



The Separationist

Volume 23, Issue 8

August 2016

Summer in Charleston

Even though some of our events are on break for the summer, we still have plenty of activities to keep you busy! Come join us!

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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.

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.

SHL Happy Hour

Friday, August 5, 2016, 7:00pm

843 Korean BBQ & Sushi House, 6601 Rivers 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 be trying something new! We will be meeting for a later dinner and for those who want to stay, some karaoke after. We hope to see you there!

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



Charleston Pride Parade

Saturday, August 13, 2016, 8:30am

Wragg Mall, Ann and Meeting Streets, Charleston

Join SHL as we support the Charleston Pride Parade 2016! Enjoy walking in the parade with your SHL friends. A festival follows at 10am in Brittlebank Park for those who wish to stay and play!

The parade starts at 9am sharp and participants must arrive at Wragg Mall by 8:30. Park in the Visitor's Center garage which is across Meeting Street from Wragg Mall and look for the SHL banner near the corner of Meeting and Ann Streets. Feel free to bring hand-held signs (no poles or sticks). The parade route ends on Broad Street in front of Sergeant Jasper and shuttle buses will take you back to the parking garage or to Brittlebank Park for the Pride Festival.

Questions? Call Bonnie Cleaveland at 843-224-0421.



Congratulations from SHL to Charleston Pride on its 10th anniversary!

Upcoming SHL Events cont.

Girls Night Out

Thursday, August 18, 2016, 7:00pm

SOL Southwest Kitchen and Tequila Bar, 1101 Stockade Lane, Mt Pleasant



**SOUTHWEST KITCHEN
& TEQUILA BAR**

A fun night for secular girls to socialize! Nursing infants okay, but otherwise adults only please.

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



Team Trivia

Thursday, August 25, 2016, 7:00pm

Liberty Tap Room, 1028 Johnnie Dodds Blvd, Mt Pleasant



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.

Team Trivia offers trivia nights at various places throughout the Charleston area on different days and times. Team members are welcome to play using the team name at any Team Trivia night.



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.

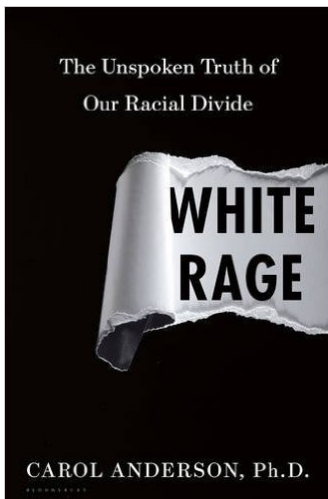
Contact president@lowcountryhumanists.org with your ideas!

Upcoming SHL Events

SHL Book Club

Sunday, August 28, 2016, 4:00pm

Barnes & Noble, 1812 Sam Rittenberg Blvd, Charleston
(we'll be in the music department)



In August, we are reading **White Rage: The unspoken truth of our racial divide** by Carol Anderson (2016, 164 p). This recent book has received widespread national press and praise since it was published in May. Dr. Anderson, professor of African American studies at Emory University, writes in a compelling and dramatic way on an important new dimension

to the national conversation about race in the US. The Boston Globe describes the work as "a powerful survey of American history as seen in the violent white reactions to black progress, from Reconstruction to the great migration to the current political landscape."

Please note that it is not a strict rule that you have read the book by the time of the club meeting. We find that those who have not read the material before hand can contribute interesting insights to the topic and then are

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>

Mark Your Calendars!

The Holy City will be the host of two, count 'em, TWO major secular conferences/conventions in 2017!

[American Humanist Association](#)

[Annual Conference: June 8–11, 2017](#)

The American Humanist Association, the oldest and largest humanist organization in the United States, has held an annual conference since its founding in 1941 so that humanists, atheists, and freethinkers can



gather together for a weekend of informative lectures, networking, and fun activities.

[American Atheists](#)

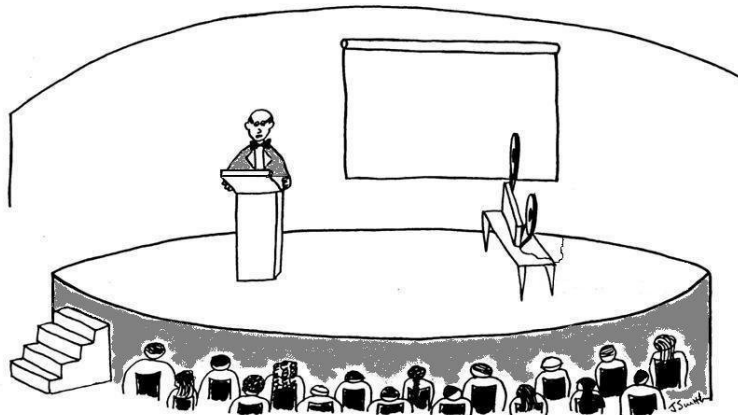
[Solar Eclipse Convention: August 19–21, 2017](#)

We will present a conference focused on science, space, technology, and (of course) atheism featuring prominent academics, scientists, and community leaders during the weekend and, on Monday, will host an eclipse watch-party (narrated by a surprise special guest!) in Charleston.

Charleston is the last major city in the path of the eclipse's path. This is the first total solar eclipse to cross the continental United States since the 1970s!



Just for Fun

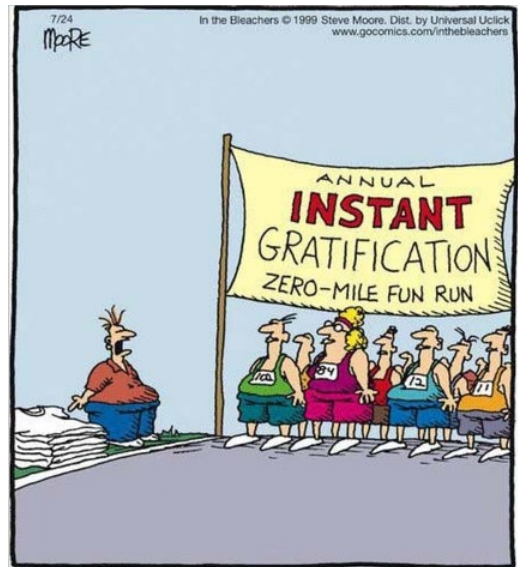


"Thus, when the film is run backwards, we see that it contains a hidden message: the glaciers are actually getting larger."

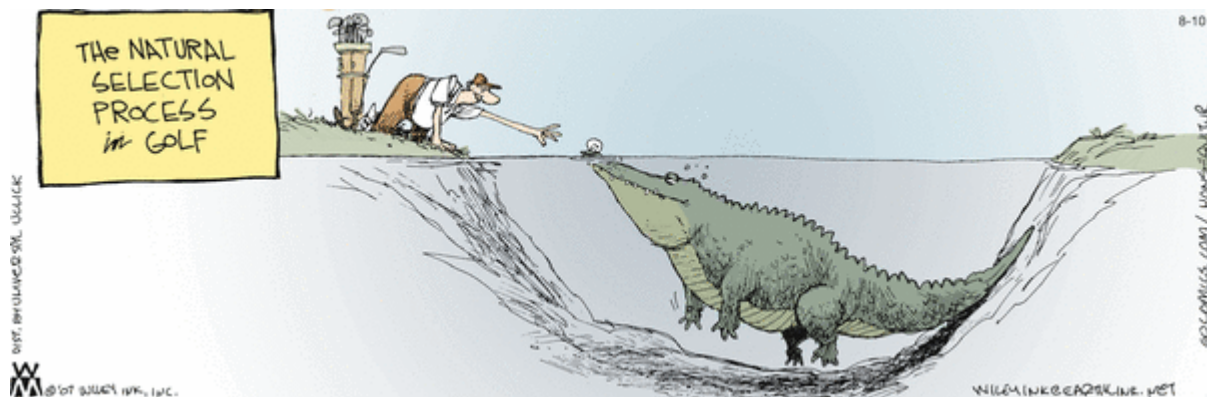


GLASBERGEN

"Tell her you like long walks in the country and snuggling on the sofa, but don't mention anything about drinking from the toilet."



"Runners to your mark. Get set. Go! ... OK, come get your T-shirts."



Herb Silverman

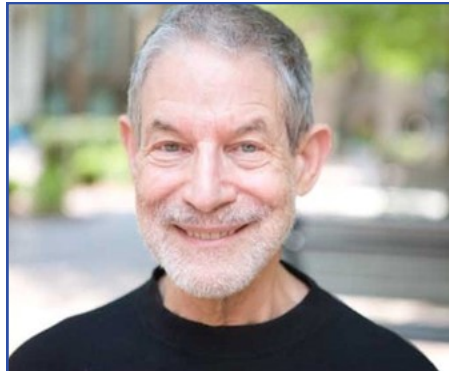
Sharia, Christian, or Constitutional Law?

In a recent [piece](#), I described striking similarities between Donald Trump and Newt Gingrich, and why Newt would be such a compatible running mate. After the attack in Nice, France, and just before Trump picked Mike Pence as his running mate, it appears that Gingrich made one last attempt to show he could be even Trumpier than Trump. Gingrich said, “We should [test every person here who is of a Muslim background](#), and if they believe in Sharia, they should be deported.” Aside from violating the U.S. Constitution, how impractical would it be to round up all Muslims in the country and give them such a religious test? Many patriotic Americans who practice the Muslim faith would undoubtedly become anti-American if required to take that test.

America is an exceptional country because our founders wisely established a secular nation whose authority rests with “We the people,” not “Thou the deity.” Our Constitution makes no mention of God, Jesus, or Allah, and our government must not favor one religion over another or religion over non-religion. Secular values are American values that benefit all of us, religious and nonreligious. We may believe anything we want, but we can’t break the law without paying the consequences.

Religious liberty means you can promote your religion, but you can’t impose your beliefs on others. We are free to practice any

religion as long as that practice does not harm others. Sharia law is certainly a problem in some countries, but in this country I



Herb Silverman is founder and President Emeritus 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.

worry more about conservative Christians who try to use the law to impose their beliefs on other people. Under the guise of religious liberty, some invoke their religion to discriminate and take away rights from those who don’t share their religion. While the majority in this country may be Christian, we are no more a Christian nation than we are a white nation.

Ironically, conservative Christians who seem most worried about Sharia agree with more tenets of Sharia law than do atheists like me. From what I understand, Sharia is opposed to abortion, contraceptives, and sex education, considers being gay a sin, has little tolerance for other religions, and treats women as subservient to men while claim-

ing women are privileged within the religion. Sharia also wants a religion-based government. Hmm, seems to me I’ve heard that song before.

Trump’s “safe” choice of Mike Pence gives Christian evangelicals a more comfortable excuse for supporting Trump besides his being a good family man with his most recent wife. Pence’s religious views are consistent with Republican positions that include discrimination against women, gays, and other minorities. In fact, the Republican Party’s latest platform demands that lawmakers use religion as a guide, stipulating “[that man-made law must be consistent with God-given, natural rights](#).”

So what about man-made laws in our Constitution that members of Congress have sworn to uphold? While I don’t recommend deporting people because of their religion, here is a legitimate question to ask all who seek public office: “Will support and enforce the laws of the land even if you believe your religion or your god tells you to do otherwise?” Neither Sharia nor Christian law should take priority over our secular Constitutional law. Theocracies rule by “God’s law,” but we are not now and must never become a theocracy even though there have been numerous attempts by Americans to bring this about.

I would be just as worried living under Christian Reconstruction-

Herb Silverman cont.

ism as under any version of Sharia Law. R.J. [Rushdoony](#) founded Christian Reconstructionism in the 1960s, and his most influential book was *The Institutes of Biblical Law*. His theonomy, or government by God, leaves no room for tolerance or other points of view. Rushdoony wanted our American laws to be based strictly on biblical principles, including death sentences for homosexuality, adultery, lying about one's virginity, idolatry, and blasphemy. While some of his more inflammatory rhetoric has not gained

much traction, he has influenced Christians like Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and many others to become engaged in politics and advocate for homeschooling, creationism, and opposition to all scientific and social issues that conflict with a literal interpretation of the Bible. Many Christian conservatives are advocating for a kinder and gentler Reconstructionism than Rushdoony's, but that is just as un-American as Sharia law.

"In God we trust" became our controversial national motto in 1956 at the height of the Cold War, replacing the more inclusive *E pluribus unum*, Latin for "out of many, one." We are one nation under the Constitution, and our bedrock, secular principle is in the Constitution we trust.

This piece was originally posted 7/20/2016 on herbsilverman.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 2016 is [Birthdays For All](#).

Birthdays For All is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Charleston, South Carolina. We operate on the

belief that every child deserves to celebrate their birthday. Our mission is to brighten the lives of children in Foster Care by providing birthday presents on their special day.

We work with the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) to get wishlists from foster children so

that they can receive the gifts they really want. We are the only nonprofit providing birthday presents to foster children in the Lowcountry, including Charleston, Berkley and Dorchester counties.

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!](#)



Our Officers

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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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The Separationist

The Newsletter of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry

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