

THE SECULAR CIRCULAR

Newsletter of the Humanist Society of Santa Barbara

November, 2004

Mythological Musings

By Nancy Wahl

Jonathan Young, Ph.D. treated our group to an unusual and, as it turns out, very popular session on October 16th.

Dr. Young, a storyteller, psychologist, and HSSB card-carrying humanist, spoke to us on



Nancy Wahl Program

"The Myths we Live By." He proposed that myths have great value in providing guidance during difficult times. Seeing how classic heroic seekers surmount their awesome challenges gives us with hints on dealing with mid-life crises or other difficult transitions.

Myths can be studied and appreciated, he emphasized, without ascribing to them any religious significance.

To illustrate the various stages of myths, Dr. Young related the original story of Hans Christian Anderson's *The Ugly Duckling*. An engrossing raconteur, Dr. Young had many of us on the edge of our seats, even though we all (well, most of us) remembered the ending.

Dr. Young suggested that even if we have what appears to be a shortcoming (e.g. ugliness), myths can help us see that, over time, that shortcoming usually turns out to be

an attribute.

In the question and answer period, one attendee pointed out that humanists can often relate to the sense of social isolation that the unfortunate cygnet felt perhaps a clue as to why this session was so well-received!

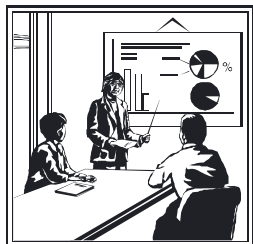


Jonathan Young

Photo: Marian Shapiro

Dr. Young is the Founding Curator of the Joseph Campbell Archives and Library and Chair of the Mythological Studies Department at the Pacifica Graduate Institute. He now gives workshops nationally through the Center for Story and Symbol in Santa Barbara.

See the enclosed flyer for information about our November program. **Note, especially, the changed meeting location.**

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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. HSSB members are welcome to attend these meetings. Contact any board member for more information.

Membership Notes

by Mary Wilk

Humanist Society meetings are 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 site 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 \$2.00 from members and \$5.00 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, next page]

[Membership, cont. from previous page]

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

Madeline Moreaux
P.O. Box 1021
Goleta, CA 93116

681-1105
moreaux@dock.net

We wish to thank all those who contributed so generously towards the purchase of a digital projector for our presentations. We are still short of our goal, so we urge you to make a tax deductible donation for this project. Send your check to HSSB, PO Box 30232, Santa Barbara, CA 93130.

Social Scene

by Anne H. Rojas

We are looking forward to our featured speaker, Sam Harris, this month. We expect a large turnout, hence



Anne H. Rojas

Activities

the change of venue. Due to Sam's schedule, there will be no dining out this month; there will be a r e c e p t i o n i m m e d i a t e l y following his talk. Sorry, but due to space constraints, the reception is limited to Board Members and Sponsor/Donors.

We are in the planning stages for our Winter Solstice Party. I have just confirmed that we have successfully booked an exciting musical duo for our Solstice Party on December 18th. The wonderful Daniel Lower Duo is well known in our area; you may have seen the pair at the Biltmore, Cold Springs Tavern or performing at private parties. They play acoustic guitar and harmonica and sing harmony vocals and will provide background musical entertainment. They will also take requests.

As we have done in the past, we will soon begin taking reservations. Cost will be about \$25 per person and will feature a full evening of food and drink, door prizes and live music. Please set aside the date of December 18th (our regular meeting day) at 6 pm. We will be in the private back room at Sizzler with a served dinner.

The trip to theatre in Ventura has been put on hold until January. The last Sunday brunch continues on with variable participation. I would like your suggestions as to changes of venue so more of you would participate.

If you would like to help or participate in planning any activities, you are most welcome. Diane Freeman and Parkie Parkie still need refreshment help. You may make a \$10 donation to them if you are unable to make purchases. A special thanks to May Smith for her diligent exercise of coffee duties.

I do not consider it an insult, but rather a compliment to be called an agnostic. I do not pretend to know where many ignorant men are sure — that is all that agnosticism means

– Clarence Darrow

Chairman's Chat

by Dick Cousineau

I applaud the Program Committee, and its Chairwoman, Nancy Wahl, for their bringing to our Society high quality and varied programs each and every month. While I know very well that you can't please every member every month, Nancy and her committee, Anne, Marian, and Roger (with a little help from me) [Ed. Note: *Don't believe the "little" part*] have come quite close.

Those of us fortunate enough to attend our meetings have been exposed to new and



Dick Cousineau

Chairman

different ideas that challenge us to look at the world and ourselves in differing lights. What a n experience!

The committee, especially Nancy, has been and is still working tirelessly to bring the nationally known author, Sam Harris, to Santa Barbara, and to our Society. Mr. Harris' visit, is sponsored jointly by this Society and by the Center for Philosophical Education at Santa Barbara City College. He will speak at 3 PM, Nov. 20th at Fe Bland Auditorium on the SBCC West Campus. His new book *The End of Faith* "offers a startling analysis of the clash between reason and religion in the modern world."

I have read the book and agree with Peter Singer that "This book will be a challenge not only to Muslims but to Hindus, Jews and Christians alike." I used so many Post It markers to note the good quote in the book

that the book's edge looks like a Buddhist prayer flag. On of my favorite quotes is "Because we have been a people of faith, taught to concern ourselves with the sinfulness of our neighbors, we have grown tolerant of irrational uses of state power." Please plan to attend this meeting at City College for I expect it to be memorable. We hope to fill the 150-seat auditorium with our members, guests, and City College teachers and students. Plan to arrive early to get a good seat.

On another matter I am sorry to say that the canned food collection program for Domestic Violence Solutions has not been going well due to lack of society-wide participation. Only a few (the same few) bring canned food to our meeting and the subsequent distribution has been meager.

We are thinking of replacing this program with another of more significance. Please give me your suggestions for a charitable outreach for our Society.

All the best
Dick

Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the government's purposes are beneficial. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well meaning but without understanding.

– Louis D. Brandeis

Please, with the God talk. Hate to break it to you, but there is no God.

– Howard Stern

Help Chose Our Speakers! by Nancy Wahl

We want to make sure our meetings are as relevant and interesting to you as possible. To that end, we welcome all ideas and sugges-tions you may have for future speakers and topics. We'll do our best to accommodate your requests.

Also, if you personally know potential speakers – humanist professors, authors, community leaders, etc – we'd appreciate it if

you could give us their contact information as well.

Please call me at 687-1515 or e-mail me at nwahl@cox.net with your suggestions. Or complete the form below and mail it to:

HSSB Program Chair
PO Box 30232
Santa Barbara, CA 93130

Thank you for your ideas and suggestions!

HSSB SPEAKER REQUEST FORM

Suggested Speakers:

Name

Phone or contact info (if known)

Suggested Topics:

Preferred Formats (check all that apply):1

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Lecturer | <input type="checkbox"/> Panel Discussion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two-Person Debate | <input type="checkbox"/> Film Followed by Panel Discussion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Members Discussion (no speaker) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Other Comments:

Optional Information: Name: _____

HSSB Notes

By Hope Smith

There are a number of Society and Board activities that are of interest to the member-ship:

- Dudley Duncan is convalescing at home and would enjoy hearing from our members. His health varies day-to-day so you must check with Bea Duncan should you want to plan a personal visit.
- As Mary Wilk mentioned on Page 3, our fund-raising for the digital projector we plan to purchase is on-going. We have raised approximately half of the total price of the projector and, based on that high level of support, we have proceeded with the purchase of the selected projector. Our November meeting will be at the Fe Bland at SBCC and December is our Solstice party so you can expect to see the new projector in action at our January meeting.
- As those of you have arrived early for our meetings at the Patio Room know, there is always a need to set up the room. We must set up the chairs, arrange the various tables, turn on the sound system, etc. Typically, this has been done on an *ad hoc* basis by whoever shows up early. We would like to have more assurance that the room is ready for our meeting by establishing a "Room Committee" of 2-4 people who will make sure that the set-up is properly completed. If you are interested, contact Dick to volunteer. This is an easy task only involving a few minutes each month. Please give Dick a call.
- Plans for our tenth anniversary celebration continue to evolve. [*Ed. Note: Can I resist a sarcastic mention that the ID movement*

is not involved. Apparently not!] We have confirmed the participation of Bill Edelen, *Santa Barbara News-Press* columnist, Eddie Tabash, Board Chairman of the Center for Inquiry - West, and Tom Flynn, Editor of *Free Inquiry* magazine. It promises to be a fun, gala celebration. Mark your calendars for May 21st and (to harken back to the 60s) "be there or be square."

- The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 11th at 5 pm at home of May Wilk, 4384 Via Presada. One agenda item of interest to all members is a discussion of Chairman Dick Cousineau's "Statement of Purpose" for our society.

As always, all members are welcome (but it will help Mary if non-board members informed her of their planned attendance as she provides light refreshments.

- Humanism and our Society will be featured in the display cases in the downtown public library, starting Monday, November 1st and lasting through the end of the month. If you have anything in the way of books, notices, other momentos that could be included in our exhibit, please contact Marian Shapiro.
- Ron Kronenberg needs some help with his PC using Adobe Photoshop with his digital camera and also with financial management with Quicken. If you can help Ron, contact him at seelberg@cox.net. He has volunteered to make a contribution to the Society for your troubles.

The scientific theory I like best is that the rings of Saturn are composed entirely of lost airline luggage.

— Mark Russell

The Exercised Editor

by Roger Schlueter

Santa Barbara was fortunate to have Barry Lynn, Executive Director speak in Santa Barbara under sponsorship of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Many members of the San Fernando chapter came her for a reception/dinner followed by speech, including Harry Schwartzbart, who spoke to our group a couple of years ago.

Many of our members were fortunate enough to attend these events such as Marian Shapiro, as shown to the right

.Finally, I'll close this this issue with some words of wisdom for our next president, plus a cartoon to celebrate a most singular event.



Marian Shapiro and Barry Lynn

Photo: Marty Shapiro

"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
September 12th, 1960



Dang Rod Sox by Larry Wright

Used with permission: CagleCartoons.com