



## Potluck Party!

5:00PM Saturday December 18, 2004  
Warren and Pat McCarl's House

Please join us on Saturday, December 18 for a potluck party at Warren and Pat McCarl's house. *(You can find driving directions to this location on page 2 of this newsletter.)* Starting at 5 p.m., we'll celebrate our friendship with a purely social meeting.

Of course, being a potluck, partygoers are expected to bring food to share, but there are no rules about what to bring or sign-up lists. Bring any food and/or beverage you like. Somehow it all seems to work out so that we get enough of our five basic food groups: appetizers, salads, main courses, side dishes and

desserts. Also, don't forget to bring along any re-sellable books you want to donate for our annual freethought book auction, with Herb Silverman once again serving as friendly auctioneer. (All proceeds will go into the SHL treasury, so plan to buy a book too if you can).

We hope to see you there, and especially invite the people on our mailing list who rarely come to a meeting as well as past speakers who are not members.

Please note that this event is on **Saturday** and there will be no meeting at Gage Hall in December, but we will return to our regular meeting format in January.

### Florida approves first humanist charter school in U.S.

An application to open the first humanist charter school in the United States was approved Nov. 17, 2004 by the Hillsborough County School District in Tampa, Fla. The Humanists of Florida Association (HFA) successfully filed the application to open the public charter school. The school, named "Carl Sagan Academy" in honor of the late Carl Sagan, astronomer and humanist, is scheduled to open in 2005 and will serve a middle

school student population in the neighborhoods surrounding the University of South Florida. The charter application for the Carl Sagan Academy was made possible through funds from the Institute for Humanist Studies Grant Fund. For information about the Carl Sagan Academy, or to make a financial contribution to the project, contact Jennifer Hancock at 941-745-7181. Or visit, [floridahumanist.org](http://floridahumanist.org).

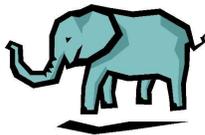
# 1994 - 2004

## Directions to the Potluck Party

1. Take the Airport exit off I-526. Turn onto International Blvd. (heading towards the airport)
2. Before you enter the airport make a left at the traffic light onto Michaux Parkway.
3. Michaux ends at Dorchester Road which is the first light you come to. Turn right onto Dorchester, heading north toward Summerville.
4. Continue on Dorchester Road for about 9 miles (past Air Force base and mall at Ashley Phosphate road) to the Coosaw Creek entrance. This is about 0.8 miles past Ashley Phosphate Road. There is a traffic light and a Hess gas station at the entrance.
5. Enter and continue to Guard House (0.5 miles). Continue up Club Course Drive, and 1.1 miles past guardhouse make a left turn onto Persimmon Woods Drive.
6. Continue about 0.6 miles on Persimmon Woods Drive until you come to a cul de sac. The McCarl's house is set back, is at the left of the cul de sac as you approach it and has a long white porch in front.

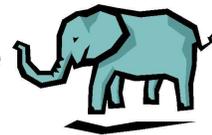
**4287 Persimmon Woods Drive (843-767-3123)**

Park either in the driveway or in front of the house. It takes about 35 minutes to get to the house from the College of Charleston.



## White Elephant Solstice Gift Exchange

Bill Dusenberry



*Bring a wrapped gift to the SHL Potluck Party this month.* It must be new, but *it can be* a present you received last year but you'll probably never have any use for. Now you've got the opportunity to let someone else be the proud owner. Remember your "dust collector" can be someone else's treasure and vice versa.

If you don't have an appropriate 'past present' to pass on, you can purchase something - but don't invest much...\$10.00 should do the trick.

You don't have to participate but the more people that do, the more fun we'll have trying to wind up with the "treasure" of our choice.

If you require any additional information about this "Solstice Swap" contact Bill Dusenberry at [bishopbill@comcast.net](mailto:bishopbill@comcast.net)

P.S. Word of Advice: Make sure you don't bring a present that someone else in the group gave to you.

## Quoted From "Wholeness vs. Holiness"

by Mike Gartland / Post and Courier November 21, 2004

Herb Silverman, president of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry, says faith-based programs may yield real social benefits, but that secular-based outreach could do the same job without bringing religion into the mix. In his view, giving someone a choice between jail and church

amounts to religious coercion.

"We should be trying to build community. I just have a problem because the government is biased toward religion," he said. "It's the community support that would be most effective, not bringing somebody to God."

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## Letters to the Editor

published by SHL Members in other periodicals

### Published in the Washington Post

(Nov. 7, 2004)

The news story "Liberal Christians Challenge 'Values Vote'" said "values voters" can be found on the religious left as well as the religious right, with a passing mention of religious moderates. That ignores the many secular voters whose moral choices are based on evidence rather than faith.

Morality is not synonymous with religiosity. Morality should be based on how our actions affect others. Our creeds should not be more important than our deeds.

HERB SILVERMAN

President

Secular Coalition for America

### Published in the Post and Courier

(Nov. 20, 2004)

I, too, was enjoying the new Faith & Values section of The Post and Courier. I thought it was including more people in our community than did the previous "Religion" section. I was sad to read that one of your letter writers believes the new section is to "buck the secular trend." Please tell me this is not so.

Many secular people, like myself, have faith (though not religious), and we have values. I believe there is room for all of us in this great country. I hope that these Faith & Values articles will help all of us to understand each other more than we do.

KATHARINE RYAN

## Internet Humor

submitted by "Bishop" Bill Dusenberry

Dear President Bush,

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's law. I have learned a great deal from you and try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind them that...Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate.

I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some other elements of God's Laws and how to follow them:

1. Leviticus 25:44 states that I may possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not to Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?
2. I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?
3. I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual un-cleanliness (Lev. 15:19-24). The problem is, how can I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offense at this.
4. When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord (Lev. 1:9). The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?
5. I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states that he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself, or should I ask the police to do it?

6. A friend of mine feels that, even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Lev. 11:10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this? Are there "degrees" of abomination?
7. Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle-room here?
8. Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev. 19:27. How should they die?
9. I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?
10. My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev. 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them (Lev. 24:10-16)? Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair, like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws (Lev. 20:14)?

I know you have studied these things extensively and thus enjoy considerable expertise in such matters, so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is Eternal and Unchanging.

## Some Thoughts About Holiday Charities

At this time of year many of us are asked to take part in group charitable projects for the needy and probably the most visible organization at the holiday season is the Salvation Army. This year both my employer and my neighborhood association arranged to have their charitable holiday giving projects go through the Salvation Army. I composed the following letter to explain why I could not in good conscience participate.

Dear Well-intentioned Friends and Neighbors:

I am writing regarding the Adopt-a-Family Program planned for MUSC/our neighborhood this holiday season. While I applaud and completely share the desire to help needy people in our community at the holidays and all year round, I object strongly to the involvement of the Salvation Army in this project. This is because the Salvation Army is first and foremost a proselytizing organization. Consider the following excerpts from the *About Us* section of their website found at [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org):

*The Salvation Army was founded as an evangelical organization dedicated to bringing people into a meaningful relationship with God through Christ...It is composed of persons who are united by the love of God and man, and who share the common purpose of the organization - to motivate all people to embrace the salvation provided to them in Christ.*

*The word "army" indicates that the organization is a fighting force, constantly at war with the powers of evil. Battles are effectively waged through an integrated ministry that gives attention to both body and spirit. It is a total ministry for the total person...*

*Those who have drifted away from God and those estranged from their own religious affiliations are often attracted to The Salvation Army. They are first urged to seek Christ for pardon and deliverance from sin...*

Nothing on the Salvation Army website indi-

cates that their goal is to help people materially or to restore their dignity by helping them become financially independent. Nothing on their website indicates that they have any secular purpose.

Please contrast this mission with the local charity Crisis Ministries, which despite its name is a secular organization.

*The challenges of homelessness are great. At Crisis Ministries we focus on providing a combination of key services - food, a safe place to sleep, primary health care, and personalized case management. Our goal is to help as many individuals as possible to move up and out of the shelter.*

*In 2001 alone, we helped 298 people to move from Crisis Ministries into more self-sufficient living.*

And there are many other secular organizations that help the less fortunate, such as the Ronald McDonald House, and Unicef. I understand that my participation in the Adopt-a-Family project is voluntary, and I can choose not to participate in this effort if the involvement of the Salvation Army offends me. But no one volunteers for hunger and poverty. Do we want the help we can offer to be provided in an atmosphere of submission to a particular faith or any faith? It seems inappropriate for an institution as diverse as MUSC/ a neighborhood as diverse as ours to publicly associate itself with the Salvation Army or any proselytizing organization.

I realize that it is too late this year to change the program, but I cannot in good conscience contribute to an organization that openly runs a charity for the express purpose of maintaining a captive, desperate audience for their rigid religious beliefs.

I know your intentions are good, so I hope you will consider an alternative partner for holiday giving in the future that can objectively be said to have justice, well-being, and independence for all the unfortunate, including freedom of religion, as their goal.

Sincerely,  
Laura Kasman

## A Singularly Interesting Vehicle

There are certainly many cars in South Carolina which sport the “truth fish eating the Darwin fish” emblem. This, one would expect, generally indicates that the owner is a creationist and a Christian fundamentalist.

There are now also cars in South Carolina which feature an SHL sponsored license plate with the words “In Reason We Trust” across the top. These official South Carolina plates, which can be purchased for your vehicle at any state DMV by following the directions on our website at <http://lowcountry.humanists.net/IRWT.html>, generally belong on the cars of a very different bunch of people.

That is why it is so entertaining and surprising that, at least for a few weeks, there was a car driving around Charleston with *both* a “truth eating Darwin” fish *and* an IRWT tag! In fact, the car belongs to some SHL members who purchased the vehicle used, with the fish already attached by the previous owner.

Sadly, the new owners have since figured out how to get the fish emblem off of the car, and so you will not be

seeing this oxymoronic vehicle on the road. Fortunately, the juxtaposition has been preserved in this photograph:



## January Book Discussion

Loretta Haskell

The Secular Humanists Book Club will be meeting early at Warren and Pat’s house at 3:30 - 5:00, just prior to the winter solstice celebration, to discuss *No More Throw-away People*, by Edgar Cahn. Scott Barton will facilitate the discussion. In this book, Cahn, an attorney, discusses the perennial problem of how social service agencies, as currently configured, often undermine the very goals they are trying to achieve. He proposes a new way to achieve these goals. Grounded in the principles of social justice, the belief that every individual can and should contribute to society, and the importance of creating reciprocity

in order to build community; his program, called TimeDollars, offers a fresh perspective on “the economics of caring”. Cahn, a brilliant and original thinker, offers a “values based” model instead of a “faith based” one, with values that are solidly in line with humanist beliefs. At this time, these books must be ordered directly from the TimeDollars Institute. If you would like to order a copy prior to the meeting, send Scott an email at [sbarton@highstream.net](mailto:sbarton@highstream.net) or call him at 795-7495, and he would be glad to order one for you. (The cost is approximately \$16.)

## Extraordinary Claims?

Herb Silverman

On November 1, I appeared in a Diversity Forum at the College of Charleston, along with a Wiccan who had been physically assaulted because of her beliefs. An article about the event was printed in the Charleston Post and Courier on November 14 (see [http://charleston.net/stories/111404/fai\\_14diversity.shtml](http://charleston.net/stories/111404/fai_14diversity.shtml)).

I was wearing the shirt of the College Atheist-Humanist Alliance student group and the article said about me: “He wore a shirt that read: ‘*Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.*’ In a nutshell, this, to him, is what being an atheist is all about”.

I also happened to be wearing that shirt when I went to dinner at a restaurant in Albuquerque, New Mexico with other board members of the American Humanist Association. After dinner, someone from another table came up to me and said: “You work for an insurance company, right?” It took me awhile to understand why he drew such a conclusion from the message on my shirt. It also took him awhile to understand my explanation of Humanism.

**THE SEPARATIONIST**  
Newsletter of the  
Secular Humanists  
of the Lowcountry

Editors:  
Alex and Laura Kasman

**SHL Calendar**

**Saturday Dec 18, 2004:** *Annual Winter Solstice Potluck Party* – Pat and Warren McCarl's house, beginning at 5PM.

**Saturday December 18, 2004:** *Book Discussion Group* – The book group will meet at 3:30 just before the potluck at Pat and Warren McCarl's house to discuss *No More Throw Away People*.

**March 25 - 27, 2005 :** *31st National Convention of American Atheists* – To be held in Philadelphia, PA. For more information <http://www.atheists.org/convention/>

**JOIN THE SHL**

The Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry (SHL) is a group of freethinkers who believe in the humanist philosophy. Members come primarily from the Charleston, SC area. The SHL is affiliated with American Atheists, American Humanist Association, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, Atheist Alliance, Council for Secular Humanism, and the SC Progressive Network.

Annual tax-exempt membership fees are \$24 (individual) or \$36 (couple or family); additional donations are always welcome. Members receive this newsletter and can participate in activities planned for the Lowcountry. For more information consult our Webpage at:

[lowcountry.humanists.net](http://lowcountry.humanists.net)

**CONTRIBUTE...**

Please contact the editors with any questions or comments about this publication. Contributions of short articles, news items, letters-to-the-editor or other information of interest to SHL members are always appreciated. Write to us at [newsletter@lowcountry.humanists.net](mailto:newsletter@lowcountry.humanists.net) or use the contact information at the bottom of page 2.

On the Web at [HTTP://LOWCOUNTRY.HUMANISTS.NET](http://LOWCOUNTRY.HUMANISTS.NET)

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