



THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

October, 2007

<http://www.sbhumanists.org>

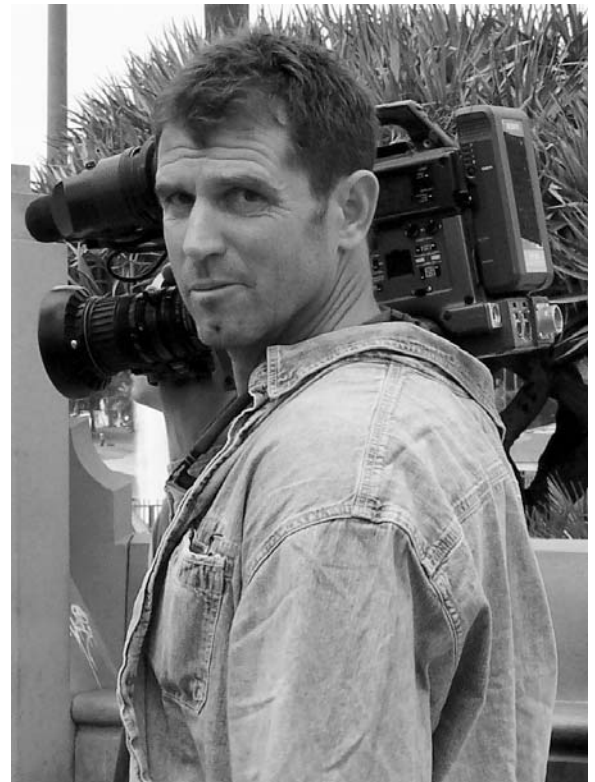
Caught in the Crossfire: Documentary Filmmaker Mark Manning

By Andrew Hankin

Mark Manning worked for 22 years as a professional deep-sea diver, underwater to 400 feet and in deep saturation. In this extreme environment, dangerous oil field work required underwater burning, demolition, robotics and submarine piloting.

In 2003, Mark retired from diving and formed ConceptionMedia, an independent film production company specializing in documentaries. His intention is to produce factual, truthful and socially responsible presentations of issues, to find common ground and connect people to their shared humanity. Current and completed projects include:

- Showing to the US Marine Corps the effects of war on civilian populations;
- “American Voices,” an in-depth and introspective look at American culture and people after 9/11, during an ongoing ‘War on Terror’ and as the occupation of Iraq rages on;
- “Caught in the Crossfire,” filmed un-embedded in Falluja, Iraq.



Mark Manning has been interviewed on radio, television and in print, including *Democracy Now*, *Air America Radio*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *LA Weekly* and *Al Arabiya*. His work has been featured in film festivals including Santa Barbara, Malibu, Telluride, Palm Beach and Boston.

<http://conceptionmedia.net>

Saturday, October 20th, 3-5pm
In the Patio Room at Vista del Monte
3775 Modoc Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105

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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 Road, 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 or any member of our Society.

News About Members by Hope Smith and Andrew Hankin

E-mail Changes:

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carolsb1@verizon.net

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Letters to the Editor:

John Coppejans, Aug. 7, *Independent's* website, decried the emphasis by presidential candidates on being religious and church-going people instead of using intellect and reasoning in the decisions that will affect all of us.

Erik Thomassen, Aug. 23, *Independent*, warned against signing an initiative petition for a June 2008 ballot measure called "The Presidential Election Reform Act".

Marian Shapiro, Sept. 13, *Independent*, in an editorial column examined reasons for Senator Larry Craig's much publicized recent behavior.

James Kimberly, Sept. 18, *News-Press*, protested the planned eviction of nuns from their local home in order to raise funds for paying priestly pedophilia fines.

Michelle Rhea, Sept. 24, *News-Press*, refuted a previous writer's suggestion that God prefers English, by citing the Genesis passage where an angry God deliberately creates a confusion of languages.

Robert Bernstein, Sept. 27, *Independent*, supported Universal Health Care for All Californians, SB840. This California Senate Bill 840 is also supported by the Social Action Committee of the Humanist Society.

On Sept. 1, Hope Smith helped mount an Esperanto exhibit in the downtown public library.

On Sept. 8, several members participated in Senator Barack Obama's visit to Santa Barbara. Attending the rally at City College were Robert Bernstein, Andrew Hankin, Martin Shapiro, and Syd Smith. Nancy Koppelman and family hosted a luncheon for the senator, at which Marian Shapiro was one of the volunteer staff, and a photo of the senator with the Koppelmans appeared in the Sept. 9 *News-Press*.

(Note: The Humanist Society of Santa Barbara as such does not endorse any political party or candidates.)

On Sept. 23, the *News-Press* "On the Town" listed Pat Coppejans among volunteers who helped prepare and staff the Planned Parenthood Book Sale. Also helping were Carol Le Gassick, Parkie Parker and Suzanne Spillman. The same page also cited Mark Hamilton as a Fund for Santa Barbara supporter who attended (with wife Sally) that organization's Bread & Roses dinner and auction benefit.

On Sept. 30, the *News-Press* "On the Town" listed Mark and Sally Hamilton among sponsors for the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's Evening of Peace at the Victoria Theatre, and Bill and Carol Palladini as sponsors for free student seating at the event.

(See **News About Members**, page 5)

I was dead for millions of years before I was born and it never inconvenienced me a bit.
-Mark Twain

Notes From the President

By Adrian Wenner

Last month I commented upon “The Affirmation of Humanism: A statement of Principles and Values.” As indicated at that time, a full list of 21 items can be found at:

<http://wolfweb.unr.edu/homepage/willis/humanism.html>

A third of those principles correspond well with “**The Golden Rule**” (or “**ethic of reciprocity**” in some texts), a doctrine that has been with us for at least 3000 years: namely “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you” (in the Biblical sense).

The Internet has extensive coverage of the subject, with some surprising entries. Virtually all known religions embrace one or another version of the ethic of reciprocity — though one would hardly believe so, given the strife that has occurred in the name of religion (including the current civil war between Sunnis and Shiites).

The Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance provided one of the finest treatments of the subject at: <http://www.religioustolerance.org/reciproc.htm>, with statements from 21 different religions or societies (including Humanists and Unitarians).

One very complex and informative entry surprised me, a contribution (“Treat Others as You Want to Be treated”) by a Jesuit philosopher who now teaches at the John Carroll University in Cleveland: <http://www.jcu.edu/philosophy/gensler/goldrule.htm>

In addition to information on his home page, Harry J. Gensler assembled an attractive poster that includes statements and icons representing 13 religions and societies (including Unitarianism), available at:

<http://www.jcu.edu/philosophy/gensler/poster.gif> I will have several copies of that poster at our next monthly meeting for those who are interested.

Whereas early philosophers (e.g., Epicetutus, Kant, Plato, Socrates, Seneca) had “ethic of reciprocity” statements in their writings, recent philosophers have been fairly mum on the topic — with the notable exception of Karl Popper. He is credited with the expansive statement, “The golden rule is a good standard which is further improved by doing unto others, wherever possible, as they want to be done by.”

Perhaps we Humanists should strive more for Popper’s version.

Book Club

By Marty Shapiro

Greetings, fellow humanists. It's Fall once again, which means it'll soon be time for the October Classic. Not the World Series, but a book that's been on the best-seller list since its publication in 1979 - Douglas Adams' legendary *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. This literary/humanistic classic has never lost its appeal as a witty, brilliant tour-de-force. Space travel was never so entertaining!

When: October 17, 1:30 p.m

Where: at the benevolent Brodys

Art and Elaine Brody

1125 Camino del Rio

(off Cathedral Oaks, between Tuckers Grove and Highway 154)

692-8898

brodybiz@cox.net

He hoped and prayed that there wasn't an afterlife. Then he realized there was a contradiction involved here and merely hoped that there wasn't an afterlife. -- **Douglas Adams**, *The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

Social Scene

By Anne Rojas

Fall greetings to you all. I hope you are marking your calendars for our December Solstice Party at Sizzler. I am still finalizing the date, but it will be either the 15th or the 22nd. It is my understanding that most of you do NOT want any entertainment other than the usual raffle and door prizes. Would you like a paper and pencil quiz, or joke caption competition with or without partners? This could be done during the cocktail hour and would be optional. Anyone who wishes to give input on this matter, please do so. Do any of you want to perform in any capacity? Let me know and we can discuss it.

October Dining Out is back to Ming Dynasty next to Big K. I am about 1/2 filled up as of this writing, so please make your reservations with me. We had a good crowd on the outdoor patio at Palapa after the Sept. meeting.

October brunch is scheduled for Sunday, October 28th, 10 a.m. at Cody's Café, 4898 Hollister Ave., in the Turnpike Shopping Center, Goleta.

We have some exciting plans for the New Year. Another Chumash Casino excursion and some luncheons for those of you who do not wish to do night driving, and some little theatre outings, also.

As always, your suggestions, help, input are all valued.

Those who seek consolation in existing churches often pay for their peace of mind with a tacit agreement to ignore a great deal of what is known about the way the world works.

-Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, 1990

(News About Members, continued from p. 3)

Fran Halpern, one of our long-time members, is the host of a lively, often funny, "Beyond Words" radio show for literary toilers and word lovers. It airs Saturday at 2 p.m. on KCLU, an NPR affiliate (102.3 in Santa Barbara Co., 88.3 in Ventura Co.). Calls and e-mail responses are welcome during and after the broadcast at 805-493-9200.

On Sunday, September 9th, Humanist Society members Aida Bullock (with her husband Matthew), Andrew Hankin, Hope and Sydney Smith enjoyed a travel film "Cruising the Orient on the QE2," at the Santa Barbara Natural History Museum. The screening was narrated live by filmmaker Doug Jones, who described one of the last voyages of the world's most-traveled ocean liner from Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, Australia; through Asian cities including Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo, Japan. The next film in the series will be to the islands of Fiji, with Rick Howard; 3pm Sunday, October 21st in the Fleischmann Auditorium at the Natural History Museum, 2559 Puesta del Sol Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105, (805-682-4711 x110); \$6.

<http://www.sbnature.org/eventcal>

HSSB Bookstore

By Ray Stone

We now have our own Book Store, small as it is. It's a moveable bookstore, to be open for business at our meetings. Ray Stone is the current proprietor and he encourages you to browse the store's inventory, and buy any that appeal to you.

Books will be both new and used. If you have books of interest to Humanists that are in good condition, please consider donating them to the store. Just bring them to the next meeting, or contact Ray at 682-2123.

September Meeting: Dr. Bob Dodge on Beyond War

By Robert Bernstein

If one BB represents the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, the 25,000 nuclear bombs in the world today sounds like a torrential rainstorm of BBs. No one left Dr Bob Dodge's September 15 "Beyond War" talk without that sound ringing in his or her ears and memory.

Only a few hands went up when asked if people remembered Beyond War in the 1980's. They held a number of high-profile events locally in the 1980's, but faded with the end of the Cold War. The new Beyond War is grassroots, rather than top-down as before. It was revived in Eugene, Oregon after 9/11.

But the message is the same as ever: The possibility of nuclear war has made all war obsolete. Any war has the potential to escalate to nuclear war. Conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional.

Nuclear war seems passé when there are bigger threats today. But Dr. Dodge says the issue is very real today. Santa Barbara County's share of spending on nuclear weapons is \$78 million/year. Global warming is a long-term threat, but nuclear war is a threat every day, he says.

The current US wars are said to be against terrorism. But terrorism is a strategy and a tactic, not a target. Terrorism cannot negotiate or surrender. It has no country or even an ideology.

Foreign military occupation is the prime cause of suicide bombings in the world today. He compared it to hitting a mature

dandelion with a golf club; it just breeds more dandelions.

The essence of Beyond War is in its three Foundational Ideas: War is obsolete. We are one on this planet. The means are the ends in the making.

This translates to a number of personal implications:

I will resolve conflict. I will not use violence. I will main attitude of goodwill. I will not preoccupy myself with an enemy. I will work together with others to build a world beyond war.

And to larger strategies to prevent war: Diplomacy and nonviolent confrontation. Appropriate foreign aid. Adherence to International Law. Cooperation with other nations.

As individuals, we are a unit of social change. Beyond War claims that if five percent of the population adopts an idea, it becomes permanently embedded in the culture.

And at twenty percent, the idea becomes unstoppable.

(See *Bernstein*, page 7)



Dr. Bob Dodge, at our September meeting.

(Bernstein, continued from page 6)

Dr. Dodge recommends getting a copy of the video he played for us, and having neighbors, co-workers and friends over to see it. And to have people visit beyondwar.org for more ideas and information.

Dr. Dodge also wants to offer his availability for any other group to have an introductory presentation or help start a Santa Barbara Team. Contact him directly at 5dodges@sbcglobal.net or through beyondwar.org

And here are a few more thoughts we were left with:

- We are all one on this planet. There is no Us and Them. We need to expand our identification of Us to include everyone.
- Martin Luther King: We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means.
- Gandhi: We must be the change we wish to see in the world.

Upcoming Events

By Dick Cousineau

On **October 20th**, we will welcome the international photojournalist **Mark Manning**, who will share his experiences and insights regarding the obscenities of the endless war in Iraq. Mr. Manning will speak at the Vista Del Monte Patio Room at 3 p.m., and will show portions of his documentary, *Road to Fallujah*.

November 17th will bring us **Dr. Ed Callaway**, internationally acclaimed neurobiologist from The Salk Institute, in La Jolla, to discuss “Understanding the brain: Clues from the visual system and other challenges.” For this program, we will meet at Fe Bland Auditorium on the SBCC West Campus. Our co-sponsors for this event will be the Biological Sciences Department of Santa Barbara City College.

Letter to the Editor

By John Coppejans

I appreciate David Whiteman’s comments on my earlier writing to the editor of this newsletter about the talk of Victor Stenger.

I took my stand based on the personal experiences I have had with religious people when the talk was about their belief. I think that the majority of true believers do not want to change their ideas, they do not care what science proves but live with a complete denial of anything this is contrary to the dogmas that they had pounded in their brains from an early age.

But there is also another category: People who have their doubts, but their standing in society will make it damaging to their careers if they would openly state their uncertainty. How many “closet atheists” are there? In the political world, it would be a person’s downfall if he or she came out and stated that religion was not part of their personal life.

Coming in this country from Europe, I could never understand that a person’s religious belief was an important and necessary part of his or her effort to be elected to a public office. Like in the upcoming elections, there are some persons with a high IQ, but still they want to proclaim that they are god-fearing because the public expects this. Now we have a leader with the IQ of a duck (sorry, Donald), but he had a vast following because, like he said, he had god on his side.

So what can we do? Write more letters to the editors of magazines and newspapers? I wrote several but very few were printed. I know that sending our impressions to this newsletter is like preaching to the choir, but since we all have a personal view of how to get our message across, it is helpful and gets debates going.

Holmes and Watson Go Camping

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine they laid down for the night and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend. "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars."

"And," Holmes asked, "what does that tell you?"

Watson pondered for a moment.

"Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are but small and insignificant and finally, meteorologically, I suspect that that we will have a beautiful day for hiking tomorrow. What does it tell you, Holmes?"

Holmes was silent for a minute, then spoke.

"It tells me, Watson, that some bastard has stolen our tent."



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