



THE SEPARATIONIST

OCTOBER 2012

LOUIS RUBBO: ASTRONOMY VS PROPHECY SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2012, 4 PM, GAGE HALL, 4 ARCHDALE ST.

Every few years we become preoccupied with the latest doomsday prophecy. Quite often these prophecies are based on misinformation or a general lack of knowledge of basic scientific principles. As we approach December 21, 2012, the prophesied end date for the Mayan calendar, we are once again inundated with bad science. Some of the 2012 doomsday scenarios include ideas of rogue planets hitting Earth, our destruction from solar activity, and even unusual alignments in the stars triggering catastrophic events. In this talk we will review the origin of the Mayan predictions for 2012 along with other related doomsday prophecies. In each case, we will also discuss how an understanding of astronomical principles can debunk each and everyone of these claims.

Louis Rubbo earned his doctoral degree in Physics at Montana State University in 2004. From 2004-07 Dr Rubbo was a postdoctoral scholar at the Center for Gravitational Wave Physics at the Pennsylvania State University. In 2007, he joined the Coastal Carolina University faculty as an assistant professor of astronomy where he now teaches introductory astronomy and physics along with advanced courses in computational analysis and astrophysics. His areas of expertise include gravitational wave astronomy, general relativity, and physics and astronomy education research. Away from the academic world Dr Rubbo is actively involved with the Myrtle Beach Humanist Group and enjoys spending time with his family.

As always, we will be going to dinner at a nearby restaurant after the meeting.



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>



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

FALL PICNIC

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2012, 5 PM

WEST FARM CORN MAZE

2641 COOPER STORE ROAD, MONCK'S CORNER

Our fourth annual Fall Picnic will be Saturday, October 20, from 5 to 9 pm. It will be at the West Farm Corn Maze in Moncks Corner. The six-acre corn maze features three miles of trails as well as a mini maze for small children and a mystery to solve by collecting clues within the maze. Other attractions include a children's play area, small petting zoo, and hay rides. There is something for everyone, so come on out and join us!

We will have a potluck dinner in the party shed, so please bring a dish to share.

Admission to the farm includes the corn maze and is \$8 for ages 12 and up, \$3 for kids 3-12 and free for those 2 years and under. If you'd like to come, but don't want to do the maze, a reduced admission-only rate of \$4 is available. These admission prices reflect a group discount, so please tell the cashier that you are with SHL to ensure you receive the discounted rate. And please note that West Farm accepts cash and checks only—no debit or credit cards.

For directions and more information, you can visit their website (<http://www.westfarmcornmaze.com>).

RSVPs are not necessary, but are helpful. To RSVP or if you have any questions, please email Amy at president@lowcountryhumanists.org.



MOVIE CLUB

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2012

The SHL Movie Club meets once a month, usually on the first Saturday, to view a film and discuss it over dinner. This month, because of scheduling conflicts, Movie Club will meet on the *second* Saturday of the month, *October 13*. The movie is announced a few days in advance by email, on our website (<http://bit.ly/shlevents>). To add yourself to the Movie Club email list, please visit <http://bit.ly/shllist>.

THE SEPARATIONIST, OCTOBER 2012

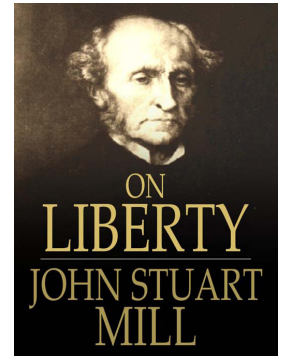
BOOK GROUP

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2012, 4 PM

WEST ASHLEY BARNES & NOBLE

1812 SAM RITTENBERG, CHARLESTON

On Liberty is a philosophical work by British philosopher John Stuart Mill, originally intended as a short essay. Mill's marriage to his wife Harriet greatly influenced the concepts in *On Liberty*, which was largely finished prior to her death, and published in 1859 shortly after she died.



The work applies Mill's ethical system of utilitarianism to society and the state. Mill attempts to establish standards for the relationship between authority and liberty. He emphasizes the importance of individuality which he conceived as a prerequisite to the higher pleasures—the summum bonum of Utilitarianism. Furthermore, Mill criticized the errors of past attempts to defend individuality where, for example, democratic ideals resulted in the “tyranny of the majority.”

(“Tyranny of the majority” refers a scenario in which decisions made by a majority place its interests so far above those of an individual or minority group as to constitute active oppression, comparable to that of tyrants and despots.)

Among the standards established in this work are Mill's three basic liberties of individuals, his three legitimate objections to government intervention, and his two maxims regarding the relationship of the individual to society, which together form the entire doctrine of Mill's essay.

Mill's book is available from Barnes and Noble and Amazon. To buy *On Liberty* with a small “kickback” for SHL, visit <http://bit.ly/JmruUg>. You can also read the book for free online; visit <http://www.bartleby.com/130/> to read in your browser, or visit <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/34901> to download an ebook.

Hope to see you all at the next book club meeting at 4 pm on October 28th, when we will also vote on books for the rest of the year. If you have suggestions, email them to John Childs at jchi6909@bellsouth.net.

**CHARITY OF THE QUARTER
LEUKEMIA AND LYMPHOMA SOCIETY/LIGHT THE NIGHT**

In association with Camp Quest South Carolina, SHL is joining the Foundation Beyond Belief event “Light The Night” for our local walk here in Mount Pleasant. The walk will be held on November 1, 2012, and will begin at 7:00 pm, with registration beginning at 5:30 pm and a Remembrance Ceremony at 6:45. Walks are 1 to 3 miles in distance and will be held rain or shine. In case of extreme weather. (Strollers are welcome, please no pets, skateboards, bicycles or skates.)

Foundation Beyond Belief has formed an international fundraising walk team for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s (LLS) Light The Night Walk in an effort to raise \$1 million to support LLS’ efforts to find cures for blood cancers. With your help, Foundation Beyond Belief can become the first team in LLS history to raise more than \$1 million in its first year! To support this goal, the Stiefel family has pledged to match the first \$500,000 the teams raise for LLS!

The funds we raise will help families like Garrett and Leigh and their daughter Eleanor.

Garrett and Leigh tell the story: “Shortly after her first birthday, a mysterious rash appeared on Eleanor’s arms,

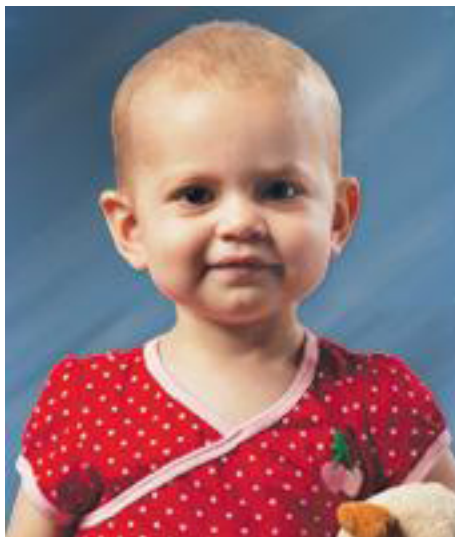
legs and cheeks, and she had bruising on her legs and fever. After being admitted to the hospital for more blood tests, we finally heard the diagnosis: acute lymphocytic leukemia.

“All the worst thoughts flooded our heads—it was a very dark moment. But then hope. This type of cancer is cured nearly 90 percent of the time. She received her first chemotherapy dose that same day, and a little more than two weeks after the diagnosis Eleanor’s leukemia was in remission. Her treatments will continue until January 2012 to make sure it doesn’t return.

“Eleanor is now 2-1/2, loves playing on the slide and swingset in the backyard and reading her books. In September 2010 we participated in our first Light The Night Walk. Watching Eleanor that night symbolized a turning point—it was a sign that the worst

parts of this whole journey were in the rearview mirror. Seeing thousands of illuminated balloons along the route we were hopeful that one day there will be a cure for all cancer!”

To learn more about this effort, watch a short video at <http://bit.ly/llsvideo> or visit <http://bit.ly/llsfbb>.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

TO JOIN THE LOCAL TEAM, VISIT [HTTP://BIT.LY/LTNSHL](http://bit.ly/LTNSHL)

OR, IF YOU PREFER, DONATE THROUGH OUR OWN PAGE BY VISITING [HTTP://BIT.LY/W42IWL](http://bit.ly/W42IWL)

**YOU CAN DONATE TO THE TEAM AS A WHOLE, OR TO ANY TEAM MEMBER
(CURRENT TEAM MEMBERS ARE LISTED ON THE RIGHTHAND SIDE OF THE PAGE)**

OUR FUNDRAISING GOAL IS \$1000, AND WE'RE SOOOO CLOSE!

SECULAR COUNTRY
HERB SILVERMAN

Recently the Democratic Party put the word “God” back into its party platform, despite significant opposition when the GOP (God’s Own Party?) turned the word’s absence into a campaign issue.

A Sept. 14 letter [printed at right] incorrectly called the original omission a sign that the Democratic Party is “no longer a party with the values of our Founding Fathers.”

Our founding document and the fundamental law of our land, the U.S. Constitution, makes no mention of God. Its ultimate source of authority is cited in the first three words: “We the people...”

This God-free Constitution demonstrates that the founders intentionally established a secular country.

You will also find no mention of God in the platform of the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln.

Today both religious and non-religious Americans are working to protect and strengthen the secular character of our government as the best guarantee of freedom for all.

People who insist that God should be an integral part of political platforms and governance will find no support from our founders.

They will, however, find overwhelming support for this point of view in countries where American troops are, or might soon be, in harm’s way.

Printed in the Post and Courier, September 19



TO BOB ADAMS, ON HIS GOD OBSESSION
PETER SMYTH

The Christian God I have read about really isn’t into worship images and idols. I seem to remember a God and a Jesus that asks for actions, particularly care and compassion for the sick and the poor, for caring for neighbors, even for laying down ones sword. “Come unto me all that travail ...” really sounds sort of out of place in the GOP platform and agenda. Some people really need to pay attention to their own bumper stickers: WWJD.

Posted on the Post and Courier website, September 14

DISRESPECTING GOD
BOB ADAMS

Last week, the Democratic Party held its convention and disclosed to the world by their voting that they are no longer a party with the values of our Founding Fathers.

Three times they failed to get a two-thirds vote to put God back into their platform. Finally the chairman gavelled and said it was approved when clearly it was a 50/50 vote.

Apparently half felt that the country had degenerated to the point that they could bare their soul and vote against God. Gross miscalculation.

That display of contempt for God and their handling of our nation’s business over the last four years clearly shows that they have serious problems.

One thing you don’t do in America is disrespect God publicly and get elected.

Printed in the Post and Courier, September 14

The logo for The Post and Courier, featuring the text "The Post and Courier" in a white, stylized serif font on a dark blue rectangular background.

RE: DISRESPECTING GOD
YVONNE FINNE

I wish the politicians would stop talking about God altogether. I never am able to convince myself that they are being sincere in the reporting of their faith. I believe the politicians are SUPPOSED to be running for office to help govern our communities, while I hope they are persons of faith, there is a real reason for the separation of Church and State. I hope that I never have to hear a politician speaking from a pulpit. I am more likely to believe the actions of a person than their proclamations of faith. Faith is easy to talk about but it is hard to live up to the example set by Christ. So, politicians, show us that which you proclaim by your deeds. Remember that you have placed yourselves in the public realm and what you accomplish will be reported by someone, most likely in the news.

Posted on the Post and Courier website, September 14

SECULAR COALITION FOR SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

The Secular Coalition for America is excited to announce the official launch of the Secular Coalition for South Carolina, expected to officially launch on Sunday. The Secular Coalition for South Carolina is the second chapter to launch as part of the SCA's greater effort to establish 50 new state chapters throughout the country this year.

The Secular Coalition for America is a lobbying organization representing nontheistic Americans and advocating protecting and strengthening the secular character of our government. The Secular Coalition for South Carolina will lobby state lawmakers in favor of a strong separation of religion and government.

On September 30, at the Carolinas Secular Conference, Secular Coalition for South Carolina Executive Board Co-Chairs, Matthew Facciani, 23 of Columbia, and Amy Monsky, 37 of Summerville, signed a "Memo of Understanding" marking the official launch of the chapter.

Co-chair Facciani, said he was excited to head up the Secular Coalition for South Carolina. "I believe it can create positive change for the secular population of our country and a more harmonious and egalitarian environment for all," he said. "Our work will directly help defend the rights of secular Americans and provide a voice for those who are in the non-religious minority."

A recent Pew Forum study indicated that 14 percent of South Carolina residents do not express an absolute belief in God, and 30 percent disagreed that "religion is very important to their lives." According to the study, South Carolina is the second most religious state in the nation—tied with Alabama—and falls behind only Mississippi. In states where non-religious residents represent a small percentage of the population, the need for protections from religious influence on secular government grows. Separation of religion and government is something the majority of Americans value, regardless of their personal beliefs. Another Pew study found that 54% of Americans feel that churches and other houses of worship should

keep out of political matters, and 38% says that there has been too much expression of religious faith and prayer from political leaders—a number that has grown to its highest point since the Pew Research Center began asking the question more than a decade ago.

Facciani said that chapter has not targeted any specific legislation yet, but plans to focus on ensuring that government officials rely on high science, logic and quality research—not religious beliefs—in decision making in their official capacities.

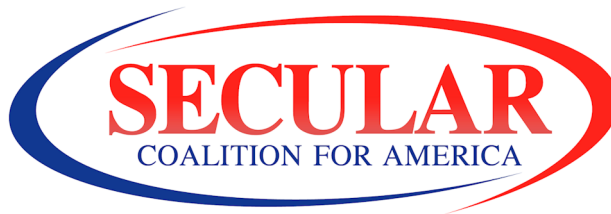
Since June, the SCA successfully held initial organizing calls for new chapters in 38 states. The remaining 12 states will hold initial organizing calls in October. The Secular Coalition plans to have all chapters up and running in every state, D.C. and Puerto Rico, by the end of the year. A Secular Coalition affiliate is already functional in Arizona

and the first chapter, in Colorado, was announced earlier this summer. A Pennsylvania chapter has also launched.

Edwina Rogers, Secular Coalition for America Executive Director said she is excited to see the South Carolina chapter launch. The state chapters play an integral role at the state level, as well as the national level, she said.

"In our current U.S. Congress, 38 percent of Representatives held local office first," said Rogers. "When we get to law makers at the local level, not only are we going to help curb some of the most egregious legislation we're seeing, but we are also building relationships and working to educate legislators on our issues, before they even get to Washington."

The Secular Coalition, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, represents 11 nontheistic member organizations and has as traditionally focused advocacy efforts on federal legislation. The SCA will continue to lobby at the federal level, while state chapters will lobby at the state level. Participation in the Secular Coalition for South Carolina is open to all South Carolinians that support a strong separation of religion and government, regardless of their personal religious beliefs.



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.

THE SECULAR HUMANISTS OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

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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>