



# THE SEPARATIONIST

NOVEMBER 2012

## RICHARD N. CÔTÉ: IN SEARCH OF GENTLE DEATH SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2012, 4 PM, GAGE HALL, 4 ARCHDALE ST.

Richard N. (“Dick”) Côté, is the author of three acclaimed biographies, two histories, and a contemporary novel. They include *Mary’s World: Love, War, and Family Ties in Nineteenth-century Charleston*; *Theodosia Burr Alston: Portrait of a Prodigy*; and *Strength and Honor: The Life of Dolley Madison*. His first novel, *The Redneck Riviera*, appeared in 2002. His latest book, *City of Heroes: The Great Charleston Earthquake of 1886*, was published in 2006.

Dick majored in political science and journalism at Butler University in Indianapolis. A Vietnam War veteran, he spent six years in the U.S. Air Force, and in the fall of 1979 he joined the staff of the South Carolina Historical Society, where he worked for several years before turning to writing full-time. Since the mid-1980s he has conducted extensive research into Southern biography, social history, microcultures, architecture, and the international death-with-dignity movement. His not-so-secret passion is writing contemporary fiction, and has two more novels in progress.

Dick has been chosen as a Featured Author and a Mas-

ter Class Instructor by numerous American book festivals. He has appeared on C-Span 2/Book TV and was a featured expert in programs by Dateline NBC and The Weather Channel.

Dick delights in sharing his love of history, biography, and the creative process. He lives in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, where he writes, lectures, and serves as Editor-in-Chief of Corinthian Books.



On Sunday, November 18, at our monthly speaker meeting, Dick will discuss a difficult but unavoidable topic. Death is inevitable. But bad deaths—those accompanied by unnecessarily prolonged pain and suffering, often aggravated by immensely costly and frequently futile medical treatments—can be avoided.

Drawing on five years of intensive primary source research and more than one hundred in-depth interviews with death-with-dignity pioneers, activists, physicians, nurses, hospice workers, and their patients on four continents, Dick will discuss the modern history of the death-with-dignity movement through the lives of its founders, leaders, and activists.

### FIND US ONLINE! WE'RE (NEARLY) OMNIPRESENT!



<http://bit.ly/shlmeetup>



<http://bit.ly/shlhome>



<http://on.fb.me/shlFB> (main)

<http://on.fb.me/shlfamFB> (family)



<http://bit.ly/shlyoutube>



<http://bit.ly/shllist>



<http://yhoo.it/shlyahoo> (family)

**LASER TAG**  
**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2012, 11 AM**  
**GLOZONE**  
**5900 RIVERS AVE., N. CHARLESTON**

November's family-friendly activity is laser tag! We'll meet on Sunday, November 11, at 11 a.m. at GloZone, Charleston's newest and only laser tag attraction.



Games are made up of individuals competing against each other, attempting to score points by tagging targets with a hand-held device. It is popular with a wide range of ages and is open to people ages 6 and older. We will set up the games by age (including a game for adults—the ultimate big kids!) based on who is there, playing multiple games so that everyone gets a chance to play.

In addition to laser tag, GloZone also offers indoor black light miniature golf. GloZone is located at 5900 Rivers Avenue, between Aviation and Remount.

For more information, please visit their website at [www.theglozone.com](http://www.theglozone.com). If you have any questions, please contact Amy Monsky at [president@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:president@lowcountryhumanists.org).



**COOKIE EXCHANGE PARTY**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2012, 11 AM**  
**DOTY PARK**  
**320 N. LAUREL ST., SUMMERVILLE**

Save the date! Please come celebrate the holidays with a kid-friendly party for families at Doty Park on Sunday, December 2, at 11 a.m. We will have holiday crafts for the kids as well as a cookie bake-off!

For more information, please contact Amy Monsky at [president@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:president@lowcountryhumanists.org).

**THE SEPARATIONIST, NOVEMBER 2012**

**BOOK GROUP**  
**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2012, 4 PM**  
**WEST ASHLEY BARNES & NOBLE**  
**1812 SAM RITTENBERG, CHARLESTON**

On Sunday, November 25, at 4 p.m., the book group will meet to discuss *Knocking on Heaven's Door: How Physics and Scientific Thinking Illuminate the Universe and the Modern World* by Lisa Randall.

This book has two avowed aims: first, to explain where physics might be headed now that the Large Hadron Collider—the enormous particle accelerator on the Swiss-French border—is finally up and running; and second, to discuss the nature of science, its fraught relations with religion, and the role of beauty as a guide to scientific truth.

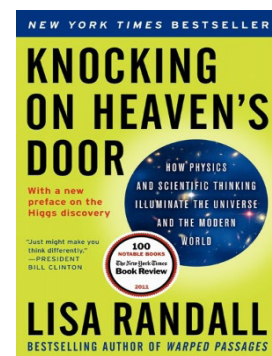
Amazon sells this book for \$10.45, with used paperback copies available for under \$7 and (slightly outdated) hardcover copies available for less than \$4. Barnes & Noble sells the book for \$12.98, with used copies available for about \$10. Copies of the book are available in the Charleston and Dorchester county library systems.

As always, we'll meet at the West Ashley Barnes & Noble, located at 1812 Sam Rittenberg. The discussion runs from 4:00 until 5:30, and we'll go out to dinner afterward.

**VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY**  
**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2012, 9 AM**  
**LOWCOUNTRY FOOD BANK**  
**2864 AZALEA DR., CHARLESTON**

Our volunteer activity for December will be the Lowcountry Food Bank. After a brief orientation, we will do whatever tasks they have for the morning. Last time we sorted and boxed hundreds of pounds of donations from retailers. Please wear closed toe shoes for safety, and comfortable clothes appropriate for the weather (the warehouse is not climate controlled).

The age limit is 14 years and up. Volunteers under 18 must be accompanied by an adult at least 21 years of age. Hope to see you there!



### CHARITY OF THE QUARTER BEGIN WITH BOOKS

Every two months, SHL selects a charity to sponsor and passes the basket, so to speak, by asking our members to make a donation in support of this charity. Our charity for November and December is Begin With Books, the Charleston County affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Begin With Books is an all-volunteer organization currently serving eight communities in Charleston County. They ship over 1,200 books per month directly to the homes of enrolled children in Adams Run, Awendaw, Charleston's Upper Peninsula, Edisto, Hollywood-Meggett-Yonges Island, Johns Island, McClellanville, Ravenel, and Wadmalaw Island.

Studies show that children who participate in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library enter school ready to learn, do better in school, and have a better chance to become productive members of the community.

Once enrolled, a child receives a book every month until his or her fifth birthday.

To contribute, visit our website (<http://bit.ly/Ph7f4c>) or bring a check to our next meeting.



### OCTOBER/NOVEMBER EFFORTS

Our Light the Night team raised \$2450, and that will be doubled by the Stiefel Freethought Foundation. We had 17 members turnout for the walk on November 1.

At our volunteer activity with Crisis Ministries, eight volunteers served 38 women and children.

Our menu was baked chicken, buttered corn, green bean casserole, baked beans, mashed potatoes, dinner rolls, and for dessert pumpkin pie and a variety of cookies.



## REMEMBERING PAUL KURTZ HERB SILVERMAN

Paul Kurtz was a founder and a leader, more so than anyone else I have ever known. Before there were the new atheists and their best-selling books, there was Paul Kurtz promoting humanism and skepticism through his many publications and institutions.

When I first met Paul Kurtz in the early 1990s at a meeting of the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), I was enthralled by his presentation in support of living a good and reasoned life without religion. Paul presented thoughtful arguments that described why such a philosophy would benefit humankind. As a skeptic, I pride myself in finding reasons to disagree at least on minor points with any speaker, so I was a little scared that I found none. I had thought that only religious people accepted 100 percent of what they hear from a leader. As a consequence, I became a strong supporter of Kurtz—and a regional director of the Council for Secular Humanism.

CSH was the only nontheistic organization I had known about, and its fine magazine *Free Inquiry* was the only such publication I had encountered. Prometheus Books, another creation of Paul Kurtz, was the only publisher I knew that was devoted to books about Freethought.

As I became more engaged in the secular movement, I began to agree with Paul Kurtz less than 100 percent of the time (a sign that I'm not religious, perhaps), and Kurtz became upset with me when I joined the board of the American Humanist Association (AHA). Both CSH and AHA seemed to be fine organizations worthy of my support, but I soon learned about their divisive history. Kurtz had been on the board of AHA and was the editor of the *Humanist* magazine, which was published by AHA. After Kurtz and the AHA parted ways in 1978 on less than friendly terms, Kurtz founded the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, the Council for Secular Humanism, and the Center for Inquiry.

Unfortunately, relations got worse before they got better. Kurtz had been a major contributor to *Humanist Manifesto II* in 1973, a better and more secular document than the *Human-*

*ist Manifesto* of 1933. Around 2000, both Kurtz and the AHA thought it was about time for *Humanist Manifesto III*, but who had the right to write it? Both sides threatened lawsuits, and I urged both Kurtz and the AHA to consider how damaging such a lawsuit would be to our movement—regardless of who was in the right.

Fortunately, Paul Kurtz wrote instead a document called *Humanist Manifesto 2000: A Call for a New Planetary Humanism*, and he asked me to be one of the signers. I happily agreed, and was listed seventh.

The AHA came out with *Humanist Manifesto III* in 2003.

Paul Kurtz's greatest strengths were his ability to found and grow organizations. A true visionary, he gave meaning, substance, and a philosophical grounding to the importance of ad-

vancing ideas of reason and science over religion. He will be remembered as a significant, and perhaps the most significant, force in the second half of the 20th century in support of secular humanism and living a good life without religion.

In my mind, Paul's greatest weakness was his less than enthusiastic willingness to play well with others. When I helped found the Secular Coalition for America in 2002, Kurtz wanted no part of it. He tended to view with suspicion organizations he didn't lead or create, but shortly after Kurtz left CSH, the or-

ganization joined the Secular Coalition. Like CSH, the AHA also declined at first to be one of the original member organizations, but sometimes it takes changes in leadership to emphasize cooperation over competition. The Secular Coalition now has 11 cooperative nontheistic member organizations.

In 2007, I was thrilled when the AHA, at its annual conference, presented Kurtz with its *Humanist Lifetime Achievement Award*, richly deserved. There, Paul Kurtz and I chatted amiably, and I treasure the memory of that time with Paul, whose brush with immortality will be his good works, his influence, and the fine organizations he created and left behind.

*(See all of Herb's On Faith posts at <http://wapo.st/herb-on-faith>)*



**DEBATE**  
**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 8 PM**  
**PHYSICIANS MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM**  
**COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON**

Alex Kasman will debate Reasonable Faith's Wallace Marshall on the existence of God. (The title of the debate is "God or Atheism: Which way does the evidence point?") This event is sponsored by several College of Charleston student groups, but is free and open to the general public.

Reasonable Faith aims to provide a Christian perspective on the most important issues concerning the "truth" of the Christian faith today. Wallace Marshall has a PhD in Philosophy from Boston College and is the director of Reasonable Faith's Charleston chapter.



Alex Kasman is on the board of directors of SHL, serving as Webmaster and co-coordinator with his wife Laura of the monthly volunteer activities at local charities. Alex earned his Ph.D. in mathematics from Boston University in 1995. He held postdoctoral positions at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute in Berkeley, the University of Georgia in Athens, and the Centre des Recherches Mathematiques in Montreal. He has published more than 25 research papers in math, physics and biology journals, a textbook on the particle-like waves known as "solitons" and an award-winning collection of mathematical short stories. Alex is a professor on the math department at the College of Charleston, where he received the college-wide Distinguished Teaching Award in 2006 and the Gordon E. Jones Distinguished Achievement award from the School of Sciences and Mathematics in 2009.

**CAN YOU HELP?**

As you may know, the SHL homepage includes a video library (<http://bit.ly/shlvideo>).

This page has included embedded YouTube videos of SHL events. Unfortunately, YouTube changed the code used for embedding and we've lost some of the videos. It is easy enough to switch to the new requirements given the location of the video, but the old code does not provide the information necessary to find them. Some of the old files, like Herb's participation in the gubernatorial debates, have gone "missing."

If you're in the mood for a scavenger hunt, please take a look. Click on a video title. If it doesn't play, it's missing; try to find the missing video (probably by searching with Google). If you find the missing video, send the URL to [shl@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:shl@lowcountryhumanists.org) and our webmaster will fix it.

**FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**

SHL is sponsoring a light display at the James Island Holiday Festival of Lights. As part of our sponsorship, we received some passes which we will be selling. A pass is for an entire car, up to 15 passengers. If you were to buy passes at the door, they would be \$12 Sunday-Thursday and \$15 Friday-Saturday, but we are selling them for \$12 to dues-paying members and \$15 for non-dues-paying members, and these can be used any day of the week. We have 25 passes to sell. Please help support us by purchasing yours from us.

How to purchase:

- Paypal the appropriate amount of money to [treasurer@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:treasurer@lowcountryhumanists.org).
- Mail a check. Make it payable to Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry (or SHL if your hand hurts) and mail it to PO Box 32256, Charleston, SC, 29417.
- In person. Email Amy Monsky at [president@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:president@lowcountryhumanists.org) to make arrangements to meet.

Annual dues are \$35 for individuals and \$50 for households. For more information on membership, visit <http://bit.ly/shljoin>.

If you haven't been to the Festival of Lights before, it's really nice. For more info, visit <http://bit.ly/Qo8sh4>.

# THE SEPARATIONIST

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SECULAR HUMANISTS OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

*Opinions expressed in *The Separationist* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of SHL.*

*Please contact the editor 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 welcome.*

*Contact our editor, Matt Dean at [newsletter@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:newsletter@lowcountryhumanists.org).*

# THE SECULAR HUMANISTS OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

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## OUR OFFICERS

President: Amy Monsky

Vice President: Herb Silverman

Treasurer: Jonathan Lamb

Secretary: Laura Kasman

## JOIN SHL

*SHL is a group of freethinkers who believe in the humanist philosophy. Members come primarily from the greater Charleston, South Carolina, area. SHL is affiliated with American Atheists, American Humanist Association, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, Atheist Alliance International, Council for Secular Humanism, and the South Carolina Progressive Network. Annual tax-exempt membership fees are \$35 (individual) or \$50 (couple or family). Additional donations are always welcome. To join, visit our website at <http://bit.ly/joinshl>, and for more information about our activities, visit <http://bit.ly/shlevents>*