

# NOSHA NEWS

## Newsletter of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association FALL 2006

### New Orleans Secular Humanist Association

330 Julia St., Apt. 233  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
(a 501c3 corporation)  
<http://nosha.secularhumanism.net>

### DIRECTORS / OFFICERS

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Charlotte Klasson  
Denis Dwyer

### AFFILIATIONS

Council for Secular Humanism  
American Humanist Association  
Atheist Alliance International  
American Atheists, Inc.

### MEETINGS

One Saturday a month, 2:00 pm  
Old Metairie Branch  
Jefferson Parish Public Library  
Check website or call for dates

N.O. COX CABLE TV  
CH 76 "Humanist Perspective"  
Sat. midnight; Sun. noon  
CH 78 "Atheist Viewpoint"  
Tues. 10:30 am; 10:30 pm

### HUMANIST AWARD TO BARBARA FORREST

Only twice since its establishment in August 1999 has NOSHA bestowed its "Humanist Award." First to Joe Cook, Executive Director of the Louisiana ACLU, for his work in the maintenance of civil liberties and separation of church and state; and second to Dr. Robert Cashner, Vice Chancellor for Research and Sponsored Programs and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of New Orleans, for his support of Darwin Day in New Orleans. This year NOSHA's board of directors unanimously voted to give the "Humanist Award" to one of our own board members (who was kept out of the voting loop), Dr. Barbara Forrest. The award was made at our winter solstice meeting on Saturday, December 16. (Pictured below are NOSHA president Harry Greenberger and award recipient Barbara Forrest.)

Not only is she a nationally recognized professor of philosophy, Barbara continues to lead a tireless and tenacious campaign to keep creationism out of the science curriculum of the public schools. She has kept abreast of the creationist movement and exposed their agenda in articles, her book (*Creationism's Trojan Horse: The Wedge of Intelligent Design*), in TV and radio interviews, public talks, and in court testimony, particularly in the Dover, Pennsylvania public schools case last year.



In addition to her work against the creationist conspiracy, she has been an ardent supporter of NOSHA and has taken heat for it. In the Dover case, the creationists tried to use her membership on NOSHA's board as a basis for her disqualification as a witness. In cross-examination Barbara's personal beliefs were unrelentingly questioned, but she didn't hedge on her secular humanist stance. In press reports she was regularly identified as a board member of NOSHA, which many undoubtedly saw as a sign that she was in league with the devil. However, New Orleans' secular humanists are proud of her association with us because we understand what is at stake and her value is, not only to the region, but to the nation as a whole.

NOSHA could be accused of being a bit tardy in recognizing Barbara for this award, as she has previously been recognized by much more prominent organizations for her efforts, including the Louisiana ACLU's highest honor the "Ben Smith Civil Liberties Award," the National Council for Science Education's "Friend of Darwin" award, and the Louisiana Library Association's "Alex Allain Intellectual Freedom Award." Sometimes you don't see the full value of your own friends. We apologize, Barbara, for taking so long to recognize your value to us all.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO BARBARA FORREST ON NOSHA'S HUMANIST AWARD

(From Vic Walczak, Legal Director, ACLU of Pennsylvania. December 3, 2006)

It is my pleasure and honor to congratulate Barbara on this award. For those of you who may have been in a Tora Bora cave for the past year, Barbara served as one of six plaintiffs' experts in the Dover Intelligent Design case, the one in which the judge kicked the Intelligent-Design movement in the teeth. You should know, however, that Barbara was the only witness that the Thomas More Law Center, which represented the school board and the ID movement, fought vigorously to exclude. They filed motion after motion to keep her from testifying. Don't be deceived by her gentle demeanor. She is ultimately a very dangerous woman, or at least so was she perceived by Intelligent Design supporters. After her testimony, it was obvious why they did so.

Barbara's testimony, based on her seminal history of the ID movement, *Creationism's Trojan Horse*, was devastating. She supplemented her prior scholarly work with an analysis of early ID-textbook drafts that we acquired during the lawsuit. Barbara showed that prior to the Supreme Court's famous 1987 decision in a Louisiana case, *Edwards v. Aguillard*, where the Court wrote that creationism was a religious view and could not be taught in public school science classes, the book's drafts all referred to creationism. After the opinion was issued, references to creation and creationism were changed to Intelligent Design. Her testimony was clear, precise and effective. When the judge wrote that, "Ultimately, ID cannot uncouple itself from its creationism roots," that was based largely on Barbara's testimony. This gentlewoman deserves recognition for helping to defeat one of the greatest frauds perpetrated on the world, namely, Intelligent Design. It may be a lovely idea, but stop pretending it's science.

Barbara, people who value scientific integrity and civil liberties owe you a huge debt of gratitude. Thank you and congratulations.

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## NOSHA OFFICERS 2007

At the NOSHA meeting of December 16, 2006, a general membership meeting was held in accordance with organizational by-laws. Two board members whose terms were expiring were re-elected by acclamation and one new member was elected. Denis Dwyer rejoins the board, having been an original member several years ago.

Officers were elected for 2007 as well. Pictured from left to right above are Vice President David Schultz, Secretary Sally Mooney, President Harry Greenberger, and Treasurer Connie Gordon. All agreed to serve for another year.



## THE "HUMANIST PERSPECTIVE" IN NEW ORLEANS

NOSHA's public access television programs have resumed airing earlier this year with the rebroadcast of shows recorded prior to Hurricane Katrina. Once the New Orleans Access Television studio began re-operation for the production of shows, Harry Greenberger, host of the NOSHA program, "The Humanist Perspective," arranged for taping times to produce two new shows a month, down from the four per month previously produced.

The first two were taped in October on the subject of "talk radio" with Christopher Tidmore as a guest and Michael Malec and Lanny Goldfinch as panelists. Those programs were aired in November.

A NOSHA member had recorded the appearance of Rev. Roger Brewin's portrayal of Clarence Darrow, which had been sponsored by NOSHA and the Unitarian churches in August. That tape was edited to NOA-TV format and aired in November.

Also in November, NOSHA members Michael Malec and Denis Dwyer participated as panelists along with the guest Rev. Jim VanderWheele, minister of Community Church Unitarian Universalist, in production of two programs: "Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson" and "the Humanist Manifesto." These were broadcast late in November and December.

Finally, in December two shows on the subject of "morality" were taped with NOSHA members Dave Schultz, Connie Gordon, and Lanny Goldfinch, to be aired in late December.

New topics, guests and NOSHA panelists are always needed to maintain a variety and quality for our "Humanist Perspective" programming. Please contact Harry Greenberger (282-5459) to volunteer in some capacity.

Our programs can be viewed on Saturdays at midnight and Sundays at noon, but only subscribers to Cox New Orleans on Channel 76. Those of you who are outside the area should ask a NO Cox subscriber to tape the programs for you.

## MEMBERS' PUBLISHED LETTERS

The following letter by **J. Michael Malec** appeared in the *Baton Rouge Advocate* on September 5, 2006:

The letter from Lowney LeBlanc regarding single-sex schools makes several critical errors. First, it is not “political correctness” but constitutional law (and Title IX) that prohibits segregation of public school students. Considering the period LeBlanc attended same-sex classes, it is very likely they were also same-race classes. We certainly do not want to return to those days.

The second error is LeBlanc makes a policy argument on a constitutional issue. Whether or not something is good, or bad, policy is immaterial if it is unconstitutional.

When I studied administrative law, my professor noted that Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the National Recovery Act knowing it was unconstitutional, but also knowing that by the time it made it through the courts, it would have had its effect. He was right. The NRA was declared unconstitutional, but it had already helped a lot of Americans out of the Depression. Good policy, but unconstitutional.

Lastly, LeBlanc says, “...there are no gays or lesbians nor homophobes among us” [his brothers and sisters]. However, if LeBlanc were referring to his school classmates, this statement is statistically highly unlikely.

The following letter by **Connie Gordon** appeared in the *Baton Rouge Advocate* on September 9, 2006:

In a recent letter published in *The Advocate*, Mr. Rusty Lavergne advocated the demise of the ACLU and denigrated some of our elected officials for supporting that organization.

The elected officials (and some appointed ones) he mentioned are not supporting the ACLU, but rather they are upholding the U.S. Constitution.

I would also point out that the ACLU Mr. Lavergne finds so offensive is an independent organization whose sole purpose is to defend the constitutional rights of each and every American citizen – it has no governmental affiliation whatsoever.

While most of our Founding Fathers may have believed in an almighty, it wasn't in God that they trusted so much as the people of this new nation. They believed that every citizen had the right to believe or not believe, to worship or not to worship, and especially they believed that those beliefs should not be foisted on anyone else through governmental institutions.

They had just overthrown the rule of a “divinely empowered” monarchy in England because they wanted the American people to be able to decide for themselves how to be governed and what deity in which to believe. There was no way they were going to let the new U.S. Government do that for them.

The very issues Mr. Lavergne disdains, such as the lack of prayer in public schools, and the ones he supports, such as free speech, are the same issues fought for in the American Revolution.

I say, thank goodness for the ACLU for bringing these issues to the forefront, and for the elected and appointed governmental officials who fight every day to uphold the constitutional rights of us all, including those of Mr. Lavergne.

The following letter by **Grant Smith** appeared in the *Baton Rouge Advocate* on September 13, 2006:

In his letter of Sept. 8, Gerald Williams states his disbelief in human activity as the cause of global warming. He implies that the sun, rather than greenhouse gases, causes global warming by his statement that “the sun is in a period of intense activity.” Nothing could be further from the truth.

The National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) studied the effect of the sun on our climate. The conclusion was that “The amount of energy emitted by the sun has risen a fraction of a percent since 1900. However, climate simulations at NACR have shown that solar changes explain less than a third of the warm-up during the last century. The most likely explanation for a warming Earth is the greenhouse gases emitted when fossil fuels are burned in homes, gas- and coal-fired power plants, vehicles and factories.”

This jibes with the conclusion of a recent global warming study by the National Academy of Sciences that “Surface temperature reconstructions for periods prior to the industrial era are only one of the multiple lines of evidence supporting the conclusion that climate warming is occurring in response to human activities.” That carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere warm the Earth is a well-established fact. To quote the Environmental Protection Agency Web site, “The heat-trapping property of these gases is undisputed...Without this natural ‘greenhouse effect,’ temperatures would be much lower than they are now, and life as known today would not be possible.”

What Mr. Williams fails to explain is how a 30 percent increase in carbon dioxide levels during the past 150 years did not warm the Earth and will not continue to warm it as carbon dioxide emissions continue to climb.

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“Any frontal attack on ignorance is bound to fail because the masses are always ready to defend their most precious possession – ignorance.”

-- Hendrik Willem von Loon  
Dutch-American Journalist  
(1882-1944)

“Moral indignation is jealousy with a halo.”

-- British author H. G. Wells

## NO JUSTICE FOR THE INDIGENT IN LOUISIANA

On Saturday, September 23, 2006, **Heather H. Hall** gave a talk at the monthly meeting of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association entitled, “System in Shambles: Public Defense in Louisiana”. Louisiana’s system of public defense is in crisis. Clarence Ear Gideon hand-wrote a request to the Supreme Court of the United States back in 1967, when the right to an attorney was not guaranteed. More than 40 years after the landmark decision of *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963), prisoners across the state of Louisiana conceivably could write similar pleas as they wait for months on end for trial and contact from their public defender.

Long backlogs, high rates of wrongful conviction, questionable representation and a lack of accountability are the shameful hallmarks of our broken system. Resources are so inadequate that public defenders struggle under crushing caseloads while defendants wait months – even years – in jail for their turn in the backlog. Often, when the time comes, they only have a few minutes to consult with their attorney – in the courtroom, before their trial begins.

The public defense crisis has grown so acute that it calls into question the ability of the entirety criminal justice system to dispense justice fairly or efficiently.

Hurricane Katrina created many new challenges for the Orleans Parish public defenders system. Without traffic tickets being issued for months, the public defender office has been forced to lay off many lawyers and deal with a growing backlog. Prisoners are still housed in facilities throughout the state and limited resources exist to effectively represent them on their charges. Several Orleans Parish judges have threatened to release criminal defendants under a ruling called *State v. Citizen* (2005), which gives judges that authority to halt prosecutions when inadequate resources exist for public defenders to defend their clients.

However, while hundreds of prisoners are serving “Katrina time”, thousands more are serving “Calcasieu time”, “Avoyelles time” and “Caddo time” throughout the state. Under the State Constitution, the indigent defense crisis can only be remedied by the Louisiana Legislature, who has ignored the issue for more than 30 years despite widespread documentation of its deficiencies.

Here are some key stats: Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the country, and if it were its own country, Louisiana would have the highest incarceration rate in the entire world.

Louisiana has a high rate of wrongful conviction, with over 25 men released from Louisiana prisons, having served over 350 years. 85%-90% of all defendants in Louisiana criminal courts are represented by public defenders. In Caddo Parish, nearly 70% of all defendants

to use the indigent defense system were employed full-time when they were arrested.

Louisiana is the last remaining state in the country to attempt to fund its constitutional obligation to provide indigent defense services through funds levied on court costs, primarily traffic tickets.

The state of Oregon, with ¾ the population, no death penalty, and less crime and poverty, spent \$90 million on indigent defense in 2005. Louisiana spent \$9.5 million.

For more information, contact:

Heather H. Hall

Louisiana Justice Coalition

P.O. Box 19403

New Orleans, LA 70179

504.301.7920 (office) 504.558.0378 (fax)

[www.lajusticecoalition.org](http://www.lajusticecoalition.org)

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## CONSERVATISM DOESN'T NEED GOD

*(The following was excerpted from an article by Heather MacDonald which appeared in USA Today on October 23, 2006.)*

For the past six years, Republican pundits have declared that religious faith is what makes Republicans superior to Democrats. Secular conservatives beg to differ. It is a proven track record that makes conservative principles superior to liberalism, not the religious inclinations of their proponents.

Conservative atheists and agnostics vigorously support the two-parent family because the life chances of children raised by both their biological parents are demonstrably superior to children raised by single mothers. Moreover, when marriage disappears as a community norm, so do civilizing constraints on male behavior. It doesn't take Bible study to see this. Conservatives do not need God to prove the value of marriage; the sad state of the inner city is testament enough.

Likewise, secular conservatives look to the world as we know it to ground their support for the free market and the principles of limited government. Recent history alone shows that governments have little capacity to run an economy, produce widespread prosperity, or take over the functions of the family. The Founders crafted America's constitutional framework based on their knowledge of human nature and their commitment to Enlightenment ideals. They left God out of the Constitution. This omission horrified many of the drafters' contemporaries, who predicted that divine vengeance would follow. The Founders' faith in secularism proved wiser.

In the personal sphere, conservative atheists and agnostics lead lives as ethical as those of any believer.

The Golden Rule and innate human empathy provide ample guidance for moral behavior. Indeed, it is doubtful that the fear of hell dissuades many people from, say, running a red light at 3 a.m.; rather, the innate appreciation for the fragility of the social order keeps the solitary driver waiting for the light to turn green.

Most educated people instinctively understand that a law-abiding society can easily slide into anarchy without widespread obedience to the law. The greatest conservative triumph of late 20<sup>th</sup> century America – New York City’s return to civility – was achieved by appeal to secular values alone. Mayor Rudy Giuliani spoke relentlessly about the need for personal responsibility and respect for social order; he based his policies on principles that non-believers and believers alike could test against their own experience.

Invoking God in the political realm is a conversation stopper, not an invitation to robust debate. America’s rules of religious etiquette demand that we acquiesce silently in a believer’s claim of revelation. But conservatism doesn’t need such revelation; common sense and openness to fact will do just fine as support. Conservative principles are available to people of all faiths or no faith at all.

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**OF INTEREST TO HUMANISTS . . .**

*AUSTIN, TX*—The Young Conservatives of Texas-University of Texas Chapter has announced they will be displaying an “ACLU Nativity Scene” on the campus this year. Their intent is to raise awareness of the extremity of the ACLU. “We’ve got Gary and Joseph” and “the three wise men are Lenin, Marx, and Stalin” as well as a “terrorist shepherd” and “an angel in the form of Nancy Pelosi.”

*DELRAY BEACH, FL*—The American Humanist Association has filed suit on behalf of a Florida man who was forced to pass an anti-abortion banner on his way to vote at a Florida church in the recent midterm elections. The AHA hopes not only to stop voting at that particular church, but ultimately at all houses of worship.

*WASHINGTON, DC*—The Bush administration has appointed Eric Keroack to an administrative post in the Dept. of Health and Human Services. He was previously director of five so-called “crisis pregnancy centers,” which opposed contraception and did not distribute information about birth control. He actually believes that the practice of birth control is “detrimental” to a woman’s well being.

*JOHANNESBURG*—In November, the South African parliament approved same-sex marriage by a vote of 230-41. Just a couple of decades after apartheid such a forward-thinking move. Can you imagine that happening in the U. S. Congress?

*ALBANY, NY*—New York’s highest court recently ruled those social service agencies in that state run by the Roman Catholic Church and other faiths must provide birth-control coverage to their employees “even if they consider contraception a sin.” A spokesperson for the Catholic Church said, “we think this has never really been about contraception. We think it was to target the church and open the door for coverage of abortion.” They, of course, plan to appeal.

*MONROE, LA*—The Ouachita Parish School Board has approved what they call a landmark proposal allowing teachers “academic freedom.” The new policy includes a statement attributed to the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” which says, “Where topics are taught that may generate controversy (such as biological evolution), the curriculum should help students to understand the full range of scientific views that exist, why such topics may generate controversy, and how scientific discoveries can profoundly affect society.” The new decision is under review by the LA ACLU and various scientific educational organizations.

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**GOD BLESS AMERICA?**

On a recent road trip through central Mississippi, NOSHA member **Michael Malec** encountered advice on how to attain God’s blessings displayed on, of all things, a cotton bale along a U.S. highway. Thank you, Michael for sharing this photo with us.



NOSHA member **Tim Ruppert** commented when he saw the picture, “I always thought that for god to bless America, we would all need to sneeze simultaneously.”

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**ELTON JOHN ON RELIGION**

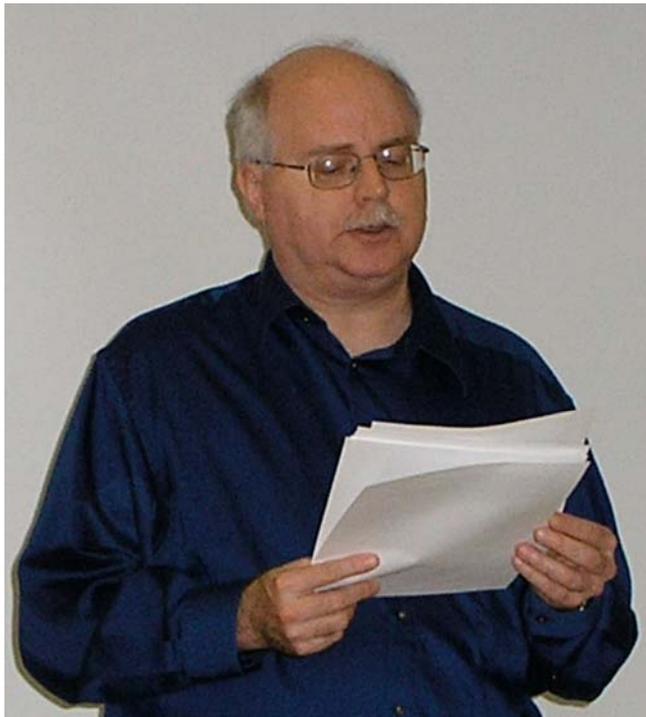
In a recent interview with the *London Observer*, singer Elton John said, “I think religion has always tried to turn hatred toward gay people. Religion promotes the hatred and spite against gays.” He went on to say, “From my point of view, I would ban religion completely. Organized religion doesn’t seem to work. It turns people into really hateful lemmings and it’s not really compassionate.”

**OTHER NOSHA ACTIVITIES**

Between the September talk by **Heather Hall**, regarding the Louisiana Justice Coalition’s concern that the public defense system in Louisiana is a “System in Shambles,” and the December meeting which culminated in **Barbara Forrest’s** Humanist Award, there were several other NOSHA-related events and regular meetings.

The regular October meeting featured a talk by NOSHA member Dr. **Stanley I. Goldberg**. Stan is a Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at the University of New Orleans, and presented “A Non-technical Talk on Origin of Life Research.”

NOSHA member **William Sierichs** was the featured speaker for the November meeting. Bill is nearly finished with a book on the history of Christianity. From that research, his talk to NOSHA was “Christianity: The Source of American Racism.” What an eye-opener. Bill is pictured below during his talk.



Also in November Loyola University in New Orleans hosted their annual President’s Forum on Current Issues and Controversies. This year’s topic was “Intelligent Design.” Among the featured speakers were two NOSHA members, Dr. **Barbara Forrest**, Professor of Philosophy at Southeastern Louisiana University and Dr. **Craig Hood**, Evolutionary Biologist at Loyola.

Finally, at the December meeting, before the humanist award was presented to Barbara Forrest, members viewed a video. It was Part 1 of the Richard Dawkins BBC broadcast of “The God Delusion.” Part 1 is entitled “The Root of All Evil.”

After the meeting, refreshments were enjoyed, including sandwiches, cookies, and a delicious and beautiful cake baked and decorated by a NOSHA member to acknowledge the occasion.



Special thanks to **Serena Bodelini** for the sandwiches, to **Connie Gordon** for the soft drinks and cookies, and to **Gina Cedotal** for the beautiful and delicious cake. And Happy Solstice to all!

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**MEETING DATES FOR 2007**

While we are striving to keep NOSHA to a regular meeting schedule, not all third Saturdays were available at the Old Metairie Library. Below are the dates we have reserved for 2007. Meeting time will remain 2:00 pm on Saturday. Meeting topics will be announced in advance.

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| January 27, 2007  | June 16, 2007      |
| February 17, 2007 | July 28, 2007      |
| March 17, 2007    | August 18, 2007    |
| April 21, 2007    | September 15, 2007 |
| May 26, 2007      |                    |

Later dates remain under negotiation.

In the meantime, we would like to return to meeting twice a month on Sundays as we did pre-Katrina. We have been unable to find an affordable meeting place that would accommodate up to 75 people on Sundays. If anyone can help with this, please call Harry Greenberger at 282-5459 or Connie Gordon at 455-7116.

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**MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2007**

Dues-paying members are important to our credibility as an influential organization. If you are on our mailing list but never paid dues, please do so now. If you have paid dues in the past, but are not up to date, please do so now. **Dues for 2007 are only \$5.00** and you may use the membership form on the last page of this newsletter. Thank you for your support.

## NOSHA'S LIBRARY

Over the years of NOSHA's existence, a number of books and videos have been donated to us. There are nearly a dozen videos and more than 40 books and pamphlets in our library. Unfortunately, they are too numerous to list here, but suffice it to say they cover a gamut of topics from Darwin, to right to die with dignity, to histories of religion and our founding fathers' position on church/state separation.

These books and videos are available for check-out on the honor system. But you have to attend a NOSHA meeting to see them and check them out. NOSHA member **Karen Calzada** has graciously volunteered to haul them to each NOSHA meeting. Thanks, Karen.

Come to the next meeting and see what we have.

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## AN OVERDUE VISIT

**Anonymous**

"Twas the night before Christmas and all through the nation  
Friends of Freedom knew it was a special occasion.  
Lady Liberty stood taller just off the shore  
Her torch shining brighter than a few weeks before.

But it wasn't the flame turning her cheeks all rosy  
It was thoughts of Snowe, Feingold and Nancy Pelosi  
And leaders from every side of the aisle  
Who would soon bring the Bill of Rights back into style.

The Amendments had all hurried out of their beds –  
Which was no easy task, they were nearly in shreds –  
And they rushed to the window on papery feet  
As a jolly old man flew right over their street.

"Could it be!?" they inquired as the roof shook and trembled  
And they crept toward the mantle, peaceably assembled,  
Just as someone emerged from the chimney with flair  
In a shiny red suit, with a shock of white hair

And a top hat, and pants all in red, white and blue –  
"Wait a minute," the Amendments exclaimed, "Who are you?"  
"Don't be frightened my children," he said, "it's no scam.  
"You can't have forgotten your old Uncle Sam!"

"Holy crap!" said Free Speech. "Stop right there!" yelled Bear  
Arms  
And Privacy cried, "Who shut off the alarms?!"  
The Fifth remained silent, but Uncle Sam said  
"We've been having some trouble, but Freedom's not dead."

The Amendments were cautious, "It's just been so long  
"We've seen Liberty lost, we've seen so much go wrong.  
"The President's trying to mangle and warp us,  
"The Fourth is in tatters, so's Habeas Corpus!"

The old man sat down – he had had quite a ride –  
But he told them, "Don't worry, the Law's on our side,  
"Cause the nation's fed up and more people are crying  
"For Justice and an end to illegal spying.

"And secret abduction by the CIA,  
"And laws that would take women's choices away,  
"And Gitmo tribunals and secret detention,  
"And other intrusions too numerous to mention – "

"Not so fast," said a grinchy voice from above  
And Don Rumsfeld pushed past the Fourteenth with a shove.  
He was covered in soot and he looked kind of scary.  
It seemed like his Christmas had not been so merry.

The Amendments said they weren't happy to see him;  
"You tried to throw all of us in the museum!  
"You've done so much the Constitution forbids!"  
"And I would have gone on, but for you meddling kids!"

Uncle Sam told him, "Rummy, your plans won't do,  
"So we've got a brand new timetable for you!"  
And as Rumsfeld retired and crept into the night  
The Amendments cried out, "Have a good secret flight!"

From the distance they heard him reply with a snort.  
"Bye-bye, Rummy!" they answered, "we'll see you in court!"  
Uncle Sam rode the chimney up out of the room  
And, like Frost, he said, "I'll be back again soon."

But they heard him exclaim, "Oh, and just one more thing!  
"This year, when the holiday bells start to ring,  
"Try to honor religion. Honest faith can't be wrong.  
It's America, can't we all just get along?"

"So, on Christian," he cried, "Muslim, Hindu, and Jew!  
"On Quaker! On Shaker! And Atheist too!  
"On Buddhist! On Taoist! And to show we're not chickens  
"We'll file a few lawsuits defending the Wiccans!

"Your belief is your right, so get out there and savor it.  
"Uncle Sam's not a preacher, and he doesn't play favorites!"  
So this holiday season, whatever you do  
Warmest wishes for Freedom,  
From the ACLU.

*(Thanks to Michael Malec for sharing.)*

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"I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omniscient god would  
have designedly created parasitic wasps with the express intention of  
their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars."

-- Charles Darwin

"We can allow satellites, planets, suns, universe, nay whole systems of  
universes, to be governed by laws, but the smallest insect we wish to be  
created at once by special act."

-- Charles Darwin

"I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us  
with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use."

-- Galileo Galilei

The New Orleans Secular Humanist Association (NOSHA) was formed to provide an opportunity for like-minded people to meet and exchange ideas and to promote awareness of secular humanist viewpoints in the community. We are committed to the application of reason and science to the understanding of the universe and to the solving of human problems. We reject efforts to explain the world in supernatural terms and to look outside nature for salvation. We strive to make the public aware of the importance of the separation of church and state, to oppose the teaching of creationism and other religious doctrines in the public schools, and to provide a voice of reason when superstition is presented in the media. We believe in enjoying life here and now, and in cultivating moral excellence. We believe in the fullest realization of the best and noblest we are capable of as human beings.

**To become a friend of THE NEW ORLEANS SECULAR HUMANIST ASSOCIATION, complete, clip, and mail in the following form:**

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Check one:  New Member  Renewing Member  Mailing list only  Newsletter by mail

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone and/or e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**2007 Annual dues are only \$5.00.** Make checks payable to "NOSHA" and mail to Connie Gordon, 2509 Giuffrias Ave., Apt. 603, Metairie, LA 70001.

**NOTE: For those of you who receive the newsletter by standard mail, the year for which you have last paid membership dues is reflected in the upper right corner of the mailing label.**

**NOSHA  
330 Julia St., Apt. 233  
New Orleans, LA 70130**