

THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

June, 2005

Party Hearty!

By Robert Bernstein

[Ed. Note: All photos of our Tenth Anniversary party are also courtesy of Robert Bernstein.]

Dick Cousineau opened the HSSB Tenth Anniversary celebration by giving a brief history of the HSSB and noted that we grown from an original seven people to our current membership of almost 150. He then introduced the speakers, Eddie Tabash, Honorary Chairman of the Center for Inquiry - West and Tom Flynn, Editor of Free Inquiry magazine.

Tabash began by sounding a note of alarm,



Eddite Tabash

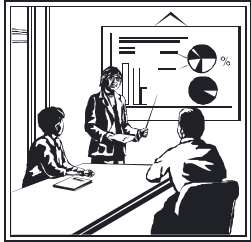
namely that Humanists and fellow travelers have much to be concerned about if Bush succeeds with fundamentalist appointments to the Supreme Court.

Tabash believes that atheists should be willing to work with the entire political spectrum. He looks forward to the day when there are elected politicians who are both atheist conservatives as well as atheist liberals. In order to achieve this long-term goal, he suggested that Humanists must necessarily put a priority on getting atheists elected.

Returning to the short-term, Tabash stated that sustaining the current filibuster rule is all that stands between the United States' existence as a secular state and its transformation into the Christian equivalent of Iran. He cited Janice Rogers Brown, one of the Bush court nominees, who has said that atheists and secularists are destroying America and that the Bill of Rights does not apply to the states. He also observed that Justice Clarence Thomas already has written that states have a right to establish their own official religions. If there were two more Justices like him, such views could become a frightening legal reality.

*(See **Tenth**, Page 6)*

Humanist Society of Santa Barbara



Board Members

2004-2005

Chairman: Richard Cousineau
687-2371 dkcgeo@earthlink.net

Secretary: Hope Smith
967-5143 hsmith1923@aol.com

Treasurer: Ron Kronenberg
967-0883 seelberg@cox.net

Publicity: Marian Shapiro
968-0478 marianshapiro@cox.net

Programs: Nancy Wahl
687-1515 nancyewahl@yahoo.com

Activities: Anne Rojas
564-6086 annehrojas@cox.net

Membership: Mary Wilk
967-3045 mwilk@cox.net

Editor: Roger Schlueter
962-6316 rogers@west.net

At Large: James Kimberly
564-1991 dr.doboy@cox.net

Board meetings are scheduled on the Monday preceding the Saturday general monthly meeting of the Society and are usually held at the home of one of the board members. HSSB members are welcome to attend these meetings. Contact any board member for more information.

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.

(See **Membership**, Page 3)

(Membership, continued from Page 2)

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

Bette Eaton
340 Old Mill Rd, #158
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
683-4520

Bret Hughes
84 La Cumbre Circle
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
682-7464
bhughes7@yahoo.com

Social Scene

by Anne H. Rojas

Thank you to all who attended the 10th Anniversary Celebration; your enthusiastic participation made it a very special event. I received many compliments on the food and decor and your Board was also very pleased with the efforts of the hotel.

This month's Dining Out will be at Rusty's Pizza on upper State street, just east of La



Anne H. Rojas

Cumbre. We have the semi-private back room reserved at 5PM for 25 persons. There is ample free parking. The last time we went to Rusty's we had very good pizza and a terrific time. The price is also right. Please let me know (just a rough count) if you think you will be

coming. It helps greatly if I have this information. Please participate in this outing as I have guaranteed them 20 persons to hold the room.

Crocodile Last Sunday Brunch drew 7 persons. We were not expecting many on the holiday weekend. We will continue to meet there for the time being for our brunches. Please let me know if there are any special activities which interest you and if you would be available to research restaurants or help with carpools.

I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute - where no Catholic prelate would tell the president (should he be Catholic) how to act, and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote - where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference - and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the president who might appoint him or the people who might elect him.

I believe in an America that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jewish - where no public official either requests or accepts instructions on public policy from the pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source - where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials.

—John F. Kennedy, speech to Houston ministers on Sept. 12, 1960.

[Ed. Note: Ah, for the good old days.]

June Program by Marian Shapiro

[Ed. Note: Dick has relinquished this space to permit a more extensive coverage of the Tenth Celebration. Chairman's Chat will return next month]

Opposing Views on SB 840: Health Care

Our June will feature two knowledgeable speakers who will discuss Senate Bill 840, The California Health Insurance Reliability Act.

SB840, sponsored by Senator Sheila Kuehl, D-Santa Monica, would replace private



Marian Shapiro

insurance plans and also extend coverage to approximately 7 million Californians who have no health insurance. It has passed two hurdles so far as it works its way through the California legislature. On April 6, it passed the Senate Banking, Finance and

Insurance Committee on a 7-4 vote, and subsequently passed the Senate Health Committee on April 27.

Our two panelists will be Peter Conn, Chairman of the Santa Barbara chapter of Health Care for All – California, and Dr. Robert Reid, Director of Medical Affairs for Cottage Hospital.

Mr. Conn will cover the nuts and bolts of the bill, including these important components:

- Security – everyone is insured for life. There is no loss of insurance when a job is lost.
- Free choice of your primary doctor or provider.
- All needed care is covered – preventive, primary, hospital, emergency, dental, vision, prescription drugs, durable medical equipment and more.
- Coverage of all pre-existing conditions.
- No co-pays or deductibles for at least two years.
- Lower premiums for most who are now insured.
- Reduced costs due to more efficient administration and no insurance middlemen.
- Fair reimbursement to all providers.

Those wanting to know how SB 840 will bring high quality universal care for all while at the same time cutting administrative costs should go to the bill's web site at

www.healthcareforall.org

and click on New Flyer and go to page 2.

Dr. Reid will offer an alternative to SB 840 that has been proposed by Blue Shield of California, on whose board of directors he serves. Dr. Reid will provided the specifics of the Blue Shield plan. As of our publishing deadline, we did not have any details of the Blue Shield plan so cannot provide a source for more details.



I distrust those people who know so well what God wants them to do because I notice it always coincides with their own desires.

– Susan B. Anthony

Humanist Candidacy

By Marian Shapiro

(Ed. Note: Loretta Redd, one of our members, has decided to run for a position on the Santa Barbara City Council. This is a noteworthy event for our Society and, as such, warrants mention in our newsletter. However, the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara has not, and will not, take any position regarding Ms. Redd's candidacy in conformance with our incorporation as a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization.)

The Santa Barbara Humanist Society was well represented at the announcement of member Loretta Redd's candidacy for City Council.

Present at the Shoreline Park announcement and media event on Monday May 23rd were Anne Rojas, Syd and Hope Smith, Marian Shapiro and Roger Schlueter.

Board Notes

By Hope Smith

Various noteworthy announcements at the May Board meeting include:

- Mary's new membership list showed 143 members, up from 139 last month.
- Discussion of estimated Tenth Anniversary income and expenses concluded that we expect to break even.
- Bill Edelen will be our speaker in November, at SBCC's Garvin Theater, on Friday November 11, from 5 - 8:30 p.m.
- The "Last Sunday of the Month" brunches will continue at the Crocodile Restaurant (Lemon Tree Inn), 10 a.m., until further notice.



Marian Shapiro and Hope Smith are front and center as Loretta Redd announces her candidacy for City Council.

Photo: M. Shapiro

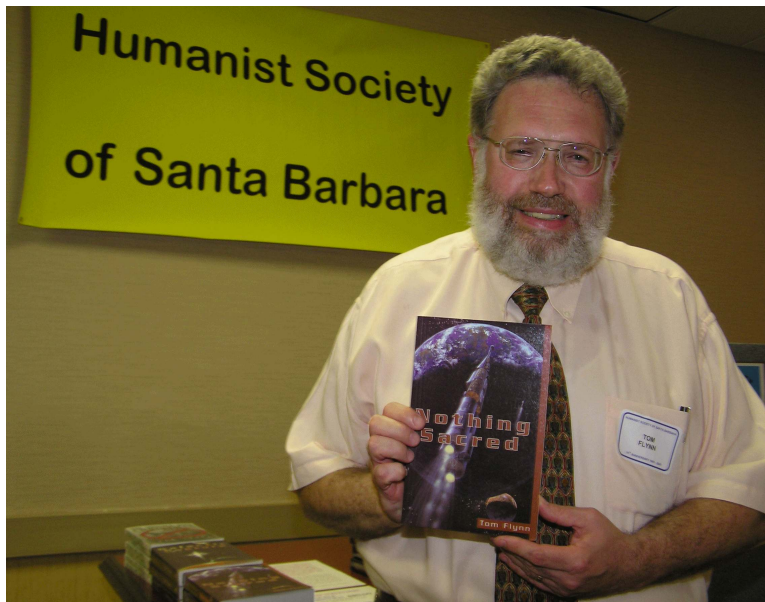
(Tenth, continued from Page 1)

Tom Flynn began his humorous talk by pointing out that the Jesuits at Xavier University that he attended made him the atheist he is today. Adopting a longer-range view Flynn said he sees a world that is gradually becoming more enlightened and secular and sees the US as a lone holdout in an otherwise advancing industrialized world. He believes that reason will triumph in the end.

Flynn supported the view of Bertrand Russell who said we are an accident in a cosmic

they have driven the course of history. The Secularization Hypothesis held that religion would disappear as the level of people's education increased. Gregory Paul points out that secularism is growing in all industrialized nations except the US.

Flynn noted that forty percent of Koreans are agnostic or atheist. Contrary to popular belief, there is no big theist revival in the former Soviet Union; only one-fourth of the population of Russia are believers. Pope John Paul II correctly pointed out that Scotland is "heathen".



Tom Flynn

Continuing with the emphasis on the competing religions, Flynn noted that two-thirds of Americans believe in God and nine-tenths in a higher power. But even in America bible reading is declining. In Africa, Christianity has to compete with Animism, and in Scandinavia religious is practically dead. Thus he concluded that while we may be generations away from a secular nation, there may be "tipping point" events that change the status quo in a very short period. The precipitous fall of the Berlin Wall was cited as an example of such an event.

backwater. There is no cosmic justice and no life after death. We are nothing but the dance of activity in our brains and that ends at death. There is no larger meaning, no master plan and no designer.

Flynn emphasized that there was no golden age of reason in the past. In other words, we are fortunate to live when we do. Reasoning people have always been a tiny minority, yet

After these wonderful talks, the group socialized, feasted, and celebrated ten great years and looked toward an even greater future together!

These festivities are evident in the pictures on the opposing page. As Mary Wilk noted, we're just going to have to start planning for our 25th anniversary. Be there or be square!



John Suarez (left) and Tom Flynn enjoy the dinner buffet and conversation.



Jim Balter chats with Eddie Tabash

New Group Forming

by Gary Hammond

I am a member of Toastmasters International, an organization devoted to helping people become better communicators, public speakers, and leaders. I will be starting a new club in which the focus will be helping individuals develop the ability to speak on religious, political, and philosophical topics in a respectful, logical, and compelling manner. I thought that this opportunity would be of interest to some of your members. I would like to get a mix of people representing diverse viewpoints to make the meetings more interesting and to enhance the learning

experience.

We will be meeting on the first and third Mondays at a location in Ventura from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. I anticipate that our first meeting will be in June. Details are still being worked out.

If joining this club sounds interesting to you or anyone you know, please contact me by e-mail at Gary@garyvhammond.com or by phone at 647-3246.

You can get more information about Toastmasters by visiting their website at www.Toastmasters.org.