



The Separationist

Meet the New SHL Board For 2015-16

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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.

At our annual picnic and general meeting on May 24, the SHL membership unanimously elected a new slate of board members to help guide the organization through the coming year. We now have an exciting mix of long-time supporters and fresh, new faces. Please meet:

Sharon Strong (President): The first important thing I did when moving to Charleston in 2000 was to attend a meeting of the SHL book group (we discussed my hero Carl Sagan's "A Demon-Haunted World"); I knew I had found an incredible resource in a most unlikely place. A lapsed Lutheran, I became self-identified as an atheist a few months later. I have served on the SHL board in various capacities



New and old: New SHL President Sharon Strong (left) and outgoing SHL President Amy Monsky (right).

for about 8 years since that first meeting, and last month I was glad to re-join and honored to be elected to follow in the footsteps of our founder Herb Silverman and most-recent past-president Amy Monsky.

Herb Silverman (Vice-President): Herb Silverman is founder and president emeritus of the Secular Coalition for America; founder of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry in Charleston, South Carolina; and founder and former faculty advisor to the College of Charleston student Atheist/Humanist Alliance. He is a board member of the American Humanist Association; advisory board member of the Secular Student Alliance; and an "On Faith" blogger for the Washington Post online.

Herb has appeared in a number of debates on topics that include: Can we be moral without God? Does God exist? Is America a Christian nation? He has also debated at the Oxford Union at Oxford University in England on the topic, Does American religion undermine American values?

After an eight-year legal battle, Herb won a unanimous decision in South Carolina's Supreme Court, nullifying the state's religious test requirement to hold public office.



Herb (in a suit!) delivering opening remarks to White House officials on behalf of the Secular Coalition for America in 2010.

Meet the 2015-16 Board cont.

Garrett Gehlhausen (Treasurer):

Garrett joined the board in February 2015 as treasurer. We are excited to have Garrett return as treasurer!



Laura Kasman (Secretary):

Laura is a long-time board member and our returning secretary!



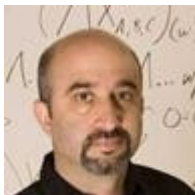
Sue Edward (Newsletter Editor):

Sue became a member of SHL in 2004 after moving here from Madison WI and joined the board in 2007. In addition to Newsletter Editor, Sue runs the movie club and happy hour.



Alex Kasman (Webmaster):

Alex is also a long-time member of the board and serves as SHL's webmaster.



Stephanie Greene (Volunteer Coordinator):

Returning board member Stephanie Greene serves as our volunteer coordinator.

Amy Monsky: Amy Monsky is the immediate past president of SHL and has served on the board for 6 years. Since her election in 2009 to create a community



for secular families, she has gone on to become a full-time activist in the atheist movement. At the regional and state level, she is the founder and camp director of Camp Quest South Carolina and and the co-chair of the Secular Coalition for South Carolina. Nationally, Monsky is the executive director of Atheist Alliance of America and serves as secretary on the Camp Quest Inc board.

Ed Stephens: Long time SHL member and returning board member Ed first joined the board two years ago.

Bonnie Cleaveland:

Bonnie Cleaveland grew up with a quietly Christian mom in Georgia and Virginia. When Bonnie was a toddler, her mom fired a caregiver who

told Bonnie that god was "everywhere," because Bonnie was searching under beds and in closets! She was a skeptic from a young age and always wanted to discuss her ideas about religion, even attending Stetson University, which was affiliated with the Baptist Church. She is a psychologist in private practice in Charleston and adjunct faculty

teaching psychology graduate students at the Citadel. She lives with her husband and 9 year-old daughter and loves to spend her free time advocating for children's rights and growing vegetables and flowers in the front yard.

Bonnie is a first time member of the board. Welcome Bonnie!

Renee Madden: Raised by wolves is the best way to describe my religious upbringing, actually lack thereof. I don't recall what prompted my parents to enroll me once in Sunday school but that lasted only two or three sessions. At my last appearance, when the teacher was describing one of the unbelievable stories from the bible, I said to her, "You don't really believe that do you?" Well, she did and that was that.

Soon after arriving in Charleston two years ago from Columbia Maryland (between DC and Baltimore) I sought out my people in SHL. Skepticism, however, is my true interest. Cultivating critical thinking skills helps me to understand the world and to recognize contemporary fibsters. For me, atheism naturally follows such a life approach.

I am honored to have been asked to serve with the dedicated individuals who are the SHL board and hope to generate some interest in skepticism centered events.

Renee is a first time member of the board. Welcome Renee!

Meet the 2015-16 Board cont.

Baldomero Garcia: Baldo is a first time member of the board. Welcome Baldo!



Brian Murtagh: Returning board member Brian Murtagh is SHL's Affiliate Council representative to the Atheist Alliance of America, where he also serves as editor of AAA's magazine *Secular Nation*. Brian is also a Humanist Celebrant.

