

# NOSHA NEWS

Newsletter of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association  
Spring 2009

New Orleans Secular  
Humanist Association  
520 St. Louis St., Apt. 3  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
(a 501c3 corporation)  
www.nosha.info

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## NATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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

## MEETINGS

3rd Saturday of month, 2:00 pm  
Dominion Learning Center  
Audubon Park Zoo

## N.O. COX CABLE TV

CH 76 "Humanist Perspective"  
Sat. midnight; Sun. noon

CH 78 "Atheist Viewpoint"  
Tues. 10:30 am; 10:30 pm

## CELEBRATING A DAY OF REASON IN THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

*Proclamation*



THE COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

CITY HALL: May 7, 2009

**WHEREAS**, the foundational documents of the United States of America were born of the Enlightenment, incorporating a commitment to the principles of reason, tolerance, morality, democracy, and human rights for the first time in history and enabling ethical interactions among people; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States has been a world leader in many of the fields of endeavor that rely on reason, including scientific and medical research, social reform, international law, and progressing and promoting the ideals of democratic government; and

**WHEREAS**, on this date in 1732, the French crown reinstated its Superior Council, a precursor to this lawmaking body, as the executive, legislative, and judicial administrator of the newly founded settlement that became the City of New Orleans, and this group effectively utilized the powers of reason to provide law and governance to what was to become one of the most pre-eminent cities in North America; and

**WHEREAS**, New Orleans – its people and its institutions – must use reason and its corresponding principles in all phases of the recovery in order for the city to represent the progress that its leaders embodied on this day in 1732; and

**WHEREAS**, the consistent application of reason offers hope that we may resolve the many challenges facing humanity, whether environmental, military, economic, or social, and the specific challenges facing post-Katrina New Orleans, **NOW THEREFORE**,

**BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS** that the Council hereby proclaims today, Thursday, the 7<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2009, a citywide Day of Reason, and encourages all citizens, residents, and visitors to join in observing this day by focusing on the employ of reason, critical thought, and free inquiry, both their history in this country and this city and their ability to resolve problems and care for the welfare of humankind.

At the request of Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow

*Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson*  
Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson  
Council President

*Shelley Stephenson Midura*  
Shelley Stephenson Midura  
Councilmember, District "A"

*James Carter*  
James Carter  
Councilmember, District "C"

*Arnie Fielkow*  
Arnie Fielkow  
Council Vice President

*Stacy Head*  
Stacy Head  
Councilmember, District "B"

*Cynthia Hedge Morrell*  
Cynthia Hedge Morrell  
Councilmember, District "D"

*Cynthia Willard-Lewis*  
Cynthia Willard-Lewis  
Councilmember, District "E"

**SUPPORTING A “NATIONAL DAY OF REASON”**

Once again, our president **Harry Greenberger**, was able to convince the city of New Orleans of the importance of recognizing a “day of reason.” City councilman Arnie Fielkow enthusiastically obliged Harry’s request and issued the proclamation shown on the previous page. Not only was it signed by all members of the Council, Harry received several thank-you messages from council members and their staffs afterwards.

The idea of a “National Day of Reason” was implemented in 2003 through the efforts of the American Humanist Association and the Washington Area Secular Humanists in direct parallel to the the unconstitutional National Day of Prayer. The goal of this effort is to celebrate reason and to raise awareness about the continuing threat to religious liberty.

Pictured below are NOSHA board members Harry Greenberger, Patrick Lestrade, and Doug Stewart receiving the proclamation from Councilman Fielkow.



Not only was NOSHA honored with the Day of Reason proclamation, but Harry was asked to deliver the invocation to open the city council meeting. The text of the invocation follows:

**NEW ORLEANS CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
INVOCATION, MAY 7, 2009  
Given by Harry Greenberger**

When I requested placement on the rotation for invocations before this Council, I did so with a broad interpretation of “invocation,” which includes, in addition to prayer, an appeal, a petition and an earnest call.

It is especially appropriate on this day, simultaneously a national Day of Prayer and a national Day of Reason, that I should appeal to “reason,” by this Council and all other agencies of government, not only on this celebrated day, but throughout the year.

Here’s what two of our Presidents, our last and our first, have said:

President Barak Obama on a recent trip to the Mid-East ruffled feathers by say, “One of the great strengths of the United States is we have a very large Christian population—we do not consider ourselves a Christian nation or a Jewish nation or a Muslim nation. We consider ourselves a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values.”

President George Washington, one of our Founding Fathers, wrote: “May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants—while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid.”

As you reasonably deliberate matters affecting our city, be mindful of all of its minorities—those of us sitting under our own fig trees. To that we should all say “amen.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Later that evening, about twenty NOSHA members and friends gathered at what has become our favorite “watering hole,” the Monkey Hill Bar, to continue celebrating a National Day of Reason.

Doug Stewart had put together another of his quizzes celebrating reason. And there was a cake to further celebrate. Here are some photos of the gathering.



Winners of the NOSHA National Day of Reason quiz were (a tie for first place) Marcy Bladsacker and Ryan Sloper. There was a three-way tie for third place. They are Katie Picone and Patrick and Patricia Lestrade (Doug was going to disqualify the Lestrades for working together, but they got different answers wrong.). Congrats to the winners for being so “reasonable.”

## AMERICAN ATHEISTS CONVENTION 2009 AN OVERVIEW Doug Stewart

I have four portraits on my study wall: Thomas Jefferson, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, and Richard Dawkins. That's why, when I heard Dawkins was going to be speaking in Atlanta, I jumped at the chance.

There were many distinguished and interesting speakers at the three-day even. For me, the most memorable included J. Anderson Thomson on how religion has hijacked normal cognitive brain functions (a subject that was of specific interest to me), and Nate Phelps, son of Fred "God-Hates-Fags" Phelps, who gave a particularly emotional speech.

However, these all but paled in comparison to Dawkins, the world's most prominent atheist and author of many books from *The Selfish Gene* to *The God Delusion*. His presentation was primarily a response to former British Prime Minister Tony Blair's-faith based charity, whose aim is "to promote respect and understanding about the world's major religions and show how faith is a powerful force for good in the modern world." As you can imagine, Dawkins ripped it to pieces. His talk also included a segment on "Lying for Jesus", which focused on how theists perform "quote mining" where they misquote him and other freethinkers to twist the point of their arguments. The most famous example was for Charles Darwin himself saying that to suppose the eye "could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree." What is rarely quoted is the next paragraph which begins, "Yet reason tells me . . ." where he eloquently explains just that.

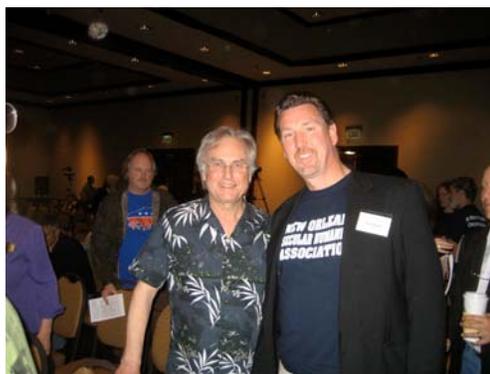
Examples he gave of his own experiences were when after a debate with John Lennox it was announced that Dawkins had been converted to Deism, and after being interviewed by Ben Stein for the movie, *Expelled*, Stein proudly exclaimed that "Dawkins believes in little green men but he doesn't believe in god". This reminded me of a similar misquote of the biology professor, atheist and blogger, PZ Myers where he was reputed to have said, "They could PROVE that Darwin was a baby raping cannibal" where the actual quote was something like "even if they could prove that Darwin was a baby-raping cannibal, it's wouldn't change the validity of evolution".

Dawkins indicated that he was also very interested in discussing the teaching of creationism in science classrooms, but unfortunately he ran out of time. I did run to the microphone during the Q&A session hoping to ask his opinion on the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology's decision to hold its meeting in Utah instead of Louisiana due to the Louisiana Science Education Act, AKA, the Christian Indoctrination Act. Alas, there were so many people asking questions that I didn't get selected.

A Dawkins book signing was held immediately after his speech, and the line was around the block! He also made himself available for photographs and general conversation throughout the day. At the dinner, where I got to sit next to Ed Buckner, President of American Atheists) and his family, a copy of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, signed by the late author Douglas Adams, was auctioned. As Dawkins was a very close friend of Adams, he was the highest bidder. Dawkins then spoke, quoting Adams, "Isn't it enough to see that a garden is beautiful without having to believe that there are fairies at the bottom of it too?" He then repeated the tribute he made to Adams in *The God Delusion*: "Douglas, I miss you. You are my cleverest, funniest, most open-minded, wittiest, tallest, and possibly only convert. I hope this book might have made you laugh - though not as much as you made me." Even after all this time (Adams died May 11, 2001), Dawkins was visibly emotional. He is obviously a very 'spiritual' man, in the non-supernatural sense of the word.

After dinner, I was more able to schmooze with my intellectual hero. As I was born in a town called Swindon, England located only about 30 miles southwest of Oxford, Dawkins' usual stomping ground; I had an angle to cut through the crowds. I mentioned that I was from the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association and he remarked that (due to my English accent), I didn't sound like it. I then told him that "Louisiana has to import most of their atheists" which made him laugh. I mentioned to him that I had his portrait on my study wall and he was very humbled and taken aback.

The conference was very enjoyable and a huge success. However, before I left the hotel I thought I'd go to the bar, order a Bloody Mary, and network one last time with some of the most rational people in the world, in a hotel hired by one of the most rational organizations in the world. However, I was told that because that Sunday about 2000 years ago, a man, that was allegedly either god or the son of a god, came back to life... they couldn't serve alcohol until 7:00 p.m.????? Sound's rational to me.



Pictured here are Doug Stewart and his hero, Richard Dawkins.

## PUBLISHED LETTERS

The following letter by **J. Michael Malec** appeared in the *Baton Rouge Advocate* on March 3, 2009:

Are you a worker? Do you get a regular paycheck, with taxes already deducted? Does someone get to organize your work, and tell you what to do? Then you are a worker, and Gov. Bobby Jindal doesn't like you very much.

One of the first things he did was get the state to change the name of the Labor Department to "Workforce Development." "Labor" sounded too much like workers and (heaven forbid) unions. Such a department might just stand up for workers. "Workforce" on the other hand, is a very employer-oriented term. It's an anonymous group you hire to do things, not individual people with kids and bills.

Now Jindal wants to turn down federal funds to help people who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

Why?

He says because it might someday cost a little money to the people who laid the workers off. The same argument that was made against unemployment insurance in the first place.

I you are a worker, you just got slapped in the face.

The following letter by **David Schultz** appeared in the *Baton Rouge Advocate* on March 14, 2009:

Louisiana Family Forum Executive Director Gene Mills' recent response to your editorial of Feb. 28 "Boycott a blow to New Orleans" displays the mission of the Louisiana Family Forum and the ideology behind the Louisiana Science Education Act, and both are an "affront to reason."

It is not open inquiry that Mr. Mills wants. In fact, it is just the opposite. Scientists have been exploring and questioning the idea of evolution for generations now and have only refined the ideas that Darwin originally developed through scientific inquiry.

There is no conspiracy among scientists to push an idea that has no basis in fact into the school curriculum. Scientists do exactly the opposite. They expose untruths through the use of the scientific method, observing the facts and comparing those facts to ideas about the nature of reality. If the facts don't support the idea, the idea is discarded.

Evolution and natural selection are ideas that have stood this test. Mr. Mills does not want this fact to be well known, and he and the Louisiana Family Forum have taken steps to try to cast doubt on a scientific fact that scientists don't dispute.

Why?

Because they don't like the fact. Mr. Mills clearly does not understand the process of science. Every

elementary science text spells it out clearly: use the facts to try to disprove ideas. If the ideas can't be disproved, they are accepted as valid ideas until new facts prove otherwise.

Mr. Mills thinks a philosophy is required to interpret facts. That is not science; it is apologetics – forcing a selective set of facts onto your worldview to falsely validate it.

To label Darwin a "nonscientist" is beyond the pale. Darwin collected facts, and those facts forced him to consider the idea of evolution and natural selection. He didn't start with the idea or a philosophy. It occurred to him as a potentially valid explanation, and he tested it by "balancing facts and arguments on both sides of the question."

He laid out his method of trying to disprove evolution and other avenues that others might also try. He was an exemplary scientist and is portrayed as such in every introductory biology text that I have ever seen.

Mr. Mills' attempt to undermine this truth is an "affront to reason." Darwin's ideas, and the science behind them have not led to feticide, genocide, racism, hatred, war and terrorism any more than religious beliefs have.

It is true that tyrants and madmen have used both religious dogma and scientific ideas to justify their atrocities. Twisted minds will claim justification wherever they can. Mr. Mills is exemplary in this regard.

The following letter by **Barbara Forrest** appeared in the *Baton Rouge Advocate* on March 24, 2009:

Louisiana Family Forum official Gene Mill's ill-informed response to the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology's decision to hold its meeting in Utah instead of Louisiana betrays his surprise that the creationist Louisiana Science Education Act – which his Louisiana Family Forum engineered – has caused damage that he didn't anticipate.

Louisiana not only has a creationist law on the books, but also now suffers from nationwide, negative publicity. Consequently, the dollars SICB would have brought to New Orleans – as it did when it held its 2004, 1987, and 1976 meetings there – will go to Utah.

Why Utah?

Because in 2005, when a Utah legislator tried to pass creationist legislation, the state Board of Education announced that evolution is central to Utah's K-12 science curriculum.

Why is Mills so concerned with what other people's children are learning in public schools? Whom does he think he's fooling when he claims to be concerned with "academic freedom"?

Let's look at some facts that Mills himself has publicized. Mills's children don't attend public schools.

They are homeschooled, with the older ones attending private Christian schools.

In his 2008 “Christmas Letter” to LFF supporters, he announced the continuation of his wife’s “great homeschool adventure” and their sons’ football activities at Christian Life Academy. He also touted LFF’s success in helping to pass voucher legislation giving public money to private schools in Orleans Parish. So he has no personal stake in public education.

Mills has promoted creationism for years. In June 2008, when Gov. Bobby Jindal signed the LSEA, the LFF Web site offered a “fact sheet” titled “Origins Science Web sites” with hyperlinks to both young-earth and intelligent design creationist Web sites. This is only a sample of such material.

LFF’s new Web site is promoting error-ridden creationist textbook addendums and an intelligent design DVD, *Investigating Evolution*, as “practical alternatives” to the “uncritical teaching of evolutionism.” The DVD features Discovery Institute creationist – LFF’s partners in promoting the LSEA – fulminating about the supposed weaknesses of evolution.

One of them, Paul Nelson, believes Earth is only 10,000 years old. Mills’s Christmas letter also credits “LFF’s friendship with the Jindal administration” for LFF’s success in the 2008 legislative session, when 100 pastors “circulated throughout the Capitol,” providing “pastoral and chaplain services” to legislators.

Mills acknowledged Gov. Jindal’s assistance throughout the year, when “another 89 Louisiana pastors served as special council to the governor at LFF’s Governor’s Roundtables. At each roundtable, twenty pastors of every denominational stripe broke bread with the governor at the mansion, talked about vision, and then prayed for each other and for our great state.”

Mills, with Jindal’s help, is crafting public policy that reflects his personal religious agenda. The responsibility for the negative economic blowback rests squarely on their shoulders.

The following letter by **Howard K. Bostock** (the Bostocks, formerly from Baton Rouge, moved near Houston, Texas more than five years ago and remain dues-payment NOSHA members) appeared in the March 2009 *Freethought Today*:

On a recent visit to our daughter in London, we had a very serendipitous experience. Boarding the underground, daughter, wife and I took the only three seats available. The placard above my daughter’s head read, “There’s probably no god, now stop worrying and enjoy your life.” The placard also contained a quote from Douglas Adams: “Isn’t it enough to see that a garden is beautiful without having to believe that there are fairies at the bottom of it too?”

Upon the return underground trip we again took the few remaining seats and this time Helen and I were seated beneath “the sign.” One hour later, walking along bustling Oxford Street I saw four buses with “the sign” displayed on the side.

The experience made my day, if not the entire trip.

The following letter by **Jim Dugan** appeared in the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* on April 15, 2009:

Re: “Marriage losing its meaning.” Your Opinions, April 10.

Over the last 300 years the United States, and much of the industrialized world, has radically redefined marriage. In 1700 marriage was a transaction by which a man acquired property, or in more progressive jurisdictions, a dependent minor. Both legislation and court decisions have dramatically redefined marriage into the modern-day partnership of equals.

At this point, expanding the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples is both a small change and just one more step in the elimination of traditional Western gender prejudices.

The writer is in error in asserting that same-sex marriage would somehow open the door to marriage of minors. In legal terms, a marriage is a civil contract, and only adults with a legal right to give informed consent can engage in such a contract.

It’s also an error to assert that same-sex marriage would allow group marriage. Plural marriage was an artifact of the male-dominated marriage system of the past, a system that allowed a man to acquire a second wife without the first wife’s consent. Wives in such a system were sisters to each other, not spouses. Plural marriage among equals would require all parties to give consent to take all other partners as spouses, regardless of the genders involved. Such a plural marriage would be as emotionally unlikely as it would be legally unworkable.

In the past, religious traditions have not always limited marriage to one opposite-sex couple. Almost any introductory text on cultural anthropology will describe considerable variation in marriage structures.

Social change can be discomfiting, but that is no excuse for ignoring history. Those who believe that same-sex marriage takes something away from opposite-sex marriage need to take more personal responsibility for the mythology between their own ears.

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“I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind as that becomes more developed, more enlightened. As new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.”

-- Thomas Jefferson

**IT'S OFFICIAL. GOD IS NOT GREAT!\*****Doug Stewart**

\* This is the sole opinion of the author alone, and is not intended to malign any religion, ethnic group, club, organization, company, individual, or anyone or thing, especially those with the ability and desire for violence that know my address.

On April 14, Jones County Junior College's Charles Pickering Honors Institute in Ellisville, Mississippi hosted two well-known authors, Dinesh D'Souza (*What's So Great About Christianity*) and Christopher Hitchens (*God is Not Great*), in a debate entitled "God is Great, God is Not Great".

I'd previously seen these two public intellectuals debate both each other, as well as others on video, so I didn't expect an answer to the debate question. (Would anyone?) Each debater knew their adversary extremely well so there were few, if any, devastating blows dealt.

There was one occasion where Hitchens asked the Christian apologetic D'Souza, if Hitchens were to be reborn, would D'Souza prefer him to be born to the religion of Jihad in Saudi Arabia, or to become an atheist? There was an agonizingly long pause before the answer came which was, after many apologies to Islam, for Hitchens to remain an atheist.

Hitchens scored applause on several occasions. One was when he encouraged the audience, contrary to the requests of the host, to "put their southern hospitality aside", and he challenged the audience with the phrase, "I've come to play".

He was particularly veracious on several occasions, one during his presentation and one to an unaware questioner during the Q&A session who implied that "atheism is hopeless". Firstly, Hitchens accused the religious of "wishful thinking" and explained in very eloquent terms that he wasn't exactly enthusiastic at the prospect of his own death, but it was the only conclusion in the face of overwhelming evidence. Secondly, he quoted Dostoevsky's "If god does not exist, everything is permitted", and countered it with "If god does exist, everything is not only permitted but mandated", and pointed to all the immorality in the world that is committed in god's name. Lastly, Hitchens vehemently rejected the smug religious assumption that anyone that mentions god has a moral edge on him. On the contrary, he said they should begin apologizing for the theistically based evil in the world.

**NOSHA LOSES A FRIEND**

Early in my days as President of NOSHA, I contacted The Hemlock Society, of which I was a member, requesting a speaker on the subject of death with dignity for one of our meetings. They referred me to Dr. Eugene Usdin, a psychiatrist affiliated with Ochsner Hospital.

Dr. Usdin accepted our invitation and addressed our group on two occasions. Moreover, at his instruction, his foundation twice contributed to NOSHA in what were substantial amounts for our small organization. He attended several of our meetings, bringing friends along. It was at his request that the goals listed in the NOSHA flier added to "support the right to voluntary euthanasia" the words "including physician-assisted dying."

The national and international honors and recognition for Dr. Usdin are extensive. In addition, he edited several books and published more than 70 articles and chapters in professional publications. The Times-Picayune on May 10 outlined his achievements in a lengthy obituary.

It was an honor for me to know Gene personally and share conversations with him, and it is with great sadness that I learned of his death on May 9 following his lengthy head injury infirmity.

Harry Greenberger

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**REMEMBERING  
JEANNE OKAMOTO**

On March 29, NOSHA lost another friend, Jeanne Okamoto. Those of you who have been regular attendees of NOSHA meetings since well before Katrina will remember Jeanne's jet-black hair pulled severely back into a knot at the nape of her neck.

What you may not know about Jeanne is that she was an accomplished pianist of concert quality and a singer. For many years she played and sang on Friday nights at a Metairie restaurant where she was often joined by other area professional singers.

Jeanne was Romanian by birth and came to the U.S. at the age of 27. She had two marriages, the second to a man who was half-Japanese. She lost a son in WW2.

Some of Jeanne's remembrances shared with others include, "I married down out of love, "I guess I can be classified as an agnostic," "My formal religion is Romanian Orthodox; I happen to like the Easter Midnight Mass and attend it sometimes when I'm in the mood for something aesthetically pleasing; I only go for the pretty part, the lighting of the candles," "I don't believe in Christ as a God, but as a great philosopher, on a part with my favorite Aristotle."

Jeanne left us in her 80<sup>th</sup> year after a long battle with neurological tumors.

**THE NOSHA BILLBOARD**

This billboard is a part of a nationwide effort by the United Coalition of Reason ([www.unitedcor.org](http://www.unitedcor.org)) to raise the visibility and sense of unity among local groups in the community of reason. Created by FreeThoughtAction (<http://www.freethoughtaction.org/>), billboards like this have appeared in communities across the country, letting humanists, atheists, freethinkers and nontheists of all stripes know that they are not alone, and that there are millions of Americans who think like they do.



Here in New Orleans, our Canal streetcar ad successfully brought attention to NOSHA, along with names added to our mailing list. Our Board of Directors supported a plan for a prominent, although expensive, billboard and we made a successful appeal for funds for an advertising campaign, which was stimulated by matching funds provided by two NOSHA members. We consider the message on the sign to be non-offensive to anyone and reassuring to many who feel isolated in the community.

The billboard will go up on May 26 on the west-bound side of I-10 coming out of downtown New Orleans before the merge with I-610 along the stretch known as the Ponchartrain Expressway, and will be up for four weeks.

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**OTHER NOSHA ACTIVITIES**

For the April 18 NOSHA meeting, board member **Lanny Goldfinch** moderated a discussion session on “What Kind of Atheist Are You, If at All?” There was a lively conversation, and if not everyone got to speak up, we’re sorry, but there has been a call of more meetings in this format. So you may get your chance another time. Thanks, Lanny, for volunteering.

NOSHA’s May 16 program was headlined by Dr. **Andre Perry**, Associate Dean of the College of Education at the University of New Orleans. The title of his talk was “Why Schools Must Teach Morality.” Dr. Perry is passionate about improving public education. As Associate Dean of Education at UNO, he is also the CEO of the New Orleans recovery school district, and this fall will be implementing the first “ethics” class in high school in the district.

NOSHA meetings are held on the third Saturday of the month at 2:00 p.m. at the Dominion Learning Center at



Audubon Zoo. Announcements are e-mailed and snail mailed about a week before each meeting. Meeting topics are also posted on the NOSHA website, which you can access at <http://nosha.secularhumanism.net> or at [www.NOSHA.INFO](http://www.NOSHA.INFO).

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**CONGRATULATIONS**

NOSHA would like to congratulate our own Dr. **Barbara Forrest**. Barbara was recently honored at the annual conference of the American Humanist Association with their **Humanist Pioneer Award**. Barbara is a Professor of Philosophy at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, and she is the co-author of *Creationism’s Trojan Horse: The Wedge of Intelligent Design*, which details the political and religious aims of the intelligent design creationist movement. She was also a key expert witness for the plaintiffs in the first legal case involving intelligent design, *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District*. Congrats, Barbara, on another well-deserved honor.

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Pictured here is the latest installment in specialty license plates by our members. This “HUMANIST” (humanist) plate belongs to NOSHA VP **Dave Schultz**. A while back, you may recall, we showed you Doug Stewart’s “GODLESS” plate. And several years ago, Percy Prestenback acquired the first “ATHEIST” plate in Louisiana, and it is still on his little white truck. Specialty plates are a bit more expensive, but they are another way to “get the message out there” that we exist.

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“If this is your God, he’s not very impressive. He has so many psychological problems; he’s so insecure. He demands worship every seven days. He goes out and creates faulty humans and then blames them for his own mistakes. He’s a pretty poor excuse for a Supreme Being.”

-- Gene Roddenberry, television producer, *Star Trek*

“I would believe any religion that could prove it had existed since the beginning of the world. But when I see Socrates, Plato, Moses, and Mohammed I do not think there is such a one. All religions owe their origin to man.”

--Napoleon Bonaparte

“A material resurrection seems strange, and even absurd, except for purposes of punishment; and all punishment, which is to revenge rather than correct, must be morally wrong. And when the World is at an end, what moral or warning purpose can eternal tortures answer?”

--Lord Byron

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: \_\_\_\_\_

**2009 Annual dues are \$15.00.** 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  
520 St. Louis St., Apt. 3  
New Orleans, LA 70130**