



The Secular Circular

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

www.SBHumanists.org

JULY 2020

Please join us for our July Speaker Meeting on Zoom...

Policing Reform

Terry Blevins, a retired sergeant with the Gila County Arizona Sheriff's Office and a Policing Reform Expert, will present on the unrest currently gripping the country and ways policing can be reformed to better serve the public.

Terry, currently residing in Ventura, will be speaking on behalf of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership ([LEAP](#)), whose mission is to unite and mobilize the voice of law enforcement in support of drug policy and criminal justice reforms that will make communities safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety, by promoting alternatives to arrest and incarceration, by addressing the root causes of crime, and by working toward healing police-community relations.



Retired Sergeant Terry Blevins, Policing Reform expert.

The Law Enforcement Action Partnership envisions a world in which criminal justice and drug policies keep our communities safer, ending the war on drugs, and looking beyond the criminal justice system for a range of solutions to address society's ills to better protect human rights, reduce violence and addiction, and build public respect for and trust in law enforcement.



Please join us for this highly topical presentation and discussion.

When: Saturday, July 18, via Zoom. Log in as early as 2:45 pm. Program begins at 3pm.

Where: Zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82191957451>. For those ONLY joining with phone audio, dial 1-669-900-9128 then enter meeting id 82191957451#

The HSSB Secular Circular – July 2020

Our June Speaker: Hugh Neighbour *How Foreign Policy Really Works: Diplomats' Tricks of the Trade* By Robert Bernstein

Hugh Neighbour is retired from service as a diplomat in the U.S. Foreign Service, and before that, as an officer in the U.S. Navy.

Specialized in political and economic affairs, he was posted in Latin America, Asia/Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. Hugh was awarded the Secretary of State's Career Achievement Award as well as a number of Department of State awards for distinguished service. Since retiring from the U.S. State Department in 2010, Hugh has worked as a consultant in both Washington and overseas, served as an official observer for several elections overseas, and lectured aboard high-end cruise ships.

He emphasized that he was not speaking for the government and was only offering his personal views and experience.

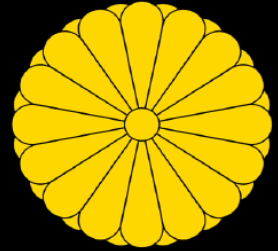
The main conclusion I came to from the talk is how outdated our system of diplomacy is. It is insane that there is so much focus on immediate gains for our country with no broader view of mutual security or mutual benefits, let alone a broader view of truly helping other countries to advance in a way that helps their people.

[Our June speaker agreed to speak to HSSB on the condition that we not record or otherwise copy & distribute his presentation. We agreed. This agreement extended to not providing a detailed summary of what we heard, so, at the speaker's request, Robert's article is highly abbreviated from his usual detailed report. Those of you who missed the live presentation missed a very interesting talk. The speaker provided the following hand-outs, prepared for HSSB, as a summary of his main speaking points for all. -ed.]

Stewards of Interests Abroad

True for all diplomats sent by all governments:

- Agents
- Advocates
- Informants
- Counselors



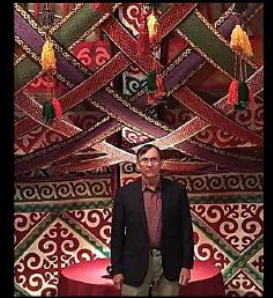
Japan

To advance their country's national interests, not necessarily "good relations"

Almost all Countries Require

Two Commitments:

1. Public support of all government policies. Even if personally disagree with policy
2. Flexibility re: Work during an assignment (includes worldwide availability)



US Embassy Nur-Sultan, KZ

Key Tools for Success

- Clear instructions from national authorities—can range from specific to a "hunting license"
- Consultations with nat'l stakeholders and Allies
- Credibility
- Seen to be in good faith
- Reasonable BATNA
- Counterpart who can deliver what is agreed



"Zoomplomacy" Some Pluses and Minuses

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saves travel time/cost • Can quickly convene • Tech = easy to show latest images to all • Easy for colleagues to listen in, take notes • Often works well for day-to-day matters • Safe from covid-19, terrorist bombs, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less prep = wing it • No side conversations to cut away the brush • No "on margins" (side deals) by lower-levels • Easier for brinkmanship • Lacks ceremony, drama to incentivize agreement • Really hard to cut deals • On-line security is weak |
|---|---|

Trends: More “Hardship” Posts

Living conditions more difficult. Some of factors (not present everywhere):

- Civil unrest
- War zone
- Political harassment
- High crime
- Can't get good food
- Harsh climate
- Isolated post
- Bad housing
- Infectious disease, e.g., covid-19 and others
- Lousy local health care
- Poor schools for dipl kids
- Unhealthy pollution levels
- No spousal employment opportunities
- Little to enjoy in free time

Three-legged stool of nat'l security:

- Military power
- Info from intelligence sources
- Diplomatic engagement



- Military solutions are quick and show resolve
- Can be necessary
- But targets often resist, Allies may not support
- No battle plan survives first contact with the enemy
- We live in an era of asymmetric threats, uneasy coalitions, scrambles for information
- A word in the ear can be as decisive as a gun in hand
- Diplomats -- a (low cost), essential part of nat'l defense

From Hand-Outs Provided by Hugh Neighbour

Board Election Results: Meet the New Board

Nine candidates ran for election to the HSSB Board for the July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 fiscal year. All ran unopposed although members had the opportunity to vote for a write-in. Our board consists of 3 officers (President, Treasurer and Secretary) and up to 8 board members-at-large who take on various roles such as membership, programming, publicity, technology/website, and social activities. Ballots were sent to all members either by email or paper mail. Five paper ballots and 35 email ballots were returned with overwhelming support for the candidates. Thanks to the voters for their support and to the candidates for their willingness to take on the tasks of running a successful society.

We will be introducing our board members in this and in the coming issues of the *Secular Circular*.

We asked about themselves, here are some of the responses:

Meet Our New Treasurer, Sondra Wikman.

Sondra has been assisting with mailing out hard-copies of the newsletter for the past several years and volunteered to run for Treasurer when she heard we were in dire need of someone to take on that role. Thank you, Sondra!

Q: What brought you to join HSSB?

A: I am impressed with the intelligence of its members and I like that the organization is not self-serving. The speakers are interesting, enjoyable, and intellectually challenging. For me, HSSB is an oasis.

Q: Where are you from?

A: I spent the first 60 years of my life in New York City, both Brooklyn and Manhattan. I don't miss it. I worked in advertising on Madison Avenue. My specialty was billboard advertising. I like it here. I have family nearby and find solace at the beach.

Q: What's your favorite book and TV show?

A: I enjoy anything on the New York Times top 10 Best Sellers list. I strictly watch British TV. I like historical mysteries.

Q: What is your favorite pizza topping?

A: No meat. Only cheese.



Newly elected HSSB Treasurer, Sondra Wikman, with President/Editor, Judy Flattery

Q: What are your talents?

A: I'm a good listener. I'm quiet and reserved although I can be the life of the party, too. I think sometimes people assume I am stupid because I am quiet, but I am not stupid. I love to cook and enjoy testing recipes. I love to do needle art and paint. I can't sing or dance.

Q: What do you wish for HSSB?

A: I would like to see us have a place to call our own—perhaps an office with a conference room.

Meet Our Returning Secretary, Diane Krohn

Q: What is your role at HSSB?

A: I am currently the Secretary for the HSSB Board of Directors. I was previously the Secretary from 2010 to 2013; editor for *The Secular Circular* newsletter from 2007 to 2009; and editor again from 2013 to 2017. I've been a member of HSSB since 2001, joining after attending a talk by Paul Kurtz.

Q: Where are you from?

A: I was born and grew up in Los Alamos, New Mexico, "the atomic city." My parents had moved to Los Alamos as part of the Manhattan Project, and they had many interesting stories about life in Los Alamos in the early days. My father was one of the few to observe the atomic bomb detonation, the Trinity Test, near Alamogordo, NM, in July, 1945.

Q: What is your educational background?

A: Schools attended include the University of New Mexico, and then UCSB, where Wayne and I met in the Mountaineering Club. I have a degree in Biological Sciences, and then I took additional classes in microbiology, clinical chemistry, immunology, and other related courses at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo.

Q: What work did you do?

A: Before retirement, I worked as a microbiologist and consultant at several local medical device companies in the areas of sterilization, environmental monitoring, and biocompatibility testing.

Q: How did you come to be a humanist?

A: It seems that I came by humanism/atheism via association with Wayne and my scientific training. Although my family was nominally Christian, we didn't have prayers at meals or bible readings; there was no talk of going to hell if we did or didn't do certain things. We did attend church fairly regularly, and always at Christmas and Easter; but the church seemed pretty liberal, as far as I can remember from my childhood.



Submitted by Diane Krohn

Q: Do you have any special talents?

A: Talents? Not sure if it is one, but I bake a lot and enjoy making new recipes when we have people over for dinner. I haven't poisoned anyone yet! I also seem to have a talent for trip planning and figuring out good routes for motorcycle travels. Wayne and I have ridden to 49 U.S. states on our motorcycle. Hawaii is the tough one to get to by bike.

Q: What are your favorite books, TV shows or movies?

A: Favorite TV show is *Law & Order*, because Lenny is a great character and Detective Green is very handsome. Favorite movies include *Ronin*, *Blazing Saddles*, and *Galaxy Quest*.

Favorite books include *Thousand-Mile Summer* (Colin Fletcher), *Over the Edge: Death in Grand Canyon* (Michael Ghiglieri), and Tony Hillerman mysteries.

Q: What do you wish for HSSB?

A: One wish to grant for HSSB: that we would have more people volunteering to help with the various tasks.

Meet Our Returning Webmaster, Wayne Beckman.

Q: What would you like people to know about you?

A: I have been on the board since 2007 and the webmaster since 2005.

Q: What are your talents?

A: I can fix things or make things from wood, metal, or electronics.

Q: How did you come to be a Humanist?

A: I think it is a natural byproduct of an engineering mind.

Q: What is your favorite pizza topping, book, movie, and/or TV show?

A: My favorite pizza is usually their special i.e. everything. Favorite book is tough question, my favorite authors are probably Richard Feynman, Colin Fletcher, and Edward Abbey. My favorite movie is *Ronin*.

Q: If you had the power, what is one wish you would like to grant for HSSB?

A: Some motivated people to join the board to take over some tasks.

Q: What is an unexpected, little-known fact about you?

A: I've motorcycled to 49 states and 5 Canadian provinces.

Meet Our Returning At-Large Board Member, Nan Cisney:

Q: Where are you from?

A: I was born in Brooklyn and it was there that I acquired my gorgeous accent. I was an avid fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers, the Bums, as they were called by Brooklynites. The warm feelings must have been mutual because soon after I arrived on the California scene, the Dodgers followed me here.

Q: Tell us about your career

A: I have been a security guard; an ESL, an English and German teacher; an editor; and a writer of non-fiction.

Q: What are your favorite books, TV shows or movies?

A: My favorite book is Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*, and my favorite film is *Carmen Jones*.

Q: What is an unexpected, surprising fact about you?

A: Like most Humanists, I am a supporter of gun control and an atheist, so you might be surprised to learn that I was on the "all-except-for-Nan men's varsity rifle team" at Jesuit Georgetown University!

Q: How did you come to be a Humanist?

A: I became a Humanist at the age of seven. A little girl told me that she loved God better than anyone in the world. I replied that I did too. Well, maybe I loved my mother more. "Yes," the girl replied, "I love my mother first and then God." Somehow, at that moment, I ceased to believe in this or in any deity. It wouldn't be until many years later that I would discover the name for what it was - Humanist.

Q: What is your wish for HSSB?

A: My wish for HSSB is for it to encompass a huge community of "Believers", a caring congregation of like-minded folk who believe that rational inquiry can provide the best foundation for human progress.

Update on Mubarek Bala

By Judy Flattery

Last month we reported on the case of Mubarek Bala, President of the Humanist Society of Nigeria. Arrested on April 28 for posting a comment on Facebook allegedly critical of Muhammed, he could not be located by his attorney, and human rights organizations worldwide feared for his well-being in Islamic northern Nigeria. We are relieved to report that his attorney has located him. We have no other details of his situation at this time.



Mubarek Bala, President of the Humanist Society of Nigeria

Jesus and John Wayne

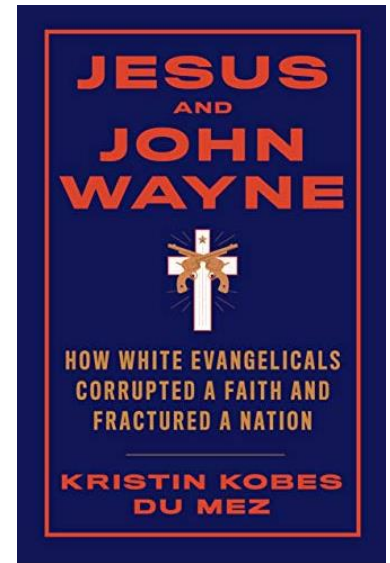
By Judy Flattery

On June 23rd, I heard a fascinating interview on NPR Morning Edition by Steve Inskeep with author and history professor, Kristin DuMez on her book, *Jesus & John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. You can listen to it here (only 7 minutes long!) or read the transcript: [NPR: Jesus & John Wayne](#).

A history professor at Calvin University, (a Christian college in Michigan), DuMez studies the portrayal of Christian men in literature and noted, "There are millions of copies of books that have been sold within evangelical circles on what does it mean to be a Christian man. And when I started reading these books, what struck me was there were only a few Bible verses ... sprinkled here and there. But when they were looking for models of Christian manhood, they

really looked to kind of secular heroes or mythical heroes - so warriors or soldiers or cowboys" like John Wayne's movie persona or Mel Gibson in *Braveheart*... "And it's a very common theme in white evangelical writing on masculinity from the 1960s really to the present - that you need to have very tough, rugged men who can protect women and children, who can protect Christianity and who can protect the

American nation. And for the sake of protecting these vulnerable things, these precious things, really, the ends will justify the means."



NPR's Steve Inskeep asked if she thought white evangelicals voted for Donald Trump because they imagined him to be a John Wayne figure who would go out and do terrible things ... so that other people could be good. She answered, "Yes. So they will actually say that in about as many words. Not all evangelicals will say that. But there is this strong kind of justification for their vote for Donald Trump in terms of, he is a strongman. He is going to protect Christianity precisely because he is not constrained by traditional Christian virtues."

I have contacted Kristin DeMez about being a speaker for HSSB. Fully committed through year end, she expressed her willingness to speak with us in 2021.

Seen on a T-shirt:
At my funeral, take the bouquet off my
coffin and throw it into the crowd to
see who is next

Upcoming Online Events:

- August 8: *Distant But Together: A Virtual Celebration of Humanism*. Sponsored by the American Humanist Association. Speakers include Hemant Mehta, Roy Speckhardt, Rachel Laser, Debbie Goddard, and others. This is a one-day virtual conference with multiple speakers. Register for it here: [American Humanists Virtual Conference 2020](#)
- CSICon 2020, Skeptical Inquirer Conference, has been cancelled. Plans for CSICon in 2021 are being made. The organizers hope to have as many of their current roster of speakers come to the 2021 event. In addition, they plan on announcing a series of lectures and panel events to be held online shortly.

Dues Collection Resumes July 1

The HSSB Board suspended dues collection at the beginning of the COVID-19 “Safer at Home” lockdown when we were uncertain whether we would be successful in transitioning from in-person meetings to on-line meetings. Since then we have successfully hosted speakers Hannah Beth Jackson (April), Armin Navabi (May), and Hugh Neighbour (June) with attendance ranging from 40-70 people (very similar to our in-person attendance). In addition we have provided several COVID-19 updates by Dave Flattery.

We seem to have succeeded (knock on wood??) in making this transition. Our monthly expenses have remained largely unchanged (mailings, web hosting fees, advertising, and some speaker honorariums) and without in-person meetings, we no longer are collecting modest donations at the door. Therefore, effective July 1 we will resume collecting membership dues; however, all members will receive the benefit of 3 months of free membership (your renewal date will be moved forward by 3 months).

HSSB is a 501.c.3 Again

HSSB received notification that our application to once again be a public charity under IRS section 501.c.3 has been approved as of April 30, 2020. This means that contributions to the society on or after that date (“bequests, devises, transfers or gifts”) are tax deductible. Please consider us in your charitable donation tax plans so we can continue to bring you interesting and educational speakers and activities. Thanks for your on-going support of HSSB!

HSSB Contact Information**Officers:**

President: Judy Flattery, sbhumanisteditor@gmail.com

Secretary: Diane Krohn, djkrohn@cox.net

Treasurer: Sondra Wikman, sondra.wikman@gmail.com

Board Members at Large:

Wayne Beckman, Robert Bernstein, David Echols, Dave Flattery, Ed Taylor, Mary Wilk

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.





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

HSSB Calendar

Sunday July 5, 3:00 PM Pacific: *Update on COVID-19.* Dave Flattery, Six Sigma Master Black Belt. On Zoom. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86384396073>

Tuesday July 14, 5:30 pm: Zoom Board Meeting. Click on the following link *as early as 5pm for dinner & socializing, meeting begins at 5:30.* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83592300667>. For those ONLY joining with phone audio, dial 1-669-900-9128 then enter meeting id 83592300667#

Saturday July 18, 3:00 pm: *Policing Reform.* Terry Blevins, Law Enforcement Action Partnership. We are meeting via Zoom. Click on the link as early as 2:45 pm to familiarize yourself with how Zoom works: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82191957451>. For those ONLY joining with phone audio, dial 1-669-900-9128 then enter meeting id 82191957451#

Tuesday August 11, 5:30 pm: Zoom Board Meeting. Click on the following link *as early as 5pm for dinner & socializing, meeting begins at 5:30.* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83592300667>. For those ONLY joining with phone audio, dial 1-669-900-9128 then enter meeting id 83592300667#