



THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

JUNE 2010

www.SBHumanists.org

SUMMER SOLSTICE PICNIC!

Saturday 1:00 PM

19 June 2010

\$5.00 donation

Stow Grove Park

Free Food includes:

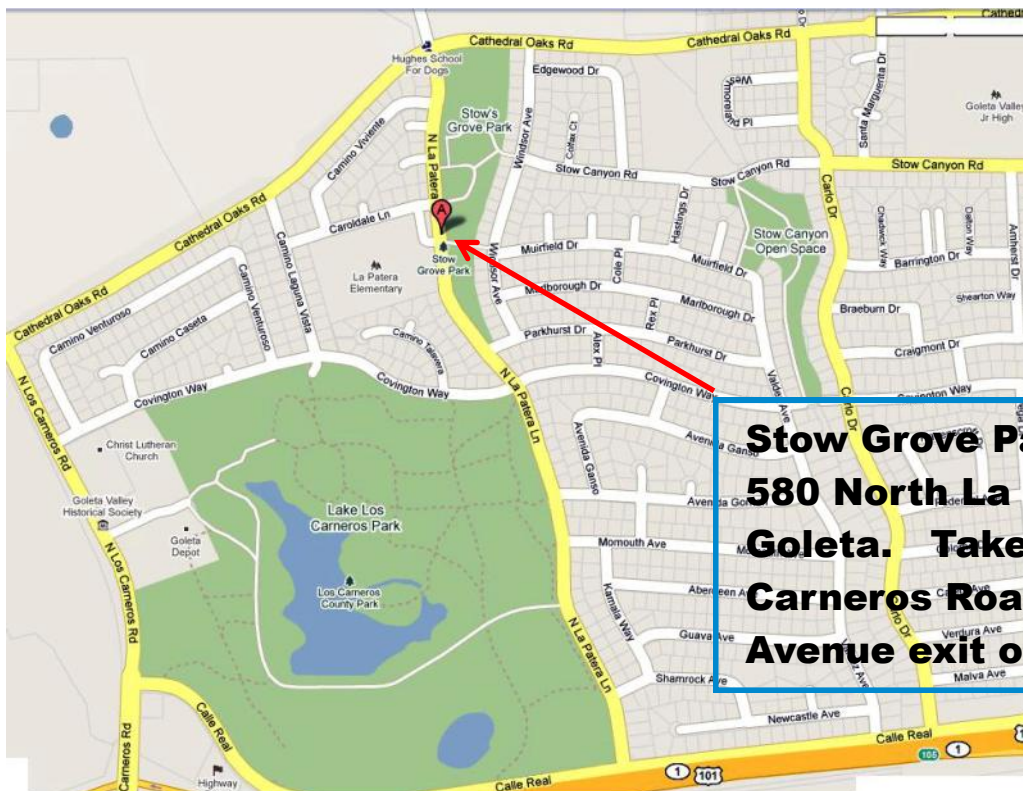
Barbecue Chicken and Tri Tip Steak.

Everyone is encouraged to bring favored

desserts, appetizers, or wine.

Games, Prizes, and Book Sale!

Reserve by 6 June by calling 805-845-6510



**Stow Grove Park address:
580 North La Patera Ln.,
Goleta. Take the Los
Carneros Road or Fairview
Avenue exit off Hwy. 101.**

Contact Information

Board of Directors 2009-2010

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Membership Notes

by Mary Wilk

Humanist Society meetings are usually held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 3 pm in the Patio Room of Vista del Monte, 3775 Modoc Rd., Santa Barbara, CA. More information is available at our web site:

www.SantaBarbaraHumanists.org

or by contacting any of the board members listed in the left-hand column of this page.

If you would like a copy of this newsletter mailed to a friend or someone who might be interested in our Society, please send their contact information to: PO Box 30232, Santa Barbara, CA 93130, or call Mary Wilk. Alternatively, all of our newsletters are available at the web address shown above.

If you are not already a member, we encourage you to join our Society. Annual membership dues are \$36 for a single person, \$60 for a couple, and \$100 (or more) for a sponsor. Members receive the monthly newsletter and have the option of attending meetings, outings and special events sponsored by the Society.

Those unable to attend our monthly meetings may subscribe to our newsletter for an annual fee of \$20, but are not entitled to other membership privileges. When attending our meetings, a donation of \$2 from members and \$5 from non-members is appreciated. First or second-time visitors are welcome on a complimentary basis. For more information, please contact Mary Wilk (967-3045 mwilk@cox.net or any member of our Society.

News About Members

by Mary Wilk & Andrew Hankin

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to our Society:

- » Deborah Winant – Santa Barbara
- » Ramon Alcerro, M.D. – Santa Barbara
- » Paul Weisman – Santa Barbara



Our member, Joy Knapp, was featured in a recent article in the News-Press about the intriguing Clark Estate. As one of the few people permitted to visit the estate lately, she provided a vivid description of the property, as well as sharing her extensive knowledge of its history and family associations.

On Tuesday, May 11th, HSSB sponsor Robert Bernstein had two of his photographs of the Mesa Spring Festival (Saturday, May 8th) featured on the front page of the Santa Barbara Daily Sound newspaper.

Lawyer and radio host Nick Beeson is a friend of HSSB who has been to several of our meetings. His new live and local program broadcasts **5-7pm Sundays on KIST-AM1490**. Nick is always seeking fresh voices for his talk show, so he invites callers on **805-879-5478** to discuss important topics. HSSB Boardmember Andrew Hankin and President Roger Schlueter have been heard regularly on-the-air.



First Recorded Senior Moment

On **July 17th** we will host Professor Phil Zuckerman of Pitzer College (one of the Claremont Group of Colleges in Pomona). Professor Zuckerman recently spoke to FFRF Convention, and is considered one of world experts in the study of nations/societies without gods (Denmark, Sweden and others). His topic will be *Goodness Beyond Godness*. We will be back at our regular meeting time and place, 2:30 PM at Vista del Monte's Patio Room.

HSSB Book Club

This month we're going political with a book by **Jeffrey Toobin**, the well-known TV commentator on CNN and PBS. It's the best-selling *The Nine*, a study of our Supreme Court (SCOTUS) viewed from the perspective of the nine members' backgrounds, personalities, quirks, and foibles. We'll be meeting on **Wednesday, June 16th, 1:30 p.m.**, at the home of long-time member **Richard Martin** at **1400 Mission Canyon Road**. Call **687-3563** for driving instructions.

Marty Shapiro, Book Club Liaison
(805) 968-0478
martinshapiro@cox.net

Here are some book reviews:

It's not laws or constitutional theory that rule the High Court, argues this absorbing group profile, but quirky men and women guided by political intuition. *New Yorker* legal writer Toobin (*The Run of His Life: The People v. O.J. Simpson*) surveys the Court from the Reagan administration onward, as the justices wrestled with abortion, affirmative action, the death penalty, gay rights and church-state separation. Despite a Court dominated by Republican appointees, Toobin paints not a conservative revolution but a period of intractable moderation. The real power, he argues, belonged to supreme swing-voter Sandra Day O'Connor, who decided important cases with what Toobin sees as an almost primal attunement to a middle-of-the-road public consensus. By contrast, he contends, conservative justices Rehnquist and Scalia ended up bitter old men, their rigorous constitutional doctrines made irrelevant by the moderates' compromises. The author deftly distills the issues and enlivens his narrative of the Court's internal wranglings with sharp thumbnail sketches (Anthony Kennedy the vain bloviator, David Souter the Thoreauvian ascetic) and editorials (inept and unsavory is his verdict on the Court's intervention in the 2000 election). His savvy account puts the supposedly cloistered Court right in the thick of American life.

-Publishers Weekly

Amazon.com Review:

★★★★★ **Reads like a movie**, May 18, 2010

By Miss Shopper "MP"

The author, Jeffrey Toobin does a thorough job covering the cases, the background and significance of the rulings. One of the things I enjoyed the most is Toobin's illustration of the Justices- he does an excellent job of making them seem human, quirks and follies included.

One reviewer said that this book covers several important landmark cases (i.e. Terry Schiavo, abortion, religion, etc.). Yes, this book speaks of those types of cases, but the point of the book is not to "cover" cases- this book is not a collection of news articles. The book covers primarily the Rehnquist court and its controversial cases during that period. The cases and those rulings said much about the Justices at that time as well as the social environment. Another reviewer said that this book does not explain "how the Court works". This is true- it doesn't. But I didn't believe that was the point of the book either. The book isn't titled "The Supreme Court for Dummies." I read the book more like a biography of the Justices and the cases that came before them.

I loved this book and I have been recommending it to everyone... all my prior law school buddies and others. I love a well written and well researched book. The author is a lawyer and the book benefited from this- it's nice to read the book without a lay person's personal opinions on legal implications (Dominick Dunne does this, which is why his pieces come off more as op-ed pieces than informative work).



Let us put theology out of religion. Theology has always sent the worst to heaven, the best to hell.

—Robert Green Ingersoll, (1833-1899) American Political Leader and Orator

The Bus and Us by Roger Schlueter



London Bus Sign

In October, 2008 a series of advertisements appeared on London buses with the support of the British Humanist Association and Richard Dawkins. The original goal was to raise £5,500 with Dawkins promising to match each pound raised up to the £5,500 goal. They were too modest; by the time the ad campaign ended in April, 2009 they had raised over £153,000.

The Board thought a similar ad campaign here in Santa Barbara would provide some good exposure for our group, so I approached the MTD with an ad modeled on ones being run in the Washington, DC metro as shown here. Our ads were rejected because the MTD stated

policy prohibited ads for “liquor, firearms, politics and religion” although the formal, written policy did not mention religion. We weren’t particularly happy with MTD’s policy but at least religious ads couldn’t appear either.

But recently a member of the SURE group at UCSB noticed this ad for a local church. As you can imagine, I was on the phone with the MTD the next day noting that their policy had changed and requesting that our sign be approved. They again rejected it saying, “we have chosen to not accept the ad you have submitted, or any ad with a similar message.” Pretty strong words.



Church Ad

After a couple of phone calls and e-mails, I linked up with Bob Ritter, Attorney/Legal Coordinator of the Appignani Humanist Legal Center of the American Humanist Association. Bob contacted the MTD attorney indicating that this was an unacceptable response. Eventually the MTD - through their attorney - said a “mistake” had been made, the ads had been taken off the buses and the advertising contract with the church had been canceled.

The matter was eventually brought before the MTD Board of Directors to determine what to do about the “mistake” and to review their advertising policy. I spoke twice to the Board but to no avail. They ended up doing nothing about the “mistake” and reconfirmed their previous policy.

I certainly hope there are no more “mistakes” but let’s all watch the bus advertising, keeping in mind Reagan’s famous policy, “trust, but verify.”



First Proposed HSSB Ad



Second Proposed HSSB Ad

Fifteenth Anniversary by Robert Bernstein

We celebrated our 15th anniversary with both style and substance and had a good time! Over 80 people attended the festivities at the Goleta Holiday Inn, complete with beautiful table decorations and good food.

Roger Schlueter and Dick Cousineau started off the talks with a history of how it all began fifteen years ago with an informal meeting in Dick's back yard.

Sean Faircloth, Executive Director of the Secular Coalition of America, gave the main talk. As a former five term state legislator from Maine, he understands political strategy and he explained that he works for us as a lobbyist in Washington. But he also expects a commitment from us to do our part to advance the secular cause.

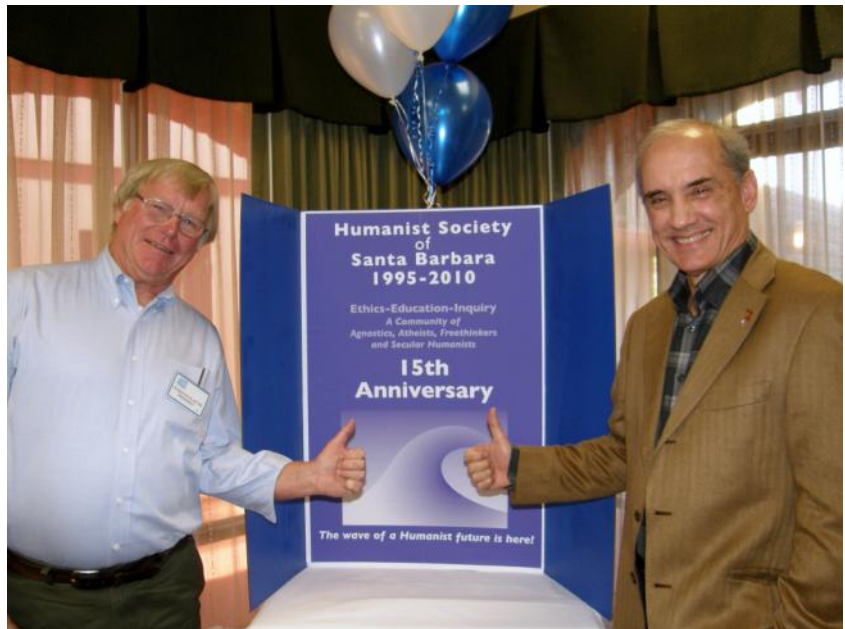
He began to question the morality of God at age 12, crossing the US on a long road trip and reading bible stories for children. A God asking a parent to kill his child seemed unworthy of worship.

And real children have died from parents forgoing medical treatment in favor of faith healing. Fortunately, over 35 states have laws making this illegal.

During the US war in Vietnam in 1966, powerful evangelist Billy Graham quoted Jesus (Luke 12:49) "I am come to

send fire on the earth" which President Johnson used to justify escalating the war.

In contrast, in the Treaty of Tripoli, President



Roger Schlueter and Dan Barker

John Adams wrote "...the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion..." He said that the government is founded on the natural authority of the people, not on miracles or the supernatural.

James Madison, father of the Constitution, said "In no instance have...the churches been guardians of the liberties of the people." He opposed having chaplains for Congress and any national day of prayer as a form of majority tyranny.

He had similar quotes from Jefferson and Lincoln. It is important to consider that these people could not be elected today. And we must change that.

The clergy opposed the use of Franklin's lightning rods as they would protect sinners from God's lightning bolts.

The Bible and the Koran reject evolution in the

(15th Anniversary Continued on page 7)



Sean Faircloth and Dick Cousineau

(15th Anniversary continued from page 6)

Humanist sense: It does not matter what we learn, nothing can change. In contrast, Madison knew that he did not know all. He wrote the Constitution to grow and change. It was a new way for humans to interact.

Jimmy Carter has visited 125 countries. He said that people everywhere treat Lennon's "Imagine" as their song.

Faircloth wants to get American non-theists off of the couch to action. To stop denial of condoms in poor countries. To end the right of religious schools to hit students.

He offered an eight-point plan for strategy and tactics:

- ◆ Expanded issue base and e-mails
- ◆ Increased lobbying effort
- ◆ Communication that connects
- ◆ More robust networking – Facebook
- ◆ 50 state strategy – A Secular Coalition in each state
- ◆ Broaden our base – Talk to non-theistic Libertarians, gays, Joe Sixpack and Soccer Moms. Angelina Jolie was shown as a sexy non-theist Soccer Mom!
- ◆ Public policy summit
- ◆ Internship program

Dan Barker of the Freedom From Religion Foundation finished off the evening with more enlightening information, along with a good assortment of his entertaining songs performed brilliantly!

He talked about an IRS loophole that allows ministers to receive a "housing allowance" tax-free. Right-wing megachurch minister Rick Warren gave the invocation at the inauguration of President Obama. He was paid a multi-million dollar salary entirely as a "housing allowance" to evade taxes.

Barker urged us to get ordained and do the same!

His songs included:

- ◆ *Beware of Dogma*
- ◆ *Let's Call the Whole Thing Off*
- ◆ *Nothing Fails Like Prayer*
- ◆ *You Can't Win With Original Sin*

The latter was a reminder that in order to sell salvation, you have to sell damnation.

The anniversary event was a reminder of the good work we have done and the good work we must still do going forward!

Upcoming Club Events

HSSB Social Brunch...

is a secular gathering for humanists, atheists, agnostics, skeptics, freethinkers, singles, couples and families without religion, on the last Sunday morning of every month. No cover charge – pay only for your food + drink. Bring your friends, because membership and reservations aren't necessary.

10 a.m. June 27th and the last Sunday of every month, **at Cody's Cafe**, 4898 Hollister Ave. in the Turnpike Center, Goleta, in the room to the right as you enter the restaurant. For information call 805-967-3045. (Membership Chair, Mary Wilk, is a regular attendee: e-mail Membership@SantaBarbaraHumanists.org).

Upcoming Book Sale

If you have books you think HSSB members would be interested in reading, please consider contributing them to the **book sale** to be held at our **Solstice Party on June 19th**. You can bring them to any meeting, or you can arrange to have them picked up, by calling Pat Coppejans at 967-0929.

HSSB Calendar

Wednesday, June 16th, 1:30 p.m. — Book Club meets to discuss Jeffrey Toobin's *The Nine*

Saturday, June 19th, 1 p.m. — Summer Solstice Picnic at Stow Grove Park

Saturday, June 19th, 1 p.m. — Book Sale at Summer Solstice Picnic

Sunday, June 27th, 10 a.m. — Brunch at Cody's Cafe

Saturday, July 17th 2:30 p.m. — Professor Phil Zuckerman of Pitzer College will discuss his book, *Goodness Beyond Godness*, at Vista del Monte's Patio Room



The Humanist Society of
Santa Barbara
PO Box 30232
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