



The Separationist

Volume 23, Issue 4

April, 2016

Vyckie Garrison

My Escape from the Quiverfull Movement

Sunday, April 17, 2016, 4:00 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.

Vyckie Garrison was once a prominent member of the Quiverfull community, a rapidly growing Christian fundamentalist movement that bans birth control and encourages huge, "Biblical families" such as the Duggar Family of TLCs 19 and Counting fame.

Garrison edited and published a Christian "pro-life, pro-family" newspaper for 16+ years in northeast Nebraska while home-churching, home birthing, and home schooling seven children. She made waves when she left the Quiverfull movement, divorced her husband, and began speaking out against the lifestyle.

Vyckie has appeared on Al Jazeera, CNN To-



night, Inside Edition, The Joy Behar Show, The Secret Lives of Women, The Story with Dick Gordon, as well as numerous podcasts and radio programs including Thom Hartmann, The Friendly Atheist, The Thinking Atheist, Living After Faith and Godless Bitches.

Garrison is The American Atheist Association's current Atheist of the Year.

She is a well-respected adversary of Biblical patriarchy and the damag-

es that it can inflict. She started the blog "No Longer Quivering" to provide support to women and children who are escaping abusive religious movements and to provide the public with accurate and compassionate information on the unique challenges faced by the spiritually abused.

When: Sunday, April 17, 2016 at 4pm

Where: Gage Hall, 4 Archdale Street

Cost: Free!


SHL will provide light snacks during the check-in and social period prior to the meeting.

After our meeting, please join us for dinner at Toast restaurant, 155 Meeting Street - a short walk away.

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.

April 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Flowertown Festival	2 Flowertown
3 Flowertown AU Meeting	4	5	6	7 Happy Hour	8	9 Movie Club
10	11	12 Girls Night Out	13	14	15	16
17 Monthly Meeting	18 	19	20	21	22 	23 Board Game Night
24 Book Club	25	26 Team Trivia	27	28	29 Blues Cruise 	30

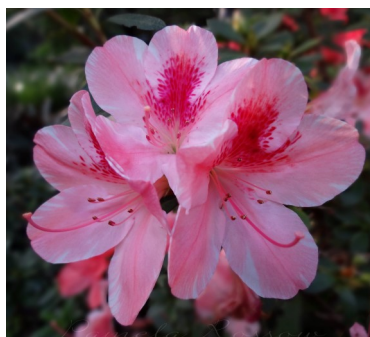
Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

Flowertown Festival

Friday, April 1—Sunday, April 3, 2016

Downtown Summerville

SHL will have a booth at the Flowertown Festival in Summerville this year! Please consider signing up for



a shift to hand out humanist goody bags and let the community know about us... or just stop by to say hello! This would be a great time to wear your SHL – or other favorite freethought – T-shirt!

The 2016 dates are Friday, April 1, through Sunday, April 3. The festival hours are Friday and Saturday 9 AM – 6 PM and Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM. We are at booth M236, which is on Main Street near the children's rides. It's a little closer to the center of the festival than we were the last 3 years.

If you'd like to sign up for a shift to staff our booth, contact Sharon Strong at president@lowcountryhumanists.org.

This is an excellent opportunity to let other like-minded people in the area know that not only are they not alone, but that Charleston is home to one of the most active and vibrant humanist communities in the region.

We hope to help remove the stigma of the negative stereotype traditionally associated with atheists and atheism by demonstrating that we, as humanists, atheists, agnostics, and others, are normal, happy,

ethical, and productive citizens, just like they are. We want to show that we are their friends and neighbors.

We can do this by presenting a positive image of ourselves, by sharing what we DO believe in, by showing that we have an identity of our own (as opposed to merely a reaction to religion), but, most importantly, by just being there.

See an event you want to attend? We'd love to have you join us! Some events ask for an RSVP which you can easily do via [Meetup](#) or [Facebook](#). This gives the event organizers a count of how many are attending which is especially important when making reservations at restaurants, providing supplies, etc.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State Reorganizing Meeting

Sunday, April 3, 7:00pm

Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St

Although not an SHL event, SHL members may be interested in attending this event.

The local chapter of AU is being revitalized! Come for an informal organizational meeting, get to know the new chapter president Rev. Randy Boone, and bring a potluck dish to share.

Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

SHL Happy Hour

Thursday, April 7, 2016, 6:00pm

Holy City Brewing, 4155 Dorchester Rd, North Charleston (take the driveway between Palmetto Colli- sion and the Honda motorcycle dealer and drive to the back)

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 Holy City Brewing. Everyone is welcome. Don't be shy - come join us! **RSVP requested via [Meetup](#) or [Facebook](#).**

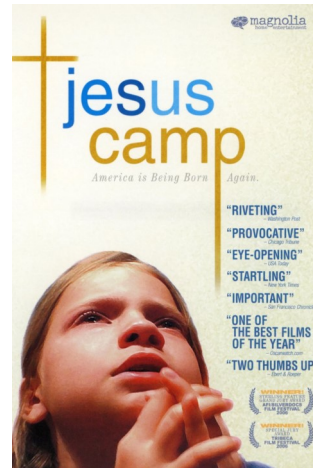


SHL Movie Club

Saturday, April 9, 2016, 3:00pm

Home of Sue Edward, 20 Wespanee Dr, Charleston (West Ashley)

Join us for a viewing of the documentary film Jesus Camp on Saturday, April 9, at the home of SHL member Sue Edward.



Filmmakers Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady visit an evangelical Christian summer camp called Kids on Fire, where children take part in programs designed to strengthen and intensify their beliefs. The camp's founder, Becky Fischer, discusses her mission to indoctrinate youths in the word of God, while young campers play certain combat video games and talk about their love for Jesus. The camp was shut down following the release of this film due to public outrage.

And to calm your nerves, we will follow the film with a short video about Camp Quest, the secular summer camp for kids.

Bring your own snacks and beverages. Following the movie we will discuss the film over dinner at a nearby restaurant. **RSVP requested via [Meetup](#) or [Facebook](#).**

Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

Girls Night Out

Tuesday, April 12, 2016, 7:00pm

Bambu, 604 Coleman Blvd, Mt. Pleasant

A fun night for secular girls* to socialize! If its a nice night, we will sit outside on their beautiful patio.

RSVP requested via [Meetup](#) or [Facebook](#).

* Nursing infants okay but otherwise adults only, please.

Bambu

SHL Monthly Meeting

Sunday, April 17, 2016, 4:00pm

Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St, Charleston

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

Board Game Night

Saturday, April 23, 2016, 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 supplier 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.

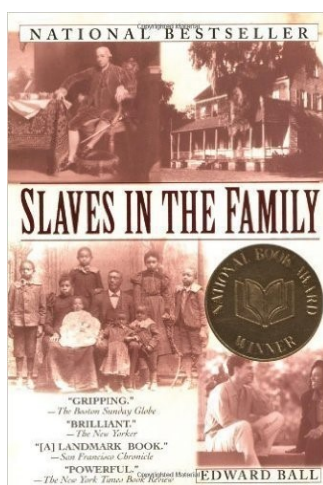


Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

SHL Book Club: Slaves in the Family

Sunday, April 24, 2016, 4:00pm

Barnes & Noble, 1812 Sam Rittenberg Blvd, Charleston



This April, we are discussing **Slaves in the Family** by Edward Ball. This is a fascinating book describing Charleston's slaving past through the lens of the Ball family's history of slave labor plantation ownership. This is a celebrated narrative of nonfiction that won the National Book Award. Although the story is told about plantation life in Charleston, it has the power to change the American conversation about race.

Afterward we invite you to join us for dinner at a nearby restaurant where the conversation always continues.

If you would like to read ahead, in May we will discuss one of New York Times Notable Books of 2015 entitled *Killing a King: the Assassination of Yithak Rabin and the Remaking of Israel* by Dan Ephron. The NYT described Ephron's first book as "an electrifying political narrative twinned with an old-fashioned crime story -- of the sort that ought to be taught in journalism schools for its restraint, pacing and expert creation of suspense."

You can purchase copies of these books from Amazon on the SHL page and a portion of the purchase price will automatically be donated to SHL.

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

Tuesday, April 26, 2016, 7:00pm

Bucca's Bar & Grill, 1000 Tanner Ford Blvd, Hanahan

NOTE: THIS IS A NEW VENUE!



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.

RSVP requested via [Meetup](#) or [Facebook](#)

Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

Blues Cruise

Friday, April 29, 2016, 6:30—9:30pm

Charleston City Marina, 17 Lockwood Dr, Charleston

A fun night of BBQ and dancing to Blues while enjoying sunset over our beautiful Charleston harbor. A two hour harbor cruise includes a yummy BBQ buffet and a great blues band. Boarding is at 6:30 at the Charleston City Marina; departure is at 7:00. **You must buy your ticket and parking voucher in advance** by calling (843) 722-1112 or online at www.CharlestonHarborTours.com. Be sure to use the promo code **SHL** to receive our group discount. *RSVP requested via [Meetup](#) or [Facebook](#)*

We Need YOU!

SHL would not be able to provide our members with such a large variety of activities without dedicated volunteers to lead them. We are looking for volunteers to lead the following activities—without volunteers we are in danger of losing these activities. Can this be you?



Family activities coordinator—the family activities coordinator schedules playdates, outings, and other activities for families with young children, makes reservations (when needed), and welcomes attendees. Previous events have included playdates at local playgrounds, outings at parks and museums, etc. Time commitment: once per month (more if desired).

Have something else in mind? We are always open to offering new activities for our members—either regularly scheduled or one-time events. Some of these may be game nights, bowling, bocce, bridge walks, billiards, political discussions, river floats, kayaking, biking, teen activities, etc.

If you are interested in the above volunteer position or in organizing another event, contact president@lowcountryhumanists.org. THANK YOU!

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Remembering David Walsh

By Sharon Fratepietro

David Walsh died on March 19, 2016. He and his wife Wendy were members of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry for longer than I can remember. In recent years they did not travel often to SHL events from their home in Hollywood, but I was always glad to greet them when they did.

Although I did not know David well, I did know the most important thing about him: He was a genuinely nice man. If he ever had an enemy, I would be truly surprised. David was always in a good humor, always eager to chat, and always helpful if help was needed.

A couple of examples will show you what I mean. David and Wendy were active members of the ACLU of South Carolina for a time, as were Herb and I. At one state meeting we learned that the ACLU SC was very low on money, and a request was made for someone willing to get donations. David's hand went up first—and last...no one wanted to solicit other people for money except David. He said he truly enjoyed doing it. We said thank you and meant it. He was named development chair on the spot.

At another time, I was planning to visit a charitable organization in Nicaragua. I asked the charity what I could take along in my suitcase that would be helpful (except money). They asked for medical textbooks for their Nicaraguan doctor, and vitamins for the many undernourished children who lived in the impoverished community the charity had founded. David had worked as a medical consultant, so I mentioned to him that I had no idea where to get donated vitamins. He said, "No problem. I have a professional contact at a pharmaceutical company in the Upstate."

A week later the pharmaceutical company let me know they were sending some free vitamins to my house. Twenty-four hours later I arrived home from work to find six hundred (600) pounds of children's vitamins on my front porch. So much for tucking them in my suitcase—or even carrying them into the house! I just hoped it wouldn't start raining. After a hurried call to the charity in Nicaragua, I arranged for FedEx to take them to Norfolk, Virginia and then transport them by ship to Managua. When I arrived at the Nicaraguan community, the staff was thrilled at the two-year vitamin supply that was sailing their way. Thanks to David again.

I will miss David's friendly face and good spirit. I hope we will still see Wendy from time to time at SHL events.



If you'd like to send a note to Wendy, here is her address:

Wendy Walsh
5223 Old Washington Course
Hollywood SC 29449

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 Q2 2016 is [Student Action with Farmworkers](#).

SAF works with farmworkers, students, and advocates in the Southeast and nationwide to create a more just agricultural system. Since 1992, SAF has engaged thousands of students, farmworker youth, and community members in the farmworker movement.

SAF changes the lives of middle, high school, and out of school migrant youth through the [Levante Leadership Institute](#).

SAF trains, mentors, and supports NC college students to develop organizing skills and become leaders in the farmworker movement through the [Student Organizing School](#).

SAF mobilizes hundreds of college students through its [Into the Fields internship](#) and [Sowing Seeds for Change fellowship](#). SAF interns & fellows provide much-needed skills, energy, and time to farmworker organizations and receive a life-changing, educational experience in return.

SAF reaches out to thousands of community members by raising awareness of injustices in the agricultural industry through its From the Ground Up program. SAF uses actions, presentations, publications and email alerts, to inform and mobilize students and community members around current legislation, consumer boycotts, and other justice efforts initiated by farmworkers. SAF coordinates an annual national week of action, [Farmworker Awareness Week](#), to raise awareness about farmworker issues on campuses and in communities.



Each summer, during the prime of South Carolina's growing season, an estimated 15-30 thousand migrant farmworkers flow through fields from the Upstate to the Lowcountry, often working dawn to dusk to cultivate, harvest and pack crops.

Locally, SAF places interns in the camps and fields of Johns Island. The students' work includes translating for the workers and helping them gain access to health care, education, and legal and other support services.

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!](#)

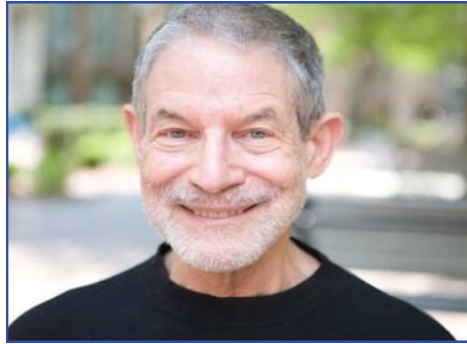
Herb Silverman

Time For an Atheist Candidate

I recently wrote about the professed religious views of presidential candidates. I asked my favorite candidate, Bernie Sanders, at a public forum in South Carolina, if he would acknowledge being an atheist. Sanders, who almost always gives direct answers to questions, said, "Not gonna happen." At least he didn't lie about his religious beliefs, as many candidates do. The most surprising and disappointing reaction to my attempt to "out" Bernie Sanders came from other atheists who support Sanders. They also assume that this Jewish socialist is an atheist, but they think he should stay in the closet.

Here are a few of the comments I heard: "You should know better than to think an open atheist could ever be elected president. Bernie does not want to commit political suicide by acknowledging he is an atheist. Bernie should wait to get elected, and then say he is an atheist. People who want political power better not reveal little quirks that would alienate a great majority of voters. Most religious Americans don't believe in evolution, so they certainly wouldn't vote for an atheist. This country is not yet ready to elect an atheist to high office."

If these critics are correct that the country is not yet ready to elect an acknowledged atheist, then how can we change "not yet ready" to "ready?" If we do nothing, the country will never be ready. Our country was once not willing to elect African-Americans, women, gays, and other minority groups. The model for atheists is more similar to



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.

that of gays because African-Americans and women could never be closeted. Attitudes toward gays changed rapidly when people realized that their friends, neighbors, family members, and even famous people are gay. And so it can be for atheists. Here are two attitude-changing national organizations that aim to end the secrecy.

Openly Secular: Its purpose is to provide support and encouragement for atheists, agnostics, humanists, and other nonreligious people who feel they can't be open about who they are. They provide resources to help secular people live full, honest, and open lives. Their goal is to eliminate discrimination and increase acceptance of the secular community. Their website contains dozens of short videos made by ordinary and extraordinary people from all backgrounds in all walks of life, describing why they became openly secular. Here is mine.

Freethought Equality Fund: This is a Political Action Committee (PAC) dedicated to expanding voter choices by backing the candidacy of open nontheists. The PAC supports candidates who want to protect the separation of religion and government and defend the civil liberties of secular Americans. The PAC also aims to dispel the bigoted notion that atheists are immoral and lack values. It is the first such PAC with a paid staff. (Disclosure: I'm an unpaid advisory board member.)

Both Openly Secular and the Freethought Equality Fund think the country is ready to elect non-religious candidates. More than 20 percent of Americans now claim no religious identity, and the percentage is even higher among young people. Nonreligious Americans are one of the largest minorities in the United States, but you'd never know it because they have lacked political power. Interestingly, Congressman Barney Frank publicly came out as gay in 1987, but didn't come out as an atheist until he left office.

My candidate Bernie Sanders may not win the Democratic nomination, but he can show the country that he is one of many reasonable and honest atheists. And voters willing to support a Jewish socialist are not likely to abandon Sanders if he says he is an atheist. In fact, I think he would energize a lot of "nones," people with no religion who cringe when political candidates try to turn their personal supernatural beliefs into government

Herb Silverman cont.

policy, and claim a “holier than thou” morality.

Speaking of holier than thou, Pastor Mark Burns, a pastor in South Carolina and a Donald Trump surrogate, said at a Trump rally in North Carolina that Bernie Sanders doesn't believe in God and that he needs to find Jesus. (I agree with the former statement, but not the latter.) A case can be made that the Jesus of the Gospels wants us to feed the poor, love our neighbors, welcome the immigrant, promote

peace and social justice, turn the other cheek to insults, and be humble. Jesus is even more of a Jewish socialist than Bernie. Jesus wants us to sell our possessions and give to the poor (Matthew 19: 21), share what we own with one another (Acts 2:44), and not brag about being rich (Mark 10:25).

Regardless of labels, it sounds like Donald Trump, not Bernie Sanders, is the one who needs to find Jesus—or at least to take seriously the more compassion-

ate passages in the Gospels. Also, Jesus and Bernie both spent their early years as carpenters, not hiring carpenters to build expensive towers for the pleasure of wealthy people.

We should judge candidates by their behavior and political positions, not on their professed religious beliefs. And I won't even mention in this political season what Jesus said about hypocrites.

This piece was originally posted 3/22/2016 on huffingtonpost.com

Become a dues-paying member of SHL!

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.

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.

SHL Board for 2015-2016

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The Newsletter of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry

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