



# The Separationist

Volume 23, Issue 5

May, 2016

## Member Ice Cream Social And Board Elections

Sunday, May 15, 2016, 2:00—5:00 pm

Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, 1254 Long Point Rd, Mt. Pleasant

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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.

What could be better than cold, creamy ice cream on a hot day?



This year our annual May gathering will be an ice cream social held at the [Charles Pinckney National Historic Site](#) in Mt. Pleasant. If coming from I-526, take the Long Point Rd exit (exit 28) and turn left - drive about 2 1/2 miles and the en-

trance will be on your right. If coming from Hwy 17 North, turn onto Long Point Rd - drive about 1/2 mile and the entrance will be on your left. There are no entrance fees for Charles Pinckney NHS.

Look for us in the picnic area. SHL will provide the ice cream—please bring your own toppings and accoutrements!

In addition, there will be a very brief business meeting in order to elect our board members for 2016-17.

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 - we will return to our regular meeting format in September.



In addition, feel free to come early and explore the Historic Site. Activities include a walking trail and a museum located inside the visitors center. The site is open from 9:00am—5:00pm.



**We will not have a formal speaker meeting this month. However, we will have a very short business meeting during the ice cream social to elect the SHL Board for 2016 - 2017. All dues-paying members present at the ice cream social 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.

## May 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5 <a href="#">Reason de Mayo</a>	6	7 <a href="#">Volunteer Activity</a> <a href="#">Movie Club</a>
8	9	10	11 <a href="#">Happy Hour</a>	12	13	14
15 <a href="#">Ice Cream Social</a>	16	17 <a href="#">Girls Night Out</a>	18	19	20	21
22 <a href="#">Book Club</a>	23	24 <a href="#">Team Trivia</a>	25	26	27	28
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# Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

## Reason de Mayo

Thursday, May 5, 2016, 7:00—9:00pm

Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St, Charleston

The National Day of Prayer has been violating the Constitution since 1952. Reasonable people all over the country now celebrate the National Day of Reason. Join us Thursday May 5 for Reason de Mayo/Reason Fiesta – since it's also Cinco de Mayo!



Emcee extraordinaire Jim Lundy opens the mic so people can share their personal path to reason. Then, Bonnie Cleaveland and Ken Catchpole will lead a lively, participative roundtable on how our brains are wired for illogic...and how we can overcome those cognitive glitches. \$10 suggested donation at the door, with all proceeds to Student Action for Farmworkers, SHL's current Charity of the Quarter!

<https://www.saf-unite.org/>

## Adopt a Highway

Saturday, May 7, 2016, 8:50am

1011 Harbor View Rd, Charleston

Our next trash pick up will be on Saturday, May 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 the bank at 1011 Harbor View Rd (next to the Harris Teeter), James Island. Please join us!

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.

# Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

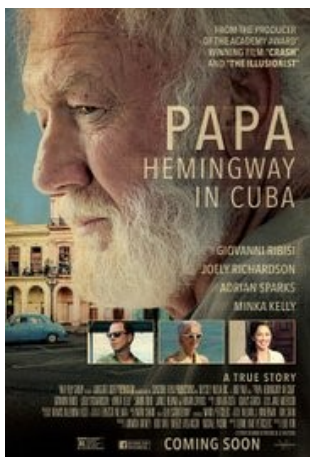
## SHL Movie Club

Saturday, May 7, 2016, time TBD

Terrace Theater, 1956 Maybank Hwy, James Island

Join us for a viewing of the film [Papa: Hemingway in Cuba](#) on Saturday, May 7, at the Terrace Theater.

**Showtimes have not yet been posted, so please check Facebook, Meetup, our website, or subscribe to the Movie Club email for updates.**



The first Hollywood film to shoot on location in Cuba since the 1959 revolution, *Papa: Hemingway in Cuba* is the true-life story of a young journalist who finds a father figure in legendary author Ernest Hemingway. Their relationship began in the late 1950's when Ed Myers, then a junior reporter at The Miami Herald, wrote a fan letter to his idol. Myers thought he was being pranked when the larger than life Hemingway phoned the newsroom a week later, inviting him to Havana.

Following the movie we will discuss the film over dinner at a nearby restaurant (please wait in the theater lobby as some of us like to stay and view all of the credits). *RSVP requested via [Meetup](#) or [Facebook](#).*

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

## SHL Happy Hour

Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 6:00pm

Home Team BBQ, 126 Williman St, 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 be meeting at the newest Home Team BBQ location on peninsular Charleston. And we have the extra treat of some great blues with Bruce Katz who will be playing later in the evening. Everyone is welcome. Don't be shy – come join us! *RSVP requested via [Meetup](#) or [Facebook](#).*



## Ice Cream Social

Sunday, May 15, 2016, 2:00pm

Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, Mt. Pleasant

Join us for ice cream and board elections. See [page 1](#) for details.

# Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

## Girls Night Out

Tuesday, May 17, 2016, 6:00pm

The Alley, 131 Columbus St, Charleston

A fun night for secular girls\* to socialize! This month we will try our skill at bowling. Half price lanes, \$2 beers, and \$2 hotdogs. Woohoo! **RSVP requested via [Meetup](#) or [Facebook](#).**



\* Nursing infants ok, but otherwise adults only.

If you would like to read ahead, in June we are reading **Islam and the Future of Tolerance: A Dialogue by Sam Harris** (10/6/2015). This is a transcribed dialogue between Harris, a famous atheist, and Maajid Nawaz, a former radical. The following description is very compelling: *These two have produced something genuinely new: they engage one of the most polarizing issues of our time –fearlessly and fully– and actually make progress. The authors demonstrate how two people with very different views can find common ground.*

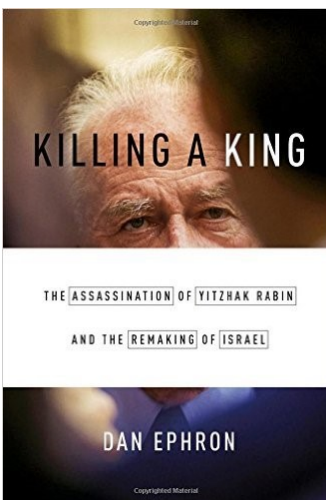
You can purchase copies of these books from Amazon.

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>

## SHL Book Club: Killing a King

Sunday, May 22, 2016, 4:00pm

Barnes & Noble, 1812 Sam Rittenberg Blvd, Charleston



This May we will be discussing one of New York Times Notable Books of 2015 entitled **Killing a King: the Assassination of Yithak Rabin and the Remaking of Israel** (10/19/2015) by Dan Ephron. The NYT described the 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."

## Team Trivia

Tuesday, May 24 2016, 7:00pm

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



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](#).**



# Just for Fun



## 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!](#)*

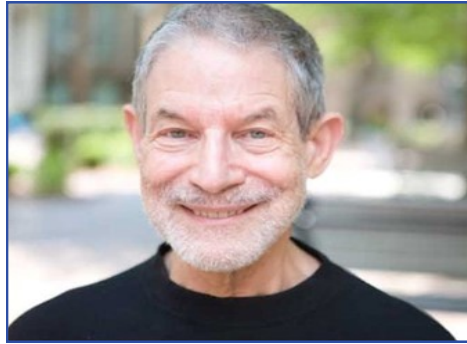
# Herb Silverman

## To Talk or Not To Talk (About Religion)

I grew up hearing that it was impolite to discuss in public the three most interesting topics—politics, sex, and religion. Discussions about politics and sex are omnipresent today, with religion often used to justify views on politics and sex. For instance, many liberals promote a social agenda with passages like Mark 12:31, “Love your neighbor,” while many conservatives promote a different social agenda with passages like Leviticus 18:22, which refers to male homosexuality as an abomination. But you rarely hear them cite other abominations in Leviticus, like eating pork, having tattoos, mixing seeds, or wearing a garment made from two kinds of material.

We all have the free speech right to quote selected passages from holy books or talk about religion to anyone who will listen. However, I wish politicians would recognize the importance of separating personal religious beliefs from legislation that affects those who don’t share their beliefs. The more a politician equates public policy with religious belief, the less likely I am to support him or her.

Politicians aside, when should we talk about religion with family, friends, and others? A recent piece in the Atlantic categorizes Americans according to the frequency with which they talk about religion in public. Only a third do so at least once a month. Evangelicals do it most frequently, minority religions less frequently, while atheists and



**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.

agnostics are the least inclined to talk publicly about religion.

Understandably, we like to talk about things important to us. That’s one reason evangelicals talk about religion more frequently than atheists. I grew up as an Orthodox Jew in Philadelphia, so religion was an integral part of my life and I often talked about it with my Jewish friends. But unlike evangelicals, I didn’t discuss religion with people outside my “tribe” because I had neither the interest nor the belief that I could “save” someone from eternal damnation.

When I stopped believing in God, I became a mostly quiet atheist. But as I got older and more comfortable with myself, I didn’t hesitate to tell selected people about my religious (or non-religious) views. However, religion wasn’t much discussed when I lived in academic communities in New York and Massachusetts because religion was just not important.

That changed in 1976 when I moved to South Carolina to teach at the College of Charleston. Being an atheist at a secular academic institution wasn’t a problem, but religion is extremely important in South Carolina, so it frequently enters conversations. Many atheists are quiet about their religious views, especially in the Bible Belt, not wanting to appear impolite or offend others. However, being polite by avoiding conflicts has never been a guiding light for me.

I received national publicity in 1990 when I declared for governor of South Carolina, becoming the “Candidate without a Prayer” in order to challenge the state constitutional provision that prohibited atheists from holding public office, a challenge I eventually won in the South Carolina Supreme Court. After that, strangers who had seen me on TV or in the newspaper would stop me in the street to discuss my religious views. Some thanked me for being open about my atheism, while others had trouble understanding how anyone could possibly be an atheist. Despite frequent attempts, nobody succeeded in converting me. I’ve also had public debates with Christian leaders, usually fundamentalists. My personality, along with job security, enabled me to thoroughly enjoy religious conversations with those whose beliefs were considerably different from mine.

As with many vocal atheists, I initially thought I could apply logical arguments and biblical contradictions to show religious



## Herb Silverman cont.

people that there probably is no god. I've since learned that you can't reason someone out of a belief that they didn't come to through reason. We can listen and try to understand one another. We can find points of agreement, and perhaps even become friends. But at the very least we should be able to reach a point where we agree to disagree, and move on without hostility.

I've become more sympathetic toward religious fundamentalists who want to convert me because

I now understand why it's so important to them. Since I came to atheism through following what I consider to be a sensible evidence-based path, it doesn't much matter to me whether others adopt my position. For fundamentalists, on the other hand, eternal life is at stake. And for many of them, that's more important than life itself. I find such a worldview odd at best, and potentially dangerous. But for those who believe in a god who wants them to love their neighbors, help the less fortunate, and fol-

low the Golden Rule, I can happily cooperate in doing good works with them.

There is one thing I won't compromise on, though. I will continue to fight nonviolently against those who try to force their religious beliefs on people who don't share such beliefs. Especially politicians.

This piece was originally posted 4/27/2016 on [huffingtonpost.com](http://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

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!

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# 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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## 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.*