



The Separationist

Volume 22, Issue 5

May 2015

Member Potluck

Sunday, May 24, 2015, 4:30 pm
RM Hendricks Park, 4953 - 4999 block of Virginia Ave, North Charleston

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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.

Dig out your flip-flops, shorts, and sundresses, and get ready to enjoy good food and good conversation with your fellow freethinkers and non-theists!

This year our annual May potluck will be held at **RM Hendricks Park** in North Charleston. From 526, take the Virginia Ave exit and turn right - the park is immediately on your left.



From the East Montague/Park Circle business district, turn left onto Virginia Ave - the park is on your right (if you go under the Don Holt bridge you've gone too far).

Look for us in the picnic shelter. There is a nearby enclosed playground for the kids plus plenty of room for games, so bring your Frisbees, softballs, and bocce sets!

Bring a dish to share and get to know your fellow members over dinner. We are not assigning items,

simply bring whatever food item you wish - salads, entrees, side dishes, and desserts are all good choices. Items can be homemade or store bought.

SHL will supply the paper goods and beverages.

We hope to see you there, and we would like to extend a special invitation to people who rarely come to meetings. There will be no



meeting at Gage Hall this month but we will return to our regular meeting format in September.

When: Sunday, May 24, 2015, 4:30 pm
Where: RM Hendricks Park, North Charleston
Cost: Free!

NOTE: per city of North Charleston laws, **NO ALCOHOL** is allowed in the park. Please plan accordingly when making your potluck contribution decisions.

We will not have a formal speaker meeting this month. However, we will have a very short business meeting during the potluck to elect the SHL Board for 2015 - 2016. All dues-paying members present at the potluck are eligible to vote! If you are not currently a dues-paying member, you can join or renew your membership [here](#).

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.

Adopt-a-Highway

Saturday, May 2, 2015, 8:50am

1011 Harborview Rd, James Island

For our May volunteer activity, we are returning to Adopt-a-Highway! Come join us on Saturday, May 2nd at 8:50am in the parking lot of South State Bank, 1011 Harbor View Rd, James Island (next to the Harris Tee-ter—formerly Piggly Wiggly). We will clean our section of Harborview Rd, which is between *Darwin Street* (coincidentally) and Fort Johnson Road.



It is often a pleasant walk in the outdoors as well as a chance to talk with fellow volunteers and find strange or funny things

along the road (including money!). This is an opportunity for us to make things a little better than they were before and to let people know that Secular Humanists exist, and that we care about our communities.

If you have any questions, call Aerin at 843-321-9466 or [email our volunteer coordinators](#).

SHL Movie Club

Saturday, May 2, 2015, 3:45 pm

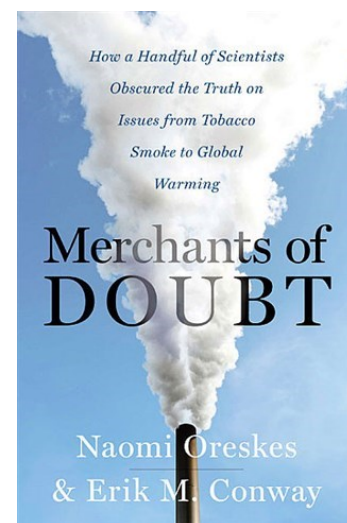
Terrace Theater, 1956 Maybank Hwy, James Island



Please join us for a viewing of [Merchants of Doubt](#).

Inspired by the acclaimed book by Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *MERCHANTS OF DOUBT* takes audiences on a satirically comedic, yet illuminating ride into the heart of conjuring American spin. Filmmaker

Robert Kenner lifts the curtain on a secretive group of highly charismatic, silver-tongued pundits-for-hire who present themselves in the media as scientific authorities - yet have the contrary aim of spreading maximum confusion about well-studied public threats ranging from toxic chemicals to pharmaceuticals to climate change.



"It's not the science that's affecting us. I mean the science is pretty clear. It's something else that's causing this rejection...the reason we need the science to be wrong is that otherwise we see that we need to change. That's really a hard pill to swallow."
- Congressman Bob Inglis (R, South Carolina)

Following the movie we will discuss the film over dinner at a nearby restaurant. Please wait in the lobby for everyone to exit (some people like to stay for all of the credits).

Upcoming SHL Events cont.

Sunday Funday in the Park

Sunday, May 3, 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.



Reasonfest will feature entertainment and short form improv comedy performance (in the style of "Who's line is it, anyway") with SHL members Rob Britt, Steve Cardinal, and friends. An open-mic session hosted by local poet, songwriter, and SHL's own Jim Lundy will follow. Audience members will be invited to share their personal "pathways to reason," or how they left religion to become atheists or agnostics, and to read passages from their favorite free-thought writers.



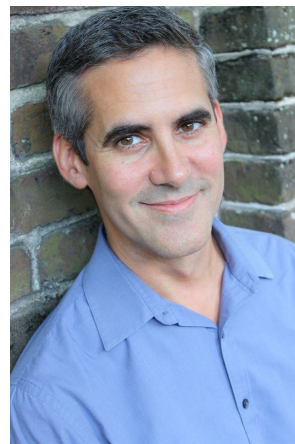
Jim Lundy

Reasonfest

Thursday, May 7, 2015, 7:00pm

Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St, Charleston

The Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry will host our 3rd annual Reasonfest on Thursday, May 7, to mark the National Day of Reason. The event will be held at 7 p.m. in Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St. in downtown Charleston.



Steve Cardinal

This event is free and open to the public. However, we will happily accept donations which will help cover this event's expenses as well as make future events possible. Baked goods will be available for purchase.

The National Day of Reason was established in 2003 by the American Humanist Association and Washington Area Secular Humanists. It serves as a critique of the federally sponsored National Day

of Prayer, which occurs on the same day and which many secularists regard as an unconstitutional violation of the separation between church and state.



Rob Britt

Upcoming SHL Events cont.

SHL Happy Hour

Tuesday, May 12, 2015, 6:00pm

Mellow Mushroom, 19 Magnolia Rd, West Ashley (Avondale)

Join us for a fun and relaxing evening of stimulating conversation over drinks (alcohol is optional) and yummy food with old and new friends!

Everyone is welcome. Don't be shy – come join us!



Girls Night Out

Wednesday, May 13, 2015, 7:00pm

Myles and Jun Yakitori, 710 Bacons Bridge Rd, Summerville

A fun night for girls to socialize! Nursing infants okay,

but otherwise adults only, please.



Team Trivia

Wed, May 27, 2015, 7:00pm

Steel City Pizza, 1440 Ben Sawyer Blvd, Mt Pleasant



Come out for a night of trivia and socializing! This is a team event and is free.

Our team **Happy Humanists** is officially registered, so our points are cumulative and 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. And if you would like to organize an SHL trivia night in your part of town (hello, West Ashley!) let us know. Organizers are responsible for checking in using our team name, welcoming players, and using any winnings from the previous week to purchase appetizers for the team. Please contact president@lowcountryhumanists.org for more info.



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!

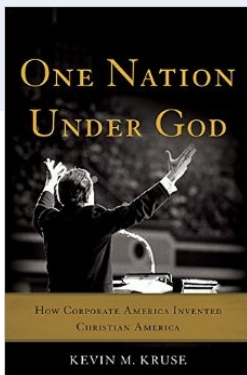
Upcoming SHL Events cont.

SHL Book Club

Sunday, May 31, 2015, 4:00pm

Barnes & Noble, 1812 Sam Rittenberg Blvd, West Ashley

Our meeting date for the month of May has changed from our regular schedule. Because of a conflict with the SHL potluck event on the 4th Sunday of May we have moved our Book Group meeting to the 5th Sunday of May.



Our book selection for May is Kevin M. Kruse's **One Nation Under God, How Corporate America Invented Christian America**. Following is a brief description of the book from the Amazon book purchase site. Keep in mind when you open the SHL homepage there is a book purchase link to Amazon which provides our organization with a rebate at the end of the year.

"We're often told that the United States is, was, and always has been a Christian nation. But in One Nation Under God, historian Kevin M. Kruse reveals that the idea of "Christian America" is an invention—and a relatively recent one at that.

As Kruse argues, the belief that America is fundamentally and formally a Christian nation originated in the 1930s when businessmen enlisted religious activists in their fight against FDR's New Deal. Corporations from General Motors to Hilton Hotels bankrolled conservative clergymen, encouraging them to attack the New Deal as a program of "pagan statism" that perverted

the central principle of Christianity: the sanctity and salvation of the individual. Their campaign for "freedom under God" culminated in the election of their close ally Dwight Eisenhower in 1952."

This best seller is proving to be a fascinating read and should generate a very engaged review by our members. We look forward to seeing everyone at our next book group review on the rescheduled date of May 31st at the West Ashley Barnes and Nobel on Sam Rittenburg Blvd. The time is as always 4:00 in the afternoon and the meeting takes place in the back of the movie and music dept.

As always we will break at 5:30 to go to dinner and have further fellowship. If you have a dining preference please bring your suggestions with you for the group to vote on.

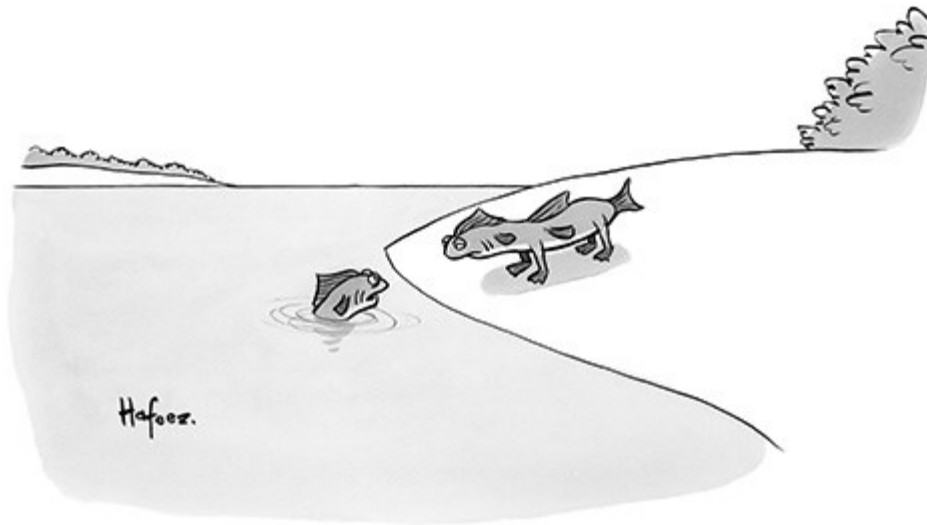
For further information please contact:

John or Barbara Childs

John: 843-670-6811

Barbara: 843-847-7168

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>



"I don't know who you are anymore."



© the TUL - <http://figowooder.wordpress.com>

Charity of the Quarter

Reading is Fundamental was a very important cause for Richard "Dick" Côté and upon his death his family requested that donations be made to RIF in lieu of flowers. It is this wish that inspired us to select RIF as our next Charity of the Quarter.

SHL collects donations for a worthy charity each quarter, and donates the full amount under the name *Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry*. Our Charity of the Quarter for spring, 2015 is **Reading is Fundamental**.



Reading Is
Fundamental

Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) is the largest children's literacy nonprofit in the United States. RIF prepares and motivates children to read by delivering free books and literacy resources to those children and families who need them most. RIF inspires children to be lifelong readers through the power of choice. RIF provides new, free books for children to choose from and make their own. The seeds of inspiration in these books have motivated children to follow their dreams and achieve their potential. Yes, it

Nearly two-thirds of low-income families in the U.S. own no books.

seems incredible for a book to launch a life, but it happens every day as hungry, inquisitive young minds reach out and grab hold of the new people, places, and ideas that books bring them.

Planting seeds of inspiration in our nation's most vulnerable children is what RIF and a network of more than 400,000 volunteers do. Whether in schools, homeless shelters, or community centers—wherever you find children—RIF volunteers spend countless hours distributing books, staging reading motivation activities, and promoting the importance of literacy in their communities.



Four times a year SHL collects donations on behalf of a worthy 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!](#)

Herb Silverman

A Very Brief History of Jews, Christians, and Muslims

First there were the Jews, with their holy book; then there were the Christians, with their holy book; and then there were the Muslims, with their holy book. Together they formed the three major monotheistic religions, with lots in common and lots not.

Christianity, a cult of Judaism that eventually had enough members to rise to the status of sect, became a separate religion when they added their own holy book, the New Testament. For some Christians, this superseded the Old Testament (which Jews call the Hebrew Bible), though Christians also consider the Old Testament holy. Jesus said he did not come to change [one jot or tittle from the old law](#). Subsequent bibles actually contain anywhere from 24 to 66 books, depending on sect. Muslims much later added their own holy book (the Quran), but also consider the Jewish and Christian bibles holy.

Each religion added at least one prophet. Jews had Noah, Abraham, and Moses, and then Christians added Jesus (who is also somehow the God of the Old Testament, as well as being his own son). Muslims kept all these prophets and added Muhammad.

Here's what else these three religions have in common. If you can find an interpretation in one holy book to justify an atrocity, then you can most likely find a comparable interpretation and justification in the other holy books. These include genocide, holy wars, slavery, misogyny,

and death for crimes like blasphemy, homosexuality, and worshipping the wrong god or even the right god in the wrong way.



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.

I'm not interested in trying to decide the best and worst "holy" books because all contain both ridiculous and reasonable passages. Adherents can quote portions to justify loving their neighbor or killing their infidel neighbor. I'm more interested in behavior than belief. Some religious fundamentalists will find relatively benign interpretations of terrible passages, while some liberal religionists will either ignore uncomfortable passages or treat them as metaphors.

As an atheist, it's easy for me to read portions of ancient books written by fallible humans and follow only what makes sense to me. I believe (along with most biblical scholars) that Noah, Abraham, and Moses never existed, that Jesus probably existed,

and that Muhammad definitely existed. I also believe that nobody died and returned, and nobody traveled up or down to a nonexistent heaven or hell.

Today, we see more Muslims invoke their holy texts to justify violence than do adherents of any other religion. Often these atrocities are inspired or justified by passages in the Quran that are similar to those from Judaism or Christianity. Recently, Islamic militants [ransacked Mosul's central museum](#), destroying priceless artifacts because they represented idols. That reminded me of the biblical story of [Abraham smashing his father's idols](#) instead of worshipping the one "true" God. And when the Islamic State indiscriminately kills innocent people, I think of the quote from a Christian abbot in the midst of a Crusade: "[Kill them all, let God sort them out.](#)"

I prefer the Crusades to the Islamic State only because the Crusades ended in the thirteenth century. Most Christians have learned to be more tolerant and secular, and I hope that Muslims will also have their twenty-first century Enlightenment. Of course, I'm not so concerned with people who have ludicrous religious beliefs as long as their beliefs don't interfere with those who don't share such beliefs.

Which brings me to Michele Bachmann, the 2012 candidate for the Republican presidential nomination who recently predicted that the [rapture will be coming soon](#) because of President

Herb Silverman, cont.

Barack Obama's policies on Iran's nuclear program and marriage equality. Bachmann seemed upset by such pursuits, though I would think she'd now be a strong supporter of Obama since he will hasten the return of Jesus. Then again, Christians in previous generations (and some today) hate the Jews for killing Christ even though Jesus supposedly came on purpose to be killed so that his blood could

"save" Christians. Go figure.

I'm happy to live in a country where Michele Bachmann has the free speech right to say whatever she wants about Obama or anyone else, and I have the free speech right to call Bachmann an idiot. And I'm very happy to live in a country where people can choose to be Jews, Christians,

Muslims, atheists, and any other religion or non-religion, without being prosecuted as a heretic.

This article originally appeared in [The Huffington Post](#), 4/29/2015



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organization!*

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OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

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The Separationist

The Newsletter of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry

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