

The Newsletter of the Humanist Community in Silicon Valley



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

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HCSV's Own Celebrant-Hiker

Our own **Bill Rausch** gives a great deal to the Community--this AHA Celebrant gave us a presence at the recent San Francisco Gay Pride Festival. He organized a Humanist Celebrant booth, letting LGBT folks know of his and our support. Bill said, "I think that I raised the consciousness of quite a lot of attendees as to what a Humanist Celebrant does. I'll also have a booth at the San Jose Pride Festival on August 18 and 19. I would like to 'recruit' an HCSV member to help out down there, as my wife won't be available. It's in the Guadalupe River Park in San Jose, and of course, it's free."

Bill says about his hiking, "Some people wonder what I'm doing, hiking at age 80. As a boy I had Perthe's disease, which led to a half year's full bed rest and 3 1/2 years in a full length leg brace. So no hiking before I came to Palo Alto in 1960. A book, *Going Light with Backpack or Burro* by the Sierra Club, started me on weekend backpack and "Peak Bagging" trips. I learned to ski at the Club's Clair Tappaan lodge and started backcountry weekend ski trips. I became recognized as a leader for many such trips.

"In the 1970s I started bicycling to work to Lockheed. I did this for 9 years until a bike crash fractured my right hip, cutting off blood circulation to my hip joint, causing it to soften

and pit. After using crutches for 2 years I had a total replacement. I kept doing backpack peak climbing trips for 6 more years until I needed revision, which has lasted until now.

"I'd like to have the chance to share my hikes with you. At 80 I'm not about to take those who come with me on something strenuous. My rules for Humanist hikes are about 3-4 miles total with no more than 300 ft of elevation change. Rain cancels, but heat or cold can be coped with by putting on or peeling off clothing. Boots are best, but old tennis shoes are OK. Come and share the beauty of Nature with me! As Baruch Spinoza, the 17th century philosopher said, "If there is a god, it is Nature."

Forums

AUGUST 5 AHA president David Niose on *Nonbeliever Nation* and current humanist issues

Adapted from his book, *Nonbeliever Nation*: "Today's culture wars are more heated than ever. Education, public policy, and the separation between church and state have become a battlefield, and many are frustrated with the success the Religious Right has had in shaping the national agenda, from putting the brakes on gay marriage in California to stripping textbooks in Texas of references to Thomas Jefferson. But today, a growing nonreligious minority, nearly 20 percent of Americans, are finally organizing and taking explicit political positions. In *Nonbeliever Nation*, Niose argues that America was never in fact a Christian nation and shows how the Religious Right successfully took control of the social and political narrative. He takes us across the country to meet the secular groups now forming in opposition to that force—from humanist gatherings to the rise of the New Atheists to the explosion of secular groups on college and even high school campuses. Niose

discusses their political goals, including lobbying efforts, legal strategies, and outreach through advertising and education, and what still needs to be done to make the secular voice a game-changer in American politics."

AUGUST 12 Shelley Segal--*Atheist, Humanist, Secular Singer*

Segal, an Australia-based singer-songwriter, will discuss and sing songs from her latest release, *An Atheist Album*, at shelleyssegal.com. She became involved in secular activism over two years ago, despite her father being the president of a local synagogue. Her songs are a passionate response to dogmatic belief, inequality, religious oppression and the idea that only the devout can be grateful and good. She enjoys bringing these controversial topics to public discourse and finds music to be an effective medium for expression and raising awareness.

AUGUST 19 Moral Luck, the "Natural Lottery," and Mitt Romney

A child is born somewhere in America. Will she be born in a blue state, or red? Will she be born to a loving family, or into a family

blighted by drug and alcohol abuse? Will she be born to a wealthy family, or into a family struggling to make ends meet? Questions like these will show how one's luck in the "Natural Lottery," have strong influences on individuals – in essence, making them more or less likely to be successful. Join Humanist Chaplain at Stanford, John Figdor (B.A. Vassar College: Philosophy, M.Div. Harvard Divinity School) for a conversation about Moral Luck, the "Natural Lottery," and Mitt Romney.

AUGUST 26 *The Journey Through Atheism to Humanism, Ethical Culture and Beyond*

Peter Bishop, a long-time HCSV member, now lives in Washington, DC. While here, he set up a Humanist Sunday School, started one of the first Rational Recovery Chapters, and served on the Board of HCSV. Peter will discuss the progress of his views of humanism.

FORUM INFORMATION

Palo Alto High School – Student Center
50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto

Sundays 11 a.m.-12:15. Free and open to the public. Lunch 12:15-2 p.m., a donation of \$10 requested.



Editor, Pro Tem

Jon Stephens

Production

Hilton Brown, Jon Stephens, Helen Athey

Letters to the Editor

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

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Disclaimer

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

HELP *Do you need some help?*

- For confidential assistance contact Arthur Jackson at 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 hchelp@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 or call 408-739-5638.

Calendar of Events

Fun Group Outing

A San Francisco Mime Troupe Performance – August 29, 2012

Come see the Tony Award-winning SF Mime Troupe performing its 53rd season production, *For the Greater Good, or The Last Election*.

Pity the poor 1 per cent! Abused in that sliver of press they don't own, condemned in the streets by a rabble who don't appreciate the benefits of being trickled down upon, and raked over the coals by the few politicians who aren't lined up to kiss their wealth and power. Talk about an oppressed minority! Based on the classic 19th century melodrama *The Poor of New York*, the Troupe turns the story on its head, telling it from the point of view of the misunderstood Godzillionaires who have made this country what it is today: broke.

Michael Gene Sullivan directs Velina Brown, Ed Holmes, Lisa Hori-Garcia, Keiko Shimosato Carreiro, Victor Toman and Reggie D. White in this musical satire about "true" American values. Written by Michael Gene Sullivan, with additional dialogue by SFMT, music, lyrics, and musical direction by Pat Moran.

What: SF Mime Troupe performance of *For the Greater Good, or The Last Election*.

Cost: Free. Donations accepted.

Where: Mitchell Park, South Field, 600 East Meadow Drive, Palo Alto

When: Wednesday, Aug 29. Performance at 7:00 p.m. Music at 6:30.

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 or hosting a Coffee & Dessert or being on the Welcoming Committee, please contact Dianne Jacobsen, Committee Chair, diannej24@yahoo.com or Sena Havasy, senahav@gmail.com, or any one of us at Forum on Sunday.

Humanist Community Hiking Group

Bill Rausch, experienced world hiker, has planned a delightful summer outing for us for Sunday, August 12.

Our Humanist Hike will be a visit to Portola Valley's Windy Hill, which is aptly named, so bring jackets and kites. We'll traverse the Windy Hill Picnic trail, and stay high on the grassy Anniversary and the Anniversary and Lost trails. Total distance, about 3.5 miles round trip, with great views. This area has one of the Santa Cruz Mountain's greatest viewsheds, a complete cross section of the range from the Peninsula, the Bay, its cities to the east, and the Ocean to the west. The rest of the preserve swoops down some 1300 feet to Portola Valley.

We leave Palo Alto High School at 1:30 p.m. to arrive at the picnic area on Skyline Blvd by 2:30 p.m.

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.

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

The August Potluck

Sena Havasy is planning a swimming pool party for this month's potluck. 2:00 p.m. Saturday August 12th. Call 408-739-5638 or senahav@gmail.com for details.

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, contact Hilton Brown at 650-941-3146 or brownofmntnview@aol.com.

Academic Video

Brown Home, Thursdays, 8:00 p.m.
View an academic video followed by discussion. For information, contact Hilton Brown at 650-941-3146 or brownofmntnview@aol.com.

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.

Women's Coffee

Dinah's Poolside Cafe, 4th Saturday of the Month
4261 El Camino Real, Palo Alto 10:00 a.m.
Come have a cup of coffee and join in the camaraderie.

Other Events of Interest

Humanist Roots

Potluck Dinner and Discussion

John Pierce will lead a discussion entitled "Where do humanists go for hope?"

Believers often speak of the strength and consolation they find in their religions, and many cite the aphorism that "there are no atheists in foxholes." Those of us who do not rely on help from supernatural sources may sometimes envy the serenity with which some religious people can face very difficult circumstances. Was Thomas Gray right when he said "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise"? Come and share where you find strength and hope in trying times.

We start at 6 p.m. with wine and hors d'oeuvres, have the pot-luck dinner from 6:30 to 7:15, and then get into the discussion. To help with the planning, please let me know what you would like to bring to share. Contact Richard Duda at dick_d@uucpa.org.

When: Saturday, August 4, 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto
Fireside Room, 505 E. Charleston Rd., 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 4, entitled "Boredom and Excitement." 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/

When: Tuesday, August 21, 7:00p.m.

Where: Thai Pepper, 103 Fremont Ave, Sunnyvale

Volunteer/Intern for the Humanist Member Database Needed
Volunteer/Intern needed for data entry and report generation for the Humanist Membership Master Database.
If you are interested in helping, or learning, to put Excel Spreadsheet (or similar) skills to use, contact Carl Angotti at carl@angotti.com or 408-739-5046. You will receive training and provide vital help to the community.

AUGUST 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	2 8:00 p.m. Academic Video	3	4 10:00 a.m. Fun Group
5 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum	6	7	8 7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	9 8:00 p.m. Academic Video	10	11 2:00 p.m. Pool Party Potluck @ the Havasy's
12 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum 1:30 Hike	13	14	15 7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	16 3:00 Welcoming Committee 8:00 p.m. Academic Video	17	18
19 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum	20 Drive with care! A lot of schools are starting again, so watch for kids.	21	22 7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	23 8:00 p.m. Academic Video	24	25 10:00 a.m. Women's Coffee @ Dinah's Poolside Cafe
26 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum	27	28	29 7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	30 8:00 p.m. Academic Video	31	SEPTEMBER 1

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

