

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 Humanism.

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If we reflect on human history, we humans are pretty good problem solvers. We share our pasts and knowledge in our books and records, and our futures in our plans and predictions. And with these, we shape and control our material world by our actions, leveraged with our technologies and the Earth's and Sun's energy sources. Through all these efforts we have made our worlds healthier, more comfortable, more joyful, and better understood.

And then, guess what, we create more problems. We now face two relatively new and serious problems, both at a global scale. Our economic system supposedly reflects our wealth and the value we create, but the

system is now so manipulated by lending and printing of money, that real wealth and value can become lost. Meanwhile, in reality beyond our financial reflections, we mine nature and burn fossil fuels at a rate which may well lead us to an ice-free world of record high temperatures and oceans, not seen since the dinosaurs.

A humanistic philosophy may help us to address these problems, to manage and flourish within our human worlds, and to return into balance with this Earth's resources. It reminds us to focus on what is real, and what exists, here and now. For our histories and pasts are made and created right here; right now. And for all of the

possible futures we predict and plan for, only one becomes that past, and it does so right here, right now. This is our life in the making, the only effect we ever have, as we live and breathe it, right here, right now. And so to act now, with relevant and appropriate past knowledge and understanding in mind, with a will to do what is right, and with a view to moving towards a better future, is surely what we must and all we can do. We are problem solvers, so I say let us solve our problems. And let us do so in good spirits, with good humor, and with compassion, knowledge, understanding, curiosity, and of course, hope, in mind. --Martin Squibbs

Forums

OCT 7 Sandy Smith on You and Humanist Manifestos

Have you ever thought about writing your own personal Humanist Manifesto? HC member Sandy Smith will give a brief history of the Humanist Manifestos written under the auspices of the American Humanist Association and other organizations, and then there will be an opportunity for you to consider how you would write your own.

OCT 14 Nancy Unger on American Women in Environmental History

Fifty years ago Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, exposing the devastating impact of pesticides, especially DDT, on the whole web of life. *Time* magazine dismissed her as "hysterically overemphatic" and the *New Yorker* published a letter from a reader who complained, "As for insects, isn't it just like a woman to be scared to death of a few bugs!"

Why is it that men and women have often responded so differently to the environment and environmental issues? From pre-

Columbian Native Americans to the modern environmental justice movement, gender has played an under-appreciated role in environmental attitudes and actions. In this illustrated presentation based on her new book, *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers: American Women in Environmental History*, historian Nancy Unger reveals women's unique role in the shaping of the American environment.

OCT 21 Our Home, The Mind: Understanding It Better, Enjoying It More, and Using it Well

Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, Psychology, and the study of Memory and Consciousness all focus on understanding the nature and behavior of the human mind, which lives within the human brain. The brain contains around 100 billion neurons and 100 trillion connections. Most likely you are reading and interpreting these words within your brain's neural networks right now.

What does this relatively new form of life, the highly complex human brain, bring to the world? And how do we find joy within it and do well by it? HC member Martin Squibbs will share new scientific insights into the structure and processes of our minds, offer some of his

own thoughts and theories regarding the nature and form that our minds take, and propose some answers to these questions.

OCT 28 Confessions of a Lefty Godless Magazine Editor

Just when you thought you knew what Humanists stood for.... Now in her sixth year at the helm of the *Humanist* magazine, Editor Jennifer Bardi makes confessions, namely that she never knew Humanists were sexist, gun-toting, anti-abortion, homophobic, sexually inhibited, free-market loving conspiracy theorists. Well, a few of them anyway.

Bardi will speak about hot-button social and political issues on which Humanists differ in their opinions, the history of the AHA's stance on core issues, and how the AHA continues to advocate for nonbelievers of all stripes.

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, Helen Athey, Marion Sanders

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

Halloween Nature Drawing Class – October 20, 2012

Learn to make realistic drawings of what you see. Appropriate for ages 8 and up. Children, please bring an adult who would like to participate. Adults without children are welcome as well. Bring a sketch pad and pencil or use ours. All skill levels welcome.

The Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge is dedicated to preserving wildlife habitat, protecting migratory birds, protecting threatened and endangered species, and providing opportunities for wildlife-oriented recreation and nature study.

What: A nature drawing class.

When: Saturday, October 20, 2012 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Meet at the main entrance of the Environmental Education Center at 10:45 a.m.

Cost: Free. RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. Please call Debra at 408-262-5513 ext. 102 for reservations.

Where: The Environmental Education Center, Alviso. PLEASE NOTE: Internet driving directions are not always correct. The DESFBNWR recommends following the written directions and the map located at <http://www.fws.gov/desfbay/directions.htm>. From I-880 or Highway 101, exit on Highway 237 toward Alviso. Turn north onto Zanker Road. Continue to the Environmental Education Center entrance road (a sharp right turn at Grand Blvd.) The distance from 237 to the entrance road is 2.1 miles.

For more information, see <http://www.fws.gov/desfbay/index.htm> or call 408-262-5513 ext. 102.

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 is planning a Fall hike for us in October.

We'll do a loop trip in Huddart Park near Woodside. It's about 3 1/2 miles and 360 ft elevation loss. Huddart is a San Mateo county park so a \$5 per car fee is collected - car pools recommended. Leave Palo Alto High at 1:30 PM & meet at Werder Flat on the Trail Camp road in Huddart by 2:30 PM. THIS HIKE MAY BE CANCELLED--CHECK AT FORUM. Bill was in a car accident and at the writing of this newsletter he is in Stanford Hospital.

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
Most Sundays 10:30 a.m.-12 noon.

The October Potluck

Trick or Treat! Our next potluck will be at Pam Lidden's place in San Jose at 6:00 PM October 27th. Contact Sena Havasy at senahav@gmail.com or call 408-739-5638 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 brownofmnview@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

Hobee's, 4th Saturday of the Month (Dinah's is closed!)
El Camino Real near Arastradero, 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

October's topic is **Humanism in American Politics**.

Kay Culpepper will open the discussion after first describing her interpretation of "humanism" and how it reveals itself in the actions of candidates, our political choices and our own actions. She will invite your input, especially regarding the presidential campaign.

Please come prepared to think about how each candidate demonstrates his own ability to "lead a meaningful, ethical life capable of adding to the greater good of humanity."(or not) Bring newspaper clippings, editorial cartoons, etc.

Contact Emma Pan at emma_p@uucpa.org for potluck and other information about the meeting.

When: Saturday, October 6, 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 6, entitled "Envy." 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, October 16, 7:00p.m.

Where: Thai Pepper, 103 Fremont Ave, Sunnyvale



Seagull contemplating platonic form (© Jon Stephens).

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	4 8:00 p.m. Academic Video	5	6
7 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum	8	9	10 7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	11 8:00 p.m. Academic Video	12	13
14 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum 1:30 Hike	15	16	17 7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	18 3:00 Welcoming Committee 8:00 p.m. Academic Video	19	20 11:30 Fun Group
21 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum	22 7:30 Board meeting	23	24 7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	25 8:00 p.m. Academic Video	26	27 10:00 a.m. Women's Coffee 6:00 p.m. Potluck
28 10:30 a.m. Family Program 11:00 a.m. Forum	29	30	31 7:30 p.m. Free Thought Discussion	November 1	2	3

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