

# PIQUE

Newsletter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York

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January, 2013

*Now let us welcome the new year, full of things that have never been. – Rilke*

Are we, year by year, getting smarter? Then why do we still think magically? Why does a favorite science writer go off the tracks, and our favorite looney actually say something sane? We consider infinity, an indifferent universe, and not-really suicide. We vote for Dumbths, welcome a new Board member, promote art and religious freedom, and decry the freedom to kill children. – JR

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## TODAY IS THE DAY. NOW IS THE TIME

**John Rafferty**

When, after an outrage like the massacre in Newtown, Connecticut, is it “appropriate” to discuss the politics of gun control? “Today is not the day,” say not only the accomplices to murder of the billion-dollar gun lobby, but even White House spokespersons and well-meaning liberals who mouth the piety that “Today is for mourning”.

Wrong.

As I write this four days after the slaughter of six adults and twenty first-grade children in Newtown—during which time another 1,072 human beings of all ages were shot in America—the multi-multi-million-dollar public relations machine of the National Rifle Association is still strangely silent, and its right-wing toadies in Congress seem to have nothing to say. (See “Update”, page 3)

Why? Because they’re waiting. Waiting for the next long news cycle and for the grasshopper mentality of the American public to hop to its next fleeting focus. “The Hobbit”? Lindsay Lohan? The NFL playoffs? It doesn’t matter – the accomplices know that time is on their side.

Of course even that monolithic machine can’t control free-lance nut jobs like former Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, who told Fox News that this shooting happened because “we’ve systematically removed God from our schools”. Worse, Bryan Fischer of the mendacious American Family Association asked and answered the obvious question of where “God” was while those children were being slaughtered: “We’ve kicked God out of our public school system”, he explained, and “God is a gentleman” who is “not gonna go where he’s not wanted.”

And even worse – bordering on insane – are the crazies Like Texas congressman Louie Gohmert who, with straight

faces advise us that horrors like Newtown wouldn’t happen if every teacher, administrator and janitor in every school was armed. Really, janitors, too.

Those of us who think, those of us who care, will sign petitions like “Today IS the Day” (*Thank you for forwarding, Lori Rothman*), write essays like this, and even gather a few hundred to demonstrate in front of the White House. But in a few more days – certainly by the time PIQUE subscribers read this – we will hear, again, that whatever we do should not curtail “the constitutional right of law-abiding citizens to protect themselves”, then that “we need to focus on mental health issues”, not guns, and, in a few months, that “radical liberals” are out to repeal the Second Amendment and enslave us all in some firearms-free Soviet gulag.

Are you old enough to remember the murders of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968, a double-barreled shock that supposedly awakened America to the need for greater gun control? Since then, more than 400,000 Americans have been killed by guns.

The near-assassination of Ronald Reagan in 1981 led to loophole-riddled laws instituting background checks to prevent people like John Hinckley from purchasing guns. Since then, 295,000 Americans have been shot to death.

Want some ghoulish fun? Go to [bradycampaign.org/](http://bradycampaign.org/) and check the numbers in the top right corner of the Home screen. They total the number of Americans shot so far this year, and today’s running total: 95,136 year-to-date as of 8:48 am on December 18, and the day’s tally has risen from 84 to 96 since I started writing this (I don’t write quickly).

If today is an average day in America, 268 men, women, and children will be shot, and 32 of them will die. Between Newtown and the date you are reading this, at least another 400 will have died by gunshot.

I know that today *is* the day, and now *is* the time, for

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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America to wake up, stand up, and face down the accomplices. But, frankly, I despair. What, realistically, will our petitions and our demonstrations accomplish that our past petitions and demonstrations have not? Is it “pointless”, as Jeffrey Goldberg suggests in the liberal *Atlantic* magazine, to even try to put controls on the 300 million guns in the hands of America’s 312 million people?

What the hell can we do? I don’t know. Do you?

## TWO MORE POSTSCRIPTS TO NEWTOWN

When CNN and others ask the rabbi or priest or minister (in whose buildings mourners are gathering) how God allowed the pathetic (pathos is uninspiring; tragedy is inspiring) incident to happen, why is the question not addressed to a physician, a scientist, or a psychiatrist?

– Warren Allen Smith

The memorial service for the Newtown, Conn., massacre victims was held at a public high school. It was clearly a religious service from start to finish, with clergy from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Baha’i faiths presiding, along with the Pontifex Maximus of the USA, whose address, as usual, was replete with godspak.

Where were the representatives of the Ethical Culture, Unitarian, and Humanist groups?

Foolish question, I know. – Dennis Middlebrooks

## THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WASN’T THE ONLY GOOD NEWS IN NOVEMBER

Edd Doerr, President

Americans for Religious Liberty

Let me add to John Rafferty’s reasons to celebrate the election (PIQUE, December). On November 6 Florida voters rejected, 55.5 percent to 44.5 percent, an effort to amend the state constitution to allow tax aid to religious private schools, something that New York voters did in 1967 by 72 percent to 28 percent (the subject of my first book, *The Conspiracy That Failed*, in 1968).

Florida voters rejected by a similar margin an effort to restrict abortion rights. Also on November 6 Indiana voters kicked out Republican state school superintendent Tony Bennett, who had strongly supported school vouchers and disrespected teachers.

And in the final week of November two separate courts in Louisiana threw out the state’s recently passed school voucher law, the brainfart of Governor Bobby Jindal, who may have presidential aspirations for 2016.

A pretty good month for church-state separation.

## YOU GOTTA HAVE ART

Donna Marxer

In a rare reference to the arts during the recent tedious campaign season Mitt Romney said, “I’d save billions by closing down the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) and the NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities)”. He was a little off in his figures—those two organizations’ budgets total only \$392 million—but what

the hell. It’s only the arts, an easy target for budget cuts, without reference to how much the arts contribute to our society—and the economy.

What should Obama do in his second “first hundred days”? Make funding for the arts a national priority.

Consider how our museums, opera and concert houses produce tourism and attendant businesses. Even small amounts of government funding lend credibility to an institution in its quest for private donations. Consider that if a symphony orchestra fails, it will never start up again.

Think about the arts in education, which are already being ruthlessly cut. These arts create opportunities for learning when other teachings fail.

Europe knows better. Poor Ireland generously supports individual artists. Look at England’s National Theater. Finland, with a population of just over five million, supports 33 symphony orchestras. France’s love affair with the arts produces 40 times the puny support of America’s arts funding.

Great civilizations are known for their arts. The arts are civilization’s cake, not the frosting. No cuts, please.

## BRIAN LEMAIRE JOINS THE SHSNY BOARD

(Brian was an active member of SHSNY in the early 1990s, got busy with other things, and came back in 2009. When he renewed his membership a couple of months ago, he checked every “Will you volunteer?” box. So I asked him if he’d like to join the Board, and he immediately said Yes. Here he is in his own words. – JR)



As a student in college, I intended to become an accountant, and studied for and passed the CPA exam. Then I found more opportunities in the computer field once I got out of college. I spent thirty years working for corporations: AT&T, CBS, Charles Schwab, and Prentice Hall (Pearson Publishing), doing computer programming and systems support.

After being diagnosed with cancer in 2010, I left that field to pursue a career as a book editor, which I have not yet landed, and as a website designer. I have created a website, [www.ValeTales.info](http://www.ValeTales.info), which includes a blog on many subjects but mostly about editing.

The front page of this website gives a clue to an issue that I think is most important: that of overpopulation and our effect on wildlife.

My other interests include a history club organized by Barbara Bernstein, one of our SHSNY members, and volunteer work renovating Loews Jersey City Landmark Theatre, which plays classic movies from the 1930s and 40s and hosts community events. I enjoy sailing and for a few years belonged to a sailing club in Jersey City.

I have a wife, Debbie, and a daughter, Beverly, who teaches young children ages 3-5 in a small school in Fairfield County, CT.

And I am currently reading and enjoying: *The Power of Myth* by Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers.

## REASON vs. MAGICAL THINKING

Walter Balcerak

**A**s secular humanists, we strive to view the world and the universe in the light of reason. What's more, we treat supernatural and magical explanations with skepticism, right?

Wrong. So says Matthew Hutson, author of *The 7 Laws of Magical Thinking*, who has a B.S. in cognitive neuroscience and an M.S. in science writing. We all believe in magic, he asserts, even if we think we don't. For example, if a beloved grandfather leaves you an antique silver dollar, would you trade it for a similar coin with a higher resale value? Most likely, you would not. But that is magical thinking. After all, there is nary an atom of grandfather in the coin. Yet, although you don't believe in spirits, you will likely feel that something of his essence resides there.

Here's an example offered by Yale University's Brian Scholl: Suppose you honked your car horn, and at that instant a street light went out. "You may never for a moment believe that your honk caused the light to go out", he says, "but you will irresistibly perceive that causal relation. The fact remains that our visual systems refuse to 'believe' in coincidences."

Ditto for our aural systems. If you hear a sudden sound in the woods, even if it's only wind in the trees, you are more likely to survive if you assume it's a predator or an enemy. We attribute agency to inanimate things, Hutson explains, because such thinking contributes to our evolutionary success. For this reason, the brain "constructs reality in the most useful way possible for its owner. The key word here is useful, which is not to say accurate. The brain doesn't care so much what's really out there; it just needs to stay alive and be replicated, which might involve telling us a white lie now and then."

Hutson thinks much magical thinking is caused by our conflation of mind and matter. "We instinctively treat the mind as though it had physical properties", he writes, "and we treat the physical world as though it had mental properties. ... We perceive mind and matter mingling together, working on the same wavelength."

Thus we tend to believe we can control matter with mind, which explains the universal appeal of prayer, religious ritual, and belief in gods. Such magical thinking is psychologically useful, Hutson believes, because it offers us a sense of control and meaning, even if we're not really in control and events have no intrinsic meaning.

His aim in writing this book is constructive, he says. "By tearing down everything holy and pointing out the sand it was built upon, I'm hoping we can learn how to build meaning back up in constructive ways. I don't want to eradicate magical thinking, I want to harness it."

This book is worth reading for its detailed descriptions of research on magical thinking and its mechanisms. However, Hutson's ultimate goal of harnessing magical thinking is debatable. The preferred goal of this secular humanist, on the contrary, is to eradicate magical thinking and harness rationality and compassion.

## IS RELIGION NECESSARY?

Chic Schissel

**C**an society function without religion? Sara Robinson (PIQUE, September) doesn't think so, and her opinion is echoed by many. Religion, they point out, is based on fear of divine reprisal, and tends to maintain discipline and moral behavior, making a workable social structure possible. But is there evidence that supports such an assertion?

Humans have trouble thinking. Deciding on a course of action requires the intelligent gathering of information, then drawing logical conclusions from this information, not a simple task. And then some doubt always remains about the correctness of these conclusions: "Am I sure I'm doing the right thing?" Doubt causes anxiety that humans would rather avoid, and religion provides the way out. Religion gives the answers, does not equivocate, tells you what to do (*or else!*).

Religion makes it easy; thinking is not required.

Can we make a better world without using religion? Recent history has seen a tremendous advance in technology (including weapons technology) but a concomitant advance in humanity's ability to think has not been noticed. Certainly we would prefer that future society, taking full advantage of new technology, be built on a thinking and intelligent humanity. But humanity, accustomed to the restraints of religion-generated fear, may not be up to the challenge, especially since these challenges may even exceed the ability of present-day religion to handle.

So what might happen? To meet these tests, religion might evolve into an oppressive, all-controlling and malignant form. Or, as we would much prefer, something will happen to improve the thinking abilities of humanity.

We can only hope.

**I**am absolutely convinced that the main source of hatred in the world is religion ... and I think it should be treated with ridicule, hatred, and contempt ... and I claim that right.

— Christopher Hitchens

## UPDATE: THE (EVIL) EMPIRE STRIKES BACK!

John Rafferty

**W**hile three of the murdered children were being buried in Newtown, and at the same time that another crazy was—seemingly indiscriminately—killing three more victims of gun violence in America, the Executive V.P. of the N.R.A. blamed the children's deaths on the media, Hollywood, gun-control liberals, and, of course, Obama—on everything but the insane idea that freedom is measured by the number of bullets your magazine can hold.

Crazier—except in the eyes of the gun manufacturers who contribute more to the N.R.A. than members' dues—Wayne LaPierre wants to put armed guards into every one of our 97,000 K-12 schools. But you know what's not crazy?

In a month or so, a few of LaPierre's lackeys in Congress will actually debate that proposal. Watch – I guarantee it.

## INKLINGS OF INFINITY

Alan Lightman

(Excerpted from "Our Place in the Universe", in Harper's Magazine, December, 2012)

Very recent scientific findings have added yet another dimension to the question of our place in the cosmos. For the first time in the history of science, we are able to make plausible estimates of the rate of occurrence of life in the universe.

In March 2009, NASA launched a spacecraft called *Kepler* whose mission was to search for planets orbiting in the "habitable zone" of other stars. The habitable zone is the region in which a planet's surface temperature is not so cold as to freeze water and not so hot as to boil it. For many reasons, biologists and chemists believe that liquid water is required for the emergence of life, even if that life may be very different from life on Earth. Dozens of candidates for such planets have been found, and we can make a rough preliminary calculation that something like 3 percent of all stars are accompanied by a potentially life-sustaining planet. The totality of living matter on earth—humans and animals, plants, bacteria, and pond scum—makes up 0.00000001 percent of the mass of the planet. Combining this figure with the results from the *Kepler* mission, and assuming that all potentially life-sustaining planets do indeed have life, we can estimate that the fraction of stuff in the visible universe that exists in living form is something like 0.00000000000001 percent, or one millionth of one billionth of 1 percent. If some cosmic intelligence created the universe, life would seem to have been only an afterthought. And if life emerges by random processes, vast amounts of lifeless material are needed for each particle of life. Such numbers cannot help but bear upon all of our significance in the universe.

Decades ago, when I was sailing with my wife in the Aegean Sea, in the midst of unending water and sky, I had a slight inkling of infinity. It was a sensation I had not experienced before, accompanied by feelings of awe, fear, sublimity, disorientation, alienation, and disbelief. I set a course for 255°, trusting in my compass—a tiny disk of painted numbers with a sliver of rotating metal—and hoped for the best. In a few hours, as if by magic, a pale ocher smidgen of land appeared dead ahead, a thing that drew closer and closer, a place with houses and beds and other human beings.

## IT'S A SMART, SMART, SMART WORLD

Nicholas D. Kristof

(Excerpted from The New York Times, 12/12/12)

Here's a bright spot of good news: We're getting smarter. My readers are all above average. But if I ever had average readers, they would still be brilliant compared with Americans of a century ago.

The average American in the year 1900 had an I.Q. that by today's standards would measure about 67. Since the traditional definition of mental retardation was an I.Q. of less than 70, that leads to the remarkable conclusion that a

majority of Americans a century ago would count today as intellectually disabled.

The trend of rising intelligence is known as the "Flynn Effect", named for James R. Flynn, the New Zealand scholar who pioneered this area of research. Countless other scholars worldwide have replicated his findings, and it is now accepted science — although there is still disagreement about its causes and significance.

The average American I.Q. has been rising steadily by 3 points a decade. Spaniards gained 19 points over 28 years, and the Dutch 20 points over 30 years. Kenyan children gained nearly 1 point a year.

Those figures come from a new book by Flynn from Cambridge University Press called *Are We Getting Smarter?* It's an uplifting tale, a reminder that human capacity is on the upswing. The implication is that there are potential Einsteins now working as subsistence farmers in Congo or dropping out of high school in Mississippi who, with help, could become actual Einsteins.

The Flynn Effect should upend some of the smugness among those who have historically done well in global I.Q. standings. For example, while there is still a race gap, black Americans are catching up — and now do significantly better than white Americans of the "greatest generation" did in the 1940s.

Another problem for racists: The country that tops the I.Q. charts isn't America or in Europe. It's Singapore, at 108. (The reason may have to do with Singapore's Confucian respect for learning and its outstanding school system.)

None of this means that people today are born smarter. While I.Q. measures something to do with mental acuity, it's a rubbery and imperfect metric. It's heavily shaped by environment — potential is diminished when children suffer from parasites or lead in air pollution. As a result, the removal of lead from gasoline may have added 6 points to the I.Q. of American children, according to Dr. Philip Landrigan, a pediatrician and epidemiologist at Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

Flynn argues that I.Q. is rising because in industrialized societies we give our brains a constant mental workout that builds up what we might call our brain sinews.

"The brains of the best and most experienced London taxi drivers", Flynn writes, citing a 2000 study, have "enlarged hippocampi, which is the brain area used for navigating three-dimensional space". In a similar way, he argues, modern life gives our brains greater exercise than when we were mostly living on isolated farms.

It's not that our ancestors were dummies, and I confess to doubts about the Flynn Effect when I contemplate the slide from Shakespeare to *Fifty Shades of Grey*. Likewise, politics does not seem to benefit: One academic study found a deterioration in the caliber of discussions of economics in presidential debates from 1960 to 2008.

But Flynn argues that modern TV shows and other entertainment can be cognitively demanding, and video games like those of the Grand Theft Auto series probably require more thought than solitaire. (No, don't call the

police. My teenage kids are not holding me hostage and forcing me to write this paragraph.) ...

To me, the lesson from this research is the vast amount of human potential globally that is available if we can nurture and stimulate kids who now get neglected.

One challenge is to preserve foreign aid. Some 61 million children around the world still don't attend even primary school, and President Obama in his 2008 campaign was right to propose a global education fund, in part as an alternative to extremist religious schools. I'm hoping the idea doesn't get dropped forever.

## WHY THE "FINE-TUNED UNIVERSE" IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE - Part 1

Greta Christina

(Excerpted from *AlterNet*, 3/30/2010)

*"But the Universe is so perfectly fine-tuned for life. What are the chances that this happened by accident? Doesn't it seem like the Universe had to have been created this way on purpose?"*

Many arguments for religion and against atheism are so bad they can't even be considered arguments. They're not serious attempts to offer evidence or reason supporting the existence of God. They're simply attempts to deflect legitimate questions or ad-hominem insults of atheists, or the baffling notion that "I want to believe" is a good argument, or attempts to just make the questions go away. Or similar nonsense.

But some arguments for religion do sincerely offer evidence and reason for the existence of God. They're still not very good arguments, and the evidence and reason being offered still don't hold water ... but they're sincere arguments, so I'm doing them the honor of addressing them. Today's argument: the argument from fine-tuning.

The argument from fine-tuning goes roughly like this: The Universe is perfectly fine-tuned to allow life to come into being. The distance of the Earth from the Sun, the substance and depth of the atmosphere, the orbit of the Moon, the nature of matter and energy, the very laws of physics themselves ... all are perfectly tuned to let life happen. If any of them had been different by even a small amount, there could not have been life on Earth. And the odds against this fine-tuning are astronomical. Therefore, the Universe, and all these details about it, must have been created this way on purpose. And the only imaginable being that could have created the universe and fine-tuned it for life is God.

Okay. We have some serious misunderstandings here.

Let's assume, for the moment, that the Universe really is perfectly set up for life, and human life at that. I don't think that for a second—I'll get to that in a bit—but for the sake of argument, let's assume that it's true.

Does that imply the Universe was created that way on purpose?

No. It absolutely does not.

Here's an analogy. I just rolled a die 10 times (that's a six-sided die, all you D&D freaks), and got the sequence

3241154645. The odds against that particular sequence coming up are astronomical. Over 60 million to one. Does that mean that this sequence was designed to come up?

Or think of it this way. The odds against me, personally being born? They're beyond astronomical. The chances that, of my mom's hundreds of eggs and my dad's hundreds of millions of sperm, this particular sperm and egg happened to combine to make me? Ridiculously unlikely. Especially when you factor in the odds against my parents being born ... and against their parents being born ... and their parents, and theirs, and so on and so on and so on. The chances against me, personally, having been born are so vast, it's almost unimaginable.

But does that mean I was destined to be born? Does that mean we need to concoct an entire philosophy and theology to explain The Improbability of Greta-ness?

Or does it simply mean that I won the cosmic lottery? Does it simply mean that my existence is one of many wildly improbable outcomes of the universe, and if it hadn't happened, something else would have? Does it simply mean that some other kid would have been born to my parents instead, a kid whose existence would have been every bit as unlikely as mine?

Yes, life on Earth is wildly improbable. And if it hadn't happened, some other weird chemical stew would have arisen on Earth, one that didn't turn into life. Or life would have developed, but it would have evolved into some form other than humanity. Or the Earth would never have formed around the Sun, but some other unlikely planet would have formed around some other star. (Maybe one with cool rings around it like Saturn, only Day-Glo orange with green stripes.) If life on Earth hadn't happened, something else equally improbable would have happened instead.

We just wouldn't be here to wonder about it.

Douglas Adams (of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* fame) put this extremely well in his renowned Puddle Analogy. He said:

*Imagine a puddle waking up one morning and thinking, "This is an interesting world I find myself in, an interesting hole I find myself in, fits me rather neatly, doesn't it? In fact it fits me staggeringly well, must have been made to have me in it!"*

Yes, the hole fits us rather neatly. But that doesn't mean the hole was designed to have us in it. We evolved to fit in the hole that happened to be here. If the hole had been shaped differently, something else would have happened.

And how perfect is this hole, anyway? Douglas Adams' puddle analogy doesn't end there. It continues:

*This is such a powerful idea that as the sun rises in the sky and the air heats up and as, gradually, the puddle gets smaller and smaller, it's still frantically hanging on to the notion that everything's going to be alright, because this world was meant to have him in it, was built to have him in it; so the moment he disappears catches him rather by surprise.*

(Part 2 of Ms. Christina's essay in February *PIQUE*.)

# SHSNY CALENDAR: JANUARY - MARCH 2013

## SHSNY BOOK CLUB

THURSDAY, JAN 3, 6:30 pm

in the front room of  
THE COMMUNITY CHURCH  
OF NEW YORK

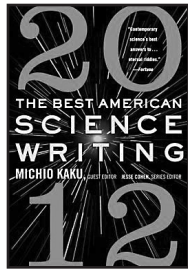
28 East 35 St. (Park-Mad)  
(3 doors West of the church - red door)

We'll discuss

**THE BEST AMERICAN  
SCIENCE WRITING - 2012**

Ed. Michio Kaku

The latest edition of the popular annual series dedicated to collecting the most crucial, thought-provoking, and engaging science writing of the year.



From climate change to public health, the origins of the universe to the wiring of the human brain, parallel universes to artificial intelligence, these selections cover the full spectrum of scientific inquiry, all brought together by the Henry Semat Professor in Theoretical Physics at the City University of New York, cofounder of string field theory, theoretical physicist, and *New York Times* bestselling author Michio Kaku.

*Kirkus Reviews* calls this delight "superb brain candy!" — *Paperback*

*Join us even if you haven't finished reading.*

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

## HUMANISM 101

Meeting/Discussion #2

*The Philosophies of Humanism*

MONDAY, JAN 28, 6:30-8:30

at Community Church of NY

See Page 8 for details

## SHSNY BOOK CLUB

THURSDAY, FEB 7, 6:30 pm

at Community Church of NY  
28 East 35 Street (Park-Mad)

**THE SEPARATION OF  
CHURCH AND STATE:**

*Writings on a*

*Fundamental Freedom by  
America's Founders  
Forrest Church, Ed.*

This concise primer gets past the rhetoric that surrounds the never-ending debate about the founders' intentions, placing their vivid writings on religious liberty in historical perspective. Among other questions it considers: to what degree was "separation" the result of anti-Catholic sentiment?

With running commentary by Forrest Church, this collection informs anyone curious about the original blueprint for our country and its government. — *Paperback*

## SHSNY BOOK CLUB

THURS, MARCH 7, 6:30 pm

at Community Church of NY  
28 East 35 Street (Park-Mad)

**ANSWERS FOR ARISTOTLE:  
How Science and Philosophy**

*Can Lead Us to a*

*More Meaningful Life*

Massimo Pigliucci

How should we live? SHSNY's Hown philosopher-in-residence argues that the combination of science and philosophy first pioneered by Aristotle offers us the best possible tool for understanding the world and ourselves.

*Answers for Aristotle* addresses such essential issues as how to tell right from wrong, the nature of love and friendship, and whether we can ever really know ourselves – while finding the path to the best possible life. — *Kindle available.*

## BRUNCH!

*New Restaurant!*

SUNDAY, JAN 20, 12 NOON

We'll gather for our  
MONTHLY CASUAL BRUNCH

*Brabant Belgian Brasserie*

316 East 53 Street

We'll meet at Noon just east of 2nd Avenue at our new brunch venue for outstanding Belgian fare, from salads to shrimp rolls, Grand Fromage Onion Soup, waffles and burgers, pots of lots of mussels, \$6 to \$18, plus a prix-fixe brunch (10 choices, plus 5 omelettes, including a drink) for \$17.

Everyone interested in getting together with 15-20 or more like-minded humanists and rationalists for good grub (huge selection of beers!) and lively talk is welcome.

*Bring friends!*

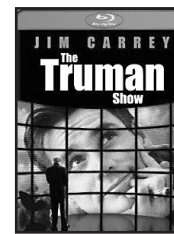
MONDAY, JAN 14, 7:00 pm

SHSNY MOVIE NIGHT

Stone Creek Bar & Lounge

140 East 27 St (Lex-3rd Aves)

**"THE TRUMAN SHOW"**



You know that feeling that maybe life, the universe, everything, is just a stage set and you're the only real person amid a world full of supporting players?

What if that were true? Truman Burbank (Jim Carrey) is the unwitting star of "The Truman Show", a 24-hour-a-day media phenomenon that broadcasts every moment of his life – without his knowledge – in a near-future dystopia.

Ed Harris is the electronic mastermind who orchestrates Truman's life in this 1998 satire that asks the question: What is reality?

*SHSNY Movie Night is FREE.*

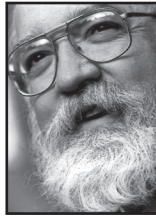
# SHSNY CALENDAR: JANUARY - MARCH 2013

**GREAT LECTURES ON DVD  
WED, JANUARY 2, 7:00 pm  
"GODLESS"**

*A Documentary*

**Stone Creek Bar & Lounge  
140 East 27 St. (Lex-3rd Aves)**

Today in America non belief is fast growing, but has stirred up a lot a fear, loathing and distrust among the faithful.



What makes us different? A lack of belief. Yet lack of belief is rife. We are all atheists with regard to everybody else's gods. And growing numbers are taking one more step: forsaking all gods and proclaiming it.

So what happens when people find belief unnecessary? Is an ethical life possible without gods to define it? *Godless* offers responses from notable humanists, free thinkers, agnostics, and atheists.

**GREAT LECTURES ON DVD  
WED, JANUARY 23, 7:00 pm  
SAM HARRIS ON  
"FREE WILL"**

**Stone Creek Bar & Lounge  
140 East 27 St. (Lex-3rd Aves)**



He doesn't believe in it. Great Lectures on DVD leader/editor Bob Murtha explains that in this lecture, "Harris will elegantly, and with great intellectual ferocity and panache, demonstrate that free will is an inherently flawed and incoherent concept, even in subjective terms. If he is right, he will radically change the way we view ourselves as human beings.

And I guess we'll all have to settle for the illusion of free will.

*Great Lectures Night is FREE*

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2:30-5:30 pm  
OUR 5TH ANNUAL DARWIN DAY AND  
SHSNY 25TH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET**

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Highlights of the afternoon:

## **10-COURSE CHINESE BANQUET**

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## **PRESENTATION OF THE SHSNY 2012 DUMBTH AWARD**

Who will win the not-so-coveted horse's-ass award? Banquet attendees will get a chance to vote a second time for the idiot of their choice. (To vote now for the first time, see page 11.)

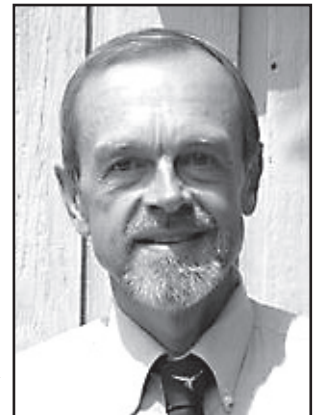
## **SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER:**

**PHILIP KITCHER, Ph.D**

***John Dewey Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University***

Professor Kitcher is the past president of the American Philosophical Association and currently teaches Literature Humanities at Columbia, i.e.: courses on Dewey; Science and Religion; Darwin; and on Joyce and on *Finnegans Wake*.

He is the author of *The Ethical Project*; *Science in a Democratic Society*; *Joyce's Kaleidoscope*; *An Invitation to "Finnegans Wake"*; and *Living with Darwin*, and is currently at work on a new collection, *Preludes to Pragmatism*, as well as on the talk he will give us February 16.



## **BOOK NOW AND SAVE 10%**

Cost for the afternoon is \$50 per person. (Cash bar, wine and beer only.) **But pre-pay by January 31 and take a 10% discount.** Pre-pay at [www.shsny.org](http://www.shsny.org) with a PayPal account or your credit card.

Or mail your check, made out to "SHSNY", to:  
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**HUMANISM 101**  
**MONDAY, JAN 28, 6:30-8:30**  
**Community Church of New York**  
**28 East 35 Street (red door)**  
**Meeting/Discussion #2**

**Subject: *The Philosophies of Humanism***

The purpose of Humanism 101 is to offer a humanist education program for the membership and friends of SHSNY, for our friends at the Community Church of New York (CCNY), and for the larger NYC freethought community. It is open to all who are interested in studying humanist history, philosophy, ethics, ideas, and ideals.

The program is a course of study, led (not lectured) by me—based on the three-year course I am currently completing at the Humanist Institute—in what I hope will be stimulating Socratic dialog based on readings done by you prior to each session.

***Suggested Readings for Meeting/Discussion #2:***

**Online** at [www.americanhumanist.org/humanism](http://www.americanhumanist.org/humanism)

- *Humanist Manifestos I, II and III*
- *IHEU Minimum Statement on Humanism*
- Fred Edwords: *The Humanist Philosophy in Perspective*

**Book(s)**

- Paul Kurtz (Ed.): *The Humanist Alternative* (Scan and select three or four essays that most interest you) and/or
- Louise Antony (Ed): *Philosophers without Gods* (Essays 1 and 17 mainly; skim the rest, focus on what interests you)

Note: If you haven't completed the reading, you may come and audit the discussion – all are welcome! – JR

**JANUARY 16 IS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM DAY:  
WHO KNEW?  
John Rafferty**

Each year, the Religious Freedom Day website announces, the President declares January 16th to be Religious Freedom Day, and calls upon Americans to “observe this day through appropriate events and activities in homes, schools, and places of worship”.

The day is the anniversary of the passage, in 1786, of the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom. As Barack Obama said in his 2012 Proclamation, “Drafted by Thomas Jefferson, the Virginia Statute formed the basis for the First Amendment, which has preserved religious freedom for both believers and non-believers for over 220 years.”

Bill Clinton, who started the tradition in 1996, never mentioned non-believers, but in true Clintonian form, patted himself on the back for the religious-freedom accomplishments of “my administration” in six consecutive Proclamations. George W. (remember him?) of course also never mentioned non-believers in his eight Proclamations, and in 2002, 2003, and 2004 (*Yes, I read them all*) was mostly worried that some churches weren't getting enough money from his Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

But whatever problems we have with Obama

let's remember than he remembers us. His first, 2010 Proclamation included the statement that, “Long before our Nation's independence, weary settlers sought refuge on our shores to escape religious persecution on other continents. Recognizing their strife and toil, it was the genius of America's forefathers to protect our freedom of religion, including the freedom to practice none at all.”

And in 2011 he said, “The writ [the Constitution] of the Founding Fathers has upheld the ability of Americans to worship and practice religion as they choose, including the right to believe in no religion at all.”

And that's an improvement.

See [www.religiousfreedomday.com](http://www.religiousfreedomday.com), and on January 16 feel free to be free of religion all day long.

**ON “PHYSICIAN AID IN DYING”  
Peter Rogatz, MD**

*(Ed. Note: The following was inspired by reportage on the address given by our Freethought Day speaker, Chuck Debrovner – “Life, Death, and Slippery Slopes”, November PIQUE – but received too late for inclusion in December. – JR)*

Last November Massachusetts voters narrowly defeated a ballot proposal to legalize physician aid in dying. This issue is not going to go away. In 1997, the U.S. Supreme Court asserted that there is no constitutional right to physician-assisted suicide, but left the issue to state legislatures to decide.

I think “suicide” should refer to an act by someone who has a reasonable life-expectancy ahead. In preference, I use “aid in dying” here to refer to someone who seeks to hasten his or her impending death because of unrelieved suffering.

For years, opponents of physician aid in dying have raised fears of a “slippery slope”, leading to coercion or manipulation of elderly, frail persons into hastening their deaths. However, none of these fears are borne out by experience in Oregon, on which the Massachusetts proposal was based, and where physician aid in dying has been legal for 14 years.

Under Oregon law a physician may provide a lethal dose of medication to a patient under carefully controlled conditions. The patient must have an incurable condition causing severe suffering. The diagnosis must be verified by a second physician. Palliative measures must have been presented to and considered by the patient. The patient must request assistance in dying clearly and repeatedly – at least once in writing. A psychiatric consultation must be held to establish if the patient is suffering from a treatable depression. No physician is expected to violate his/her own basic values; if unwilling to assist the patient, the physician should facilitate transfer to another physician. Finally, all of the foregoing must be clearly documented.

Oregon's 14-year experience has been one of restraint. Less than half of one percent of Oregon deaths were the result of the assisted dying law. Very few patients requested lethal medication, not all of these filled the prescription and, of these who did obtain the medication, not all actually took



the medication and ended their lives.

Clearly, hastened death is not for everyone. For many, the final days and weeks of life may be peaceful and perhaps even productive. For others, however, every day is filled with suffering that far outweighs whatever positive features remain. Should not each person be entitled to control his or her own life and to declare, if and when the time arrives, that “enough is enough”?

What of arguments offered by opponents?

First, there is the injunction to do no harm. It has been asserted that sanctioning physician-assistance in dying “would give doctors a license to kill”. This is illogical and inflammatory. Withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment (for example, disconnecting a ventilator at a patient’s request) is almost universally accepted, yet this requires a more definitive act by a physician than prescribing medication requested by a patient who is free to take it or not, as he or she sees fit. I believe the physician who would comply with a patient’s plea for final release when facing death under unbearable conditions—if permitted by law—would be doing good, not harm.

Some argue that provision of adequate pain control can eliminate requests to hasten death. But pain is a relatively infrequent cause of such requests. The major factors are urinary and bowel incontinence, intractable vomiting, severe body wasting, immobility, and total dependence. Loss of dignity and of those attributes that we associate particularly with being human are the factors that most commonly reduce patients to a state of unrelieved misery and desperation.

Some say that permitting physician-assisted dying would undermine a patient’s sense of trust in her doctor. How so? I know many patients who would like to be able to trust their physicians to provide such help in the event of unrelieved suffering. That would give such patients a greater sense of security; indeed, some patients take their own lives at a relatively early stage of terminal illness precisely because they fear that progressively increasing disability will rob them of this option at a later time if they become truly desperate. A patient who is confident of receiving future assistance if desired would be unlikely to act prematurely.

Although a patient determined to hasten her death may find a sympathetic and courageous physician willing to participate in a clandestine conspiracy to violate the law, this compromises the integrity of patient, physician and family. Such secret plans, by their very nature, are subject to a high risk of failure and consequent tragedy for both patient and family.

I believe that removing the prohibition against physician assistance, rather than opening the flood gates to ill-advised suicides, is likely to reduce the incentive for suicide: patients who fear great suffering in the final stages of illness would have the assurance that help would be available if needed and would be more inclined to test their own abilities to withstand the trials that lie ahead.

Life is our most precious gift and no sane person wants

to part with it, but there are some circumstances where life has lost its value. A competent person who has thoughtfully considered his or her own situation and finds that unrelieved suffering outweighs the value of continued life should not have to find drastic and violent solutions when more merciful means exist. Those physicians who wish to fulfill what they perceive to be their humane responsibilities to their patients should not be forced by legislative prohibition into covert actions.

All physicians are bound by the injunction to do no harm, but harm may result not only from the *commission* of a wrongful act, but also from the *omission* of an act of mercy. Our society should not criminalize such humanitarian acts.

## **BETWEEN ROCK OF AGES AND A HARD PLACE**

**Nicholas Wade**

*(Reprinted from The New York Times, 11/26/2012)*

**I**t was the standard political interview, about ambition and the right size for government. Then came the curveball question to Senator Marco Rubio of Florida from Michael Hailey of *GQ* magazine: “How old do you think the earth is?”

Senator Rubio, a possible contender in the 2016 Republican presidential race, gave the following answer: “I’m not a scientist, man. I can tell you what recorded history says, I can tell you what the Bible says, but I think that’s a dispute amongst theologians.”

He went on: “At the end of the day, I think there are multiple theories out there on how the universe was created, and I think this is a country where people should have the opportunity to teach them all. I think parents should be able to teach their kids what their faith says, what science says.

“Whether the earth was created in seven days, or seven actual eras, I’m not sure we’ll ever be able to answer that. It’s one of the great mysteries.”

It may have been a mystery back in the 17th century, when Archbishop James Ussher calculated from the age of the patriarchs and other sources that Earth was created on Oct. 22, 4004 B.C. Today’s best estimate for the age of Earth, based on the radiometric dating of meteorites, is 4.54 billion years. The real mystery is how a highly intelligent politician got himself into the position of suggesting that the two estimates are of equal value, or that theologians are still the best interpreters of the physical world.

Catholics and Jews have always emphasized their priests’ interpretations of the Bible, not the text itself; Protestants, starting with Martin Luther, insisted the Bible was the literal truth and the sole dependable source of divine knowledge, a belief the Puritans implanted firmly in American soil. Then, in the 19th century, German textual critics like Julius Wellhausen showed that the Bible was not the inerrant product of divine inspiration but had been cobbled together by many hands whose editing was all too evident.

At that point most Protestants decided to join Catholics in interpreting the Bible metaphorically and avoiding

embarrassing public spats with science. But after discussions in the early 20th century, the conservative wing of the Protestant movement elected to double down their bet and insist that every word in the Bible was true.

The inevitable clash with science, particularly in the teaching of evolution, has continued to this day. Militant atheists like the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins beat the believers about the head, accomplishing nothing; fundamentalist Christians naturally defend their religion and values to the hilt, whatever science may say.

A scientific statesman, if there were such a person, would try to defuse the situation by professing respect for all religions and making a grand yet also trivial concession about the status of evolution.

Like those electrons that can be waves or particles, evolution is both a theory and a fact. In historical terms, evolution has certainly occurred and no fact is better attested. But in terms of the intellectual structure of science, evolution is a theory; no one talks about Darwin's "fact of evolution."

Unlike a fact, a theory cannot be absolutely true. All scientific theories are subject to change and replacement, just as Newton's theory of gravitation was replaced by Einstein's. The theory of evolution, though it has no present rivals, is still under substantial construction.

Evolutionary biologists are furiously debating whether or not natural selection can operate on groups of individuals, as Darwin thought was likely but most modern evolutionists doubt. So which version of evolution is the true one?

By allowing that evolution is a theory, scientists would hand fundamentalists the fig leaf they need to insist, at least among themselves, that the majestic words of the first chapter of Genesis are literal, not metaphorical, truths. They in return should make no objection to the teaching of evolution in science classes as a theory, which indeed it is.

And rudderless politicians like Senator Rubio wouldn't have to throw 15 back flips and a hissy fit when asked a simple question like how old is the earth.

### **A REBUTTAL THE *TIMES* DID NOT PRINT**

*To the Editor:*

How did a science writer as good as Nicholas Wade go so far off the rails? To suggest that radical fundamentalist science deniers would "make no objection to the teaching of evolution in science classes as a theory, which indeed it is" if only "scientific statesmen" would concede that it's only a theory, not a fact, which indeed it is, makes absolutely no sense. Wake up, Mr. Wade. They will *never* compromise, because their ultimate authority, the Bible, says every living thing on Earth was created in two days. Case closed, science and facts be damned.

*John Rafferty, President*

*Secular Humanist Society of New York*

### **ONE MORE "AFTERLIFE LUNCHEON"**

My setting for an (imaginary) Afterlife lunch would be at a table in a garden in Bilbao with a view of Frank Gehry's magnificent museum. My partners in conversation

would be *Eleanor Roosevelt*, *Lawrence Olivier*, and *Walter Cronkite*, who, respectively, represent my areas of greatest interest – helping others, interpreting the world and its great writers, and reporting the news in a respectful (listeners are not fools) and objective manner.

Chilled white wine for me—my guests may have whatever they want, of course—and a large board of many cheeses and simple crackers. — *Mary Ellen Goodman*

### **WHAT'S NEW IN WILLIAMSBURG?**

**John Rafferty**

So, a jury has found Satmar Hasidic leader Nechemya Weberman guilty on 59 counts of molesting a teenage girl, including forcing her to give him oral sex and to perform for his video camera. He had been paid to counsel the teenager (now 18 and married) by her parents, who considered her "rebellious" and not sufficiently observant of the strictures of Hasidic life.

So, does this civil trial and conviction presage some change in the Satmar community since we reported ("A *Shandeh*", *PIQUE*, June, 2012) on widespread abuse and official coverups (including by the Brooklyn District Attorney's office) uncovered last spring by *The New York Times* and *The New York Post*?

Don't hold your breath.

"Many in the Satmar world", the *Post* reports, "were angered to see such a highly-regarded man in the community forced to defend himself in the 'unreliable' secular court system, instead of in secret rabbinical court proceedings.

"How did the jury listen to someone who hates the community so much?" fumed Joel Weinstock, 31, a close family friend of Weberman. "The people in this community are so hurt."

The victim herself testified she and her family were harassed and shunned for coming forward; her father lost his business and her nieces were kicked out of school. Three men were charged with criminal contempt for snapping images of the accuser on the witness stand with cellphone cameras and posting them online during the trial.

For nearly two decades, as Michael Powell reports in the *Times* of December 18, Rabbi Nuchem Rosenberg, a member of the Satmar sect, has challenged his community's silence and complicity. The rabbi, Powell writes, "has the haunted look of a man who has stared into the abyss.

"Mr. Rosenberg recalls the Jewish boys, hesitant and embarrassed, who first approached him in the 1990s. In whispers, with eyes averted, they said teachers had abused them. He assumed the teachers had struck them. Then he realized it was worse still. ...

"The children told of heinous sexual acts, in classrooms and in the ritual baths. Mr. Rosenberg recorded hundreds of these stories, and sent the accounts around to rabbis in Brooklyn and overseas. Finally, he says, one rabbi told him: Why do you bother? You think we don't know this? We know much worse but it will never get out.

"The Hasidic leaders often choose to vilify victims.

Time and again, rabbis assured that families were paid off, or cowed into silence. Even now, faced with a lone young woman who had the courage to speak up in State Supreme Court, Satmar leaders showered her with abuse. Aaron Teitelbaum, one of two feuding brothers who compete to lead the Satmar, likened her to a *zona*, a whore. ...

"Shame spreads a stain to many corners. A few months ago, David Zwiebel, executive vice president of Agudath Israel, an Orthodox organization, admitted that dissidents had surfaced a troubling issue. But, he asked, is it 'worth the cost?' 'At the very least', he added, 'it's *rechilus*, *lashon hara*, and *bittul zman*.' Translated this means malicious gossip, evil tongue, and telling tales, all prohibited by the Torah.

"None of this surprises Rabbi Rosenberg. He has been barred from synagogues and been spat at. Once a rabbi called for his beheading. 'The rabbi said whoever kills me goes to heaven', he says. 'They said I was Satan.'"

And in mid-December, as Rabbi Rosenberg walked down Roebling Street, in Williamsburg, a Satmar activist he recognized splashed a cup of bleach in his face.

So, the answer to the question in the headline above? Not much.

### WHO GETS THE DUMBTH-OF-THE-YEAR 2012 AWARD? CAST YOUR VOTE!

It's time to decide: Which nationally-recognizable personality was most spectacularly wrong-headed, denying or clueless about reality in 2012?

"Dumbth" is the coinage of the late secular humanist and humorist Steve Allen. In 1992, PIQUE Editor Warren Allen Smith proposed that SHSNY give Dumbth Awards to "those who deserve to have their illogic pointed out". Mr. Smith suggested, as an example:

*"A person who falls five floors down an elevator shaft, is rescued by a policeman who crawls into the dark hole unaided, is saved by EMS personnel who rush to the scene, is operated on by a skilled surgeon, is nursed back to health by therapists, and who then credits God with 'a miracle'."*

So, who among our numbskull nominees will receive the not-so-coveted horse's-ass trophy first won by TV personality Star Jones, who said in 2005 that God "blessed her" by postponing the 2004 Christmas-week tsunami that killed 230,000 people until after her honeymoon? And by 2008 Darwin-denier Ben Stein, who walked away with the award for opining that while prayer leads to beauty, "Dachau is where science leads you ... to killing people".

Now-rich TV actor Craig T. Nelson whined about government bailouts in 2010, "I've been on welfare and food stamps - did anyone help me?" And last year Newt Gingrich offered the sublime illogic that unless America turns right politically we could become "a secular atheist country, potentially one dominated by radical Islamists".

Tough acts to follow, certainly. But some dunderhead has to win, so here, in the order of their nominations, are 2012's contenders.



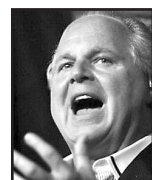
Returning champion **Newt Gingrich**—the gift of Dumbth that keeps on giving—proposed a logic-defying plan in March to track and find illegal aliens wherever they're hiding in America: *"We send a package [via UPS or FedEx] to everyone who's here illegally and when it's delivered we pull it up in a computer, and we know where they are."*

Pastor **Charles Worley** of the Providence Road Baptist Church in Maiden, North Carolina, earned his nomination on the basis of pure, mean-spirited stupidity. In May he offered this stupefying "solution" to the "homosexual problem" in America. *"Build a great, big, large fence - 150 or 100 miles long - put all the lesbians in there ... Do the same thing for the queers and the homosexuals and have that fence electrified so they can't get out ... and you know what, in a few years, they'll die out ... do you know why? They can't reproduce!"*



The early-betting favorite is, of course, Representative **Todd Akin**, the Republican Senate candidate from Missouri who gave the American English language a new definition of violent sexual assault when he said, on camera: *"From what I understand from doctors [pregnancy caused by rape] is really rare. If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down."*

Don't count out perennial Dumbth hopeful **Rush Limbaugh**. When presented with the (bogus) news on an obscure website that "Italian researchers" had found that the size of male genitalia has decreased about 10 percent over the past fifty years, and that air pollution may be the reason, America's Favorite Fathead offered his own explanation: *"I don't buy this. I think it's feminism. I think if it's tied to the last 50 years, the average size of a member is 10 percent smaller ... it has to be the feminazis."*



Finally, in a campaign debate in October, Indiana GOP U.S. Senate candidate (Thank Thor, he lost) **Richard Mourdock** made national headlines when he confirmed his no-exceptions opposition to abortion by declaring that: *"I think that even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that it is something that God intended to happen."*

Winners all! But only one can take home the silver horse's-ass statuette, and you will determine who.

#### Cast Your Vote Now, and Again in February

Okay, balloting — online and by phone — begins now, and through January 31. Cast your vote at editor@shsny.org, or leave a message at 212-308-2165. Celebrators will get a second chance to vote at our February 16 Anniversary/Darwin Dinner (see page 7), at which the winner of the not-so-coveted horse's-ass trophy will be announced. — JR

## READERS RESPOND

*To the Editor:* Art Harris ("Arab Spring", November PIQUE) says he awaits "some American Muslims to join in openly denouncing the excesses perpetrated by their co-religionists abroad". You added a critical comment to this, asking, "Why should American Muslims have to prove their loyalty any more or more often than, say, Irish Americans?"

Art never said these people had to "prove their loyalty"; he merely said they should condemn what their co-religionists were doing. They should make clear that they do not associate themselves with fatwas, religious-inspired murders, suicide bombing, the subjugation of women, and the stoning of women to death for alleged sexual improprieties or improper costume. I would expect Irish Americans to condemn such behavior by their cousins in Ireland. As an American Jew, I have often condemned some of the activities of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel (and also in America). But considering the monstrous nature of these Islamic excesses I should at least expect some leaders of Islam in America to clearly say that they do not approve of these extremes. Such a statement from a prominent Muslim would not, as you claim, be "buried in the last couple of paragraphs of atrocity stories in the newspapers", but would receive media hype. Like Art Harris, I wait in vain for such statements from any prominent or important Muslim leaders in America (or anywhere else). — *Chic Schissel*

*To the Editor:* Again, an excellent [December] PIQUE. Great work. — *Bob Miller*

## DID THE SKY JUST FALL?

**O**n November 27 a viewer called Pat Robertson's *700 Club* to ask how she could keep her children from learning about scientific discoveries that would weaken their faith and prevent them from being accepted into Heaven.

Did Pat advise her to home school them, or burn their textbooks? No.

No?

"Look," the Lifetime-Achievement-in-Dumbth Award winner said, "I know that people will probably try to lynch me when I say this, but Bishop Ussher wasn't inspired by the Lord when he said that it all took 6,000 years ... it just didn't. You go back in time, you've got radiocarbon dating. You got all these things and you've got the [carcasses] of dinosaurs frozen in time out in the Dakotas.

"They're out there ... So, there was a time when these giant reptiles were on the Earth and it was before the time of the Bible.

"So, don't try and cover it up and make like everything was 6,000 years. That's not the Bible.

"If you fight science, you're going to lose your children, and I believe in telling it the way it was."

The only response I can think of is ... *WTF?* — *JR*

**L**ife in Lubbock, Texas, taught me two things: One is that God loves you and you're going to burn in Hell; the other is that sex is the most awful, filthy thing on earth and you should save it for someone you love. — *Butch Hancock*

**SHSNY Darwin Day &  
25th Anniversary  
Celebration Luncheon**  
Saturday, February 16  
2:30 - 5:30 pm at  
Our Place: Cuisines of China  
242 East 79 Street  
with  
**Phillip Kitcher**  
John Dewey Professor of  
Philosophy, Columbia Univ.  
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