



# THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

May, 2008

<http://www.sbhumanists.org>

## "Newspaper Columns That Got Me in Trouble" Presented by Starshine Roshell

By Andrew Hankin

Named for a song in the 1960s musical "Hair", in which her father starred, Starshine Roshell is a journalism professor, award-winning magazine writer and overwhelmed mother of two. She grew up in Los Angeles and wrote for The Hollywood Reporter before joining the Santa Barbara News-Press in 1995, as a news reporter, theater and music critic and arts editor. Her award-winning column — now syndicated to the Santa Barbara Independent and other papers — waxes sassy on sex, politics, kids, fashion, and everything else a modern gal loves to dish about. She offers a fresh and quirky take on life, from the cult of thong underwear to the availability of the morning-after pill.

Recently appearing in the documentary film "Citizen McCaw", about her former employer, Starshine lives in Santa Barbara with her husband (a comic book publisher) and her sons (Stone and Dash). Her talk will be about "Newspaper Columns That Got Me in Trouble".



Starshine Roshell, Saturday May 17th, in the Patio Room at Vista del Monte,  
3775 Modoc Road (Las Positas exit off 101), Santa Barbara.  
2:30pm socializing, 3pm meeting starts.

## Contact Information

Board of Directors 2007-2008

### Officers:

*President:* Adrian Wenner  
963-8508 [wenner@lifesci.ucsb.edu](mailto:wenner@lifesci.ucsb.edu)

*Secretary:* Hope Smith  
967-5143 [hsmith1923@aol.com](mailto:hsmith1923@aol.com)

*Treasurer:* Richard Martin  
687-3563 [richardmartin@cox.net](mailto:richardmartin@cox.net)

### Board Members/At Large:

Dick Cousineau  
Andrew Hankin  
James Kimberly  
Anne Rojas  
Marian Shapiro  
Ray Stone  
Nancy Wahl  
Mary Wilk

### Committee Chairpersons/Other Contacts

Membership: Mary Wilk  
967-3045 [mwilk@cox.net](mailto:mwilk@cox.net)

Publicity: Andrew Hankin  
965-3739 [green\\_helmet@hotmail.com](mailto:green_helmet@hotmail.com)

Programs: Dick Cousineau  
687-2371 [dkcgeo@cox.net](mailto:dkcgeo@cox.net)

Social Action: Marian Shapiro  
968-0478 [marianshapiro@cox.net](mailto:marianshapiro@cox.net)

Book Club: Marty Shapiro  
968-0478 [martinshapiro@cox.net](mailto:martinshapiro@cox.net)

Activities Director: Anne H. Rojas  
564-6086 [annehrojas@cox.net](mailto:annehrojas@cox.net)

Corresponding Secretary: James Kimberly  
564-1991 [dr.doboy@gmail.com](mailto:dr.doboy@gmail.com)

Membership Directory: Ray Stone  
682-2123 [rstone@west.net](mailto:rstone@west.net)

Newsletter Editor: Diane Krohn  
[djkrohn@cox.net](mailto:djkrohn@cox.net)

Web Master: Wayne Beckman  
569-5503 [hssbwebmaster@cox.net](mailto:hssbwebmaster@cox.net)

## Membership Notes

By Mary Wilk

Humanist Society meetings are usually held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://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 Mary Wilk, Hope Smith and Andrew Hankin

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

Alex Hund  
528 W. Olivos St., Apt. #5  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105  
845-4221

Jim Wilhelmson  
575 Pintura Drive  
Santa Barbara, CA 93111  
967-2120

### Letters to the Editor:

Loretta Redd, April 10, *Daily Sound*, writing as Executive Director of the local Alzheimer's Association, on the need for more openness about this disease. (Loretta also has an opinion column in the *Daily Sound* every Tuesday.)

Bill Edgar, April 12, *News-Press*, clarifying a Sports Section analysis of why the Boston Red Sox lost the 1986 World Series.

April 20, *News-Press* "On the Town" section listed Carol Palladini among those attending our local Planned Parenthood's annual dinner for supporters. She was included in the applause for past recipients of the award honoring a local volunteer.



Josette Barsky just returned from two weeks, and Richard Martin from two months, in New Zealand.

Nancy Walker Koppelman (with husband Larry) were among underwriters of a recent Viva Vino event to benefit Direct Relief International.

On Tuesday, April 22nd, Board member Andrew Hankin addressed the Santa Barbara City Council, urging them to continue their policy of NO public prayer at City Council Meetings. This was in response to a lady who appears before council members EVERY WEEK, pleading for the opposite and reading a public prayer of her own. Video of the meeting can be watched online at this website, then clicking on the April 22nd date:

[http://santabarbara.granicus.com/ViewPublicher.php?view\\_id=6](http://santabarbara.granicus.com/ViewPublicher.php?view_id=6)

The meetings start at 2pm with the following format:

- Pledge of Allegiance (including "one nation under god");
- Honoring a local organization;
- Public Comment; one minute per person.

This was when Andrew spoke, quoting Matthew chapter 6 from the bible, encouraging private prayer, not hypocritical public prayer merely to be seen.

<http://net.bible.org/bible.php?book=Mat&chapter=6>

Notwithstanding the clear biblical instructions of moments earlier, prayer lady went into her usual routine. She, and others like her, need to be contradicted in public meetings by other Humanists, lest she chip away at the separation of church and state one prayer at a time.

## Positions on the HSSB Board of Directors Are Now Open for the 2008-2009 Year

It's that time of year when we start thinking about our new club officers and Board. To keep our organization functioning well, we have a Board of Directors with officers, Committee Chairs and Members at Large.

(See *Board Positions* continued on page 4)

*(Board Positions continued from page 3)*

We look forward to an infusion of new ideas and fresh approaches to enrich our group.

We hope you will consider volunteering to be on the Board or serving as an officer or committee person. Or maybe you'd like to nominate another member. A full listing of individuals and responsibilities is on the home page of our web site.

So what is involved? Being a board member means going to a 2-hour meeting once a month. Right now that meeting is on Monday at 5:30 pm, on the Monday before our Saturday program. But this is not set in stone. The board makes financial decisions about what causes and organizations we will support, and at what amount, what kind of publicity we can afford, where and when we want to hold our meetings, etc. We appreciate hearing the opinions of our members and look for ways to get membership input.

If you would be willing to serve on the board, chair a committee, be an officer, or would like to nominate another member, please let one of our board members know, or call Marian Shapiro at 968-0478.

We need to fill the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Program Chair. Our current board members have served between one to four years and are rotating off at the end of June. HSSB functions best when members rotate through positions of responsibility. So please lend a hand and a new face to the HSSB board. With a good response from our members, we should have a smooth transition to the new board. HSSB needs you!

## HSSB Bookstore By Ray Stone

HSSB has a bookstore now open for business at our meetings. Books are both new and used. If you have books of interest to Humanists, and the books are in good condition, please consider donating them to the store. Just bring them to the next meeting, or alternatively, contact Ray at 682-2123.

Our bookstore has received over twenty new books from Fran Halpern, HSSB member and host of the weekly Public Radio program "Beyond Words" (KCLU, 102.3 FM, Saturdays, 2-3 p.m.), a discussion show on books and publishing. These are all recent books, not necessarily on Humanist topics, but they are being sold at a fraction of their suggested retail prices.



Enjoy great music and support a local non-profit organization: the Santa Barbara Theatre Organ Society presents Jerry Nagano - live in concert at the Arlington Theatre, 1317 State Street, Santa Barbara. 11am Saturday, May 10th, information website <http://members.cox.net/sbtos> or phone Andrew Hankin 805-965-3739.

Ticket price  
\$11 for adults  
— all children  
and students  
FREE. Jerry  
will play his  
favorite tunes  
on four  
keyboards and  
pedals, with  
all the bells and whistles!



## Notes from the President: Why Belong?

By Adrian Wenner

When discussing membership at our board meetings, we all too often consider a question raised by former members: “Why should anyone be a member of the **Humanist Society of Santa Barbara**”? After all, one can hear an interesting **HSSB** talk by merely paying \$5 as a visitor, without paying \$36 for an annual membership.

Actually, membership in **HSSB** is more than a real bargain. If we were rated by **Charitynavigator.com**, we would surely get four stars! We have virtually no administrative expenses or fund-raising expenses compared to the best of other non-profit organizations. No one gets a salary, and we send out no solicitations for donations. Essentially all of our income goes to our programs. Most of the time we pay nothing for rent and do not pay upkeep for a building.

As a non-profit, we are not allowed to accrue more in our bank account than needed for operations. When we have a slight surplus, we may donate some to a worthwhile cause — preferably a local organization with Humanist-type goals. Recently, for example, we donated a sum to “Domestic Violence Solutions of Santa Barbara County” (an organization with a four star rating).

Getting an interesting speaker to come to our meetings nearly every month of the year requires some money in the bank. Our Program Officers in the past have done heroic work snagging such people — sometimes local (such as the excellent talk by Tom Mates of UCSB this past month), but more often we have to pay expenses and an honorarium. By coordinating with

organizations such as **First Freedom First**, we manage to get some top-notch speakers who happen to be traveling through our region. Only rarely does our take at the door pay for our expenses.

Your annual membership fee also permits an occasional vision for a future extravaganza of sorts. For instance, **HSSB** is now planning for a special **Darwin Week** celebration next February, in honor of Darwin’s 200<sup>th</sup> birthday, one that will be held in conjunction with the **Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History** (and with anticipated co-sponsorship by other local organizations). The focus will be on past and present aspects of evolutionary theory in our culture, including the current debate about separation of church and state.

No, membership in **HSSB** is not merely paying only \$2 for talks and getting a copy of the *Secular Circular* once each month. By belonging to the organization, we support a worthy cause and enjoy the good company of like-minded people. Why not get a friend to join? Or why not pay for a membership for someone you would like to be with us? Just contact Mary Wilk if you are so inclined.

## News From the Program Committee

By Dick Cousineau

Our Summer Solstice Party will be held on June 21st at Stow Grove Park, Cathedral Oaks Road and La Patera Lane. Please refer to the notice by our Activities Director.



It doesn't matter what you believe, so long as you don't believe it completely.  
— Bertrand Russell, (1872-1970)

## April Meeting: Tom Mates By Robert Bernstein

American Christianity has more in common with Judaism and Islam than it does with the New Testament. Judaism and Islam provide a code of law on Earth, which is very different than what the New Testament offers.

Dr Tom Mates presented this perspective in his “Clash of Christianities” to get Humanists to challenge American Christians in a fresh, new way.

For too long Humanists have criticized religion for being unscientific, but believers don’t really care that it is unscientific. They are contented with a magical view of god.

Humans have a worshipping tendency, whether it is for a great leader, a god or a party. They seek unconditional love and acceptance and tribal identity. Mates would rather shape or moderate religion than fight these tendencies head on.

A dominant regressive force in American culture is a strain of Christianity that is in direct opposition to the basic ideas in the New Testament. Forcing American Christians to confront this contradiction can lead to beliefs that may still be irrational, but at least are not harmful.

A good way to do this might be simply to point out the relativistic, personal nature of Christianity: the differences in belief among Christians, and their departure from even the most basic outline of the religion of Jesus.

Puritans came to America to enforce a society of Biblical laws. They had rules about every aspect of personal conduct. But where did they get these laws?

Roger Williams was a Puritan colonist who took the time to read the Bible. He was astonished to find that the Christian Bible was not the source of any of these laws. In fact, the New Testament was explicit in ceding laws to the “bad guys”. To the Romans. The bad guys are supposed to win on Earth and the Christians are supposed to win in the hereafter.

He found that the Puritan laws were actually taken from the Old Testament. The Jews spent little time thinking about the hereafter and instead tried to live their lives on Earth the way they believed God wanted. God had even handed them some of these laws directly on stone tablets.

Williams founded Rhode Island as a refuge of tolerance for all beliefs, even for the native people. Not because he rejected Christianity, but because he embraced what he considered to be the true Christianity of their own Bible.

And in that version of Christianity, there is not only separation of Church and State. There is separation of believers and state.

The writers of the US Constitution and most of the other founders of that era were very aware of this idea of separation.

In our current day, we do not need to show Christianity is a false set of beliefs to end the threat of theocracy. A quarter to a third of Americans today want such a theocracy, according to recent polls.

But their belief system is not Christian, it is actually Judeo-Muslim according to Mates. The Jews believe they are abiding by the rules of their tribal God in their promised land. Muslims likewise believe in a religion of earthly law enforcement but, in addition,

*(See Mates continued on page 7)*

(Mates continued from page 6)



believe their laws are universal for all people in all places at all times.

You can safely assume that you've created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do. — Anne Lamott, Writer (1954- )

But the Christian Bible takes no interest in any worldly matters. While American Christian leaders preach the importance of marrying and having lots of children, those ideas are Old Testament ideas. The New Testament actively discourages such action.

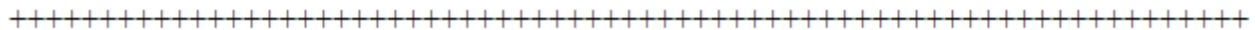
Which is it? Is man one of God's blunders, or is God one of man's blunders. — Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche.

Why spend time having children when the end is near? The Old Testament teaches that the infidels run things on Earth and they will destroy everything in the process. That is why the Kingdom is coming in the hereafter. The focus should be on preparing for the hereafter and getting others to do so as well.

The belief that there is only one truth and that oneself is in possession of it seems to me the deepest root of all evil that is in the world. — Max Born, German-British Physicist and Educator (1882-1970)

Dr. Tom Mates challenged us Humanists not to try to convert Christians to or through reason. He asks us to challenge them with this question: "What do you believe?"

It is of interest to note that while some dolphins are reported to have learned English – up to fifty words used in correct context – no human being has been reported to have learned dolphinese. — Carl Sagan (1934-1996)



**Summer Solstice Party Reservation Form**  
(Fill out, cut off, and mail to Anne!)

Yes, I (we) plan on coming to the Summer Solstice Party at Stowe Grove Park on Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1 p.m..

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed please find my check for \$20 per person payable to HSSB. I understand this covers bulk wine, beverages, tableware, an on-site barbeque with chef-prepared meal of chicken and steak, beans and salad. Optional activities. **Reservations must be in NO LATER THAN June 17th!**

I will contribute one of the following for 6 persons: (circle one)  
Appetizer    Salad    Dessert    Other \_\_\_\_\_

Appetizer people plan on arriving promptly at 1 p.m. Non-refrigerated items preferable |— particularly desserts.

**Mail to:** Anne H. Rojas, P.O. Box 41823, Santa Barbara, CA 93140



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