



The Separationist

Volume 22, Issue 3

March 2015

Rob Dillon
**South Carolina Science Standards 2014:
 Like Darlington Without Beer**
 Sunday, March 15, 2015, 4 PM, Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St, Charleston

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Please join us for the March monthly meeting of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry for a talk entitled **The South Carolina Science Standards 2014: Like Darlington Without Beer** by Dr. Rob Dillon, College of Charleston.



Around in circles 366 times, wrecking every 20 laps! From the fall of 2013 through most of 2014, the agencies responsible for

developing the South Carolina science curriculum were deadlocked over High School Standard H.B.5, Biological Evolution. Join us on Pit Row as we watch Darwin's Theory pass three times through the State Board of Education, twice through the Education Oversight Committee, and once through the Creationist Discovery Institute out in Seattle. And the start line and the finish line will be

the same thing. WooHoo, Raise Hell!
 Dr. Rob Dillon is Associate Professor of Biology at The College of Charleston, President of the South Carolinians for Science Education, and Coordinator of Darwin Week. Sunday mornings he sings tenor in the First (Scots) Presbyterian choir, and Sunday afternoons his favorite driver is Denny Hamlin.
When: Sunday, 2/15/15 at 4pm
Where: Gage Hall, 4 Archdale Street
Cost: Free!
 After the meeting, join us for dinner at Leaf Restaurant.

About SHL

The *Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry* was founded in 1994 by a group of local non-theists in Charleston, South Carolina.

Our members are freethinkers of many kinds. We call ourselves agnostics, atheists, skeptics, secular humanists, rationalists and scientific naturalists. We welcome you and all who are interested in participating in our friendly community, either as members or observers.

The purpose of our non-profit, educational organization is to promote the non-theistic, human-centered viewpoint as a valid contribution to public discourse and to strive to maintain the First Amendment guarantee of separation of state and church.

Sunday Quest **Sunday, March 15, 2015, 4 PM**
Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St, Charleston

Sunday Quest, our new humanist youth program, will provide our children an opportunity to learn about humanism and all of its life-affirming ideals. Modeled after the Harvard Humanist Learning Lab and other secular Sunday schools, our goal with Sunday Quest is to create a safe space for children to explore their developing worldviews, think for themselves, connect with

their community, and build a strong ethical foundation. Each class will offer fun, interactive games and activities.
 Scheduled during our third-Sunday monthly speaker presentation at Gage Hall, Sunday Quest will be geared toward children ages 5-12 years old. This is a drop-off program, and we welcome parents to attend the speaker presentation. If space allows, children

older than 12 years old may attend as program assistants and children younger than 5 years old may attend with a parent. The program will last approximately an hour to an hour and a half.
 Space is limited, so pre-registration is required. Please email president@lowcountryhumanists.org to register your child(ren) or for more information.

In Memory: Richard "Uncle Dick" Côté

From SHL President, Amy Monsky:

This is the hardest event I've scheduled, but also the one I am most honored to do. Uncle Dick's memorial service will be held Saturday, 3/7, 3-5pm at Gage Hall. For those who haven't yet heard, Dick died on 2/9 from head trauma after falling down the stairs.

If you met Dick once, you need no further introduction to him as he was as unforgettable as they come. If you didn't get the chance to meet him, I'm sorry for your loss. He was full of life and embraced his to the fullest. He was a humanist acutely aware of the fact that this life was the only one we had and to make the most of it because you never know if there will be a tomorrow. He gave selflessly to others to make the world a better place. Our group is better to have had him and the world is a little bit dimmer without him.

Dick first came to us when he spoke to our group (in Gage Hall) on 11/18/2012 about the death with dignity and right to die movement. He had written [In Search of Gentle Death](#) and many of our members got a signed copy that day. He was taken with our group and became a regular and notable member.

I hope that you can come to his service and celebrate his life. I think it is a fitting close that we will say goodbye to him in the very building many of us first met him.

When: Saturday, 3/7 3-5pm

Where: Gage Hall, 4 Archdale Street

In closing, thank you to everyone who has reached out to his wife, Nancy. She is a lovely person and the outpouring of support has meant a lot to her. Below is an email she sent to me and asked to be passed along to everyone else:

Dear SHL friends:

Thank you for your support and thoughtful words in this difficult time. Your cards, emails, and phone calls were of great comfort to me and my family. I am trying to live my life one hour at the time, but feel blessed of being surrounded by loving people like all of you.

We are going to have a celebration of life to honor my husband Richard N. Côté next Saturday, March 7, between 3:00 to 5:00 p. m., Gage Hall, Unitarian Church, 4 Archdale Street, Charleston, SC 29401. Everybody is welcome to attend.

My deepest gratitude to all.

Nancy Betancourt G.



Upcoming SHL Events

Events sometimes get added after The Separationist is posted. Keep up to date with SHL events by signing up for our [email lists](#) or [meetup](#), or check postings on our [website](#) and [facebook](#) group.

Sunday Funday in the Park

Sunday, March 1, 2015, 11:00am

Mount Pleasant Waterfront Park, 99 Harry M. Hallman Jr. Blvd, Mt Pleasant

Bring the kids and meet other like-minded families in a fun, casual, and judgment-free environment. Dogs on leashes are welcome, too! Don't have kids? No problem! Come on out! Sundays are fundays for everyone.

Please call 843.209.4263 if you need help.



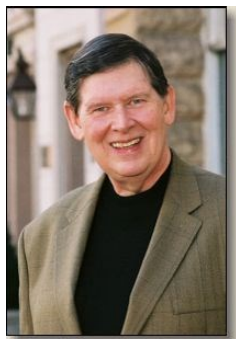
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Memorial Service for Dick Côté

Saturday, March 7, 2015, 3:00pm

Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St, Charleston

A celebration of life to honor Richard N. Côté. See story on [page 2](#) for more details.



SHL Volunteer Activity: Community Potluck

Sunday, March 8, 2014, 12:40pm

Mall Park, corner of Columbus and America Streets, Charleston

The Community Potluck began in 2011 by Occupy Charleston and other volunteers as a way to help those who are disadvantaged. It grew into a weekly event, often feeding up to 60 community members—in some cases this is their only meal of the day.

SHL will provide the March 8 community potluck. Volunteers are needed for donating food, preparing the items, and serving the meals. Food can be prepared in advance. Setup begins at 12:40pm and serving begins at 1:00pm on the day of the potluck. The potluck is held at Mall Park, on the corner of Columbus and America Streets (near the Trident Palmer Campus), rain or shine. Contact Stephanie Green at 843-708-7796 or volunteers@lowcountryhumanists.org to coordinate needed items and volunteers.



Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

SHL Movie Club

Sunday, March 8, 2015 — check our website, meetup, facebook, or movie club email for showtime

Terrace Theater, 1956 Maybank Hwy, James Island

Join us for a viewing of the film [The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel](#). Following the movie we will enjoy dinner at a nearby restaurant.

As the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel has only a single remaining vacancy – posing a rooming predicament for two fresh arrivals – Sonny pursues his expansionist dream of opening a second hotel.



NOTE: Movie club is on Sunday this month so that it does not conflict with the memorial service for Dick Côté

SHL Happy Hour

Tuesday, March 10, 2015, 6:00pm

The Original Ms. Rose's Fine Food & Cocktails, 1090 Sam Rittenberg Blvd, West Ashley

Join us for a relaxing evening of stimulating conversation over drinks (as always, alcohol is optional) and yummy food among old and new friends! No agenda, just fun.



Pi Day

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

Wherever you wanna

Pi Day is just around the corner, on 3/14. Bake (or buy) a pie* and deliver it to your local fire department**. Firefighters provide a huge service to society



and they put in long days. Let's brighten their day with a delicious pie! This is a fun and tasty way to give back to our community, and it's a great opportunity for including younger children, too.

For more information on Pi Day, visit <http://www.piday.org/>. And to enter your pi-pie in a pi-pie contest, visit <http://www.instructables.com/contest/piecontest>. And for some cool, creative ways to make a pi-pie, visit <http://mentalfloss.com/article/49444/10-pies-pi-day>.

We can't all be together for Pi Day, but we can celebrate it in the same way and share our pictures after, so please do [post your photos](#) here if you participate!

*Bonus points for making it pi themed.

** It can, of course, be given to someone else instead.

Frank and Ernest



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Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

Girls Night Out

Wednesday, March 18, 2015, 6:30pm

3 Matadors Tequileria, 2447 Ashley River Rd, West Ashley



A fun night for secular girls to socialize! Nursing infants okay, but otherwise adults only, please.

SHL Book Club

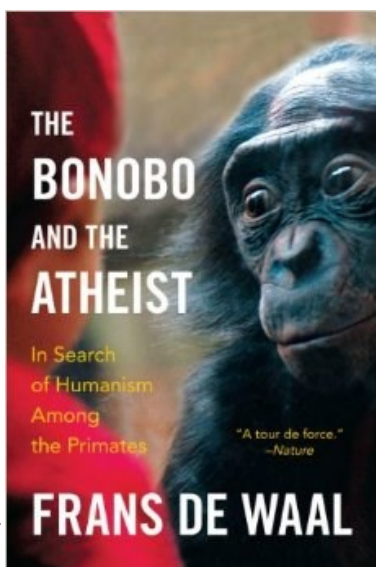
Sunday, March 22, 2015, 4:00pm

Barnes & Noble, 1812 Sam Rittenberg Blvd, West Ashley

February bookclub attendees voted for [The Bonobo and the Atheist](#) by Frans De Waal for the month of March. It looks to be a fascinating read. Sharon S. will be facilitating.

Here is a short description from the Amazon book purchase site. "*In this lively and illuminating discussion of his landmark research, esteemed primatologist Frans de Waal argues that human morality is not imposed from above but instead comes from within. Moral behavior does not begin and end with religion but is in fact a product of evolution.*

For many years, de Waal has observed chimpanzees soothe distressed neighbors and bonobos share their



food. Now he delivers fascinating fresh evidence for the seeds of ethical behavior in primate societies that further cements the case for the biological origins of human fairness....."

SHL is affiliated with the Amazon Associates program! Our organization earns up to a 15% commission on items purchased at Amazon.com through the links on our Website. So, if you are buying the book club book (or anything else from Amazon), this is a super-easy way to contribute to SHL! Simply use the link at <http://lowcountryhumanists.org/default.php>

Team Trivia

Wednesday, March 25, 2015, 7:00pm

Steel City Pizza, 1440 Ben Sawyer Blvd, Mt Pleasant



Come out for a fun night of trivia and socializing! This is a team event and is free. The trivia questions begin at 7pm.

Our team Happy Humanists is officially registered, so our points will be going for season totals.



Team Trivia offers trivia nights at various places throughout the Charleston area on different days and times. Team members are welcome to play using the team name at any Team Trivia night.

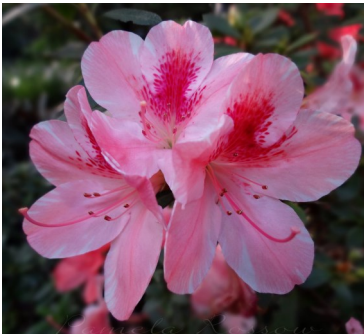
Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

Flowertown Festival

Friday, March 27— Sunday, March 29, 2015

Downtown Summerville

Every spring, the Town of Summerville is awash in color, from the hot pink azaleas, to the purple wisteria, to the delicate white dogwood. On one 3-day weekend during this season, thousands of festival-goers transcend this gracious Southern town to take in the flowers and hospitality and attend one of the largest arts and



crafts festivals in the Southeast: The YMCA Flowertown Festival. The Flowertown Festival is consistently ranked as one of the Top 20 events in the Southeast by the Southeast Tourism Society.

SHL will once again have a booth at the Festival and we need volunteers! We need people to help with assembling give-away bags, setting up and taking down the tent, and staffing the tent. [Sign up to volunteer online.](#) Please complete this form no later than Wednesday, 3/25.

The booth location has not yet been assigned, but we will let you know as soon as we can. Last year we were at the far end of Main Street, across from the children's rides. As the event gets closer, we will send you an information packet.

The festival runs Friday, 3/27, through Sunday, 3/29. We have broken the weekend down into 4-hour shifts. Please indicate the shifts you are willing to work. You may work as many or as few as you want.

Interested in an activity but don't see it listed? Let us know! Volunteers are always welcomed to lead events such as bridge walks, bowling, billiards, biking, bocce, board games, etc.

Contact
president@lowcountryhumanists.org
with your ideas!

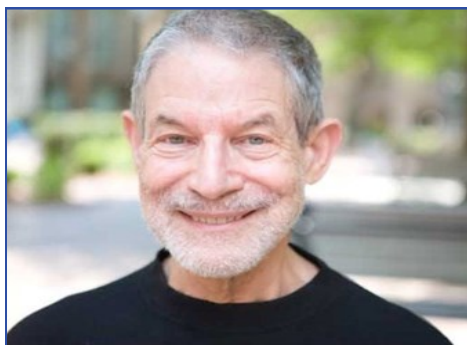
Pay it Forward

Do you have usable items that you no longer want or are you in need of an item? If so, join the [Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry Pay It Forward facebook group](#). This is a closed group for SHL members to post things they want to give away and for others to claim them. All items are free. Whether you are spring cleaning, looking for a few items for your apartment or dorm, looking for things you can make into crafts, or just want to free up a little space in your home, this is the place to post/find them.

Herb Silverman

An Atheist Reaction to the Chapel Hill Tragedy

I was horrified when I heard of the tragic murders on February 10 of three Muslim college students in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. My sorrow was compounded when I learned that Deah Barakat, his wife Yusor Abu-Salha, and her sister Razan Abu-Salha were shot by an atheist, Craig Stephen Hicks.



Herb Silverman is founder and President Emeritus of the [Secular Coalition for America](#), author of [Candidate Without a Prayer: An Autobiography of a Jewish Atheist in the Bible Belt](#), and Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the College of Charleston.

Media, of course, tried to learn as much as possible about Hicks and his motive for these senseless killings. Speculation included his hatred of religion, disputes over parking spaces, and whether it was a "hate crime." In Facebook postings, [Hicks said](#), "I hate Islam just as much as christianity, but they have the right to worship in this country just as much as any others do." Hicks might be more pro-Second Amendment than anti-religion, because one post included a photo of a revolver and the warning, "If you are anti-gun, defriend me NOW!!!" (Several people said Hicks would show up at their door, gun on hip, to complain about a visitor who had parked in someone else's spot.)

While the atheist community and the rest of the country are unified in condemning this terrible act, there is no such unanimity about hate crimes. When Congress was planning to expand hate crime laws to add "sexual orientation," I got a lot of pushback from my liberal friends for [opposing this legislation](#). I was also in the unfamiliar posi-

tion of being praised by a [blogger for the Wall Street Journal](#) who said, "Herb Silverman eloquently articulates what we've written before -- that at best, the law could be merely symbolic and, at worst, the law could lead to strange outcomes."

He then quoted from my piece:

A crime is a crime, regardless of the victim's race, color, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. A murdered white heterosexual male is no less dead than a Hispanic, gay Christian. Suppose three murders occur: one for money, another out of jealousy, and a third because the victim is a black, gay Wiccan. If the first

two murderers are sentenced to 20 years in prison and the third is sentenced to 30 years, would the families of the victims in the first two cases feel they had received equal justice under the law?

I'm less interested in speculating on the motives of Hicks than in seeing that justice is served. Atheist and Humanist organizations have been quick to strongly condemn the murders and offer condolences to the victims and their families. See, for instance, statements by [American Atheists](#), the [American Humanist Association](#), the [Secular Student Alliance](#), and the [Secular Coalition for America](#). Particularly noteworthy is the reaction by the nontheistic organization [Foundation Beyond Belief](#), which observed that Deah Barakat was pursuing his doctorate in dentistry at UNC Chapel Hill and planned to travel to Syrian refugee camps this summer to perform emergency dentistry for refugee children through the Syrian Medical Society Foundation. Foundation Beyond Belief is collecting funds from the atheist and humanist community that will go directly to the [Syrian Medical Society Foundation](#) to honor the lives and celebrate the memory of Deah, Yusor, and Razan.

Herb Silverman cont.

No large group should be held responsible for the actions of a deranged person who just happens to belong to that group. A mathematical colleague once worried needlessly that mathematicians would not be trusted after [Ted Kaczynski](#) was discovered in 1996 to be the Unabomber. That colleague, Kaczynski, and I were in the same mathematical field of geometric func-

tion theory, and I published several joint papers with a mathematician who was on Kaczynski's dissertation committee (Kaczynski was a much better mathematician than I am, but a much worse human being.).

No mathematicians support the actions of Kaczynski and no atheists support the actions of

Hicks. We must take special care not to stereotype all individuals in a community based on the acts of its worst members -- be they Muslim, atheist, or mathematician.

This piece was originally posted February 20, 2015 on huffingtonpost.com

Charity of the Quarter

SHL collects donations for a local charity each quarter, and donates the full amount under the name *Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry*. Our first Charity of the Quarter for 2015 is **Meals on Wheels of Charleston**.

Meals on Wheels of Charleston provides free, hot, nutritious meals and daily monitoring for seniors in need. This program serves low-income seniors who are homebound or have moderate to severe physical restrictions.

Through a network of staff and volunteers, MOW packages and delivers hot noon meals to house-bound seniors. While there, the meal deliverers check to see if the clients are stable, comforta-

ble, and safe. Many of the clients live in substandard housing, have serious health conditions with little to no family support. Clients are referred by medical staff, family, friends, hospice, and other human services organizations.



MOW Charleston serves seniors in Downtown and the Charleston Peninsula, North Charleston, West Ashley, Ravenel/Hollywood, and James/Johns/Wadmalaw & Edisto Islands.

Four times a year SHL collects donations on behalf of a worthy local charity. You can donate by cash, credit card, or check at our monthly meeting or by mailing a check to

SHL
PO Box 32256
Charleston SC 29417-2256

Make checks payable to SHL and note COQ in the memo line.

Or securely [donate online!](#)

Board Update

SHL is excited to announce that **Garrett Gehlhausen** has joined the board and has assumed duties as our new treasurer! Welcome Garrett!



Garrett takes over from **Jason Gregory** who has recently moved to Richmond, VA with his wife Munazza Anis and daughter Maya. We wish to sincerely thank Jason for his contributions to SHL and his volunteer service as board member and treasurer. Best of luck Jason and family—we'll miss you!



“Pi what squared? Long John, you should be able to get this.”

Time to Join/Renew!

It's time to pay your dues for the 2015 calendar year. Our largest expense is bringing in outstanding speakers for the monthly meetings. Although we usually balance things out with a handful of local guests who do not request travel or honorarium, the regional and national figures require us to pay travel costs and/or a small honorarium. We occasionally invest in sponsorships or marketing initiatives to hopefully reach potential new members such as setting up an informational table at the Flowertown Festival and sponsoring a light display at the Holiday Festival of Lights. Finally, there are smaller costs such as the rental fee for Gage Hall, credit card processing fees, meeting refreshments, PO Box rental, member perks such as stipends for attendance at Humanist/Atheist/Freethought events, and more.

We are proud of the fact that we do not require membership to attend our activities. Instead, we hope that

you see the great value in your annual donation to maintain a robust and active secular humanist organization in the Charleston area.

Membership is open to all who support the purposes for which this organization is founded. The available membership levels and corresponding dues (new members and renewals) are:

- Individual \$35.00
- Family \$50.00
- Sustaining \$100.00
- Benefactor \$150.00
- Lifetime \$500.00

Dues are tax-deductible, as we are a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. (As we like to joke, we are also a "non-prophet" organization!)

There are 3 easy ways you can join/renew:

- You can pay by cash, credit card, or check at our monthly meeting.



- You can also mail a check to:

SHL
PO Box 32256
Charleston SC 29417-2256

Make checks payable to SHL and note "Membership" and level in the memo line. Please include your name, address, phone number, and email address.

- Or securely [pay online](#) and select your membership level in the dropdown box.

Member Perk: Stipends

SHL offers five stipends annually to dues-paying members to help offset costs associated with attending an atheist/freethought conference or convention, or to attend a freethought summer camp. Some examples of eligible events are the American Atheists convention, Freedom From Religion Foundation convention, American Humanists convention, Camp Quest, and Camp Inquiry, among others.

Stipends are available to dues-paying members. A member may not receive a stipend two consecutive years, how-

ever different members of a family membership are eligible even if another family member received a stipend the previous year.

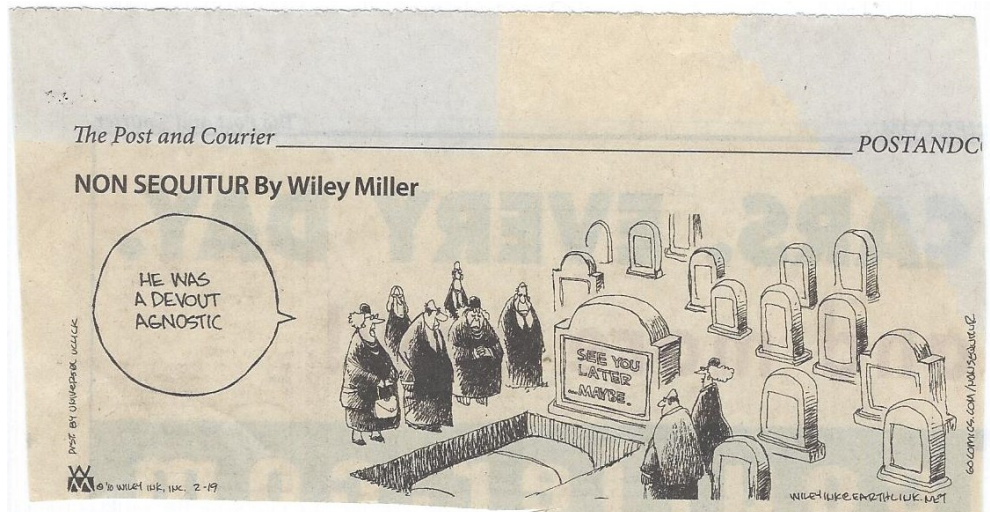
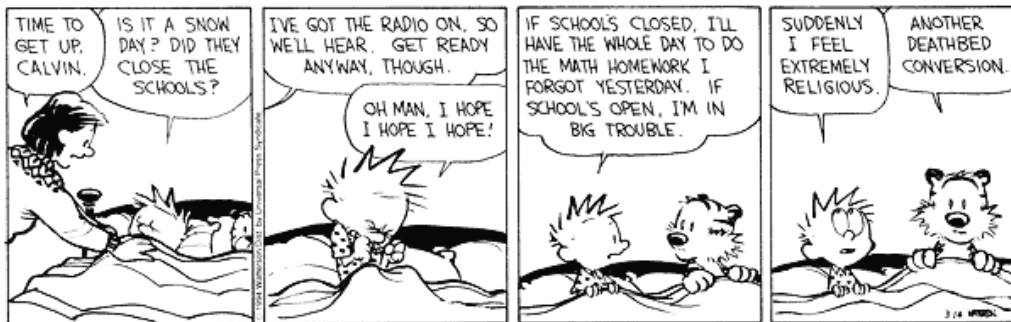
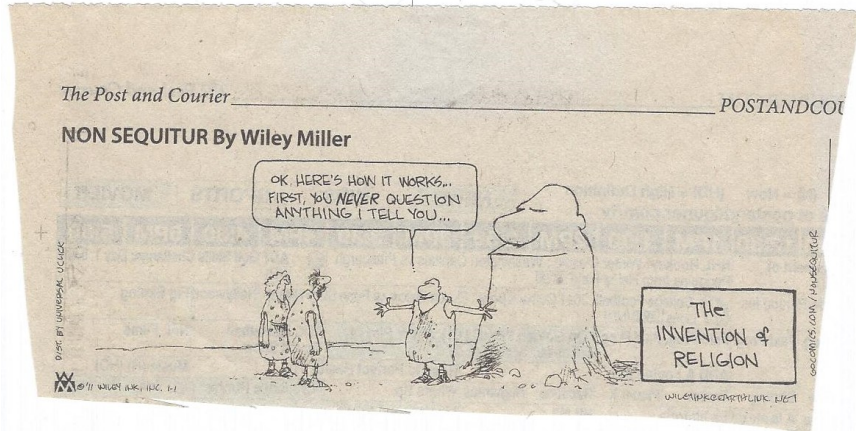
Stipends cover up to \$200 of registration, travel, and lodging costs. Food and drink expenses are not eligible for stipends.

A stipend request must be pre-approved before attending your event. To see whether your event qualifies or to inquire about stipend availability and to apply, or if you have questions

about the stipend program, contact treasurer@lowcountryhumanists.org.

Stipend recipients must write a short essay about their event experience and submit it along with their receipts to treasurer@lowcountryhumanists.org within 30 days of the completion of the event. The essay will be published in an issue of *The Separationist*. Parents may assist young children who attended camp with their essays but the essay should reflect the child's own words as much as possible.

Just for Laughs!



Our Officers

President: Amy Monsky
Vice President: Herb Silverman
Treasurer: Garrett Gehlhausen
Secretary: Laura Kasman
Newsletter Editor: Sue Edward

Contact us!

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SHL is a non-prophet
organization!

SECULAR HUMANISTS



OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

Find us online! We're (nearly) omnipresent!



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The Separationist

The Newsletter of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry

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