

# The Newsletter of the Humanist Community in Silicon Valley



Vote Feb 24!

The mission of the Humanist Community is to meet the social, intellectual, and emotional needs of Humanists of all ages; to contribute to the well-being of the larger community; and to be a voice for Humanism.

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## Mr. Darwin & Us

We in the Humanist Community like to celebrate **Darwin Day on February 12th**, his birthdate, because we sense Darwin would be a kindred spirit. He expressed several qualities that we value, and I wish to comment on some of them.

First, he was a learner, and we hope to continue in his example. He was a scientific learner: a critical, discerning observer and recorder of reality, i.e., facts, details, and most importantly, patterns and their varying consequences. Witness his analysis of Darwin's finches (check out the Wikipedia article on this subject).

Second, he could analyze and synthesize what he observed in a rational way. That is,

he created good theory from reality. To me this is not just a mechanistic process using deductive and inductive logic, but it also has an enriching humanities aspect, sometimes involving analogical or even metaphorical reasoning - as compelling as a good story or poem, or an elegant proof of a mathematical concept. (Some balk at this.)

A third virtue of Darwin was his strong respect for authority, but in his case it was the authority that we hear in the Missouriian's curmudgeonly challenge, "Show me." For Darwin, books of mystical tales, guarded by priests and other holy men, had no particular relevance in trying to learn and understand the world before us. He did not wish to be told what to believe because it says so in Genesis.

A fourth point about Darwin's science is that his observational style and resources were not simply a matter of mere null-hypothesis testing. The history of scientific method is much richer than that, allowing for the exploration of broad hypotheses.

And certainly, the outgrowths of Darwin's work in the fields of genetics and elsewhere are intriguing, and we humanists find studying and discussing these ideas fascinating and good fun! Again, there is a feeling that we in the HC and Darwin may be kindred spirits.

Jon Stephens

(And thanks, Bob Stephens, for stirring all this interest in Darwin Day a while back.)

## Forums

### FEB 3 Green Burial and the Funeral Consumers Alliance

Deborah Meckler, President of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties discusses helping find meaningful, dignified and affordable death care, Deborah is working to make 'green burial' an option on the San Francisco peninsula. She has a B.S. in natural resources management and has worked as a land steward and as an environmental consultant.

From the FCA website, "Green burial is a way to return human remains directly to the earth so that they will biodegrade naturally and become soil. It is a way to deal with human remains with as little resource use, energy use, and land disturbance as possible." Learn more about this option for disposing of human remains, with the benefits of keeping pollutants out of the soil and helping to preserve open space in a near-natural state. More information is at fcapeninsula.org.

### FEB 10 Nonviolent Peaceforce Project in the Philippines

Gilda Bettencourt will share a 9-minute video report from PBS, then make a 10-minute presentation about the Nonviolent Peaceforce Project in the Philippines. Remaining time will be open for Q & A. More about the Peaceforce is at: [www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/nonviolent-peaceforce-pbs-video](http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/nonviolent-peaceforce-pbs-video).

### FEB 17 A New Foundation for Civilization: Humanism?

Can humanism truly provide a foundation for a society? If not, what would it take to do so? HC President Arthur Jackson will lay out his best thinking on this. Arthur is secretary for the Humanist Society, AHA. He chaired the IHEU Working Party on Humanist Counseling (1968-78). He authored *The Humanist Chapter of the Future* (1982), *The Future of Humanism* (1993) and *How to Live the Good Life: A User's Guide for Modern Humans* (2011). He has also worked as AHA's Assistant Director (1965-69).

### FEB 24 What's Happening to PublicSchooling in the U.S.?

Roberta Ahlquist, professor at San Jose State, researches critical race theory, critical pedagogy, countering hegemony, and indigenous knowledges. Her recent contribution is a co-edited book, *Assault on Kids: Hyper-accountability, corporatization, deficit ideologies and R.Payne are destroying our schools*. She was visiting scholar and researcher in Australia, a Fulbright Scholar in Finland, and recently returned from research in the Middle East.

Roberta is president of Our Developing World, a non-profit multicultural resource center in Saratoga that reaches out to teachers to provide resources and alternatives to the mainstream curriculum that students receive in schools. She is a social justice educator and activist.

### FORUM INFORMATION

Palo Alto High School – Student Center  
50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto  
Sundays 11 a.m.-12:15p.m. Free and open  
to the public. Lunch 12:15-2 p.m.; a  
donation of \$10 requested.



**Editor**

Jon Stephens

**Production**

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**Letters to the Editor**

Letters to the editor may be submitted to [infohcsv@yahoo.com](mailto:infohcsv@yahoo.com). The length of your submission should not exceed 100 words and may be edited for clarity.

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e-mail [Arthur@arthurmjackson.com](mailto:Arthur@arthurmjackson.com)

**Disclaimer**

Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or positions of the Humanist Community.

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**HELP** *Do you need some help?*

- For confidential assistance contact Arthur Jackson at [Arthur@arthurmjackson.com](mailto:Arthur@arthurmjackson.com) or call 408-923-3774.
- If you need to talk to someone about a problem you're having, call Arthur Jackson at 408-923-3774.
- If you need some other kind of help (for example, a ride to a doctor's appointment, some groceries brought by, a recommendation for a lawyer), email [hhelp@yahoogroups.com](mailto:hhelp@yahoogroups.com) (which forwards your e-mail to members of the HC HELP group, each of whom may send a reply e-mail to you and the group if they can help), or contact Sena Havasy at [senahav@gmail.com](mailto:senahav@gmail.com) or call 408-739-5638.

## Calendar of Events

### Fun Group Outing

**Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – February 2, 2013**  
"Lord what fools these mortals be!"

The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival presents Shakespeare's quintessential comedy, an excellent example of The Bard's fun-loving humor and lovely evocative language. The creative plot-line, involving two couples whose romantic intentions become complicated and confused by their encounters in an enchanted wood, is readily appreciated and enjoyed by audiences of all ages!

**What:** The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival presentation of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

**Where:** Campbell Library, 77 Harrison Avenue, Campbell, CA 95008.

**When:** Saturday, February 2, 2013. The play begins at 1:30 p.m. Post-play Question and Answer Session with Cast begins at 2:30 p.m.

**Cost:** Free.

For more information, visit <http://www.scll.org/campbell> or call (408)

### Welcoming Committee

We schedule small monthly get-acquainted gatherings in private homes, assist with all holidays, greet visitors, and keep ourselves informed about goings-on in the Community. We meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 3:00 p.m.

If you are interested in attending, hosting a Coffee & Dessert, or being on the Welcoming Committee, please contact Dianne Jacobsen, Committee Chair, [diannej24@yahoo.com](mailto:diannej24@yahoo.com) or Sena Havasy, [senahav@gmail.com](mailto:senahav@gmail.com), or any one of us at Forum on Sunday.

### Humanist Community Hiking Group

*Watch the website for information about a February hike.*

### Humanist Community Board of Directors Election: Members Vote!

It's February and it is time for the members of the Humanist Community of Silicon Valley to elect or reelect the Directors. At the start of the February 24 Forum, you will be given the opportunity to use your humanist-given right to express yourself

Positions to be filled are currently held by: Beverly Crowell, Andrea Dorey, Arthur Jackson, Marie Stephens, and *vacant*. The five candidates for these five positions are: Andrea Dorey, Paul Gilbert, Arthur Jackson, Harrienne Mills, and Marie Stephens.

*Vote*

## *The Family Program*

The HC Family Program is designed for children from 4 to 13 in freethinking humanist families. The program is supervised by the parents. Participants involve themselves in science, art, and drama projects, reflecting the ideas and goals of the families and community. At the end of each program meeting, they join the community for lunch when the program is on site.

Science Resource Building, Room 1732  
Palo Alto High School  
50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto  
Most Sundays 10:30 a.m.-12 noon.

**Check at [humanists.com](http://humanists.com) for December dates.**

## *February Potluck – Lupercalia!!*

**LUPERCALIA**—ancient Druid celebration, later taken over by the Romans with rituals to assure fertility in maidens and easy childbirth for wives. Later Lupercalia was replaced by Valentine’s Day, a celebration of romance. We humanists have the best of both worlds: we’ll celebrate Lupercalia with a quiet, romantic pot-luck dinner, and *YOU’RE INVITED!*

Burt and Margie Liebert’s  
3747 Redwood Circle, Palo Alto  
February 16, 6 p.m.  
Seating limited, so please reserve your place:  
650~493~3747

## *The Sharing Circle*

Palo Alto High School Student Center, Sundays at 10:30 a.m.  
One of several groups that meet prior to the Forum each Sunday where attendees may share any personal feelings or experiences they wish, in an environment of trust and confidentiality.

## *Free Thought Discussion*

Brown Home, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.  
Discussion of recent news or a selected book. For information, check [www.humanists.org](http://www.humanists.org).

## *Academic Video*

Brown Home, Thursdays, 8:00 p.m.  
View an academic video followed by discussion. For information, check [www.humanists.org](http://www.humanists.org).

## *Clinic Defense*

Planned Parenthood, 4th Saturday of the Month.  
1691 The Alameda, San Jose 8:00 a.m. For information, contact Alex Havasy at 408-739-5638 or [havasy@aol.com](mailto:havasy@aol.com).

## *Women’s Coffee*

Ten o’clock on the fourth Saturday, February 23rd, Dinah’s Poolside again, as usual. We will discuss a topic.

## *UU Humanist Roots*

### *Potluck Dinner and Discussion*

Our next meeting is at 6 PM on Saturday, Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> in Fireside room. Dan Harper, associate minister, will present the topic “Humanism vs. Religious Naturalism”.

What is Religious Naturalism? To give you a hint, it values “science, spirituality and stewardship of the earth”. Because it values science, supernatural is not accepted. However, God is accepted, as long as its definition is not about a supernatural being. And there is more - sound emotional life, wisdom and morality emerged from history of human culture, appreciation of an essence, a grandeur and a magnificence in Nature, etc. As you can see, it’s not just about reasons, it’s also about senses.

Contact Emma Pan at [emma\\_p@uucpa.org](mailto:emma_p@uucpa.org) for potluck and other information about the meeting.

**When:** Saturday, February 2, 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.  
**Where:** Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto  
Fireside Room, 505 E. Charleston Road, Palo Alto

## *Bay Area Russell Society (BARS)*

Join us as we continue with our new book by Russell entitled *The Conquest of Happiness*. We will be discussing Chapter 9, entitled “Fear of Public Opinion.” This small volume, first published in 1930 offers the reader, according to the Atlantic Monthly, “a primer of self-regeneration.” According to the Preface by Russell, he wrote the book “in the belief that many people who are unhappy could become happy by well-directed effort that I have written in this book.” We hope that our discussions of these writings will prove informative, interesting and perhaps life-changing in making us happier than before.

**More:** [www.meetup.com/philosophy-219/](http://www.meetup.com/philosophy-219/)

**When:** Tuesday, Feb 26, 7:00p.m.

**Where:** Thai Pepper, 103 Fremont Ave, Sunnyvale

***Members! You are called to Vote at the Board of Directors meeting just prior to the February 24 Forum. Check around this newsletter and on our growing and glowing website for more information!***

***[www.humanists.org](http://www.humanists.org)***

# FEBRUARY 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 GROUND HOG DAY
3 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum	4	5	6 6:30 pm Fun Group  7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	7  8:00 p.m. Academic Video	8	9
10 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum	11	12 Darwin's Birthday Mardi Gras	13  7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	14 valentine's day  3:00 Welcoming Committee 8:00 p.m. Academic Video	15	16  6:00 p.m. Potluck
17 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum	18 Presidents Day	19	20  7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	21  8:00 p.m. Academic Video	22	23  10:00 a.m. Women's Coffee
24 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. FORUM ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS	25 7:30 Board meeting	26	27  7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	28  8:00 p.m. Academic Video	MARCH 1	

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

