



The Separationist

February 2019

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.

The Separationist is 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.

Please contact the SHL newsletter editor's with any questions or comments about this publication. Contributions such as short articles, news items, letters to the editor, or other information of interest to SHL members are always welcome.

The editors can be contacted at:

newsletter@lowcountryhumanists.org

President's Corner

South Carolina Religious Freedom Under Attack

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." - **1st Amendment to the US Constitution**

Sometimes it's difficult living in a conservative state as a freethinker. We all probably harbor at least occasional dreams of moving to a state that's a bit more accepting of people who don't represent the majority in every way. But I think it's important to stay and coax our state into the present century.

We need to fight even the battles that aren't specifically our battles, or we'll lose the war entirely. You're probably not trying to foster or adopt a child right now. If you were, you might have difficulty. A Christian agency called Miracle Hill manages 15% of SC adoptions from foster care, according to a Post & Courier article by Jamie Lovegrove (Feds side with McMaster to deny same-sex, non-Christian foster care placements, January 23, 2019). Miracle Hill has recently petitioned for a waiver so that they may only serve straight, Christian foster families who sign a declaration of Christian faith and agree to minister to others. Senator Tim Scott and governor

Henry McMaster support the decision.

Every fight for the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment is important. We're on a slippery slope toward state religion. Evangelical cultural warriors have already taken power at The Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies under the Trump administration (Cohen, R. (December 26, 2017). How a gay friendly and "very pro-choice" Trump created the most anti-choice, anti-LGBT administration in generations. The Intercept.)

Speak out publicly in the comment sections of the articles about the Miracle Hill case. Contact your state legislators to let them know we won't tolerate religious discrimination against freethinkers or any religious group in South Carolina.

Bonnie Cleaveland
President

Contact Governor Henry McMaster:

governor.sc.gov

Contact your state legislators:

scstatehouse.gov

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SHL Main Events

February Volunteer Activity: Adopt a Highway

Saturday, February 2, 2019
9:00 AM to 11:00 AM
Grove Corner Grocery parking lot
2301 Cosgrove Ave
North Charleston, SC

SHL's adopted highway is Azalea Drive from the SC-7 exit to the King Street Extension in North Charleston, which runs past the Lowcountry Foodbank. From I-26 in either direction, take Exit 216B. At the corner with first stop light is a small store called Grove Corner Groceries. We have permission to park in their parking lot.

Picking up trash at the side of the road is a lot more fun than it sounds. We enjoy each other's company and conversation. It is a pleasant walk in the fresh air. And we usually find some interesting items.

As always, participants get a sense of accomplishment from making the world a better place and enjoy a chance to talk as we walk. We also have a sign put up by the Dept. of Transportation there that says that the road is kept clean by "Secular Humanists," which helps us let people know that our group exists and that we care about our community.

SHL will provide the necessary supplies, including trash bags, gloves, and reflective vests. Please join us if you can.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email our volunteer coordinators.

Hosted by Laura Kasman




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 Muse in downtown Charleston. Hope to see you there!


Hosted by: **Elizabeth Taylor**



The Muse on Society Street

SHL Happy Hour Secular Humanist of the Lowcountry

 Wednesday, February 13, 2019,
6:00 PM

 Muse Restaurant \$ Wine Bar
82 Society St.
Charleston, SC 29401

SHL Volunteer Activity: Feeding the Homeless at *Potluck in the Park*

Where? Mall Park

68 Columbus St.
Charleston, SC

When? February 17, 2019
12:45 pm

We need SHL members to bring food, drinks, paper and plasticware for the weekly community "potluck" for the needy in Mall Park in downtown Charleston. Potluck in the Park organizers do this every week! SHL tries to volunteer to bring the food quarterly, in rotation with other groups. We always feel like we make a difference.

SHL members bring the food and help serve. A recommended menu is below. Potluck in the Park provides tables, and table cloths, chaffing dishes, plastic gloves and water.

It is okay to just drop food off and not stay to serve if you like.

We set up at 12:45 and start serving at 1 pm. Kids and teens welcome! Please join us!

Recommended menu (please reply with what you will be bringing):
(We can expect 70-100 people)

Green salad with dressings on the side - Ranch seems to be a favorite

Potato salad, pasta salad or other starchy cold salads

Meat or Main dishes with meat, sandwiches

Sides or main dishes without meat, vegetarian sandwiches Rolls/bread

Hard-boiled eggs (easy to take away for later)

Bananas or other easy-on-the-teeth hand fruits **Deserts**

Drinks - Anything is fine, but PLITP brings a drink cooler with water so dry tea or punch mixes are popular.

Paper plates or clamshell take-away boxes

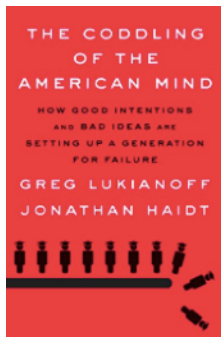
Plastic forks

Paper napkins

Plastic cups - 8-12 oz

Condiments (they usually have some leftover from past weeks, but not always)

RSVP via Meetup



Where: West Ashley Barnes
and Noble

When: 4:00 to 5:30
4th Sunday

Book Group is an opportunity to share the Secular experience with like minded free thinkers. If you like to read, this is the place for you.

Book Group for February

The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas are Setting Up a Generation for Failure by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt (2018) HC \$16.80 322p., Kindle \$14.99, Audible \$16.80

Publishers Weekly: "In this expansion of their 2015 piece for the *Atlantic*, Lukianoff and Haidt argue that the urge to insulate oneself against offensive ideas has had deleterious consequences, making students less resilient, more prone to undesirable "emotional reasoning," less capable of engaging critically with others' viewpoints, and more likely to cultivate an "us-versus-them" mentality... the path they advocate—take on challenges, cultivate resilience, and try to reflect rather than responding based solely on initial emotional responses—deserves consideration."

Recommended by Barb Childs

The Leading Edge of Reason

Contributions from our Community of Free Thinkers

Letter to the Editor
Post and Courier
Feb. 16, 2019

No Exorcist Needed

An article in the paper on Jan. 13 relates that the Catholic Church needs to train more exorcists to meet national and local demands for exorcisms. Church leaders explain the need by claiming that more people are turning to expulsion of evil spirits because they have become “Godless.”

Speaking as a “Godless” atheist, I believe in no supernatural beings. No gods, no demons, and consequently no need for exorcisms. Father Bryan Babick, quoted in the article, got it partially right when he said, “Not everyone who thinks they are possessed is.” I would replace “Not everyone” with “No one.”

I may not be a trained exorcist, but I have a four-word solution to combat demonic possession that is more effective than anything an exorcist has in his arsenal: “Stop believing in demons.”

It is far more productive to develop a personal relationship with reality. Instead of thanking God for accomplishments and

blaming Satanic forces for failures, we should take personal responsibility for our actions.

The late comedian Flip Wilson created a character, Geraldine, who always excused her bad behavior with “The Devil made me do it.” Flip got it right — attributing bad behavior to the devil is just something to joke about. And we’d live in a happier and more peaceful world if we’d all embrace Flip Wilson’s devilish humor.

Herb Silverman
George Street
Charleston
Facebook Post
SHL Lounge
January 15/8:36 PM ·



Letter in FB Lounge
January, 2019

What would you like to be remembered for?

I would like to be remembered for daring greatly. For being marred by dust and sweat and blood while throwing myself into a worthy cause, uncertain of the outcome, but nonetheless doing what I can to create a better today and tomorrow for the next generation.

Sometimes when I've fallen flat on my face and want to feel sorry for myself, I remind myself that I have fallen while daring greatly, and that helps me get back up. If you haven't heard the quote below from Teddy Roosevelt, it's a great one. I learned of it from reading Brene Brown's books, which I love and highly recommend.

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly.”

Amy Monsky



Leading Edge of Reason (Continued)

Letter to the Editor
Post and Courier
January 20, 2019

A human right

Jennifer Berry
Hawes' moving Jan. 20
story about the life and
agonizing death of Bob
DeVey carried an essential
message: It should be a
human right for people
suffering unbearably from a
terminal illness to get
medical help to end their
lives.

A Gallup poll in 2018
found that 72 percent of
Americans say that doctors
should be able to help
terminally ill patients die.
Six states and the District
of Columbia have legalized
medical aid in dying.
Unfortunately, no doctor in
South Carolina may legally

prescribe the pills to do
that.

South Carolina's
legislators have yielded to
voters who insist their
religious rules prohibit
medical aid in dying, and so
those religious values must
apply by law to everyone,
including people with other
faiths or none.

The consequences of
this situation arise from
desperation. Knowing there
will be no help at the end
when needed, some people
keep a supply of toxic pills
or even a loaded gun to be
able to end their lives when
suffering becomes
unbearable. Others just
stop eating and drinking, a
prolonged and miserable
way to die.

Many look for
information and help from
the organizations

Compassion & Choices or
Final Exit. But it is likely that
far more people, like Bob
DeVey, linger on indefinitely
through pain and indignity.

As an atheist and
secular humanist with no
religious beliefs, I believe it is
my right to be able to make
my own decision about such
a personal and important
matter.

All South Carolinians,
religious or not, should have
the legal right to make that
choice.

Sharon Fratepietro
George Street
Charleston

Editor's note: The leading edge reflects the writings of freethinkers. Rather than ask for submissions we will be reviewing various local social media to be included each month on this designated page in the Separationist. Suggested writings are welcome. Please send letters or articles to newletter@lowcountrynewsletter.org.

Reason Without Borders

Articles and Opinions Beyond the SHL Community

Congress is more religiously diverse SC delegation is made up of all Christian believers

BY RICKEY CIAPHA DENNIS JR.

The Unitarian Universalist Church in Charleston at 8 Archdale St. The new Congress includes a Unitarian Universalist.

The 116th Congress is more religiously diverse and less Christian than the previous one, even though representation from states like South Carolina saw no shifts.

The new Congress includes the first two Muslim women ever to serve in the House of Representatives, along with four new Jewish members, one additional Muslim and a Unitarian Universalist, the Pew Research Center reported.

Religious leaders are glad to see the government becoming more diverse.

The Rev. Nancy Pelligrini is the assistant minister of the Unitarian Church in Charleston, a congregation that allows for theological diversity and beliefs. Here, members have a wide range of beliefs and are bound by their search for meaning and purpose. Pelligrini said she's pleased to see Unitarian Universalist representation in Congress and hopes to see more diversity in the government moving forward. "I'm definitely pleased that it's becoming more religiously diverse to better represent the religiously diversity of our country. Since its founded on the concept of the freedom of religion, as Unitarian Universalists, we include all faiths. We would definitely applaud more diversity in Congress."

Even with the rise in religious diversity, Congress still does not properly reflect the population. Though the percent of Christians in Congress dropped from 91 to 88, the faith is still overrepresented. Only 71 percent of adults in the country identify as followers of Jesus Christ.

What's particularly notable is the underrepresentation of the "unaffiliated" population. While 23 percent of adults claim to be not be affiliated with any religion, less than one percent of Congress falls in that category.

Dr. Matthew Cressler, assistant professor of religious studies at the College of Charleston, said one reason for this is people link moral character to religious identification. This, combined with the misconception many have that the country was founded on religious concepts, can lead people to shy away from nonreligious candidates.

"One would think algorithmically, there's going to be increased representation from people who (are) not religious," Cressler said. "It seems clear that voters are reluctant to elect people who are unaffiliated."

This is particularly true in South Carolina. Congressional representatives remain exclusively Christian in the Palmetto State, even though 19 percent of the population say they don't identify with any faith. On one hand, this is not surprising considering

the the state's reputation as conservative, Bible Belt territory. But some say that a change could eventually come. ***Herb Silverman is the founder of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry, which consists of atheists, agnostics and skeptics who meet regularly for conversation, potluck and book clubs. He thinks the rise in religious "nones" could eventually shape the political landscape. "I'm cautiously optimistic because politicians will go along with what their constituency wants," Silverman said. Silverman added that nationally, many atheist politicians are in the closet. That's why some political leaders helped form the Freethought Caucus to "promote public policy based on reason and science."***

Religion experts aren't holding their breath, though. They noted the decline in the number of white evangelical protestants in South Carolina, and the rise in black and Hispanic protestants. This could make room for more minorities who identify as Christian making it into public office. "If that trend continues and you are hoping to have a religiously representative Congress for South Carolinians, you'd expect to see more nonwhite Christian representatives before you'd see any unaffiliated representatives," Cressler said.

Follow **Rickey Dennis** on Twitter @RCDJunior

Charity of the Quarter






“Fresh Future Farm leverages unused city assets to create food and job opportunities that will transform the current food desert into a more self-reliant and robust community.” “Established in late 2014 on a vacant North Charleston, SC lot, Fresh Future Farm sows healthy food to harvest community and independence. Food access is an \$11 billion business in South Carolina and a comprehensive way to bring green jobs to blighted communities.” They have a store in a food desert in N. CHS, providing fresh produce to underserved neighborhoods.

Please help SHL make a difference: Contributions can be made at the Monthly Gathering at Gage Hall or contact our SHL Treasurer: Garrett Gehlhausen at treasurer@lowcountryhumanists.org .



February



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 SHL Adopt-a-Highway 
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 SHL Happy Hour 	14 Valentines Day 	15	16
17 SHL Pot Luck in the Park and Gathering at Gage Hall 	18  Presidents's Day	19	20	21	22	23
24  Book Group	25	26	27	28		

SHL Board for 2018-2019

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Garrett Gehlhausen, Treasurer
Member-at-Large, Tom Jhou
Member-at-Large, Joshua Pershin
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News Letter Editor's *John and Barbara Childs*
Volunteer Coordinator, Laura Kasman

SECULAR HUMANISTS



OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

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SHL is a non-prophet
organization

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This Section
currently under
construction: We
apologize for any
inconvenience.

Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry

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