

NOSHA NEWS

Newsletter of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association
Summer 2005

New Orleans Secular Humanist Association

5331 Bancroft Dr.

New Orleans, LA 70122

(a 501c3 corporation)

<http://nosha.secularhumanism.net>

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Barbara Forrest

J. Michael Malec

Vitas Paukstaitis

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

N.O. COX CABLE TV

CH 77 "Humanist Perspective"

Sat. midnight; Sun. noon

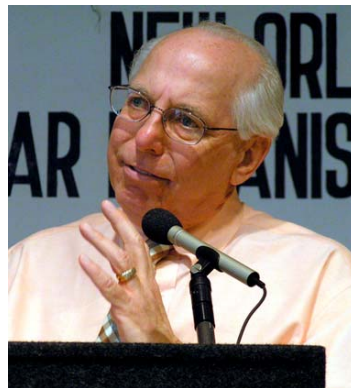
CH 78 "Atheist Viewpoint"

Wed. 10:30 am; 10:30 pm

AMERICAN HUMANIST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VISITS NOSHA

On May 21-22, Tony Hileman, Executive Director of the American Humanist Association visited with NOSHA members and gave an inspiring talk. On the evening of May 21, many of us joined together at Harry Greenberger's home for a potluck supper and reception for Tony. It was great to meet him and just talk about current world events of interest to humanists everywhere.

On the morning of May 22, several of us took Tony on a quick driving tour around the city and then to brunch at Copeland's. Again, it was fun to visit him in that more intimate setting. We delivered him to the Smith Library promptly for his 1:30 talk to a large crowd of interested freethinkers.



The title of Tony's talk was "Humanism and the American Humanist Association." AHA, established in 1928, is the oldest and largest humanist organization in America. Tony explained humanism and compared it to theistic, deistic, and other supernatural lifestyles. He explained the AHA's past, present and future accomplishments and mission and elaborated on the association's position within the community of reason.

On every chair in the meeting room was a small pocket-sized folding card that summarized humanism and its aspirations as outlined in the Humanist Manifesto III. First, humanism is defined as a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity. Elements of the manifesto include the following:

- Knowledge of the world is derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis.
- Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change.
- Ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience.
- Life's fulfillment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals.
- Humans are social by nature and find meaning in relationships.
- Working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness.

NOSHA was honored to have Tony Hileman visit our group. For those of you who did not get an opportunity to meet him or hear his talk, you may visit the AHA website for more information at www.AmericanHumanist.org.

MEMBERS' PUBLISHED LETTERS

The following letter, written by **Timothy Ruppert**, appeared in the *Galveston County Daily News* on May 5, 2005:

In regard to the story, "A soldier comes home (The Daily News, April 24): It is unfortunate that your writer spoiled an otherwise positive and heartening story of a soldier's safe return from service in Iraq with a religious slur. I refer to that old canard about atheists and foxholes.

What was the point of including this swipe at non-believers? Clearly, the subject soldier already had religious faith when he went to Iraq, so the point was not that life-threatening stresses can inspire religious conversion.

We can only conclude, then, that the point your writer wanted to make was that nonbelievers are cowards and unpatriotic, an insult as cruel and defamatory as it is untrue.

There have been and are many atheists in foxholes, humvees, surface vessels, submarines, tanks and aircraft. They have and they continue to serve with honor and distinction.

Need proof? There have been several famous examples. How about former football star Pat Tillman, who demonstrated bravery and leadership beyond his rank until he was felled in a friendly fire accident?

How about Gene Roddenbury, who flew dozens of combat missions during World War II?

I would hope the Daily News has the integrity to apologize to past and present atheists in the military and their families for this unfair characterization.

The following letter, written by **Catherine Cohen**, appeared in the *Times-Picayune* on May 22, 2005:

Re: "Pharmacists must exercise conscience," Other Opinions, May 14.

While I believe that people should be able to follow their conscience, I also believe that these people should have their facts straight. The morning-after pill does not cause abortion, as Mr. Malouse claims. It cannot interrupt an already established pregnancy. It is a form of contraception, and I am quite sure that Mr. Malouse probably sells other forms of contraception in his drugstore without a problem.

The following letter, written by **Harry Freeman**, appeared in the *Times-Picayune* on June 14, 2005:

This past weekend the total of American dead in Iraq exceeded 1,700. There is no telling what the Iraqi death count is. Where is our outrage?

It is way past time for President Bush to bring the troops home and stop this meat grinder of a war.

Obviously, little yellow \$1.98 ribbon magnets attached to cars urging everyone to "support our troops" are having no effect whatsoever. Of course, displaying the ribbons is a really painless way to make the occupants of the car look as if they are really concerned about what is happening as they go about their normal lives.

How about we actually support our troops and tell our leaders that we are tired of having our young men and women slaughtered for no reason whatsoever, and demand that they develop some backbone and bring them home?

The following letter, written by **Connie Gordon**, appeared in the *Times-Picayune* on July 5, 2005:

President Bush and his die-hard supporters seem to have two blind spots when it comes to Iraq. One is the insistence on some kind of connection between the 9/11 terrorists and that country – there was none.

There was no terrorist insurgency in that country until after it was invaded by us. We all know that the real reason for our invasion of a sovereign nation was to preserve U.S. oil interests in the Middle East.

The other blind spot is that somehow the deaths of more than 1,700 American service people (not to mention thousands more maimed and wounded) is "worth the cost." Those are not the only deaths. Since the beginning of the invasion, thousands of Iraqis have been killed, wounded and maimed. I wonder, how would the Iraqi citizenry poll on whether the war was worth it?

The following letter, written by Timothy Ruppert, appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor* on July 8, 2005:

Your June 28 editorial, "Limits of Religion in Public Life," praises the recent Supreme Court rulings on Government promotion of the religious text known as the Ten Commandments. You gush that, "The rulings recognized the historic role of religion in the foundation of this country and its laws."

However, reading our founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, The Bill of Rights, and the Federalist Papers, I see no evidence of duplication of or even inspiration from the Ten Commandments. Those ancient declarations are clearly religious laws from alleged revelation, whereas our nation's civil laws derive authority from the consent of the governed. What makes our Constitution so remarkable is that it is an entirely secular document.

The Ten Commandments may well be part of our cultural history, as are automobiles, Mark Twain, and popular music, but the claim that biblical edicts were the foundation of our laws is totally spurious.

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NOSHA ENDORSES LOUISIANA JUSTICE COALITION

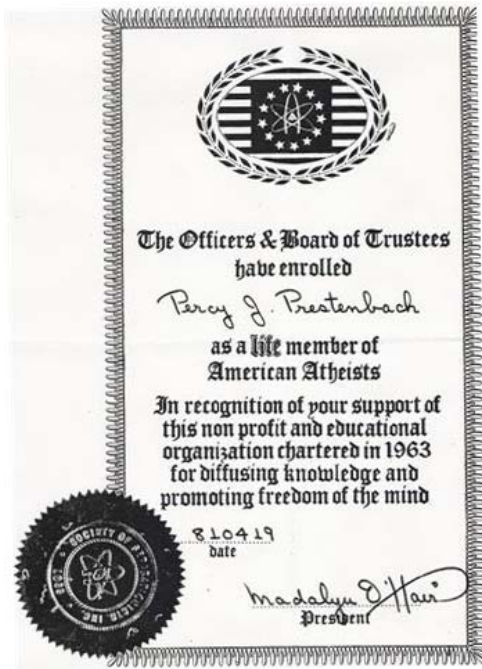
In May, the NOSHA Board of Directors voted to endorse and join the Louisiana Justice Coalition, which is a diverse group of community leaders and organizations committed to the reform of our criminal justice system. It has initiated a comprehensive public education campaign to highlight the crisis in Louisiana's indigent defense system and to mobilize public pressure from the community. Their letter introducing the topic reads in part, "Inadequate and unreliable funding, lack of uniform standards to ensure qualified representation, troubling miscarriages of justice against Louisiana citizens, glaring disparities in investigative resources between prosecutors and public defenders, and the absence of responsible state oversight are the shameful hallmarks of Louisiana's public defense system."

NOSHA’S NUMBER ONE ATHEIST

While NOSHA celebrates its sixth anniversary this year, many of our members have been participants in national secular organizations for a much longer time. They welcomed the opportunity for involvement on a local level which NOSHA was established.

NOSHA member **Percy Prestenbach** recently provided us with copies of his certificates of membership in American Atheists, signed by its founding president Madalyn Murray O’Hair. His membership certificate is dated December 19, 1979, followed by a “life” membership, dated April 29, 1981 (see below).

Percy recently discussed his years of avowed atheism on the NOSHA television program “The Humanist Perspective.”



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NOSHA DISTRIBUTES MOVIES

On May 13 NOSHA received an e-mail from American Atheists describing an opportunity for its affiliates to “be on the cutting edge of Atheist films.” Portions of the movie, *The God Who Wasn’t There*, had been shown at the April American Atheists convention, receiving “thunderous applause.” Brian Flemming, the writer, director, producer and narrator of the film was offering it to secular groups around the country at a very nominal cost. Each of us had to determine a venue for its showing. After visiting their website, www.thegodmovie.com, our president advised the NOSHA Board of its availability and ordered the film. It was sent with a supply of postcards and posters, along with press kits and a few CDs of the soundtrack music.

Arrangements were made with Zeitgeist Theater, which presents many avant-garde films, for showing on June 21-22, with NOSHA to receive a portion of the ticket sales. The

movie, with short description of its contents, was listed in both the *Times-Picayune* and *Gambit* newspapers, as well as inclusion in the Zeitgeist announcement of their June scheduled films. On each night of the showing Harry Greenberger made a short presentation and distributed NOSHA brochures to what can be assumed to be a receptive group. Zeitgeist and we were pleased with the turnout and in response to many requests, the theater scheduled an additional two days of screenings two weeks later. Prior to our show dates, the film had been presented in Hollywood, San Francisco, Birmingham, Atlanta, New York, Bloomington, Orlando, and Fairfax, so we were still among the early viewers of *The God Who Wasn’t There*. Then, the June 27 edition of *Newsweek Magazine* carried a photograph and article about the film, writing that it “irreverently lays out the case that Jesus Christ never existed.”

A manager of Chalmette Movies 9 saw the screening at Zeitgeist and asked to be allowed to show it at their multi-screen theater for a week, which took place beginning on July 15. NOSHA was again to share in proceeds from ticket sales. Again, the film was listed and described in the two newspapers. In addition, the *Times-Picayune’s* “Lagniappe” section carried a photo and quotations by Sam Harris, author of *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason*, who appears in the film. Wherever the movie was listed, credit was given to NOSHA as sponsors of the film.

An e-mail from the film’s producer to all who had responded to their offer of the film included this comment: “Some events are so successful that they turn into encore screenings (NY) and even real theatrical runs (New Orleans).” We may have been the only ones who managed to get a commercial theater run.

Encore! NOSHA arranged for local presentation of another movie for which the producer had been unable to get commercial distribution. *The Heart of the Beholder*, produced at a cost of \$500,000, is based on a true story of prejudice and religiously based political action against a theater-owning couple in St. Louis. It is scheduled to be shown at Chalmette Movies 9 and Zeitgeist theaters in September. And discussion is underway for possible arrangements for screening *Bible Madness*, an internet cult classic. Anyone with personal contacts at other theaters in or around New Orleans should talk with Harry Greenberger about expanded coverage for each of these films.

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**“Is God willing to prevent evil,
but not able?
Then he is not omnipotent.
Is he able, but not willing?
Then he is malevolent.
Is he both able and willing?
Then whence cometh evil?
Is he neither able nor willing?
Then why call him God?”**

Epicurus

OF INTEREST TO HUMANISTS . . .

GREENBELT, MD—Two groups have filed a federal lawsuit to block a high school health curriculum that would allow discussions about homosexuality and a video demonstrating how to use a condom. While most parents in the district are supportive of the curriculum that teaches about safe sex, those opposed (including Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays and Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum) argue the program doesn't do enough to stress abstinence or allow formerly gay persons to present their views.

MONTGOMERY, AL—A pregnant student who was banned from graduation at her Roman Catholic high school stood and announced her own name as she walked across the stage anyway at the close of the program. Her name was not even listed in the program, but the father of the child, also a senior at the school, was allowed to participate in graduation.

LONDON, KY—A Kentucky judge has been offering some drug and alcohol offenders the option of attending worship services instead of going to jail or rehab. The judge, a devout Christian, doesn't think there is a church-state issue because it's not mandatory and he uses the words "worship service" instead of "church."

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND—A young couple was recently united by a humanist celebrant here after it was agreed that previous rules were restrictive and discriminatory. Until this June, Scottish couples had to be carried out by a minister of religion or a registrar. But this couple said, "Neither of us are religious and it would have felt hypocritical to get married in a church." Now that Scotland has relaxed its rules on marriage, it is hoped that England and Wales will follow.

TANGIPAHOA PARISH, LA—Even after a U.S. District Judge ordered the school district to cease prayer at school-sponsored events, the school district has violated that order at least four more times: when a teacher's aide led the Lord's Prayer for students during a school board meeting; when a man prayed over the public address system before a baseball game between two parish schools; and when a student at a parish high school recited a prayer to Jesus just has his teacher asked him to at an end-of-school banquet. The ACLU continues to intervene and the citizens of the district continue to defy the law insisting, "Prayer should be kept in school" and "The Bible should not be kept out."

TORONTO—Earlier this month Canada became only the fourth country worldwide to legalize same-sex marriage. The bill pass in Canada's parliament gives homosexual couples across the country the same rights as those in traditional unions between a man and a woman, something which had already been legal in 10 of 13 provinces and territories. In spite of opposition by the Catholic Church, Canada's Catholic Prime Minister Paul Martin said that in spite of anyone's personal beliefs, all Canadians should be granted the same rights in marriage. Canada joins The Netherlands, Belgium and Spain in legalizing homosexual unions.

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"Every man, who reasons, soon becomes an unbeliever."

--Paul Henri Thiry, Baron D'Holbach

THE WRATH OF LEVITICUS

(The following is excerpted from *The Hightower Lowdown*, July 2005 issue, edited by Jim Hightower and Phillip Frazer. NOSHA thanks member **Jules DeBarros** for sharing with us.)

Whoa! The religious extremists are on a white-hot tear, aren't they? From George W's election to Terry Schiavo and to federal judge nominees, such zealots as James Dobson and Pat Robertson are flexing their political muscle, seeking to impose their Republican "Christianity" on all public policy.

They're particularly intent at the moment on "saving marriage." Curiously, this holy crusade includes Rush Limbaugh and Newt Gingrich, two serial divorcees and enthusiastic practitioners of extramarital sex. But it's not divorce that worries these marriage saviors—they're opposing marriage itself...when that union is between gay people. We're doing the will of God, they thunder, pointing to the Holy Word in Leviticus 18:22, which declares homosexuality an "abomination." We are not moral relativists, they cry, but Biblical literalists.

Wait though—the wrath of Leviticus is deep and wide. Chapter 11, verse 10 tells us that eating shellfish is also an abomination. And in 11:6-8, so is touching anything made of pigskin—someone call the NFL! Leviticus 19 says that planting two different crops in the same field is forbidden by God, yet George W's Department of Agriculture openly promotes this abomination, calling it "companion-planting." Let's hope USDA at least insists that those seeds be heterosexual.

Speaking of Bush, he's known to have a hot temper and to burst out occasionally with curse words. Does he know that Leviticus 24:10-16 commands that if a person blasphemes God with curse words, the whole town must come together and stone that person? Wouldn't that put the Secret Service in a Biblical bind?

Extremists who insist that every word of the Bible must be accepted literally can't pick and choose which scriptures must be obeyed. I suspect they spend more time thumping the Bible than reading it...much less understanding it.

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THE END OF ENLIGHTENMENT?

(The following letter from Andrew D. Miall of Toronto, Canada appeared in the *AAPG Explorer*, the newsletter of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. Miall is Canada's 2004 recipient of the Grover E. Murray Distinguished Educator Award. NOSHA thanks member **Keith Welsh** for sharing it with us.)

News reports indicated that evolution is not being discussed by biology teachers, even in states where it is a formal part of the curriculum. Teachers and school principals are simply trying to avoid getting into trouble with conservative parents.

Here is an issue for the American petroleum community to take as their own. Evolution is a fact.

You all know it.

The discovery of evolution is one of the triumphs of the Enlightenment, along with the beginnings of physics and chemistry, Adam Smith's elucidation of free market economies,

and concepts about human rights. It was the end of religious dogmatism that let all this happen, and the mainstream Christian denominations long ago accommodated themselves to all of these ideas. Do you folks have to go through the Scop9es trial all over again?

Why should petroleum geologists care? It should be a question of American pride and nationalism. Americans have won more Nobel Prizes in science than the citizens of any other country. Why? Because of the spirit of imagination and of free inquiry for which Americans are famous. The world needs more of this.

But it will get rapidly less, if the conservative trends sweeping the United States increase their grip on teaching and research in your country. This matters, because it is free inquiry, especially the freedom to roam across the fascinating spaces of inventive science, that have built the prosperous communities of the developed world.

America will contribute less to this, and benefit less from it, as the years go by, if these trends continue. The great prizes, the research monies, and the most inventive corporations, the most talented academics will gradually move out—to Canada, to Europe, to anywhere where they are free from the stifling oversight of the religious evangelist.

Why is it that some of the most conservative states also are the most petroleum rich? Texas and Oklahoma come to mind. How is it that these states, which have benefited the most from the full expression of the earth-science enterprise, are the most backward when it comes to integrating the knowledge that arises from the earth sciences into their daily lives?

I await some answers with interest.

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SOMETHING TO LOOK FOR ON TELEVISION

**APE TO MAN
The Revolution in Evolution**

August 7th 8:00 pm Central

The History Channel

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“It vexes me when they would constrain science by the authority of the Scriptures, and yet do not consider themselves bound to answer reason and experiment.”

--Galileo Galilei

“If the liberties of the American people are ever destroyed, they will fail by the hands of the clergy.”

--Marquis De Lafayette

“I believe in God, only I spell it Nature.”

--Frank Lloyd Wright

WRITE YOUR CONGRESSMAN

NOSHA president Harry Greenberger shares the following letter he recently received from U. S. Senator David Vitter:

Dear Mr. Greenberger,

Thank you for contacting me to express your opposition to faith-based initiatives. I appreciate hearing from you on this important issue.

As you may know, President Bush issued an executive order directing several Cabinet departments to adopt charitable choice rules in their social service programs. These rules seek to promote the use of religious groups as providers of social services while protecting the religious freedom of beneficiaries. In turn, Congress has provided funding to be given to faith and community-based groups to facilitate and expand their work of caring for the poor and needy in society.

I certainly understand your concern about the possibility of government interference in religious institutions. I strongly believe, however, that this sort of charitable work is something that religious charities are much better suited to carrying out than government bureaucracies. There are innumerable examples of religious charities succeeding admirably where non-religious ones have failed. One of the key aspects of faith-based initiatives is that despite receiving money from the federal government, these charities are able to retain their religious character and are able to continue to exercise control over the development and implementation of their religious beliefs and practices – aspects of the charities that make them especially effective.

While we may not see eye to eye on this issue, I appreciate hearing from you. Please feel free to contact me in the future about other issues important to you

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GIVING THROUGH YOUR WILL OR LIVING TRUST

If you would like to remember NOSHA in your will or living trust, use our legal name: New Orleans Secular Humanist Association, Inc.

Sample Wording:

“I hereby give, devise, and bequeath \$_____ to New Orleans Secular Humanist Association, Inc., now or formerly at 5331 Bancroft Drive, New Orleans, LA, for its general purposes.”

The IRS recognizes NOSHA as a tax-exempt, 504(c)3 not-for-profit organization. Our federal tax ID number is 72-1497570.

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**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS
CONTROVERSY CONTINUES**

On Monday, June 27 the Supreme Court struck down Ten Commandments displays ruling that two such exhibits in Kentucky cross the line of separation between church and state. However, they ruled that some displays of the decalogue would be permissible if they are portrayed in a neutral manner such as to honor the nation’s legal history.

The Court’s ruling initiated a spirited debate within NOSHA’s on-line discussion group. Some excerpts follow:

SV: When I looked up “Ten Commandments” some time ago in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1968-1978), Vol. 7, pp. 153-154, I was struck by the fact that the Index referred me not to that phrase but to “Decalogue” for history, Britannica’s strong point. It was described as a “list of religious obligations divinely revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai and engraved on two stone tables.” Immediately this defines the “Ten” as a religious document and therefore we would then need to rule out allowing a public display as surely as though we were trying to display a catechism.

WS: I’ve long thought that there is one legal way to show the 10 Religious Expressions in public places. It’s been known since the 19th century that the popular version of the 10Cs is merely one version of a set of ideas found in earlier pagan literature, particularly Egyptian literature (there’s also a Mesopotamian version). A legitimate historical display would include copies of the various versions, going back to 3rd-millennium BCE Egypt, with the estimated dates, plus the 3 different versions found in the Bible (The only one that the Bible says is the 10Cs is *not* the version people display in public.) Thus one could see the evolution of certain moral and religious ideas.

Of course, anyone reading it would be led to the suspicion that the 10Cs were not handed down on Mt. Sinai by a voodoo spirit to Moses but copied and adjusted by some Canaanite scribe, possibly in an Egyptian branch library in the pharaoh’s provincial HQ at Jerusalem. That’s not the effect the bibliolators want to achieve.

MM: J[ustice] Breyer said the monument on the Texas statehouse grounds was OK ‘cuz it had been there for 40 years (since the promotion by CB DeMille). I wonder if he would have told Woody Guthrie his Huntington’s was no problem since he had it from birth. Anybody for posting the Code of Hammurabi?

JD: The Code of Hammurabi would be excellent since it has a section on the duties of slaves to their masters, and, what is more important, of MASTERS TO THEIR SLAVES! In today’s world, this would apply to sweat shops and other forms of corporate exploitation of employees.

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Although NOSHA issued a press release immediately after the Supreme Court ruling on the Commandments, NOSHA president **Harry Greenberger** was quoted in only one area publication. His comments follow:

From *The Baton Rouge Advocate*: “Harry Greenberger, president of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association, said he couldn’t see justifying a Ten Commandments display with arguments of historical relevance.

The commandments begin with a reference to ‘I am the Lord thy God.’

“If that isn’t religious, then what is?” Greenberger asked.”

NOSHA member and executive director of the Louisiana ACLU, **Joe Cook**, also commented on the Advocate’s website as follows:

“We applaud the ruling in the Kentucky case and are gratified that the Supreme Court properly recognized that the Ten Commandments are inherently a religious text. That ruling is consistent with what the court has ruled before. It affirms our Constitution’s ban on government entanglement with the advancement of religion. It keeps religion free and allows the government to represent all of us. That’s what the role of the state is in a free and democratic society. Just look at those countries where it is entangled, and you see religious strife. For example, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia, Northern Ireland and Afghanistan, Pakistan, the list goes on.

“We live in one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world, and we’re some of the most devout servers of faith. People from all these 1,500 different religious groups get along for the most part, and that tranquility is endangered when this happens. That’s a danger we face today when you have groups that want to use government to promote, endorse and advance their religious beliefs. There are those who want to put judges on the court who agree with that. That’s dangerous to our democracy and to our freedom.”

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WAR ON SCIENCE

The following is adapted from the Amazon.com website:

Science has never been more crucial to deciding the political issues facing the country. Yet scientists have less influence with the federal government than at any time since the Eisenhower administration. In the White House and Congress today, findings are reported in a politicized manner spun or distorted to fit the speaker’s agenda; or, when they’re too inconvenient, ignored entirely.

This is not unique to the Bush administration, but it is largely a Republican phenomenon, born of conservative dislike of environmental, health, and safety regulation, and at the extremes, of evolution and legalized abortion. In *The Republican War on Science*, **Chris Mooney** ties together the disparate sides of the attack on science into a compelling and frightening account of our government’s increasing unwillingness to distinguish between legitimate research and ideologically driven pseudoscience.

The Republican War on Science by Chris Mooney will be available from Basic Books on September 9, 2005. List price is \$25.05, but it is still available from Amazon.com for \$16.47.

Note: Chris Mooney is the son of NOSHA board member **Sally Mooney**.

WHAT NOSHA HAS BEEN UP TO

Since the Spring newsletter, NOSHA members have participated in a number of interesting activities, some indoors, some outdoors, some informative, some just plain fun.

On May 7, 14 NOSHA members and guests attended the Caravan Stage Company performance of “Vanishing Currents.” After dinner at a seafood restaurant in the little village of Lafitte, everyone watched the performance from dockside as the actors performed on the tall ship *Amara Zee*. It was a truly unique outing.

On May 26, **Harry Greenberger** and **Lanny Goldfinch** were guests on the radio talk show, “Louisiana Live” on radio station WVOG, where they discussed a number of humanist topics with the host. Good job, guys!

Twice in the last two months, NOSHA members have participated in interviews for our NOA-TV program, “The Humanist Perspective.” We taped two programs with **Denise LeBoeuf** of the Capital Post-Conviction Project of Louisiana where we discussed many aspects of the under- and misrepresented persons in Louisiana courts.

On another taping we interviewed our own **Percy Prestenbach** about his experiences as an avowed atheist for most of his adult life. We then taped a program with NOSHA member **Charlotte Klasson** who is currently the acting president of the local New Orleans chapter of NOW.

Thanks to **Harry Greenberger**, **Dave Schultz**, and **Connie Gordon** for their participation in these programs.

Regular NOSHA meetings have also been interesting and a continued arena of great discussion and camaraderie.

Our visit from Tony Hileman of the American Humanist Association is discussed on the page one. He discussed the meaning of humanism and what we can all do to promote humanism.

On June 5, Anthony Marr, a Canadian who is traveling around the country promoting his book *Omniscience Cosmology*, visited NOSHA. He summarized his book, which draws together many branches of science and recent discoveries into a theory that has been well received by many.

Our June 19 meeting was held outdoors at the Audubon Louisiana Nature Center where we had a potluck picnic to celebrate the summer solstice. Following the great food, everyone attended planetarium show, which featured constellations visible in the summer sky.

NOSHA member **Bob Sylvia** spoke to the July 17 meeting. Bob’s talk was “Waiting for God: Humanist Humor in the Far Future.” He ran a video of one episode of the British science-fiction comedy series “Red Dwarf” to illustrate his point. Thanks, Bob, that was fun.

In addition to the movie *The God Who Wasn’t There*, which was well-attended by many NOSHA members, some other members have been making Sunday morning talks at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in New Orleans. In June and July talks were given by **Veronica Collins**, **Harry Greenberger**, **Darlene Reaves**, and **Charles Foster**, and the **Reverend Jim VanderWeele** is scheduled for August 7.

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“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.” --Helen Keller

ALTRUISTIC ATHEISTS AND HUMANIST HUMANITARIANS

The Institute for Humanist Studies is working with the BBC on an educational program provisionally titled “Secular Beliefs.” The show aims, in the words of the BBC, to “introduce pupils to a range of non-religious people and their beliefs, from ancient Greece to the present day. It will explore the meaning of terms such as ‘atheist’ and ‘humanist’ and will examine the ethics, values and sense of human meaning and purpose associated with them.”

The BBC would like to include some segments on humanists whose charitable work reflects their humanist ethics. For example, a visionary lawyer who is committed to working with people on death row on a pro-bono basis, or a doctor who volunteers her time to a marginalized group. The BBC would prefer unsung heroes to celebrity atheists. The person would have to be willing to be interviewed, and possibly filmed in action. The program will be shot in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Do you put your humanist principles into practice by helping others in your community? Or do you know a non-religious person with an inspiring life story who has helped make the world a better place? If so, the BBC wants to hear from you.

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for this program, please e-mail Info@HumanistStudies.org with the subject line “BBC.” The e-mail should include a brief biography of the humanist humanitarian, explaining what they do and why. It should give the subject’s contact details, including phone and e-mail, and also their location and, ideally, an address.

The Institute for Humanist Studies is a nonprofit advocacy organization that serves as a resource for and about humanism.
www.HumanistsStudies.org.

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

- August 7 Regular Meeting – Videos of the Tony Hileman talk will be shown
- August 21 To be announced
- September 18 To be announced
- October 2 To be announced
- October 16 To be announced
- November 6 To be announced
- November 20 To be announced
- December 4 To be announced
- December 18 Winter Solstice Celebration
Details to be announced

(Planning is currently underway for a NOSHA “Dinner” for late August or early September – details to come)

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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:

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone and/or e-mail: _____

2005 Annual dues are \$15.00. A renewing member can bring in a new member, two for one -- \$15 for two when one is new. Mail to Connie Gordon, 2509 Giuffrias Ave., Apt. 603, Metairie, LA 70001.

Please send \$4.00 if you are a non-member and would like to receive the newsletter by regular mail.

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
5331 Bancroft Dr.
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