

PIQUE

Newsletter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York

June, 2014

Is America a nation of wimps phobic about “Islamophobia” (pages 9-10) and torn apart by class warfare (pages 8-9)? Let us pray (pages 2-4) it is not. This month we consider not only those big questions but the infinities of space, the immensity of death and the nature of Gosh. We reflect on Memorial Day (a little overdue), suggest jail time for a very public felon (*way* overdue) and get some modern advice from Abe Lincoln. But first, the polls are closed and the results are in. – JR

THE 2014 SHSNY BOARD ELECTION: EVERYONE WON!

NOW LET'S GET TO WORK: THIS MEANS YOU!

The Board of Directors of the Secular Humanist Society of New York met on May 22, and opened and counted the ballots cast in our triannual election. The unsurprising results of the count showed that all twelve candidates on the ballot received enough votes to be elected; the even happier outcome was that four out of five ballots received (78 percent) were cast for “All of the [listed] candidates” – and *that's* a vote of confidence!

As per our bylaws, which mandate at least five Directors, the five candidates who received the most votes—in order, John Rafferty, Donna Marxer, Bob Murtha, David Orenstein, and Carl Marxer and Maria Astifidis in a tie for fifth place—constituted the new Board. They in turn, and in accordance with the same bylaws, “declared elected” all the other candidates who had “received a significant number of votes” (80 percent or better in every case is a pretty “significant number”).

Here, then, is your new Board of Directors:



Clockwise from top left: Astifides, Cotto, Lemaire, Marxer, Marxer, Millman, Murtha, Orenstein, Rafferty, Wagner, Weiss

Immediately following its constitution, the new 11-member Board chose officers for the 2014-2017 term. Elected unanimously in each case, they are:

President - John Rafferty
Vice President - Bob Murtha
Treasurer - Donna Marxer
Secretary - Brian Lemaire

Considering immediate and long-term goals for SHSNY, everyone agreed that we want to—we *must*—expand our reach and influence through and on social media, led by John Wagner (*Get on Facebook right now and post something on the SHSNY page, or at least Like us!*)

We need a new, interactive website, now ably administered by Colin Rafferty, but in need of a graphic overhaul, and we can afford to pay (modestly) for it. The job is open.

We have a professional and award-winning videographer in Carl Marxer, and he is eager to do more, e.g., record more of our more interesting meetings, create a video library on our new website, even develop a cable TV or online SHSNY program. Want to be Carl's second camera (*you can learn!*) on the shoots? Contact editor@shsn.org.

There's more work to be done, too much to list in detail here. If you're willing to invest a few hours a month to help SHSNY grow, please contact editor@shsn.org.

Finally, the new Board wishes to thank the departing members of the old for their work and their invaluable contributions to SHSNY's growth: Elaine Lynn, who has made our Book Club such a success, and will (*Thank you, Elaine*) carry on in that labor of love; Remo Cosentino, who will continue as our print graphics and production guru; as well as Art Harris (one of SHSNY's Old Originals of 1988) and Carlos Martin Mora, who have both stepped down for reasons of health; and departing SHSNY Secretary Lee Loshak who, in spite of being one of our re-elected, is unable to grace our meetings. *Thank you all.* – JR

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Rafferty, *President/Editor*; Robert A. Murtha, Jr., *Vice President*; Donna Marxer, *Treasurer*; Brian Lemaire, *Secretary*; Maria Astifidis; Mirta Cotto; Carl Marxer; Irv Millman; David Orenstein; John Wagner; Mike Weiss
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Individual membership \$40 per year; Family membership \$65; Subscription only: \$30.

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A BIG WIN FOR THE PRAYER LOBBY

Katherine Stewart

(Excerpted from *The NYTimes OpEd page*, 5/7/2014)

If you listened to Justice Anthony M. Kennedy of the Supreme Court and his fellow conservatives on the bench this week, you might think the court's 5-4 decision in the case of *Town of Greece v. Galloway* was no big deal. So what if a town in upstate New York typically opens its council meetings with prayers that acknowledge "the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross"?

If you listened to the people who shepherded the case as it ascended the judicial hierarchy, however, the decision represents one of their biggest victories to date. It "wasn't just an answer on prayer — it was an answer to prayer!" read a statement by the Family Research Council. The council is one of a host of organizations guided by the religious liberty advocacy group the Alliance Defending Freedom that backed the defendants with legal resources.

To understand why the case's backers were so cock-a-hoop, you must first know something about the long game being played by the religious right. The goal is to get back to a "soft" establishment of religion in America — that is, a system in which formal guarantees of religious freedom and the official separation of church and state remain in place, but one religion is informally or implicitly acknowledged as the "approved" religion of the majority and a legitimate basis for public policy.

This was more or less the situation in the United States during the first half of the 19th century. In 1811, the New York Supreme Court upheld a conviction for blasphemy (the archetypal union of church and state) on the grounds that the state had an interest in punishing offenses to the religious sensibilities of the Protestant majority. Back then, nativist Protestants imposed their version of the Bible in public schools, while Catholics rioted in protest and placed their children in parochial schools.

Through the 19th and 20th centuries, however, the judicial thinking on church-state issues evolved, and the "soft" establishment became much harder to justify. The United States Supreme Court introduced the "Lemon test", for example. Named for a 1971 case ... this required that legislation concerning religion should not result in "excessive government entanglement" with religious affairs. The Supreme Court also increasingly took the view that government should abstain from any activity wherein a reasonable observer might perceive it to be endorsing religion.

Today, groups like the A.D.F. ... are deeply unhappy with the reigning jurisprudence on church-state separation. It would seem that they wish to undermine the Lemon test, which they consider "burdensome", as a staging post to restoring a soft establishment of Christianity in the United States. This is where *Greece v. Galloway* comes in.

The first order of business is to remove objections by swiping aside the idea that soft forms of establishment exist at all. Here, the *Greece* decision delivers, substantially.

"Offense," Justice Kennedy wrote in his majority opinion, "does not equate to coercion." Justice Clarence Thomas

... drew out the key implication: "To the extent coercion is relevant to the Establishment Clause analysis, it is actual legal coercion that counts — not the 'subtle coercive pressures' allegedly felt by respondents in this case." In other words, religious observance counts as "establishment" only if you are compelled to kneel by law.

A second element of the plan for undermining concerns based on the First Amendment's Establishment Clause is to reinterpret public acts as personal expressions of speech by private individuals. Thus, when the minister appointed by the municipal government of Greece bids "all rise", the Supreme Court majority tells us, this is not an establishment of religion because the words are not uttered by public officials. And when the town leaders respond with a sign of the cross, that isn't establishment either, because, just then, public officials are acting as private individuals.

Another prong in the assault on the Establishment Clause is to use neutrality among religious denominations as a wedge for inserting the (presumed) majority religion into state business. In theory, "neutrality" means giving every sect an equal shot at officiating prayer at Greece's council meetings. In practice, the town government has unquestionably identified itself with what it takes to be the majority religion in the area.

In his concurring opinion, Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. dismissed concerns about the blatantly sectarian tilt of the town's proceedings, which were led exclusively by Christian ministers for nearly a decade, by pointing out that Jews make up a mere three percent of the local population and alleging that other non-Christian groups are no larger.

A final, crucial part of the strategy is to substitute history — or, more accurately, a particular mythologized version of history — for legal analysis. Here the A.D.F. and its allies have hit pay dirt in the *Greece* decision.

Justice Kennedy invoked an earlier, highly problematic decision in the case of *Marsh v. Chambers* to suggest that the usual legal tests were "unnecessary" because the "history supported the conclusion" that the prayers were compatible with the Establishment Clause. It is, however, preposterous to say that something is constitutional simply because it's been done in the past.

The "history" here sustains a myth that early America had a single religion of "Christianity", when, in fact, it was bitterly divided into antagonistic sects from the start. And many of America's founders — James Madison, for example — were firmly opposed to such precedents of church-state entanglement as congressional chaplains.

The assault by the religious right on the Establishment Clause has been unfolding for two decades, in a number of landmark cases. Under cover of pursuing "religious freedom", it has already succeeded in inserting fundamentalist religion into parts of America's public education system. With *Greece v. Galloway*, it has now expanded the reach of this novel and destructive interpretation of the Establishment Clause. It is part of a project to "restore" a version of America that never was, and never can be.

SUPREME COURT STRIKES DOWN MAIN REASON COUNTRY WAS STARTED

Andy Borowitz

(Excerpted from The Borowitz Report, 5/6/2014)

In what legal experts are calling a landmark decision, the United States Supreme Court struck down what many believe to be the main reason the country was started.

By a five-to-four vote, the Court eliminated what children have traditionally been taught was one of the key rationales for founding the United States in the first place.

"The separation of church and state has been a cornerstone of American democracy for over two hundred years," said Justice Samuel Alito, writing for the majority. "Getting rid of it was long overdue."

Justice Antonin Scalia was guarded in predicting what the Court might accomplish next. "Last year, we gutted the Voting Rights Act, and today we did the First Amendment," he said. "We'll just have to see what's left."

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

Jonathan Engel

Disappointingly, but not surprisingly, the Supreme Court has upheld the right of a town in upstate New York to begin sessions of open town business with sectarian prayers that are virtually always Christian.

This, of course, opens the door for other government entities to do likewise, eviscerating the "wall of separation" between church and state that Thomas Jefferson said was "absolutely essential in a free society". Even in dissent, Justice Kagan got it wrong; she argued that a prayer in and of itself was not unconstitutional, but the practice in the Town of Greece does not pass constitutional muster because the Town has not made strong enough efforts to have a wide variety of religions represented in its meetings' opening prayers, instead almost always having the prayer led by a Christian clergyman expressing Christian beliefs.

This reasoning ignores the rights of both non-believers and those with religious beliefs (e.g. Wiccans or Scientologists) that are not generally recognized as being "mainstream". Of course, anyone can leave the meeting room when the prayer begins and come back in when it is over, but how could anyone who does feel confident they would receive fair and equal treatment from the Town's officials who will see them leave when the prayer begins?

But the above question focuses on whether there is potential harm to the individuals who challenged the constitutionality of the opening prayer, which there most certainly is. But there's a flip side to this question that most commentators (and the Court itself) seem to be ignoring, i.e. what harm would befall the Town of Greece if the Court prohibited the prayer? The business of the Town, after all, is purely civil and secular. In what way would the absence of an opening prayer prevent the Town from going about its business? None that I can see. Does the Town have any compelling interest in starting its meetings with a prayer?

Again, none that I can see. Even if the Court wants to

preserve an individual's right to pray (and remember, individuals have Freedom of Religion; municipalities do not), this has nothing to do with an official Town prayer. Any individual, whether a member of the Town government or simply a citizen with reason to attend a Town meeting, has the right to pray before going to the meeting, or even at the meeting, if they do it silently and to themselves. Why is it necessary to the proper functioning of Town government to have an organized sectarian prayer that everyone says together to start their meetings? In his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew: 6) Jesus said,

"And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites; they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. ... But when you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you."

Why are the good Christians and patriotic Americans of the Town of Greece listening to neither their God nor their Constitution?

THEY WANT PRAYER IN PUBLIC? LET'S GIVE THEM THEIR "HOLY BOOK"

John Rafferty

So, what do we do about the outrageous Supreme Court decision? I have an idea. Make it a point to attend a government function where "non-denominational prayer" is committed, listen to the bushwa, and at the end of the meeting politely ask whoever is in charge if you can read a "non-denominational" Bible passage at the next meeting. When you do read, give them something like this, from Numbers 31:17-18 ...

Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, but save for yourselves every girl who has not slept with a man.

Not pertinent enough for Christians? Then maybe this quickie from Ephesians 6:5 in the New Testament:

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them as you would serve Christ.

Then ask for a minute of silent reflection.

DENNIS MIDDLEBROOKS SUMS UP THE GREECE DECISION PERFECTLY IN THE NEW YORK POST

To the Editor: The five justices who ruled in favor of sectarian prayer at town council meetings know perfectly well that throughout the nation those prayers will be overwhelmingly Christian in content, making non-Christians feel like second-class citizens.

There is no valid reason why any Americans of whatever religious viewpoint should be asked to bow their heads and listen to a cleric pray at a government function or exercise their right to "walk out", which in many parts of the country will mark them as pariahs, and possibly lead to negative consequences at their jobs or businesses.

A (SLIGHTLY) BELATED MEMORIAL DAY MESSAGE FOR HUMANISTS

David Rafferty

(Reprinted from "Truth is in Verses, Not Choruses" in The Greenwich Time (CT), 5/16/2014)

It's been a month since the Field of Flags display came down from in front of the Second Congregational Church in Greenwich. Started back in 2005, the Field of Flags is a traveling memorial to the American dead in Iraq and Afghanistan. One flag for each serviceman or woman killed in action. In fact, the organizers started with 2,231 almost two full years after "Mission Accomplished". Nine years later the number of flags needed has risen to 6,801. Mission accomplished, indeed.

Still, it was something to see. A powerful statement designed to get people thinking. I hope it did, because sometimes we miss the greater meaning of things to confirm our own pre-determined ideas or prejudices. Take President Ronald Reagan and his misunderstanding of Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA" during the 1984 presidential campaign. Whether accidental or dishonest, Reagan ignored Springsteen's very harsh and critical storytelling verses and instead decided the song was a fist-pumping pro-American anthem based solely on the rallying-cry chorus. "Born" is actually an angry song, aimed directly at powerful people who send young men off to die in foreign lands and then want nothing to do with them when they come home.

The Rev. Maxwell Grant of Second Congregational, who worked hard to bring the Flags to Greenwich, told his congregation that each person should bring their own perspective to the installation. He emphasized that the flags were more a mirror than a candle. And what we see in the reflection says a lot about us. Do we see the bigger picture in the more difficult-to-listen-to verses where the real story is being told, or do we focus only on the upbeat, non-threatening choruses that everyone can sing along to?

Posted alongside the names of the fallen was a message from the Flags organizers that read, "Each flag represents not simply one casualty, but all the family members and friends who have been touched by that life now gone. They represent our respect for those who have served and are currently serving in the military and our hope for peace in the future, for a time when no one is called upon by our country to give the greatest sacrifice." Many different, challenging thoughts are conveyed in that statement.

And that, my friends, is the mirror. In 2002, most Americans trusted that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were undertaken to protect our safety, catch "evildoers", and to somehow "defend our freedom". But we were lied to and deceived, and instead of getting angry and demanding accountability we chose to listen only to the choruses gloriously extolling patriotism, honor, toughness, bravery, and most importantly, heroes. We merrily focus on the troops; yet give a free pass to the leaders who send them out to die under the banner of "protecting our freedoms". All while

those same leaders erode our real freedoms behind closed doors via executive orders, court decisions and congressional chicanery.

We ignore the challenging verses of this song, don't we? We don't want to believe we were lied to, or that the cause was never really noble. If our troops are not defending our freedom, if they're really defending the interests of the rich and powerful, well, as one Cos Cobber I know put it, "Seeing our flags makes me feel patriotic, but it's not the same anymore."

Ironically, just below the land where Second Congregational sits is the spit of property referred to as Crocus Hill. For many, the annual blooming of the fragile crocuses marks the return of spring. After even the harshest of winters, the rebirth of the crocuses sends a message of renewal and awakening. The difference this year was its proximity to a graveyard of flags. Each one representing a life cut short, never to return to us the next spring.

Now Memorial Day is right around the corner, full of parades and pageantry from Glenville to Old Greenwich. Honor those who have served and returned, but don't ever forget those who didn't. And don't ever get so wrapped up in the choruses leading us to the next war that we forget to listen to the verses. Where the real story can be found.

PUTTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

Natalie Angier

(Excerpted from Ms. Angier's book, The Canon: A Whirligig Tour of the Beautiful Basics of Science)

To gain a richer sense of cosmic proportions, we can paraphrase William Blake, and see the Earth as a fine grain of sand. The sun then would be an orange-sized object twenty feet away while Jupiter, the biggest planet of the solar system, would be a pebble eighty-four feet in the other direction—almost the length of a basketball court—and the outermost orbs of the solar system, Neptune and Pluto, would be larger and smaller grains, respectively, found at a distance of two and a quarter blocks from Granule Earth.

Beyond that, the gaps between scenic vistas become absurd and it's best to settle in for a nice comfy coma. Assuming our little orrery of a solar system is tucked into a quiet neighborhood in Newark, New Jersey, you won't reach the next stars—the Alpha Centauri triple star system—until somewhere just west of Omaha, or the star after that until the foothills of the Rockies. And in between astronomical objects is lots and lots of space, silky, sullen, inky-dinky space, plenty of nothing, nulls within voids. Just as the dominion of the very small, the interior of the atom is composed almost entirely of empty space, so, too, is the kingdom of the heavens. Nature, it seems, adores a vacuum.

"The universe is a pretty empty place and that's something most people don't get," said Michael Brown of Caltech. "You go watch Star Wars and you see the heroes flying through an asteroid belt, and they're twisting and turning nonstop to avoid colliding with asteroids." In real-

ity, he said that when the Galileo spacecraft flew through our solar system's asteroid belt in the early 1990s, NASA spent millions of dollars in a manic effort to steer the ship close enough to one of the rubble rocks to take photos and maybe sample a bit of its dust. "And when they got lucky and the spacecraft actually passed by two asteroids it was considered truly amazing" said Brown. "For most of Galileo's journey there was nothing. Nothing to see, nothing to take pretty pictures of. And we're talking about the solar system, which is a fairly dense region of the universe."

Don't be fooled by the gorgeous pictures of dazzling pinwheel galaxies with sunnyside bulges in their midsections, either. They, too, are mostly ghostly: the average separation between stars is about 100,000 times greater than the distance between us and the Sun. Yes, our Milky Way has about 300 billion stars to its credit, but those stars are dispersed across a chasmic piece of property 100,000 light-years in diameter. That's roughly 6 trillion miles ... multiplied by 100,000 miles wide. Even using the shrunken scale of a citrus sun lying just twenty feet away from our sand-grain Earth, crossing the galaxy would require a trip of more than 24 million miles.

Comment: At the other end of the scale, I was knocked out by Neil deGrasse Tyson's visual, on "Cosmos", of atomic and sub-atomic measures. Standing in a huge cathedral, he pointed out that if the cathedral represented the total volume of an atom, the nucleus at its center would be the size of ... and he pointed to a dust mote floating between him and the camera lens. - JR

ANOTHER HUMANIST VIDEO FROM STEPHEN FRY

Actor, director, writer, atheist and humanist Stephen Fry has made four short illustrated and animated "That's Humanism" videos for the British Humanist Association:

- How Do We Know What Is True?
- What Should We Think About Death?
- What Makes Something Right Or Wrong?
- How Can I Be Happy?

They are available at <https://humanism.org.uk/> or on YouTube, and are highly recommended by Your Editor and by our own American Humanist Association. We transcribed the first from the above list last month (PIQUE, May), and offer the second right here ...

WHAT SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT DEATH?

Stephen Fry

One thing we can be sure of is that we will die, everybody will. Some people do not like the thought of this, and don't accept it. They prefer to think that death is not the end of us, but that we might live on, perhaps in another life on Earth, or perhaps in another place, where people are rewarded or punished. But *wanting* something to be true is not the same as it *being* true. And there is no evidence to support the idea that our minds could survive the end of our bodies. What sense could we make of the things that we value - love, experience, achievement, the warmth of the sun on our face - if we were disembodied?

And if life were eternal, wouldn't it lose much of what

gives it shape, structure, meaning, and purpose? Think about reading a good book, or eating a delicious cake. These may be good pleasures, but one of the things that makes them pleasures is that they come to an end. A book that went on and on forever, and a cake that you never stopped eating would both soon lose their appeal.

Death is a natural part of life. It makes sense for us to try not to be afraid of this, but instead to come to terms with it. Then we can focus on finding meaning and purpose in the here and now, making the most of the one life we *know* we have, and having others to do the same, choosing good over evil without expecting a reward in some other place.

When we do die, we will live on, in the work we've done, and in the memories of the other people whose lives we have been part of. Our bodies will break up, and become part again of the cycle of nature. The atoms that form us now will go on to form other things - trees and birds, flowers and butterflies.

THOMAS BOWDLER* EXPLAINS GOSH, HECK AND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE TO HIS SON

John Rafferty

Tommy Bowdler, Jr.: Daddy, what's Heck?

Bowdler, Sr.: Heck is the terrible place full of everlasting fire that Gosh—or Golly, as some people call Him—sends bad people to after they pass on.

Junior: What do the bad people do?

Senior: Some of them are serial killers or brutal dictators or birth-control users. Some of them take Gosh's name in vain, and some of them don't believe in His only-begotten son.

Junior: Gee Whiz! How could they *not* believe in Gee Whiz?

Senior: It beats me, son. No matter which of His holy names you use - Jeepers or Geez or even just plain Gee - they just refuse to believe in Him. And of course they don't believe in the Third Person, Holy Moley, either.

Junior: Cripes Almighty! And Gosh punishes them?

Senior: He darns them to Heck, where they'll be roasted alive for eternity - Goshdarned forever!

Junior: Jiminy Christmas! Golly Gee Whiz!

Senior: You said it, son, you said it.

**The pre-Victorian who "cleaned up" Shakespeare, Gibbon, and others in editions "fit for family reading".*

CORRECTION, APOLOGY, ADMONITION

To the Editor: Teenagers spawning? In May PIQUE, p. 12, "Why We Live in New York #71":

"Mississippi has one of the highest teen birth rates of any state in the Union, 50 births per teen ..."

Is this "litter"ly true? Or should it be "50 births per 1000 teens"? - Norman Condit

Of course it's supposed to be 50 per 1000. My bad, and I apologize. However, Norman was the only person to catch it - after I (twice), Donna, and three other members of the Board proofed the issue prior to printing, and Zeus only knows how many readers have scanned it since.

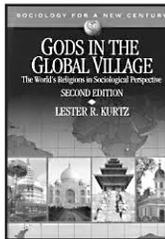
Come on, people - nobody?

I'm going to start giving quizzes. - JR

SHSNY CALENDAR: JUNE - AUGUST, 2014

SHSNY BOOK CLUB
THURS, JUNE 5, 7-8:30 pm
THE COMMUNITY CHURCH
OF NEW YORK
28 East 35 St. (Park-Mad)
 (3 doors West of the church - red door)
 We'll discuss
GODS IN THE
GLOBAL VILLAGE:
The World's Religions in
Sociological Perspective
Lester R. Kurtz

The question that faces us is not "Which religious tradition is true?" or "Is any religious tradition true?" but rather "How can we enable the various religious and secular traditions to coexist peacefully on the planet?"



Kurtz believes the sociology of religion can provide invaluable insight into the most pressing problems of our time.

Book Club Editor Elaine Lynn notes: "The new Third Edition can be bought used and, just as useful for our purposes, the 2006 edition costs very little." Just read, she says, Chap 2, A Sociological Tour: Turning East; Chap 4, Indigenous Religions; Chap 6, Modernism & Multiculturalism; Chap 7, Religious Movements for a New Century.

Join us even if you haven't finished reading.

The SHSNY Book Club is open to all ... and free!

LIKE SHSNY ON FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/pages/The-Secular-Humanist-Society-of-New-York/168704396485734

AND MEET US ON MEETUP

www.meetup.com/shsny-org/

SHSNY BOOK CLUB
THURS, JULY 10, 7-8:30 pm
 at Community Church of NY
 (Note change to second Thursday)
THE AGE OF ATHEISTS:
How We Have Sought to Live
Since the Death of God.
Intro and Part 1
Peter Watson

Acclaimed historian Watson offers a sweeping narrative of the secular philosophers and poets, psychologists and scientists, painters and playwrights, et al, who have forged a thrilling, bold path in the absence of religious belief.

From Nietzsche to Habermas, Watson's narrative explores the revolutionary ideas provoked by these great minds and movements.

"This book has so much to offer," says Book Club Editor Elaine Lynn, "that we're going to give it in-depth study over two sessions, and concentrate on just the Intro and Part 1 this month."

SHSNY BOOK CLUB
THURS, AUG 7, 7-8:30 pm
THE AGE OF ATHEISTS
Parts 2 and 3

Our wrap-up discussion of this outstanding book.

PLANNING AHEAD

The usual SHSNY schedule is ...

Book Club: First Thursday
 at the Community Church of NY
Movie Night: Second Monday
 at Stone Creek Lounge.

Brunch: Third Sunday
 at The Stag's Head

Great Lectures: 4th Wednesday
 at Stone Creek Lounge.

Humanism 102: Last Monday
 at the Community Church of NY

More info: www.shsny.org,
 and/or 646-922-7389

BRUNCH & CONVERSATION
SUNDAY, JUNE 15, 12 NOON
MONTHLY CASUAL BRUNCH
The Stag's Head
252 East 51 St.



The Stag's Head offers an American-traditional brunch menu of eggs and omelets several ways, crepes, burgers, frittatas, burritos and short-rib hash, all in the \$10.95-12.95 range., and including a drink. Join 19 other freethinkers and humanists (private space in back seats 20) for food, fellowship and well-fed fun.

After-Brunch Discussion:
Is Ayaan Ali an "Islamaphobe"?
 (See pages 9-10)
Is that a bad thing?

MONDAY, JUNE 9, 7:00 pm
SHSNY MOVIE NIGHT
Stone Creek Bar & Lounge
140 East 27 St (Lex-3rd Aves)
ENRON: The Smartest Guys
in the Room

How could America's 7th largest corporation crumble into dust? This shameful exposé rips open the nation's darkest corporate scandal, one that left thousands of investors and dedicated employees with nothing as a handful of top execs walked away with billions.

A behind-the-scenes look at the powerful energy company whose downfall forever changed the landscape of the business world ... but not enough.

After-film discussion:
Is business in America fixable?
SHSNY Movie Night is FREE.
 (But put something on the bar beside your elbow.)

SHSNY CALENDAR: JUNE - AUGUST, 2014

GREAT LECTURES ON DVD
WED, JUNE 25, 7:00 pm
Stone Creek Bar & Lounge
140 East 27 St. (Lex-3rd Aves)
AMERICAN FREETHOUGHT
Part 1

The Founding of Nation, Rich in Religious Contradictions
Rick Bradford

Produced in association with The Council for Secular Humanism this fascinating four-part documentary traces the history of secularism, free speech and censorship in America.



In Part 1, we'll meet Ethan Allen, America's first free thought author, examine the lives and careers of Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine, including Paine's seminal book *The Age of Reason*, and witness the rise of the abolition movement as radical abolitionists like Lucretia Mott and Elizur Wright break from the churches.

Great Lectures on DVD is FREE.
(But put something on the bar beside your elbow.)

HUMANISM 102
MONDAY, JUNE 30, 6:30-8:30
Community Church of New York
28 East 35 Street (red door)
Meeting/Discussion #8:
Readers' Choice

Let's review the "semester's" readings and themes ... continue discussions cut short by time ... look at some topics from new angles ... and plan for next year.

What do you want to discuss?

Note: *Humanism 102 is a study group, not a book club. If you have not done the reading, you may still audit the discussion – all are welcome!*

FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 7:00 pm
at NYSEC, 2 West 64 St.
The Secular Humanist Society of New York,
Feminist Freethinkers of NY,
and the
NY Society for Ethical Culture
jointly present
an important new film,
HONOR DIARIES
Culture is no excuse for abuse!

This outstanding 2013 documentary explores violence against women



in "honor-based" societies, and features nine courageous women's rights advocates who have witnessed firsthand the hardships women endure, and who engage in the film in a dialogue about gender equality and women's rights.

More than a movie, *Honor Diaries* is a movement meant to inspire viewers to learn more about issues facing women in Muslim-majority societies, and to act for change.

Suggested donation: \$5

SATURDAY, JUN 21: 2-6:00pm
REASONABLE NEW YORK
SUMMER SOLSTICE
POT LUCK PARTY
The Great Hill
in Central Park
(entrance at West 106 St)

Celebrate our hemisphere's longest and (we hope) sunniest day with dozens of friends and fellow Reasonable New Yorkers – in one of the loveliest, greenest spots in Central Park.

Bring a picnic lunch or take advantage of the ubiquitous park vendors, relax, meet new friends, and have some fun in the sun!

OTHER REASONABLE NEW YORK EVENTS

www.reasonablenewyork.org
CFI-NYC. Mon, Jun 9, 10 pm, Google's Lounge (Upstairs at the Living Room), 154 Ludlow St.: "Skeptics on the Mic Karaoke".
New York Philosophy: Date and place for June "Cocktails & Conversation" to be determined. Check www.nyphilosophy.com and/or reasonablenewyork.org

NY Society for Ethical Culture:

- Fri, Jun 6, 7 pm, Ethics in Film: *Thelma and Louise*. Snacks/Bevs, \$5 suggested donation.
- Sun, Jun 1, 2 pm, Sunday Assembly-NYC. Andra Miller, NYSEC Pres., on *The Power of Touch*. Free.
- Mon, Jun 2, 1 pm, Ethics in Literature: *Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal?*, by Jeanette Winterson. Snacks & Bevs, \$5.
- Fri, Jun 13, 6:30 pm, Ethics and the Theater: Warren Leight's *Side Man*. Recept/Refresh, \$10.

See the full RNY calendar at reasonablenewyork.org

PLUS

Agnostic A.A.: Twelve weekly AA-endorsed meetings. agnosticAANyc.org/meetings.html
Atheism History Week – With SHSNY's John Rafferty, 5:30 p.m. every Wednesday, MNN Ch. 1997 in Manhattan, and live streaming on your computer anywhere at www.mnn.org.

Drinking With Atheists: Every Friday, fun and conversation.

meetup.com/GothamAtheists/

Feminist Freethinkers of New York: Check schedule at feministfreethinkers.org

Manhattan History Buffs: Every 3d Tues, 6:00, dinner/talk at Lili's rest, 83-84th/3rd. Jun 17: "The Court of Henry VIII". Info at 212-802-7427

CALL OUR “CULTURAL DIVIDE” WHAT IT REALLY IS: CLASS WARFARE

Thomas Frank

(Excerpted from What’s the Matter with Kansas?, Mr. Frank’s 2004 best-seller, and a subject of our Humanism 102 June 2 Meeting/Discussion)

When national correspondents come to cover the Kansas revolution, they scratch their heads, mystified. They watch one group of Republican Kansans bombard another group of Republican Kansans, and they marvel at the strangeness and sadness of the spectacle. If pressed for a sociological explanation, they will attribute the conflict that roils the state to a squabble between fundamentalists and mainline Protestants, or a fight between the ignorant and educated, or even to the Cons’ [shorthand for conservatives] relative newness to modern, big-city ways. But above all it is a class war.

Class animus has been a persistent theme in the Great Backlash since ... George Wallace railed against liberalism on behalf of the “average man on the street, this man in the textile mill, this man in the steel mill, this barber, the beautician, the policeman on the beat”. Class animus has just as persistently been ignored by mainstream observers of the ever-growing conservative movement. The subject of social class is always a disconcerting one for Americans, and most journalists find it simpler to blame the backlash on racism, sexism, or some unfathomable religious conviction than to broach this troubling topic.

The Mods [moderates] are the worst offenders in this regard. As a rule, they do not admit the possibility that what separates them from the Cons is social class. ...

Dwight Sutherland, Jr., a deeply conservative Mission Hills [affluent suburb of Kansas City] lawyer and onetime member of the Republican National Committee, is refreshingly direct about all this. “It is a class struggle,” he tells me. “The roles have been slightly reversed.” Sutherland is a caustic critic of the moderate Republicans. The way he tells the story, the Mods look out at a state where working-class people are flocking to the Republican banner, swarming out of low-caste churches and lying down under cars in front of abortion clinics, and they have reacted with pure shocked snobbishness. “We are the better people,” the Mods supposedly think, “and we are entitled to lead this community, and we don’t want uppity sorts getting in the way and interfering in the process to ratify our anointed guardians of the public.” ... His point is hard to miss: the halls of even the most rarefied enclaves of the plutocracy ring today with the sanctimonious bushwa of political correctness. The primary targets of upper-class bigotry are now blue-collar people, with their funny religions and conservative politics. ...

The Kansas conservatives [on the other hand] like to refer to moderate Republicans as “liberals”, and in their struggle with the Mods for control of the Republican Party the Cons imagine they are confronting a local arm of the fabled “establishment”. For them the war is a set piece right out of the works of Ann Coulter or the monologues of Rush

Limbaugh: the common people versus a haughty, know-it-all liberal power structure.

The Mods are plenty conservative in their economic views ... [but] they also fulfill the liberal-elite stereotype, if all you consider are the cultural attributes of liberalism made famous by the good-natured loathing of commentators like [The New York Times’s] David Brooks. There are moderate Kansas Republicans who drink chardonnay and who put Martha’s Vineyard stickers on their Saabs. There are Mods who insist on European-style coffee and whole-grain breads and high-end chocolates. There are Mods who shop at Restoration Hardware and Whole Foods and who look down on those who shop at Wal-Mart. There are Mods who listen to NPR and who insist on speaking French to the waitress when at a French restaurant. There are Mods who go to gay-friendly, super-Waspy Episcopal churches and who disapprove of the Patriot Act and who rally in support of immigrant rights. And there are Mods who assume that all working-class whites are racist.

But such people aren’t liberal. What they are is corporate. Their habits and opinions owe far more to the standards of courtesy and taste that prevail within the white-collar world than they do to Franklin Roosevelt and the United Mine Workers. ...

And as corporate types, these Mods are the primary beneficiaries of the class war that rages against them. Although the Cons vituperate against the high and mighty, the policies they help enact—deregulating, privatizing—only serve to make the Mods higher and mightier still. ...

This situation may be paradoxical, but it is also universal. For decades Americans have experienced a populist uprising that only benefits the people it is supposed to be targeting. In Kansas we merely see an extreme version of this mysterious situation. The angry workers, mighty in their numbers, are marching irresistibly against the arrogant. They are shaking their fists at the sons of privilege. They are laughing at the dainty affectations of the Leawood [another rich suburb] toffs. They are massing at the gates of Mission Hills, hoisting the black flag, and while the millionaires tremble in their mansions, they are bellowing out their terrifying demands. “We are here,” they scream, “to cut your taxes.”

CASE IN POINT: KIDS v. HORSES

(From US Uncut, forwarded by Deeya Pavelle)

Since 2008, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett has cut \$1.8 billion from that state’s school budgets, mostly from poor/minority districts.

During the same period, Pennsylvania race-horse owners, by definition wealthy, have received \$1.8 billion in tax subsidies.

Note: Although deep-thinker and perennial presidential candidate Rick Santorum says there are no “classes” in America, and that such talk is “Marxism” or worse, “liberalism”, the above is a first offering in PIQUE of a refutation to the ex-Senator. Further “Dispatches from the Class War” are solicited. – JR

CASE IN POINT: “CORPORATIST” FACT TWISTING FROM “THE HEARTLAND”

John Rafferty

(The following is based on and quotes from an internet posting whose source I have lost – my apologies to someone.)

The Heartland Institute describes itself on its Google link as a “Chicago based think tank promoting public policy based on individual liberty, limited government, and free markets”. It has posted a quote about education in America by the uber-liberal late George Carlin that supports the Institute’s campaign for privatizing public (i.e., government-run) education. Here’s the quote posted on Facebook that has been “Liked” by thousands of like-minded conservatives, as well as centrists and liberals:

Governments don’t want well-informed, well-educated people capable of critical thinking. That is against their interests. They want obedient workers who are just smart enough to run the machines and do the paperwork. And just dumb enough to passively accept it.

Sort-of sounds like him, doesn’t it? Well, as my friend Tobee McMellon says, “Close”. Here’s what Carlin actually said – the full-monty, both-barrels Carlin – in 2005.

“There’s a reason education sucks, it’s the same reason that it will never, ever, ever be fixed. It’s never going to get any better, don’t look for it – be happy with what you got – because the owners of this country don’t want that.

“I’m talking about the real owners, now. The real owners, the big wealthy business interests that control things and make all the important decisions. Forget the politicians, they’re an irrelevancy. The politicians are put there to give you the idea that you have freedom of choice. You don’t. You have no choice. You have owners. They own you. They own everything. They own all the important land. They own and control the corporations. They’ve long since bought and paid for the Senate, the Congress, the state-houses, the city halls. They’ve got the judges in their back pockets. And they own all the big media companies, so that they control just about all of the news and information you hear. They’ve got you by the balls. They spend billions of dollars every year lobbying, lobbying to get what they want. Well, we know what they want; they want more for themselves and less for everybody else.

“But I’ll tell you what they don’t want. They don’t want a population of citizens capable of critical thinking. They don’t want well-informed, well-educated people capable of critical thinking. They’re not interested in that. That doesn’t help them. That’s against their interests.

“They don’t want people who are smart enough to sit around the kitchen table and figure out how badly they’re getting fucked by a system that threw them overboard 30 fucking years ago.

“You know what they want? Obedient workers, people who are just smart enough to run the machines and do the paperwork but just dumb enough to passively accept all these increasingly shittier jobs with the lower pay, the longer hours, reduced benefits, the end of overtime and the vanishing pension that disappears the minute you go to collect it.

And now, they’re coming for your Social Security.

They want your fucking retirement money. They want it back, so they can give it to their criminal friends on Wall Street.

“And you know something? They’ll get it. They’ll get it all, sooner or later, because they own this fucking place. It’s a big club, and you ain’t in it. You and I are not in the big club.

“This country is finished.”

George Carlin was a scabrously funny truth-teller admired by both left and right, and his name in a conservative-site Facebook headline will still attract many times more readers than would, say, Dinesh D’Souza or Milton Friedman. So I guess it doesn’t matter what Carlin actually said. If it suits your politics, you can twist the above anti-plutocratic opinions of a man who’s no longer around to defend his words or to sue you (but Carlin’s daughter Kelly is fighting back on Facebook) into whatever serves your cause, because your heart is ideologically pure, and your ends justify your means.

I have often in these pages used Chris Rodda’s wonderful phrase Liars for Jesus, but I think I have to call this one Liars for Mammon.

CALVIN INSTRUCTS HOBBS ON ETHICS, AND VICE-VERSA

Bill Watterson

(In the further comic-strip adventures of six-year-old Calvin and his stuffed-toy – but real to Calvin – tiger, Hobbes, the two enjoy a walk in the springtime woods.)

Calvin: I don’t believe in ethics anymore. As far as I’m concerned, the ends justify the means. Get what you can while the getting’s good, that’s what I say. Might makes right! The winners write the history books. It’s a dog-eat-dog world, so I’ll do whatever I have to, and let others argue about whether it’s “right” or not.

(Hobbes pushes aside Calvin, who falls into a mud puddle.)

Calvin: HEY! What did you do that for?

Hobbes: You were in my way. Now you’re not. The ends justify the means.

Calvin: I didn’t mean for *everyone*, you dolt. Just *me*.

Hobbes: Ahh.

SAM HARRIS INTERVIEWS THE NOW-POLITICALLY-INCORRECT AYAAN HIRSI ALI ABOUT “ISLAMOPHOBIA”

(Excerpted from “Lifting the Veil of ‘Islamophobia’: A Conversation with Ayaan Hirsi Ali”, on Mr. Harris’s blog)

Ayaan Hirsi Ali: When I read the work of my critics, whether it’s a blog or an article or a full book, they introduce me as a “controversial figure”. I’ve been trying to wrap my head around what I say, exactly, that makes me controversial.

Consider my views about the treatment of women under Islam. Where is the controversy? Can anyone argue women are treated well in traditional Muslim societies?

Under Islam, every woman is a second-class citizen.

She can inherit only half as much as her brother. Her testimony in court—say, in the case of her own rape—is worth half that of her rapist. A Muslim woman has to ask a male guardian for permission to get married or have a child—in some places to even leave the house. And all these various oppressions are justified using the core texts of Islam: the Koran and the hadith. I’m amazed by the accusation that something I’ve said on this topic is controversial. It’s simply horrible to treat women like this. Is that a controversial thing to say? Is it controversial to say that men and women should be equal? I would have thought this was the most boring statement a person could make.

Harris: It certainly should be. That’s what is so crazy about this Islamophobia charge. The people who commit the worst offenses—the honor killers, the suicide bombers, the Taliban gunman who attempted to murder Malala Yousafzai—are absolutely clear about their motives and articulate them at every opportunity. They are motivated by Islam. Yes, other religions have problematic doctrines. We can even concede that the Old Testament is the most barbaric scripture of them all. But Christians and Jews don’t tend to take the worst of its passages seriously, for reasons that can be explained both by the centuries during which these Western faiths have been weathered by science and secularism and by crucial elements of their own theology.

Most important, in my view, is the fact that Christianity and Judaism do not have clear doctrines of jihad, nor do they promise, ad nauseam, that martyrs go straight to Paradise. Islam is truly unique in this respect, which helps explain the fanaticism and violence we see throughout the Muslim world. Of course, your focus has been on the plight of women and girls under Islam, many millions of whom live in conditions that are antithetical to the most basic human happiness, as you know all too well. And the rationale for their oppression is drawn directly from scripture.

Hirsi Ali: Absolutely. And when I expose these oppressions, along with their cultural and religious underpinnings in Islam, I’m not doing it just to annoy people. I’m working in the hope that debating and discussing these issues is going to lead to some form of positive change. Even for the people who disagree with me—even for those who call me naïve or stupid—I remain hopeful that their thinking around these issues will change. Clearly, I’m not doing this work for the fun of it. I take absolutely no pleasure in talking about Islam at all.

In the Netherlands, where the debate was a little more intense because I was in Parliament, at some point my critics shifted from discussing the substance of these issues to, “It’s not what you say, but how you say it. We agree, Ayaan, there’s this problem with treatment of women under Islam, but we just don’t like how you say it.” So we would get into these absurd conversations where I would say, “Okay. How exactly do you want me to say it?”

How can you say these things in a way that is inoffensive to the very people who think that women are second-class citizens? There is just no way. I am surprised sometimes that we cannot find more common ground. Liberals

notice these same oppressions, but they attribute them solely to economics or politics.

N.B.: See the whole conversation at <http://www.samharris.org/blog/item/lifting-the-veil-of-islamophobia#sthash.1A6t98ji.dpuf>

TO ILLUSTRATE THE ABOVE ARGUMENT ...

John Rafferty

(Based on “Indonesia: Shariah Official Urges That Gang-Rape Victim Be Caned”, an AP report in The New York Times’s World Briefing of 5/7/2014)

She was a 25-year-old widow in the village of Lhokbani, in the East Aceh district of Indonesia, and she had a man who was not a relative visiting in her house in early May. Eight local men broke in, gang-raped her, beat the visitor, doused them both with sewage and then went to the Islamic police station to accuse the couple of having extramarital sex.

The head of Islamic Shariah law in the district, Ibrahim Latief, said his office had recommended that the woman and the married man be caned nine times for violating religious law by being in the same room together, pending an investigation.

And the eight rapists? *What?* Don’t be silly.

MO’S CRISIS OF FAITH, JESUS’ SOLUTION

(Transcribed from www.jesusandmo.net/2014/05/14/face2/)

Mohammed (*hiding under bed covers*): I’m having a crisis of faith. For so many years I have regarded the Koran as the perfect, uncreated word of God.

Jesus: You don’t think so anymore?

Mo: It can’t be, the way it see-saws between cajoling and menacing the reader, the constant, desperate-sounding reassertion of its own bona fides – it’s obviously the work of men who are trying too hard. But I’ve preached it for too long, and I don’t have a face-saving exit strategy.

Jesus: Have you thought about clinging to your belief with an increased fanaticism that threatens to erupt into violence should anyone question it?

Mo: What a brilliant idea! Thanks, Jesus.

Jesus: Don’t mention it.

ON THE OKCUPID BOYCOTT OF FIREFOX

Bill Chapman

In political discourse, there are some actions that are considered off-limits. Assassination is out, and we’re not allowed to beat up people we disagree with. I personally don’t approve of even being rude, though satire is allowed.

60 years ago, the US experienced the McCarthy Era. The core of the McCarthy Era was that capitalists were refusing to do business with people who wanted them lined up against a wall and shot. There were government committees involved, but the key actions were private companies firing, or refusing to hire, suspected communists, especially in jobs such as scriptwriters where they would be in a position to influence public opinion.*

PRESIDENT OBAMA: CLIVEN BUNDY BELONGS IN PRISON

John Rafferty

Generally it is liberals who talk about the McCarthy Era, and they are vehemently of the opinion that what the conservatives did at that time was wrong. My reaction to that was "OK, then it's wrong to retaliate economically against someone for their beliefs." I was willing to go along with that because it meant that others would not economically harm me for my beliefs.

Around 1990, a situation arose where it became known that Tom Monaghan, the founder of Domino's Pizza, was funding anti-abortion causes, and liberals were boycotting Domino's in retaliation. Though staunchly pro-abortion myself, I went out of my way to patronize Domino's because I felt they were being unjustly persecuted.

This week, as I went on the OKCupid dating site, I was greeted by a message that I was using Firefox, and Brendan Eich, a founder and the CEO of Mozilla, the maker of Firefox, and the inventor of Javascript, had donated \$1,000 to an anti-gay marriage cause in 2008, and urging me to boycott Firefox, and directing me to other browsers.

Bear in mind that at the time that donation happened, then-presidential candidate Obama was officially opposed to gay marriage, too. And \$1,000 is not much money for someone as rich as Eich.

I think an important part of OKCupid's campaign was that they could tell that I was already using Firefox, and users of OKCupid answer long questionnaires to determine dating compatibility. So the dating site knew that I had answered that I support gay marriage. I'll bet users who were opposed to gay marriage and using Internet Explorer learned nothing of this campaign, because they would have switched to Firefox. Mozilla yielded to the pressure, Eich stepped down, and Mozilla issued an absurdly profuse apology for ever having had him as CEO.

What's the world coming to? I have guarded an abortion clinic against Christian protesters, and have given thousands of dollars to Planned Parenthood. This means at least 30 percent of Americans feel I'm complicit in murder - what if they all decide to retaliate economically against me? We can't predict the future. In 20 years, libertarians may have taken this country by storm (as if they haven't already), and they could be targeting anyone who participated in Occupy Wall Street for economic retaliation. If any of the former OWS supporters claim there is anything unfair about this, the libertarians (or whoever else is doing the oppressing) will have a long list of victims of liberal economic persecution to cite as precedent.

The important lesson from the McCarthy Era was that we have a first amendment right to be communists. Or anarchists, or fascists, or homophobes, or racists. But OKCupid has established that we don't.

**Comment: Bill, this is perhaps the most disingenuous description of McCarthyism I've ever heard from someone educated. To compare the depredations of Joe McCarthy, the House UnAmerican Activities Committee and the hundreds of local-government witchhunts that ruined the lives of thousands of people (who never wanted anyone "lined up against a wall and shot") with a feeble liberal boycott of a multimillionaire won't wash. - JR*

Let's write a scenario. An African-American businessman - let's call him Cliven Bundy - in South Philly or Detroit has not paid federal taxes in 20 years. By bluffing and stalling in the courts he has kept the feds at bay, but now, armed with federal and state court orders, they come to seize his property. He gathers some family and friends, all armed, and calls in the media.

On TV he claims that as a black separatist he does not recognize the government of the United States, and calls on others to join him in an insurrection. Dozens of heavily-armed and military-garbed black men from various militant and separatist groups with histories of violence swarm to the scene. They take up sniper positions and aim assault rifles at federal agents. A hotel in which the feds are staying receives bomb threats. Some of the "black liberationists" wave signs scrawled "You need to die!" at local police and sheriffs trying to keep order. They then begin "patrolling" the city streets, setting up roadblocks and, at gunpoint, demanding proof of residency before allowing people into "their" communities.

And after a standoff of nearly two months, nobody has been jailed, black "Cliven Bundy" is still in business and has still not paid any taxes.

Uh, huh. Sure, the black guys would get away with it.

The only part of the above scenario that is fantasy is the color of the insurrectionists' skin. That scenario really is playing out in the real world, in real Nevada, where the real (white) Cliven Bundy continues to flout federal law, not pay grazing fees for his cattle, and to make such pronouncements as his "one more thing I know about the Negro" racist stupidity. And his armed racist and skinhead supporters still roam the streets and threaten violence.

Why? Because 21 years after the Branch Davidian disaster in Waco, federal law enforcement and the White House are still snake-bit and gun-shy about enforcement in the face of armed resistance, even of insurrection - which is what is happening in Nevada, and now spreading to Utah.

And why is this a humanist question? Because of that fantasy scenario at the top of this column. Because there are still two standards of justice in America: one for whites, and one for everyone else, especially you-know-who.

President Obama, the rabid right-wingers, secessionists and gun nuts won't hate you one whit less for showing patience with Cliven Bundy. So man up and do the right thing: Cliven Bundy belongs in prison - put him there.

ON THE OTHER HAND ...

Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.

- Harry S Truman

A new (and long-distance – Rochester, NY!) member reminds us of the basics.

SHOW YOU CARE

Paul Forcella

There are many ways one can show a caring attitude toward the people and animals who share the Earth with us. First, respect others and avoid treating others who are different from you with disrespect. Volunteering your time to assist those in need, giving to a worthwhile charity, and helping out at a food cupboard are a few examples of how you can help. Volunteering for the Red Cross and volunteering at your local hospital are a couple of other ways.

Thousands of children starve to death around the world. Sign up and give to a valid charity that stops this from happening and gives these people hope – it's a noble thing to do. Make the most of your spare time. Give to a charity that stops animal cruelty.

Doing these acts of kindness makes you feel good, strengthens the cause of secular humanism and, most importantly, helps society and our world.

If equal affection cannot be, Let the more loving one be me.
– W.H. Auden

It is impossible to live pleasurably without living prudently, honorably, and justly; or to live prudently, honorably, and justly, without living pleasurably. – Epicurus

WHAT (ELSE) SHSNY MEMBERS ARE DOING ...

• **Sat, June 7, thru July 13**, Artist **Harvey Offenhartz** is exhibiting new abstract work in his show, "Drawing Color", at the Souterrain Gallery, West Cornwall, CT.

• **Mon, Jun 9, 6:30pm**: Lawyer/ Activist **Jonathan Engel** will speak to the Humanists and Freethinkers of Fairfield County (CT) on "Engel v. Vitale, Prayer in the Schools, and the Separation of Church and State" at the Silver Star Diner, 210 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT. (Exit 14 off of I-95). Admission is free – food and drink for sale by the diner.

• **Wed, Aug 27 thru Sun, Sep 7**: Artists **Irene Christensen** and **Donna Marxer** are curating "The Suitcase Show" of works by 28 Artists In Residence In Everglades at Galleri Schaeffers Gate 5, Oslo, Norway.

• **Wed, Sep 10 thru Sun, Sep 21**: **Ms. Christensen** and **Ms. Marxer** will exhibit in a two-woman show ("a double solo", Donna says) at the same gallery in Oslo.

NOTE: If you are a member of SHSNY and *actively* involved in an event open to the public, e.g., an artist or photographer having a show, a musician in performance, a speaker lecturing or on a panel, send your info to editor@shsn.org. Each issue closes on the 20th of the month preceding the issue date.

AND A FINAL NOTE OF CAUTION

Not everything you see on the Internet is true.

– Abraham Lincoln

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The SHSNY Election:
Everyone won!

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