



The Separationist

SHL Solstice Potluck and Book Auction

Sunday, December 20, 2015, 5:00 PM
611 North Shore Drive, Charleston, 29412

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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.

SHL's annual Solstice Potluck

will be held on Sunday, December 20, 2015, 5:00pm

at the home of Libby Smith. Please bring an appetizer, salad, main dish, side dish, or dessert

to share. If you don't like to cook, wine, beer, and soft drinks are always welcome.

Also, bring your used books, CDs, and DVDs related to secular humanism, religion, and science for our annual book auction. Proceeds of the book auction will be donated to the Charleston Chapter of the NAACP which is our current [Charity of the Quarter](#).

Herb Silverman will be our auctioneer. (To keep the auction from lasting an eternity, please only bring

this event is not especially kid-friendly and there are no kids' activities. Those looking for a fun family-friendly

event are invited to check out our [holiday cookie contest](#) on Dec. 19.

Directions: North Shore Drive is off Harborview Road on

James Island. A map can be found [here](#).



items related directly to humanism, religion, and science.)

We hope to see you there, and we would like to extend a special invitation to people on our mailing list who rarely come to meetings, as well as past speakers who are not members.

Note to parents: This event is primarily FOR ADULTS. Children are welcome, although

There will not be a meeting at Gage Hall this month — we will return to our regular meeting format in January.

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.

December 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Painting Party	5
6	7	8 Happy Hour	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 Cookie Contest
20 Solstice Potluck	21 	22	23	24	25 Movie Club	26
27	28	29	30	31 		

There are no Girls Night Out, Book Club, or Team Trivia events in December. These events will resume in January.

Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

Palmetto Brush Painting Party

Friday, December 4, 2015, 7:00—9:00pm

TBonz Gill & Grill, 80 North Market St, Charleston



Join us for Palmetto Brush's Painting Party "Outside the Galaxy"!

This will be an evening of guided art, fine fare, and frosty refreshments! Not a Rembrandt? No worries, this event is great for people of all artistic inclination. The cost is \$20/person (\$5 off the regular price

because we're awesome!!).

If you plan on coming please make your payment at least three days in advance here: <http://www.palmettobrush.com/services.html>



"How can we possibly compete with their solstice decorations?"

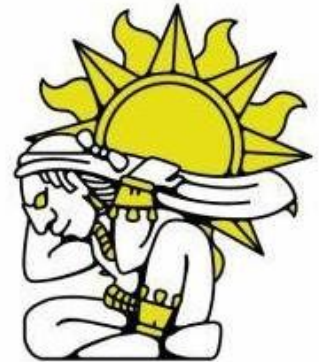
SHL Happy Hour

Tuesday, December 8, 2015, 6:00pm

Raul's Maya Del Sol, 1012 E. Montague Ave, North 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 Raul's Maya Del Sol in the Park Circle neighborhood. Everyone is welcome. Don't be shy - come join us!



All of the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names.

Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

Holiday Cookie Contest

Saturday, December 19, 2015, 11:30am

Hazel Parker Playground, 70 E. Bay St, Charleston

Please come with your homemade cookies and baked goods for judging and eating! If you are entering them in the cookie contest please bring around 3 dozen.



All homemade sweet baked goods will be

considered. Prizes for best cookie are based on taste.

There will also be prizes for most creative and best looking cookies. Judges will be chosen from attendees.

Cookies will be assigned a number and judged anonymously.

Looking forward to seeing everyone inside the recreation center at Hazel Parker!

COOKIE!



SHL Solstice Potluck

Sunday, December 20, 2015, 5:00pm

611 North Shore Drive, Charleston (James Island)

Join us for our annual Solstice Potluck and book auction! See [page 1](#) for details.

SHL Movie Club

Friday, December 25, 2015 time TBA

Terrace Theater, 1956 Maybank Hwy, James Island

Join us for a viewing of the film [The Danish Girl](#) on Friday, December 25 at the Terrace Theater on Maybank Hwy on James Island. Showtimes have not been published 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).

After standing in as a female model for a painting by his wife Gerda (Alicia Vikander), Danish artist Einar Wegener (Eddie Redmayne) becomes enamored with his feminine identity and begins living as a woman named Lili Elbe. Although their marriage becomes strained, Gerda stands by Lili as she explores her true self and eventually undergoes one of the world's first gender-reassignment surgeries in the 1930s. This touching biopic was adapted from David Ebershoff's book of the same name, and helmed by director Tom Hooper (*The King's Speech*).



Note to Book Club attendees from Yvonne Michel:

We had a large and engaged group at our November Book Club meeting reviewing "Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed" by Jared Diamond." It proved prophetic with the climate change meetings in Paris starting this week.

As it is customary to not hold a Book Club Meeting in December, our next meeting will be January 24, 2016 at 4pm to discuss the new book "Sacred Cows: A Light-hearted Look at Belief and Tradition Around the World." The author, Seth Andrews, is the host of one of the largest online atheist communities in the world, The Thinking Atheist.

Barnes & Noble will have 4 copies of the book (\$15.95) placed in reserve at the store under Barb Child's name for our reading pleasure.

Yvonne Michel, Book Club organizer

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>



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

The Jew/Atheist Paradox

When I recently wrote about [God-less Jews](#), I cited a [Harris survey](#) that surprised a lot of people. The majority of Jews don't believe in God. They are atheists. What makes this result even more interesting is another finding in a Pew Research Center survey on how Americans feel about [different religious and nonreligious groups](#): Jews are viewed the *most* warmly of all groups and atheists the *least* warmly. Go figure!

Other than members of their own sect, evangelical Christians give Jews the highest rating. This is a case of unrequited love because Jews rate evangelical Christians the lowest, below Muslims. Not surprisingly, Jews and atheists regard each other warmly, while both rank evangelical Christians at the bottom.

Christians may not know that most Jews are atheists, but they do know that religious Jews believe Jesus was just an ordinary Jew with extraordinary delusions of grandeur. And this rejection of Jesus inspired Christian anti-Semitism since the time of Jesus. So what has turned the anti-Semitism prevalent in my youth into today's philo-Semitism?

Many Christians began deemphasizing certain biblical passages that contributed to anti-Semitism and [perhaps even to the Holocaust](#). Less on Matthew 27:25, which says that the blood of Jesus will be on Jews and on their children. And less on John 8:44, the Devil is father of the Jews. Post-Holocaust Christians have concentrated more on Jews as "chosen people," where God the creator/father says about Abraham and his descendants in Genesis 12:3: "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you." What these com-



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.

bined passages tell me is that God and the Devil are both absentee fathers. Thanks, dads.

It wasn't until the late 1950s that I heard the term "Judeo-Christian," meant to encompass perceived common beliefs of Christianity and Judaism. I found this phrase odd, since many key beliefs of the two religions are so different (think Jesus). And I've heard Judeo-Christian used only by Christians, not by Jews. If Christians wish to be inclusive of monotheists, why not refer to our "Judeo-Christian-Islamic" heritage? After all, [Mary is mentioned more often in the Quran](#) than in the New Testament, and the Quran asserts that Jesus was the result of a miraculous virgin birth.

There is another reason many evangelical Christians strongly support the land of Israel and Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu, perhaps even more so than most Jews. In a word, it's "rapture." According to the strangest book in the New Testament, *Revelation*, there will be a final apocalyptic battle in Armageddon, where Isra-

el triumphs. Jesus then will return, take believers up to heaven, and incinerates everyone who doesn't believe in Jesus, including Jews. So much for God's chosen people! (If I were to watch this event unfold, I'd have the evidence to become a believer. But I guess I would be too late because evidence-free beliefs are required ahead of the event.)

I've focused on belief in God and the so-called holy books, but what about behavior? To overgeneralize, conservative religionists emphasize belief and liberal religionists emphasize behavior. Not coincidentally, liberals view atheists more favorably. I'll illustrate by citing two of our many religious, conservative, presidential candidates.

Ted Cruz, Senator from Texas, believes that atheists are unqualified to become president. He said, "Any president who doesn't [begin every day on his knees](#) isn't fit to be commander-in-chief of this country." Based on such bias, Cruz would also disqualify deists like our first four presidents: George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison.

Then there's Dr. Ben Carson. Presidential candidates certainly need protection from psychopaths; however, Carson wants the Secret Service to protect him from [secular progressives](#). I had never before heard secular progressives (liberal atheists and humanists) accused of being violent, but perhaps I've now gained insight into Carson's religious mindset. It requires a faith-based leap for me to believe his undocumented and unverified claims that as an angry teen he would [punch and stab](#) classmates, bludgeon his mother with a hammer, and commit other atrocities,

Herb Silverman cont.

until divine intervention brought Jesus into his life. Maybe Carson thinks Jesus saved him from his former "secular progressive" evil-doer ways. If I believed such a scenario, I, too, would want protection from secular progressives.

Those who don't trust atheists fear that society will fall apart as people stop believing in God. Maybe it's time for some evidence based on careful studies. Globally, the most [secular countries fare better](#) in terms of crime rates, prosperity, equality, freedom, democracy, women's rights, human rights, educational attainment, and life ex-

pectancy, while the most religious countries fare worse. Homicide rates are highest in religious countries and lowest in secular countries. The same correlation is true in the United States where, by nearly all measures of societal health, states that report the highest levels of belief in God fare worse than states with the lowest levels of belief in God.

That doesn't mean you should go around hugging all atheists (though I'm open to hugs), and it doesn't mean you should run from all religious believers. I recom-

mend learning more about individuals before judging them by their professed religious beliefs. In fact, I think some religious Jew once cautioned about [judging others](#). Sure wish I could get that message across to some presidential candidates.

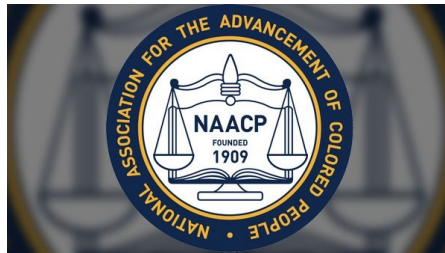
This piece was originally posted 11/18/2015 on huffingtompost.com

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 Q4, 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 Cares



November's volunteer activity was participation in the Community Potluck held weekly at Mall Park on the city's eastside. SHL members provided and served food to community members who may not otherwise have a hot meal that day.



Caring for Our Own

SHL member Mickie McClain suffered a stroke on Sunday, November 8. She has no insurance, and her partner Bernie is disabled and cannot drive.

For those who wish to help, donations for Mickie can be made in any of the following ways:

- via [SHL's online donation form](#) (specify the donation is "for Mickie") **
- via [PayPal](#) payable to mcclainbernie@yahoo.com **
- via check payable to Bernie McClain sent to:

Mickie & Bernie McClain
319 Merrimack Blvd
Apt 1104
Moncks Corner, SC 29461

** If possible, make your payment directly from your bank account to avoid credit card fees being withheld from Mickie's payment.

Also, Bernie and their 13-year-old daughter Miranda need rides from their home in Moncks Corner to visit Mickie at Trident Medical Center as she gradually recovers her health. If you can help, please check the [SHL Facebook event](#) to sign up for a turn.



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