, ultimately, between people with very different outlooks.

A quote from the review on Variety.com (April 4, 2019) summarizes the movie well: "Watching "The Best of Enemies," there's a part

of us that wants to put on the moral brakes, because we think: *Is the film's point that the head of the Klan is really a good guy?* But actually, that's not the film's point. It's that racism, disgusting as it is, truly is a mask for fear and ignorance." For more information and for options to view this 2019 movie: [Best of Enemies](#)

Jet Propulsion Laboratory Tour for HSSB Members Likely To Reschedule

Our group tour of JPL, currently scheduled for May 26, *is likely to be rescheduled* due to COVID-19 pandemic social distancing requirements. We will keep you apprised of the actual date. This full day outing will include transportation, lunch, tour, and dinner. Cost is projected to be ~\$60-75 per person plus the cost of your dinner selection.



Want to Join the HSSB Board?

The HSSB Board election will take place in May/June for the start of our fiscal year, which begins July 1. If you are interested in working to guide the direction of our society, please contact a Board Member. Thank you!

MOM: Characters Research Underway

We are pleased to report that Meredith McMinn has the enthusiastic volunteers needed to create our own version of a Meeting Of Minds script using a new set of historical figures. The

team's intention is to have this stage production ready for HSSB in November. If you are interested in providing production assistance please send your name to Meredith c/o Nan Cisney (cisneynan@gmail.com).

Southern CA Secular Leaders' Summit

By Judy Flattery

I was invited to attend the 2nd Annual Secular Leaders of Southern California Summit retreat in Fallbrook, CA February 28-March 1. I connected with leaders of like-minded organizations. Some of the organizations represented were:

- Backyard Skeptics (Orange County)
- Atheist United (LA)
- Secular Latinos of San Gabriel Valley
- Orange County Humanists
- Inland Empire Atheists, Agnostics & Humanists
- USC Secular Student Alliance
- Santa Clarita Atheists & Freethinkers
- Sunday Assembly of LA
- San Diego Sunday Assembly
- KAHAL AM (Humanistic Jewish Community of San Diego)
- South Orange County Humanists, Atheists, Agnostics
- Leisure World Humanists
- Humanist Community of Ventura County
- The Freethought Society

I came away with a team of partners and great ideas for future HSSB activities.

The Summit participants agreed to support each other by sharing our newsletters, looking for opportunities to attend each other's events, and collaborating on some common opportunities (e.g. marketing/attracting new members, how to best use technology to support our efforts, sharing speakers, etc.). Three subgroups were created to work on these items. HSSB will benefit in the coming months from this very worthwhile weekend.

Non HSSB Events of Interest

Upcoming Events in California:

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, all Arts & Lectures events have been cancelled for the 2019-2020 season.

- June 7: SkeptiCal 2020: The Northern California conference on science and skepticism. Berkeley. [SkeptiCal 2020](https://skeptical2020.org)

Upcoming Events Outside of California:

April 9-12, 2020: American Atheists 2020 National Convention. Speakers TBA. Phoenix, AZ. <https://convention.atheists.org>



Source: American Promise.net

Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!

HSSB is moving our meetings to the on-line platform, Zoom, until it is safe for us to meet again in person. We will offer **training opportunities to practice using Zoom** before the April meeting with Senator Jackson. We invite those of you unfamiliar with Zoom to take advantage of these training opportunities. This is a great way to stay connected with fellow Humanists and reduce feelings of isolation. The Board also decided to suspend collecting dues from members until we resume “normal” operations. Let’s stay connected.

HSSB Contact Information

Officers:

President: Judy Flattery, sbhumanisteditor@gmail.com

Secretary: Diane Krohn, djkrohn@cox.net

Treasurer: Neal Faught, nfaught@frontier.com

Board Members at Large:

Wayne Beckman, David Echols, Mary Wilk, Nan Cisney, Clover Brodhead Gowing

Newsletter Editor & Submission Deadline

Judy Flattery sbhumanisteditor@gmail.com

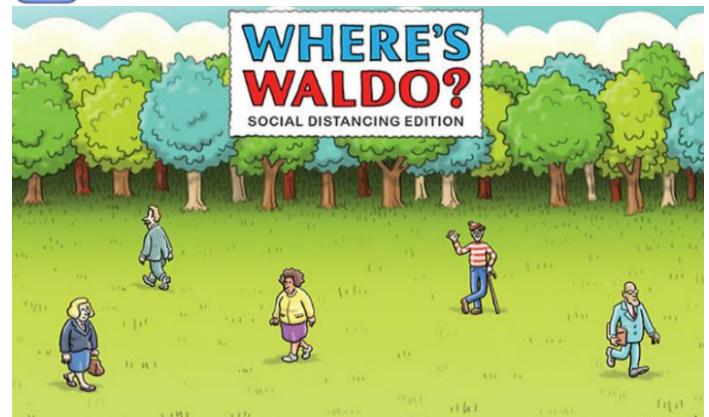
Deadline for submissions to the Secular Circular is midnight, the last day of each month. Our web site, www.SBHumanists.org, archives current and past issues of the *Secular Circular*.

Annual HSSB membership dues: \$36 for an individual, \$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 to members and interested non-members at no charge.

To join HSSB: Send your contact information and a check for your membership dues to *Humanist Society of Santa Barbara*, to Mary Wilk, 4384 Via Presada, Santa Barbara, CA 93111. For further membership information contact Mary Wilk at mwilk@cox.net.

For any information about HSSB, call 805-769-4772.

Like our page on Facebook. Join our Facebook Group.



Source: Cartoonist Martin Hanford



Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

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HSSB Calendar

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Tuesday April 14, 5:30 p.m: Zoom Board Meeting. Click on the following link as early as 5pm for dinner & socializing: <https://zoom.us/j/415545408> . For those ONLY joining with phone audio, dial 1-669-900-9128 then enter meeting id 415545408#

Saturday April 18: *COVID-19, 2020 Election & Coastal Development Issues.* Speaker: State Senator Hannah Beth Jackson. Click on the link as early as 2:30 pm to familiarize yourself with how Zoom works: <https://zoom.us/j/371303375> . For those ONLY joining with phone audio, dial 1-669-900-9128 then enter meeting id 371303375#