



THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

June, 2006

It's Solstice Party Time!

By Anne H. Rojas

As usual, our June "meeting" takes the form of our annual Summer Solstice Party. Don't miss out on this exciting event which will take place on our regular June meeting date of June 17th. We have a professional chef preparing tri tip and chicken on-site at the home of Mary Wilk in Hope Ranch. The cost is only \$10 per person with a potluck contribution and BYOB. Soft drinks and tableware will be provided.

If you plan to attend send your check ASAP to HSSB, PO Box 41823, SB 93140. Please call or e-mail me to let me know your check is in the mail.

If you need directions to Mary's home, please call Mary or me (our contact information is on the next page of this newsletter). As you drive along Via Presada Lane, look for a vibrant turquoise blue sign approximately 3' by 2' with pink letters saying "PARTY". It will be hard to miss and someone will be by the sign to direct you where to park.

In other social news....

Chumash Casino Seafood Buffet

We are planning to go to the Chumash seafood buffet in late June or early July. The cost is \$19.95 for lobster! This will be an excellent opportunity for our North and South

county members to get to know each other. Those of us in South county will leave by carpool around 1:30 PM on the selected Wednesday. At this time, I would like to hear from anyone who might be interested in this event. Your expression of interest will be used for planning purposes only; it is not a firm commitment to attend.

Mongolian Bar-B-Que and Buffet

After the July 15th meeting we will be going to Dining Out at this favorite establishment. They offer round tables, separate checks and bargain prices. You must reserve with me no later than July 12th. Unfortunately, I cannot accommodate anyone after that date; your co-operation is appreciated.

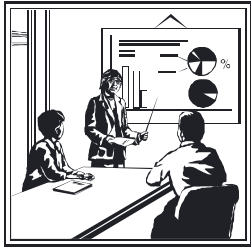
May events

May was a busy month. Our after-meeting dinner took place at what promises to be a new favorite, La Palapa Mexican Restaurant. Over 20 people enjoyed very good food and service with separate checks and ample parking in the rear. As a bonus, there was also live music.

On May 3rd several of us enjoyed the dinner at El Paseo and then went on to the Lobero to see the Capitol Steps.

The Last Sunday Brunch at the Crocodile Restaurant saw 15 people enjoying lively conversation, good food and sporadic service. I hope more of you will join us in the future.

Humanist Society of Santa Barbara



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2005-2006

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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. All 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. If you are not a member and would like to learn more about our Society, please contact any Board member to attend one of our meetings on a complimentary basis.

(See *Membership*, page 3)

(Membership, continued from page 2)

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

Marvin & Jeannette Cohen
3535 Chuparosa Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93105

John Ernest
333 Old Mill Rd. #101
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

We wish to say farewell to longtime members Verdun & Ethel Trione who are moving to Atlanta, GA.

The Humanist Book Club by Marty Shapiro

This month we will be immersing ourselves in the current flood of Da Vinci Code "spin-offs" with Richard Elliott Friedman's *Who Wrote the Bible?* (1997), a modern scholar's investigation into who actually wrote the Five Books of Moses (the Pentateuch).

We will meet on Wednesday, June 21st, at 1:30 pm at the home of Elaine and Art Brody. Call me (968-0478) if you need directions.

Here is one review from Amazon.com:

I had read several books that purported to explain the origins of the Old Testament, but they tended to make assertions without explanations. Perhaps they were too advanced for me. This book, however, explains in great detail how it arrives at its conclusions.

It is great fun to read parts of the book and ask yourself: Whodunit? For example, there's one place where you are compelled to predict who wrote about the Golden Calf incident. I picked J, but the author picked E. After he explained his decision, I had to admit that he was probably right and I was probably wrong. Not so good for my ego, but an enjoyable puzzle nonetheless.

The author is careful not to overstate his case. In situations where he lacks sufficient evidence, he points this out. This level of caution makes the whole work much more credible.

I greatly enjoyed the way he explained how the political reality of the ancient Near East created pressures to write (or compile) a particular **kind** of book. Prior to this, I knew that many Bible stories contained contradictions, but I didn't know why. It is an outstanding story of one of the greatest mysteries of our time.



Is it not extraordinary to the point of being a miracle, that so loose and ill-constructed a narrative in an antique translation of a dubious text should after so many centuries still have power to quell and dominate a restless, opinionated, over-exercised and under-nourished twentieth-century mind?

– Malcolm Muggeridge
Jesus Rediscovered

Chairman's Chat

by Dick Cousineau

The past two years have been an eventful and exciting period for me as your Chairman. We have experienced continued growth, celebrated our 10th year together, have been exposed to numerous ideas and viewpoints (both gratifying and challenging), been the recipient of the monthly first class newsletter, and appreciated the hard work and dedication of numerous fellow Humanists.

I have grown in my appreciation of Secular Humanism as a philosophy of living the good life and taking responsibility to lead an ethical



Dick Cousineau

and moral life without any supernatural aid or fear. I have come to the conclusion that the fundamental position of any thinking person is how one defines the unknowable. To me the first and primary statement is that there can be no rational belief in souls or saviors, sinners or saints, supernaturalism or superstition. During the enlightenment of the 17th Century, we humans took our first steps away from the Fatherhood of God idea and along the evolving path to personal responsibility within, as far as we can tell, a meaningless universe.

We in the HSSB are all on this continuum; some just getting on - still with their prayer beads in their back pocket; some who know that science does explain most of the natural laws - yet renames the unknowable as a "Spirit of Life"; some still clinging to that ray

of hope that something, anything, exists out there beyond the abyss; to that final confident, dignified individual who just accepts the fact that **this is it**. There just isn't anyone coming to save me; God, like Elvis, has left the building and isn't coming back, ever.

Thanks to you all who have made my two years as your Chairman deeply rewarding, and proud to be a Humanist, and more fulfilled as a human being.

All the best to each and everyone.

HSSB Election

by Dick Cousineau

The By-Laws of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara require that an election of officers take place each year for the Board of Directors for the upcoming Fiscal Year. This year we are conducting this election by use of the enclosed ballot.

You may simply check the box at the top of the page to select the default slate of officers or you may select individual candidates and write-in your own preference.

Your ballot must be postmarked before **June 24th, 2006**.

Finally, while you're thinking about the Society, please take this opportunity to let the Board know of any issues relevant to programs, publicity, the newsletter, meeting venue, or any other topic that you would like to opine about by entering your thoughts in the comments section at the bottom of the ballot.