



# The Separationist

Volume 22, Issue 11

November, 2015

## Dot Scott:

### The Negative Impact of Racism: Then, Now, and Going Forward

Sunday, November 15, 2015, 4 PM, Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St, 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.

#### Joins us for the November monthly meeting of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry!

Our community, and indeed the world, was shocked by the mass murder of nine local African-American churchgoers by a white supremacist youth this past June. This was not, of course, the first time innocent black Charlestonians suffered and died at the hands of whites. The roots of racial violence run deep in the streets of our slave-trading, secessionist city.

But racism, past and present, can take many forms. Voter suppression, gentrification, school segregation, poor policing--these and other current practices are often understood to stem from a racist past: a past that some of us are not aware of and others of us may prefer to ignore.

What can we learn from the tense and peculiar history of race relations in the place we call home? And what can we as humanists do bend the arc of history in a more positive direction?



Dot Scott is the president of the Charleston chapter of the NAACP, a group that has been fighting for racial justice in the Lowcountry for nearly a century. She will draw on her many years of experience actively confronting racism in our part of the world to shed light on the past and hold out hope for the future.

**When:** Sunday, 11/ 15/ 15 at 4pm

**Where:** Gage Hall, 4 Archdale Street




**Cost:** Free and open to the public!

After the meeting, join us for dinner at **Leaf Restaurant**.

# 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.

# November 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 	2	3 	4	5	6	7 <a href="#">Adopt a Highway</a> <a href="#">Movie Club</a>
8	9	10 <a href="#">Happy Hour</a>	11	12	13	14 <a href="#">Board Game Night</a>
15 <a href="#">Monthly Meeting</a>	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 <a href="#">Volunteer Activity</a> <a href="#">Book Club</a>	23	24	25	26 	27	28
29 <a href="#">Sunday Brunch</a>	30					

# Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

## Adopt-a-Highway Trash Pickup

Saturday, November 7, 2015, 8:45am

1011 Harbor View Rd, Charleston



Our next trash pick up will be on Saturday, November 7th. As always, participants get a sense of accomplishment from making the world a better place. And, significantly, a sign saying that the road is kept clean by "Secular Humanists" helps us let people know that we exist and that we care.

Meet at 8:50 am in the parking lot of First Federal of Charleston Bank at 1011 Harbor View Rd, James Island. Please join us!

If you have any questions, [email our volunteer coordinators](#).

There are no **Girls Night Out** or **Team Trivia** events in November or December. These events will resume in January.

## SHL Movie Club

Saturday, November 7, 2015 time TBA

Terrace Theater, 1956 Maybank Hwy, James Island

Join us for a viewing of the film [Of Men and War](#) on Saturday, November 7, at the Terrace Theater on Maybank Hwy on James Island. Showtimes have not been posted yet, so please check our [website](#) or [Facebook](#) group posting, or subscribe to the movie club [email list](#) or [SHL Meetup](#) for updates.

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



Anger consumes a dozen US combat vets long after their return from the front. The warriors in *Of Men and War* have come home, but their minds linger out on the battlefield. Like figures from a Greek tragedy, all have traumatic memories that haunt them to this day. Ghosts and echoes of the war fill their lives.

Their families bear the brunt of these fractured spirits.

At The Pathway Home, a first-of-its-kind PTSD therapy center, the film's protagonists resolve to end the ongoing destruction. Their therapist, a Vietnam vet himself, helps the boys forge meaning from their trauma. Over years of therapy, *Of Men and War* explores their grueling paths to recovery, as they attempt to make peace with themselves, their past, and their families.

## Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

### SHL Happy Hour

Tuesday, November 10, 2015, 6:00pm

Taco Boy, 217 Huger Street, Charleston

Happy Hour is always a fun and relaxing evening of stimulating conversation over drinks (alcohol is optional) and yummy food among old and new friends! This month we will meet at Taco Boy in downtown Charleston (yes, they have parking!)



Come bask in the over-the-top kitsch and enjoy the funky splendor that is Taco Boy! Everyone is welcome. Don't be shy - come join us!

### Board Game Night

Saturday, November 14, 2015, 6:00-9:00pm

Green Dragon, 7671 Northwoods Blvd, North Charleston

Calling kids of all ages! SHL is sponsoring a game night at the Green Dragon, our area's premier suppli-



er of board games, card games, role playing games, and gaming accessories. The Green Dragon is home to a truly awe-inspiring library of games available for in-house use, and SHL has reserved tables for our group in the Dragon's adjacent game room. SHL will cover the cost of an evening's game rental for our members, and you are also welcome to bring your own favorite board games to share for free. No outside food or beverages are permitted, but snacks and drinks will be available for purchase at a very reasonable cost. OK, maybe "Saturday the 14th" doesn't come with its own fancy phobia like the day before--so perhaps there's all the more reason to come out and sharpen those gaming skills! "Settlers of Catan," anyone?

### SHL monthly meeting

Sunday, November 15, 2015, 4:00pm

Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St, Charleston

Join us for our monthly meeting with speaker **Dot Scott**. See [page 1](#) for details.

# Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

## Volunteer Activity: Potluck in the Park

Sunday, November 22, 2015, 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 November 22 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 our volunteer coordinators at [volunteers@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:volunteers@lowcountryhumanists.org) to coordinate needed items and volunteers.



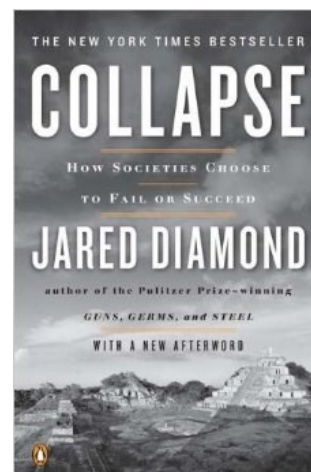
## SHL Book Club

Sunday, November 22, 4:00pm

Barnes & Noble, 1812 Sam Rittenberg Blvd, Charleston

We had an enthusiastic discussion at our last Book Club get-together reviewing *The Better Angels of Our Nature*. It is truly wonderful to challenge our assumptions and impressions with thoughtful consideration on a scholarly work on the workings of human history.

And we are continuing that challenge with our book selection for next month: *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* by Jared Diamond. This is a powerful followup to his prize winning *Guns, Germs, and Steel* which was read by the club last year. This subject may prove valuable in light of challenges we, as society, face in our future.



We will meet for riveting conversation about *Collapse* the 4th Sunday, Nov 22 at the usual place: Barnes & Noble on Sam Rittenberg at 4:00pm and head off to dinner together after.

Questions, comments or suggestions? Write to [books@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:books@lowcountryhumanists.org).

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>

# Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

## Secular Sunday Brunch

Sunday, November 29, 2015, 10:00am

Butcher and Bee, 654 King St, Charleston

RSVP to [president@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:president@lowcountryhumanists.org) by Saturday Nov 28 .

Face it. By the time the Sunday after Thanksgiving rolls around, you are going to be sick and tired of home-cooked food--especially if it was your home and your cooking and your endless supply of leftovers. And your relatives. So come on out for our next Fifth Sunday Brunch at one of Charleston's best foodie hotspots, Butcher and Bee on Upper King Street. B&B prides itself on its locally sourced ingredients and farm-to-table sensibilities, with zesty dishes (like chilaquiles--a Mexican breakfast scramble and hangover cure) and inventive sandwiches (like the roast beef on ciabatta with chimichurri mayo). They have veggie options and happy to address dietary constraints, just let them know ([843-619-0202](tel:843-619-0202)). And besides, it's better than church! Butcher and Bee do not usually take reservations but they have saved a spot for us right when their doors open. Join us!



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

Contact  
[president@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:president@lowcountryhumanists.org)  
 with your ideas!



## Congratulations!

SHL's entry in the Summerville **Scarecrows on The Square** event, "Neil de Grasse Tyson's Cosmos House", won 2nd Place in the Civic Category! Votes were 25 cents each and winners were based on whose entry raised the most money. The event is held annually by the Junior Service League to raise money for their school supply fund for Dorchester District Two schools.

This year's display featured a cut-out for people to pose as Tyson. Thank you to Patricia Rice Johnson for organizing such a creative and awesome display!



## Become a Dues-Paying Member of SHL!

Membership is open to all who support the purposes for which this organization is founded. Your dues help provide a variety of programs and activities for young and old alike.

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 organization. (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.

# Herb Silverman

## Are Secular Progressives Murderers?

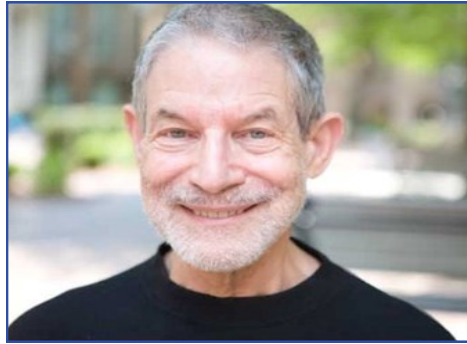
Open atheists like me are accustomed to being vilified as a class, but the pejoratives say more about those who cast aspersions than about those they malign. Here are just three examples of judgments made about me, along with my parenthetical thoughts.

1. You have no moral compass because you don't fear a judging God. (So without your God belief you would be committing horrible crimes?)

2. I feel sorry for you. How can you go on living without a belief in an afterlife? (I guess you must not get much joy in this life, since you focus on an afterlife.)

3. Why do you hate God? (This always makes me want to laugh, but I don't. Atheists can no more hate God than hate the Tooth Fairy. I can understand why God believers might sometimes hate an all-powerful God who triggers or allows countless atrocities under his "watch.")

When it comes to politics, there is some marginally good news for atheists. In response to a recent Gallup survey asking if your party nominated a generally well-qualified person for president who happens to be an atheist, 58 percent say they would vote for that person. That's the highest percentage ever, though it pales in comparison to over 90 percent for a Catholic, Woman, Black, Hispanic, or Jew. While still ranked below gays and Muslims, atheists do beat out socialists (47 percent). Many of us are



**Herb Silverman** is founder and President 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.

hoping that an Openly Secular campaign will favorably change the public's perspective of atheists.

It's not surprising that politicians who are atheists remain in the closet about their religious beliefs. One notable exception, sort of, is presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. He considers himself a socialist and a non-religious Jew, though he doesn't use the "atheist" label. If he were not an atheist, he would probably be the only Jewish socialist in this country who isn't.

Nobody, however, doubts that Bernie Sanders is a Secular Progressive, a category that has recently earned capital letters thanks to another presidential candidate, Dr. Ben Carson.

Carson's view of the world amazes me. It's hard to decide which is his most ridiculous pronouncement: no abortions ever, even for rape or incest; equating abortion to slavery

and the Holocaust; equating Obamacare to slavery; or asserting that there might not have been a Holocaust had Jews defended themselves with guns; or Carson's biblically based tax plan of tithing so that poor people will gain self-respect for the privilege of paying the same percentage as rich people. Now add Carson's recent proposal to turn the Department of Education into an investigative body to monitor biased political speech by professors on university campuses. So much for our cherished free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment. (As a math professor, I never discussed politics in my classroom, so a Secular Progressive like me probably would not be investigated by a Department of Education under (hypothetical) President Ben Carson.)

I get it that Ben Carson does not like Secular Progressives. But I was astonished by his assertion of being in great danger and needing Secret Service protection because he challenges the Secular Progressive movement to its very core.

I acknowledge that presidential candidates need protection from the many lunatics in this country who would like to become famous by killing a well-known person. As a leading candidate in presidential polls, I'm fully supportive of Ben Carson receiving Secret Service protection. But I'm shocked by his reason for such a request.

Whether you agree or disagree with Secular Progressives, this is the first time I've heard them indirectly ac-



## Herb Silverman cont.

cused of being violent. At worst, they might verbally challenge Carson on just about all the political positions he takes. While we don't understand how a doctor can ignore overwhelming evidence for evolution, we don't kill people because of our disagreements. I've read about all the mass murders and assassinations in my lifetime, and the number committed by secular progressives is--zero. The Secular Progressives I know generally favor gun control to reduce violence, and can't imagine believing that gun

control in Germany was a major contributor to the Holocaust.

Despite all of the above, Secular Progressives like me aren't worried about electing a President Ben Carson. He does not have much more chance of becoming president than Lindsay Graham, the presidential candidate from my home state of South Carolina. I expect most Democrats would like to see Ben Carson become the presidential nominee of the Republican Party because he would be so easy to defeat once the

campaign in a general election turns to issues, knowledge, and experience.

But I do worry about a Republican Party in which Ben Carson ranks so high in the polls, a party in which almost half the people would like to see this country become a Christian theocracy. Now that's Scary with a capital S.

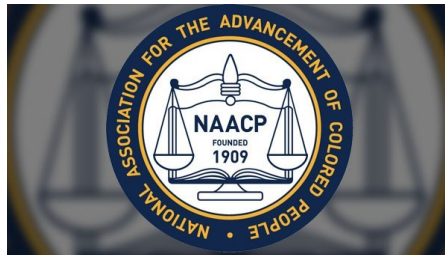
This piece was originally posted 10/28/2015 on [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com)

## 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 Q3, 2015 is the Charleston Chapter of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which seeks to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination. This is a worthy cause any time and anywhere, but especially now and here considering the recent racially motivated murders at Emanuel AME Church.

Founded February 12, 1909,



the NAACP is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization. Its more than half-million members and supporters throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, campaigning for equal opportunity and conducting voter mobilization.

Founded in 1917, the Charleston Branch of the NAACP is a local unit of the

NAACP, the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization.

From the ballot box to the classrooms, the dedicated workers, organizers, leaders, and members who make up the Charleston Branch of the

*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!](#)*

## SHL Board for 2015-2016

President: Sharon Strong  
Vice President: Herb Silverman  
Treasurer: Garrett Gehlhausen  
Secretary: Laura Kasman  
Newsletter Editor: Sue Edward  
Webmaster: Alex Kasman

Amy Monsky  
Brian Murtaugh  
Ed Stephens  
Bonnie Cleveland  
Renee Madden  
Baldomero Garcia

## Contact us!

SHL  
Post Office Box 32256  
Charleston, SC 29417-2256  
843-670-0290  
[president@lowcountryhumanists.org](mailto:president@lowcountryhumanists.org)

# SECULAR HUMANISTS



## OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

SHL is a non-prophet  
organization!

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



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[Facebook Group](#)



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[Facebook Lounge](#)



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[Facebook Families Group](#)



[Email Lists](#)



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[Facebook Page](#)

## 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.*