

NOSHA NEWS

Newsletter of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association
Summer 2003

New Orleans Secular Humanist Association

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NATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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

MEETINGS

1st & 3rd Sundays
1:30 p.m.
Smith Branch Library
6301 Canal Blvd.
New Orleans

“HUMANISM” SPECIFIED IN CONSTITUTION

Wouldn't it be nice if it were true that “humanism” was specified in the Constitution? Well it is, in the draft constitution of the European Union. And, “God” and “Christianity” are excluded. At least there's hope for part of the world. Following is a report adapted from the Institute for Humanist Studies on-line newsletter of 06/18/03:

The Convention on the Future of Europe adopted a draft constitution for an enlarged European Union on June 13. Despite vociferous interventions from the Pope and Christian politicians, the preamble to the constitution does not include any mention of “God” nor any reference to Christianity. It does however include references to humanism.

The preamble was written by former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, a practicing Catholic and conservative politician who chaired the convention preparing the European Union's constitution. Its opening two paragraphs state:

“Conscious that Europe is a continent that has brought forth civilization; that its inhabitants, arriving in successive waves since the first ages of mankind, have gradually developed the values underlying humanism: equality of persons, freedom, respect for reason . . .

“Drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, the values of which, still in its heritage, have embedded within the life of society its perception of the central role of the human person and his inviolable and inalienable rights, and of respect for law, . . .”

Visibly moved after 16 months of hard debate and bargaining, Valery Giscard d'Estaing and the 105-member forum rose for the EU's anthem, Beethoven's “Ode to Joy,” and toasted their historic achievement with champagne.

“I will now go and present on your behalf to the European Council [of national leaders] in Thessaloniki our joint work which will provide the basis for a future constitutional treaty of Europe,” Giscard d'Estaing told the final plenary session.

After the Thessaloniki summit on June 20-21, the Convention will still have to fine-tune part of the constitution dealing with EU policies. An Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) due to start in October will have the final say on the text.

European Commission President Romano Prodi, a Roman Catholic, lamented the lack of any reference in the draft constitution's preamble to God or Christianity. “To ignore 1,500 years of civilization is to create a vacuum in our consciousness, in our identity as Europeans,” Prodi said, according to a Reuters story by Gareth Jones.

In an interview with the Spanish newspaper Corriere della Sera, Giscard d'Estaing argued that the reference to Europe's religious inheritance obviously included Christianity, “But we could not cite it more explicitly, otherwise we would have had to mention the other religions present in the continent, too,

from Judaism to Islam. And that solution would not have been acceptable to everyone,” he said.

The new constitution has one article that explicitly deals with the status of religious and humanist organizations. Article I-51 permits national governments to continue their historic arrangements with churches and other religious groups. So, for example, the British government will not be required to disestablish the Church of England. More positively, this article gives humanist organizations parity with religious ones. In full the article reads:

“Article I-51: Status of churches and non-confessional organizations

1. *The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States.*
2. *The Union equally respects the status of philosophical and non-confessional organizations.*
3. *Recognizing their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organizations.”*

* * * * *

Isn’t it ironic that the Europeans, who once fostered religious persecution, prompting the exodus of pilgrims to the New World, have finally grown up to a rational and humane stance on human rights and existence? It is perhaps even more ironic that in the country that once accepted Europe’s “huddled masses yearning to be free”, we have a President who surrounds himself with right-wing religious fanatics and who himself talks with God and apparently takes orders from him as well. The United States still has a document called a Constitution, which bears no mention of God or Christianity. As rationalists, humanists, atheists, we have an obligation not only to ourselves, but to our progeny, to keep fighting for the secular government and way of life for which our forefathers from Europe came.

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Hooray for the U. S. Supreme Court’s decision of June 25, striking down the Texas anti-sodomy law and in so doing, the Louisiana sodomy law as well. In the words of state Senator Lynn Dean who had earlier failed in an attempt to repeal the Louisiana law, “We’ve now got a little bit more freedom in this country we call the land of the free.” The decision is a great win for privacy.

In the summer edition of *Free Inquiry*, Tom Flynn reports persuasively about the need for nonbelievers to “come out of the closet.” He compares our challenges to those faced by gay and lesbian activists 50 years ago, writing: “The gay movement engineered a stupendous reversal in American sexual attitudes. Circa 1950, homosexuality was universally reviled. Today, people expressing a broad variety of sexual orientations are embraced by many Americans and accepted by most . . . What made this happen? The gay community achieved irresistible visibility.”

While New Orleans and Louisiana are not the most fertile fields for “growing” acceptance for our secular lifestance, much can be accomplished by those of us willing to stand up to be counted. Despite warnings of dire consequences from some of my friends, the several *Times-Picayune* articles about NOSHA, identifying me as a leader did not produce a single threatening or insulting letter, telephone call or visit. Each time, the publication was followed by calls supportive of our position and asking for more information about NOSHA.

Flynn says it is easy to “pass” as part of the mainstream. He says, “That’s why the gay movement invested so heavily in exhorting its members to come out of the closet—to make that hard, dangerous choice not to pass—and to keep making that choice until not passing had become less dangerous.”

I encourage each of you to begin or continue to make your secularism known so that more people in our area will become aware of us, who live good lives without religion. Are you ready to “come out of the closet?”

Harry Greenberger

* * * * *

“The easy confidence with which I know another man’s religion is folly teaches me that my own is also.”

-- Mark Twain

Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear. Fear is the basis of the whole thing. Fear of the mysterious, fear of defeat, fear of death. Fear is the parent of cruelty, and therefore it is no wonder if cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand.

-- Bertrand Russell

“I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish Church, by the Roman Church, by the Greek Church, by the Turkish [Muslim] Church, by the Protestant Church, nor by any Church that I know of. My own mind is my own Church.”

-- Thomas Paine

MEMBERS' PUBLISHED LETTERS

The following letter, written by **Michael Malec**, appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on April 7, 2003:

Some people just don't get it. Unfortunately, some of them are elected officials like Jefferson Parish School Board Member Julie Quinn.

It's not prayer that is prohibited in public schools, its government sponsored, promoted, or otherwise endorsed prayer.

"The First Amendment gives you the right to pray individually or in groups or to discuss religious views with your peers, so long as they are not disruptive of an educational activity. Also, you have the right to read a religious book, say grace before meals, pray before tests, and discuss religion with other willing student listeners. In the classroom, you have the right to pray quietly, except when required to be actively engaged in school activities. For example, you may not decide to pray just as a teacher calls on you."

This is not quoted from the Christian Coalition, or the Louisiana Family Forum. The quote is from the ACLU of Louisiana Students' Rights Handbook.

It's not prayer that violates our Constitution. It's exactly the kind of governmental promotion of prayer that Julie Quinn proposes.

She should read some of the court cases on the subject, including *Karen B.*, which was a Jefferson Parish case, before she makes proposals which if implemented would cost the Parish a great deal of money in legal fees in a losing cause, and will make the Parish a laughingstock once more.

The following letter, written by **Connie Gordon**, appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on April 9, 2003:

Jefferson Parish School Board member Julie Quinn has proposed adding a religious component to the schools' curriculum ("Jeff schools reopen debate over prayer," April 4).

As with every other time that school-sanctioned prayer or posting of religious dogma on school walls is proposed, the suggestion comes from a conservative Christian with no regard for the diversity of culture and religion in our schools.

Religion and spirituality cannot and should not be taught in our schools. These concepts belong in the churches, synagogues and mosques, but predominantly in the home. It is not spirituality or the posting of a religious Decalogue that makes a young person a better person. This comes from the teaching of the cultural and societal mores that are inherent in all of world civilization.

My own son graduated in 1997 from a Jefferson Parish public school. Without any religious upbringing, he is a fine human being and productive citizen.

As the law stands now, no student in our public schools is restricted from prayer on his or her own. It is only school-sanctioned religiosity that is forbidden, as it should be.

The following letter, written by **Harry Greenberger**, appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on April 24, 2003:

Your page-wide headline on April 23 reading "Secular education is U.S. priority" would have signaled a surprising victory for those who favor the separation of church and state, had it not been placed below an even larger headline: "Postwar Iraq."

The article reports, "U.S. officials are hoping to combat fundamentalism by helping the Iraqis build a secular education system."

Are those officials with the same religious right fundamentalist theocratic Washington administration that is relentlessly trying to infuse its Christianity into our public schools?

The following letter, written by **Barbara Forrest**, appeared in the *Baton Rouge Advocate* on April 29, 2003:

A recent *Advocate* editorial (4/25/03) rightly condemned Sen. Santorum's anti-gay remarks. Santorum's words reflect the Religious Right's effort to enact its religion as public policy. But readers are probably unaware that Louisiana legislation bears Santorum's fingerprints. Ben Nevers' HCR 50, encouraging LA school systems to "refrain from purchasing textbooks that do not present a balanced view of the various theories relative to the origin life" also reflects Santorum's (and Nevers') religious agenda.

The bill cites conference report language from the No Child Left Behind Act: "The Conferees recognize that a quality science education should prepare students to distinguish the data and testable theories of science from religious or philosophical claims that are made in the name of science. 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." This was written by Phillip Johnson, an intelligent design creationist with the Discovery Institute in Seattle. Santorum, Johnson's supporter in Congress, inserted it into NCLB, the most important education legislation in decades. Urged by science and education organizations, the conference committee moved the language to its report. It is not

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federal law, but creationists around the U.S. are using it to influence education policy, as LA creationists will use HCR 50.

Nevers' resolution looks suspiciously like an end run around the Louisiana Family Forum's failure to persuade BESE to place antievolution disclaimers in state science books. Now it is joined by A. G. Crowe's HB 1782, prohibiting "any branch, department, agency, official, employee, or other entity of state government or any political subdivision from knowingly and intentionally printing or distributing material containing false or fraudulent information." Unsuccessfully pushed by Tony Perkins in 2001, the ACLU exposed it as a creationist bill modeled after an unsuccessful 2001 Arkansas bill. Resurrected by Crowe, who spoke before BESE to support the disclaimer, HB 1782 will hold teachers and school boards liable for distributing textbooks teaching evolution, which creationists consider "fraudulent." I know what I'm talking about: I have spent three years writing a book about this issue.

The following letter, written by **The Rev. Jim VanderWeele** of the Community Church Unitarian Universalist, appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, on May 1, 2003:

Thank you for the article on Barry Melton, featuring his ambivalence to the war in Iraq ("Life is a new kettle of fish for former folk singer," April 29).

Melton recognizes a need to remove Saddam, "a truly despotic man," but is concerned with world opinion and the war's consequences in the future. I share his ambivalence.

In the 1960s, I sang along with Melton, asking, "What are we fighting for?"

Today I have an 18-year old son who is as antiwar as Melton's 16-year old son. Tempted to agree, I am also moved by our role as leaders in this world, and aware of our moral obligations. Most importantly, I am distressed when our national character is questioned. Our critics make me wonder.

My question today is not, "What are we fighting for?" It is, "What are we standing for?"

In her column the same day, Maureen Dowd notes that the secretaries of Defense and State disagree on "whether America will lead by fear, aggression and force of arms or by diplomacy, moderation and example."

My hope is that we continue to value being a positive example of all that is the best of freedom, liberty, and justice.

The following letter, written by **Percy Prestenbach**, appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on May 24, 2003:

Re: "Voucher Plea leads to help for N.O. boy," May 14.

How can the richest church on earth have the gall to expect the public to fund its school system? Why doesn't the church itself offer a voucher program for children who cannot afford their tuition?

Throughout history religions have financed their cathedrals and financial empires with contributions from some of the poorest people on earth. If the public could know the value of the church's tax-exempt properties and the amount of its income, it might refuse to approve government school vouchers and keep the taxpayers money for the public school system.

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SPREAD THE WORD

Harry Greenberger's February 28 letter to the *Times-Picayune* (see *NOSHA News*, Spring 2003) was reprinted in *Free Mind*, the bi-monthly membership newsletter of the American Humanist Association. To get our words out to other parts of the country, we recommend that NOSHA members send their published letters to organizations that reprint such submissions. Members of American Humanist Association and American Atheists are requested by those organizations to forward their letters. Each of them requires the original full page on which the letter appears in order to authenticate its publication.

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Tuesday, June 17, 2003 marked the fortieth anniversary of the historic U. S. Supreme Court decision in the combined *Murray v. Curlett* and *Abington Township v. Schempp* cases which ended mandatory prayer and Bible verse recitation in our nation's public schools. Two hundred and fifteen years after the adoption of the Constitution and forty years after that Supreme Court Decision, the fight goes on.

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Leave the matter of religion to the family, the altar, the church, and the private school, supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the church and state forever separate.

--President Ulysses S. Grant

OF INTEREST TO HUMANISTS . . .

CONCORD, NH—New Hampshire lawmakers recently approved a bill to require notification of a parent or judge at least 48 hours before girls under 18 can get abortions. In signing the bill into law, Gov. Craig Benson said, “We ask children to get their parents’ permission to get their ears pierced, to take an aspirin at school, . . . I think this law finally puts all parental notification on the same footing.”

Although the new law gives neither parent nor judge veto power, it’s hard to imagine a teenage girl who was either too afraid to ask for or denied access to birth control, telling the same authority figure, “Oh, by the way, I’ll be a little late for dinner because I’m getting an abortion.”

BERKLEY, CA—Researchers at UC, Berkeley, have discovered the oldest known skulls of modern humans in Ethiopia. The three fossils—two from adults and one from a child—have been dated to at least 160,000 years old. The find strongly supports the theory that modern humans evolved in Africa. The new fossil evidence meshes with the previous molecular evidence that have long suggested that *Homo sapiens* had emerged in Africa, and the newest discovery predates previous evidence by at least 30,000 years.

BATON ROUGE, LA—State Senator Paulette Irons recently introduced legislation which would require each school district in the state to develop a policy that explicitly bans harassment of any kind. The bill required that all students be treated with respect regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or mental or physical disability. In opposition, some religious right types distributed fliers suggesting that Sen. Irons’ bill would require the state board of education to “develop policies and curricula . . . on homosexual lifestyles.” Not true; all Sen. Irons wanted was equal respect for all.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL—A woman with bipolar disorder is suing her former boss for religious harassment because he claimed her disorder was “God’s will” because Satan had infiltrated her life and her sins were unconfessed. He suggested that she pray with him daily, but when she refused, he fired her. Another former employee had previously complained that the television production company president had put scriptures inside paycheck envelopes. The company produces secular programs for cable television.

WASHINGTON—In a May 2003 issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, scientists at the University of Wisconsin suggest that humans and chimps

share a common ancestor about 7 million years ago. In fact, they suggest that chimps are more closely related to humans than to gorillas or other primates and therefore should be considered the same genus. (A genus is a group of closely related species.) The human species *Homo sapiens*, currently stands alone in the genus *Homo*, although there have been other fossil members of the families, such as *Homo neanderthalensis* or *Homo erectus*.

MILTON, MA—She’s ba-a-a-ck! The Virgin Mary that is. It seems at least once a year somewhere in the world, the blessed virgin makes an appearance and her minions flock to see her. This time she appeared in a third-story window of Milton Hospital. Hospital officials have explained that the “likeness” is made by a chemical deposit inside a sealed window, but by the end of the first weekend, more than 25,000 people had arrived to see it. Officials have asked the crowds to please honor the hospital’s official visiting hours.

PALESTINE—From the minutes of one of June’s cease-fire negotiations in the Middle East, Palestinian Prime Minister Abbas stated that U.S. President Bush told him: “God told me to strike at al Qaida and I struck them, and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did, and now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East. If you help me I will act, and if not, the elections will come and I will have to focus on them.” Wasn’t Joan of Arc burned at the stake for her conversations with God?

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WHY THERE ARE SO FEW RATIONALISTS

During the height of the revolutionary terror in France, three people were lined up for execution: a priest, a count, and a godless scientist.

The priest prayed desperately as he went to the guillotine. The guillotine blade began its long descent and abruptly stopped, just a few inches above his head. The priest thanked God for his miraculous intervention.

The executioner crossed himself and said, “This is the hand of God at work. You are free to go.”

Having seen all this, the Count loudly repented his sins and called on God to save him from the chop. Again the guillotine blade came down and then stopped.

“Thank you, God; I will never sin again,” said the Count as he left the platform.

Next the scientist went to the guillotine. Once he was in proper beheading position he shouted out, “Ha! I knew it wasn’t a miracle. Look—there’s a nail sticking out that is stopping the blade from descending all the way.”

EASTER EVE POTLUCK A SUCCESS

Susan Fleet

On April 19, NOSHA President Harry Greenberger hosted a potluck dinner at his home to welcome two internationally known secular humanists visiting New Orleans. Twenty-five NOSHA members met and talked with Tim Madigan, former editor of *Free Inquiry* magazine, and Warren Allen Smith, author of *Celebrities in Hell* and *Who's Who in Hell*. After some lively conversation and a smorgasbord of incredible edibles, Madigan and Smith spoke about their experiences as secular humanists.

Several years ago Madigan, a member of the Council for Secular Humanism, visited New Orleans to meet with a group of people interested in forming a local chapter. He said he was happy to know that there is still a group of humanists in New Orleans dedicated to promoting freethought and humanist values. Now editorial director of the University of Rochester Press in Rochester, New York, Madigan also writes and acts in comedy murder-mystery plays. In his latest--"Death Takes a Hollandaise"--Madigan plays a nasty restaurant owner who gets killed with a shish-kebab skewer.

Smith explained how he came to write his massive reference tome, *Who's Who in Hell* (Barricade Books, 2000, 1268 pages, \$125), a compilation of people from Greco-Roman times through the 20th century who profess no religious beliefs, or as he described it a listing of "over 10,000 brief biographies of those who would be consigned to Hell if such a place existed." After noting that he donated a copy of the book to the Vatican, he read from his thinner but equally fascinating book, *Celebrities in Hell*, quoting such notables as Katherine Hepburn, Christopher Reeve, George Carlin, and Adlai Stevenson. A man of eclectic interests and talents, Smith has owned and operated a recording studio in New York City for the past thirty years. Autographed copies of *Celebrities in Hell* are available for \$15 postpaid from Rationalists NY, 31 Jane St. (Box 10-D), NY NY 10014.

OTHER NOSHA DOINGS

The May-June 2003 issue of *The Humanist* contained the new Humanist Manifesto III. The May 4 NOSHA meeting was dedicated to a group discussion led by **Connie Gordon** about the newest manifesto and what was wrong with I and II. It was the consensus of the group that the newest manifesto was too nebulous and that the Manifesto II was much better. Manifesto II is the basis for the Affirmations of Humanism of the Council for Secular Humanism from which NOSHA's own statements of purpose were adapted.

The topic of the May 18 NOSHA meeting was "Freedom, Liberty & Justice in the 21st Century." The discussion was led by the Reverend **Jim VanderWeele**, Pastor of the Community Church Unitarian Universalist. Jim reminded us all again of our eroding personal freedoms, especially after 09/11. It was a very troubling and stirring discussion.

"Humanism: Reason or Rebellion" was the title of **Brent Fodera's** talk at the NOSHA meeting of June 1. Brent discussed the universality of religion with Islam being the fastest-growing, the failure of Christianity to promote peace, the seeming universal preference for strong centralized leadership, and what the allure of humanism might be in all of this as well as what the fruits of rationalism are. A very heated discussion at times lead us all to think about the current world condition a little more.

Finally, on the eve of father's day, another potluck-movie night was held at Harry Greenberger's home. The movie shown was "Pleasantville" and was attended by about 20 people who enjoyed good food, great conversation, and an excellent movie. Once again, the evening was coordinated by **Sally Mooney**.

A **special thanks** to our members, **Connie Gordon**, **Jim VanderWeele**, **Brent Fodera**, and **Sally Mooney** for **volunteering** to lead discussions, give talks, and coordinate activities.

If you haven't been attending NOSHA meetings or social gatherings, look at all you've been missing? We would really like to see you at these events. If you are on our mailing list, you are obviously interested in forwarding the interests of secular humanism. Come to the meetings, bring a friend, and let's make a rational difference.

NOSHA ENDORSEMENTS

During the month of June, NOSHA's Board of Directors has made two important commitments for the cause of humanism and freethinkers in the New Orleans area. On June 5, the Board agreed to sign on with New Orleans Access TV, for which we will pay \$100/year to broadcast programs produced by the Council for Secular Humanism (see Spring 2003 Newsletter for programs produced locally).

On June 23, the Board agreed to join the Louisiana ACLU as it puts together a "Safe and Free" Coalition, with hopes of passing a city council resolution that urges the local New Orleans government to protest the rollback of basic American freedoms, which have been enumerated in the USA Patriot Act. Over 150 other communities and three states have already passed similar resolutions.

THE NOSHA LIBRARY

NOSHA has acquired quite a few items in its lending library. We don't have a permanent place to keep the items, but we have a librarian, Doug Hinton, to maintain the library. Following is a listing of the items currently available for loan. If you would like to borrow any of the items, you should contact Doug prior to the next NOSHA meeting and ask him to bring it, or ask him to send it to you. This is all done on the "honor" system; we trust you will return the item when you have finished with it. You may reach Doug at Hintondougk@aol.com. Or you may call Harry Greenberger at 282-5459.

GODLESS MORALITY. KEEPING RELIGION OUT OF ETHICS by Richard Holloway
THE ATHEIST HANDBOOK TO MODERN MATERIALISM by Philip A. Stahl
JESUS. AN HISTORIAN'S REVIEW OF THE GOSPELS by Michael Grant
THE BIBLE AS HISTORY by Werner Keller
GOD. A BIOGRAPHY by Jack Mills
DECEPTIONS & MYTHS OF THE BIBLE
THE PRIMATES by Irven DeVore & Sarel Eimerl
EVOLUTION from the Life Nature Library
EVOLUTION OF LIFE by Catherine Jarmin
FOSSIL MAN by Michael H. Day
EVOLUTION. WHAT? WHY? WHEN? HOW? WHERE? WHO? By W. E. Swinton
A HUMANIST FUNERAL SERVICE by Corliss Lamont
CARL SAGAN by William Poundstone
DO I STAND ALONE? by Jesse Ventura
FOUNDING BROTHERS. THE REVOLUTIONARY GENERATION by Joseph J. Ellis
IN THE BEGINNING. THE STORY OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE by Alister McGrath

INTELLIGENT DESIGN CREATIONISM AND ITS CRITICS edited by Barbara Forrest & Robert T. Pennock
WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE WEIRD THINGS by Michael Shermer
GOD.COM by John A. Henderson
WHAT ON EARTH IS AN ATHEIST? By Madalyn Murray O'Hair
A SECULAR HUMANIST DECLARATION drafted by Paul Kurtz et al
STUDENTS' RIGHTS HANDBOOK from the ACLU of Louisiana
THE ORIGIN OF SATAN by Elaine Pagels

The following videos are also available:

BEYOND DEATH – A & E
THE BLIND WATCHMAKER, Richard Dawkins, BBC
MARK TWAIN FORUM ON EVOLUTION – Florida Cable Access
PBS EVOLUTION SERIES:
DARWIN'S DANGEROUS IDEAS, tape 1
GREAT TRANSFORMATIONS & EXTINCTION, tape 2
EVOLUTIONARY ARMS RACE AND WHY SEX? Tape 3
THE MIND'S BIG BANG & WHAT ABOUT GOD? Tape 4

THE BOSTOCKS BECAME TEXANS

NOSHA lost two of its most supportive members when Howard and Helen Bostock moved from Baton Rouge to the Houston area in early June. They were exemplary Secular Humanists, driving from Baton Rouge frequently for NOSHA meetings and other events and participating with the LSU Atheists, Agnostics and Humanists group. Their dedication to the Humanist lifestance included frequent attendance at meetings of various national organizations, including the 2002 Godless Americans March on Washington.

Howard has served on the NOSHA Board of Directors for several years and has agreed to remain until the expiration of his term at the end of this year. He also represented NOSHA as a Director with Atheists Alliance International. Willing to be recognized as nonbelievers, Howard and Helen each contributed to our *Times-Picayune* published book reviews, and Howard frequently made his position known through his letters to the *Baton Rouge Advocate*. Already, in Texas they have attended an event sponsored by the Isaac Azimov chapter of the American Humanist Association. We hope they remain members of our organization, but we will miss seeing them at our events.

NOSHA CALENDER

July 20 – Regular Meeting – Bob Sylvia: “Nightmares and Dreams: Tales of Nihilism and Humanism by HP Lovecraft and Clifford D Simak”

August 3 – Regular Meeting – Ray Bartlett: “Origins (of the First Amendment) with Special Emphasis on the ‘Freedom of Religion’ Section”

August 9 – Alabama Regional Atheists Meeting, Embassy Suites, Birmingham, 9:00 – 5:00, \$30

August 17 – Regular Meeting – Steve Voelkel: “Islam”

September 1 – NO MEETING – Labor Day Weekend

September 7 – Regular Meeting – topic to be announced

September 21 – A special video of Paul Kurtz (founder of the Council for Secular Humanism) explaining secular humanism, to be followed by a live call-in group discussion with Kurtz. To be held at a venue other than Smith Library; details later.

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:

Check one: New Member Renewing Member Mailing list only

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone and/or e-mail: _____

Annual dues for 2003 are \$15. A renewing member can bring in a new member, two for one -- \$15 for two when one is new. Make your check payable to "NOSHA" and mail to Connie Gordon, 2509 Giuffrias Ave., Apt. 603, Metairie, LA 70001.