



The Separationist

Volume 23, Issue 11

November, 2016

Roundtable Discussion “Controversial Topics”

Sunday, Nov 13, 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.

*Note: our November meeting will be held on the **second Sunday**.*

Continuing an old SHL tradition begun by Roger Prevost and Dave Brown years ago, rather than having a guest speaker this monthly meeting will be a roundtable discussion of topics that even we are likely to disagree about.

Join SHL Founder Herb Silverman and board member Bonnie Cleaveland as they lead us in a fast-paced group discussion.



Bonnie Cleaveland

Four topics are on the agenda:

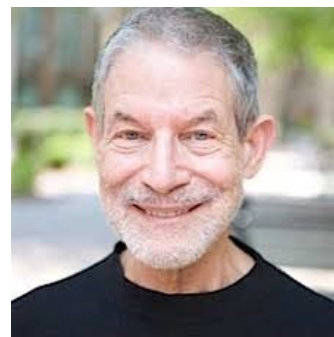
- Is it intolerant to criticize Islam? Why should we – or should we not – criticize Islam?

- In order to decrease religion’s harms in the world, is it necessary to have in-your-face atheists being extremely critical of religion, or is it better to present a more loving, humanist face of the movement?

- Atheists have sometimes been accused of being sexually immoral or amoral. We generally think sex is OK for consenting adults, though there is controversy about the meaning of “consenting” and “adult.” What about those with mental retardation or in nursing homes? Is 18 and 16 OK, but not 30 and 16? What about incest among consenting adults?

- Who is “us” and who is “them?” Should groups continue to argue about which nontheistic label to use? Should we work with

religious groups, and do we compromise our principles when we do so without proclaiming that we are atheists and humanists?



Herb Silverman




Come prepared or come unprepared for a fast-paced friendly debate of topics controversial to freethinkers!

After the meeting, those interested in continuing the conversation and sharing dinner will stay at Gage Hall where we will order in pizza (including vegan), salads, and beverages to share.

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 2016

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

Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

Volunteer Activity: Adopt-a-Highway

Saturday, November 5, 2016, 8:45am

Bank parking lot, 1011 Harborview Rd, James Island

Our next trash pick up will be on Saturday, November 5th. 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 8:45 am in the parking lot of the bank at 1011 Harbor View Rd, next to the Harris Teeter, on James Island. Please join us if you can. If you have any questions, please [email our volunteer coordinators](#).

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 with your ideas!

SHL Happy Hour

Thursday, November 9, 2016, 6:00pm

Community Pizza House, 4825 Tanger Outlet Blvd, 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 Community Pizza House in North Charleston.



Everyone is welcome. Don't be shy – come join us!

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

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 Monthly Meeting

Sunday, November 13, 2016, 4:00pm

Gage Hall, 4 Archdale St, Charleston

Join us for our monthly meeting and enjoy lively discussion among SHL members. [See page 1](#) for details.

Girls Night Out

Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 7:00pm

Accent on Wine, 1056 E. Montague Ave, N. Charleston
(Park Circle)

A fun night for secular girls to socialize! This month we will be going to Accent on Wine in Park Circle.



Nursing infants okay, but otherwise adults only please.

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

From Steffi Green, SHL Family Activities Coordinator:

I am trying to get more families involved in going to play dates and to do that I created a short survey to get a sense of how often people want play dates, where they want to do play dates, their kids ages, and where the bulk of the families live. Your feedback is appreciated and will help us plan fun activities for your family.
Thanks!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9MDHF9W>

Volunteer Activity: Pet Helpers

Saturday, November 19, 2016, 9:00am

1447 Folly Rd, Charleston (James Island)

Pet Helpers is a no kill shelter for homeless pets. We always have a great time at this organization and kids are welcome if accompanied by a parent.

SHL volunteers will be assisting with the animals' "morning rituals" of cleaning, feeding, walking and more. Volunteers coming to help out will also have an opportunity to play with the animals! Come and meet us at Pet Helpers (1447 Folly Road) at 9:00 AM on Saturday, November 19th. All volunteers should wear long-pants and closed-toed shoes. Pet Helpers also accepts donations of pet toys, Pedigree canned dog food, Friskies or 9 Lives canned cat food, towels and sheets, etc.

Hoping to see you there,
Laura Kasman
SHL Volunteer Coordinator

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



Pet Helpers

SHL will not be playing trivia in November or December.
Trivia will resume in January.

Upcoming SHL Events, cont.

SHL Movie Club: Loving

Saturday, November 26, 2016, time TBD

Terrace Theater, 1956 Maybank Hwy, James Island

Join us for a viewing of the film *Loving* on Saturday, November 26, at the Terrace Theater. **Showtimes are not posted this far in advance so please check [Meetup](#), [Facebook](#), [our website](#), or [subscribe to the Movie Club email list](#) for updates.**

Jeff Nichols wrote and directed this biopic about Virginian interracial couple Richard and Mildred Loving (played by Joel Edgerton and Ruth Negga), who were sentenced to prison in 1958 for violating the state's laws against miscegenation. The Lovings decided to fight back, and their case led to a landmark Supreme Court decision that struck down laws prohibiting interracial marriage.



Following the movie we will discuss the film over dinner at a nearby restaurant.

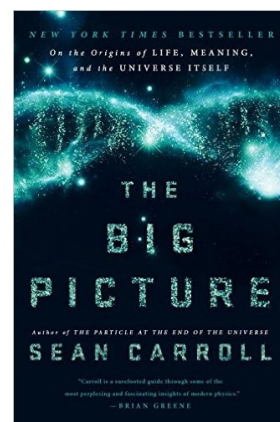
RSVP requested via [Meetup](#) or [Facebook](#).

SHL Book Club: The Big Picture

Sunday, November 27, 2016, 4:00pm

Barnes & Noble, 1812 Sam Rittenberg Blvd, Charleston

We stalwart SHL'ers don't hesitate taking on the BIG questions, but this book, *The Big Picture: On the origins of life, meaning, and the universe* by Sean Carroll (2016), should also be a real treat to read. Neil deGrasse Tyson, host of *Cosmos*, describes this volume thusly: "Weaving the threads of astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and philosophy into a seamless narrative tapestry, Sean Carroll enthralls us with what we've figured out in the universe and humbles us with what we don't yet understand. Yes in the end, it's the meaning of it all that feeds your soul of curiosity." You can [purchase a copy of the book from Amazon on the SHL page](#) and a portion of the purchase price will automatically be donated to SHL. Join us for lively conversation even if you haven't read the material. We value opinions on such weighty topics as these. Afterward we invite you to join us for dinner at a nearby restaurant where the conversation always continues.



[Also, check out our [list of potential books](#) from which we make our monthly selection]

Amazon::0525954821

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>

Transgender Day of Remembrance

This year SHL honors the Transgender Day of Remembrance by selecting the Trans Love Fund as our Q4 Charity of the Quarter.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder on November 28th, 1998 kicked off the "[Remembering Our Dead](http://www.rememberingourdead.org)" web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999. Rita Hester's murder — like most anti-transgender murder cases — has yet to be solved.

Although not every person represented during the Day of Remembrance self-identified as transgender — that is, as a transsexual, cross-dresser, or otherwise gender-variant — each was a victim of violence based on bias against transgender people.

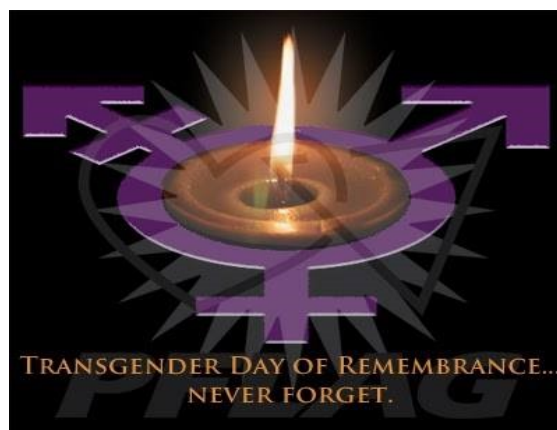
We live in times more sensitive than ever to hatred based violence, especially since the events of September 11th. Yet even now, the deaths of those based on anti-transgender hatred or prejudice are largely ignored. Over the last decade, more than one person per month has died due to transgender-based hate or prejudice, regardless of any other factors in their lives. This trend shows no sign of abating.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance serves several purposes. It raises public awareness of hate crimes against transgender people, an action that current media doesn't perform. Day of Remembrance publicly mourns and honors the lives of our brothers and sisters who might otherwise be forgotten. Through the vigil, we express love and respect for our people in the face of national indifference and hatred. Day of Remembrance reminds non-transgender people that we are their sons, daughters, parents, friends and lovers. Day of Remembrance gives our allies a chance to step forward with us and stand in vigil, memorializing those of us who've died by anti-transgender violence.

From <http://www.rememberingourdead.org/day/what.html>

On Thursday, November 17 from 7:00—8:00pm, **Charleston Area Transgender Support** and **We Are Family** will hold a memorial service at the Unitarian Church on Archdale Street. For info, please see their [Facebook event](#).

You are invited to attend the Charleston areas 2016 Transgender Day of Remembrance. Help us remember those who lost their lives in the past year because of their gender identity. There will be a candlelighting after the memorial. If unable to attend, please light a candle in memory of those who are no longer with us.



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 2016 is [Trans Love Fund](#).

The Trans Love Fund is a program of We Are Family, an organization dedicated to providing resources, support and leadership development to

LGBTQ+ youth. The Trans Love Fund is dedicated to helping the transgender community of South Carolina through providing microgrants to trans-identified individuals for medical, legal, and emergency living expenses.

We believe that all people have the right to live as their most genuine selves, and seek to make that possible by financing the

care of trans people in South Carolina. We seek to create trans inclusive spaces, collaborate with other organizations to create increased access to resources, and spread education and awareness of trans issues.



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!](#)

A BIG Thank You goes to everyone who supports SHL's Charity of the Quarter. Your generosity raised \$400 for our Q3 charity, Birthdays for All!

Herb Silverman: From Jefferson to Trump

Here in a nutshell is America's regression from Thomas Jefferson to Donald Trump.

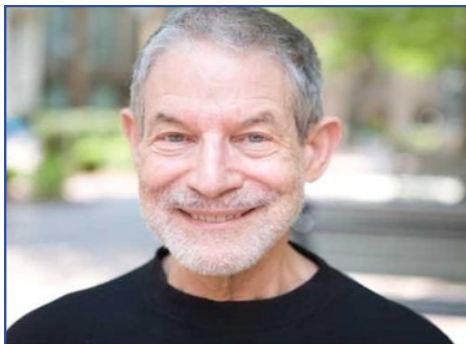
Thomas Jefferson (Notes on the State of Virginia, 1782): "It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg."

Donald Trump (Bangor, Maine Rally, October 15, 2016):

"Imagine what our country could accomplish if we started working together as one people, under one God, saluting one American flag."

Jefferson envisioned religious liberty for an inclusive America. Our founders wanted no part of the religious intolerance and bloodshed they had seen in Europe, so they wisely established the first government in history to separate religion and government. They understood the devastating nature of holy wars and formed a secular nation with no deity mentioned in its Constitution.

Trump's vision excludes all who don't believe we are a nation un-



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.

der one God (presumably the Christian one), and he has never specified what "again" means in his slogan, "Make America great again." Perhaps "again" means when the seventeenth century Pilgrims and Puritans arrived in the colonies. They were religious dissenters from Europe who sought freedom of worship for their own versions of Christianity, but not religious freedom for others. I prefer our eighteenth century founders, who wanted our new country to stay out of the religion business.

I dislike hearing politicians end speeches with "God bless America," but at least this cliché doesn't tell all Americans to unite

under the one God. Our secular government's role is not to tell us we are one nation under God any more than it is to tell us we are one nation under no gods (my view). Imagine a Commander-in-Chief who also wants to be a Converter-in-Chief. We are legally one nation under the Constitution and geographically one nation under Canada, but we are not theologically one nation under God.

I can't blame only Donald Trump for equating "one God" with American patriotism. In 1954, during the shameful McCarthy era, President Eisenhower signed into law the addition of "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance. He preached, "From this day forward, the millions of our schoolchildren will daily proclaim in every city and town, every village and rural schoolhouse, the dedication of our nation and our people to the Almighty." This melding of God and country turned a secular, inclusive pledge into a divisive, religious one. Eisenhower made no mention of the Constitution, perhaps because that document prohibits

Herb Silverman, cont.

religious tests for public office.

Donald Trump takes pride in being politically incorrect in order to justify his bigotry, offensive comments, and scientific ignorance. When did rejecting the overwhelming scientific consensus about evolution and climate change become a proud politically incorrect position? Unfortunately, Trump's statements about religion and other American freedoms show him also to be proud of his constitutionally incorrect positions.

Thomas Jefferson, a great intellect and product of the Enlightenment, read the Bible thoroughly and thoughtfully. Then, using a razor, he cut out the supernatural and other passages

he deemed ridiculous, and called the remainder "diamonds in a dunghill." (In 2013, the American Humanist Association distributed copies of the "Jefferson Bible" to President Obama and all incoming members of Congress.)

Donald Trump not only trumpets his Christianity, but also speculated, "Maybe I get audited so much because I'm a strong Christian." He says the Bible is his favorite book, along with his ghost written *The Art of the Deal*. I doubt that Trump has read much of the Bible, other than passages handed to him for speeches. He couldn't name his favorite verse, or which testament he prefers. His funniest flub occurred at Liberty University

where he referred to Second Corinthians as "Two Corinthians." So Donald Trump is also "biblically incorrect."

After November 8, expected presidential loser Donald Trump should have plenty of spare time to read his favorite book. This atheist, who still finds some wisdom in the Bible, suggests that Trump start with Luke 14:11: "He who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Or perhaps Proverbs 12:15: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice."

This piece was originally posted 10/25/2016 on herbsilverman.com

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

There are 3 easy ways you can join/renew:

- Pay by cash, credit card, or check at our monthly meeting.

- 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.

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!

There will be opportunities for SHL members to volunteer at the conference and convention. Needs are still being evaluated so stay tuned!

SHL Store

SHL is pleased to announce that t-shirts, mugs, bags and other merchandise featuring our logos and slogans can now be purchased at our [online Zazzle store](#).

We hope you will show your pride and help support SHL by shopping at our new store: <http://www.zazzle.com/lowcountryhumanists>.



Just for Fun!



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It was then that the other animals understood why the turkey had asked to be deep fried on the back porch.



SHL Board for 2016-2017

Alex Kasman, President

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Bonnie Cleaveland, Secretary

Ed Stephens

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SECULAR HUMANISTS



OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

Contact us!

SHL
Post Office Box 32256
Charleston, SC 29417-2256
843-670-0290
president@lowcountryhumanists.org

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The Separationist

The Newsletter of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry

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