

NOSHA NEWS

Newsletter of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association Summer 2008

New Orleans Secular Humanist Association

520 St. Louis St., Apt. 3
New Orleans, LA 70130

(a 501c3 corporation)

<http://nosha.secularhumanism.net>

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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

New Orleans Public Library

219 Loyola Avenue

N.O. COX CABLE TV

CH 76 "Humanist Perspective"

Sat. midnight; Sun. noon

CH 78 "Atheist Viewpoint"

Tues. 10:30 am; 10:30 pm

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY

At the end of June, several NOSHA members attended the Gay Pride Weekend at Armstrong Park in New Orleans, not only to show our support for gay rights, but also to introduce ourselves to them. Many people visited NOSHA's display table, and 25 people added their names to NOSHA's mailing list. Pictured at left are Doug Stewart and Lanny Goldfinch. Below are Camie Keife and Jeffery Richard, and at bottom



right is Jim Dugan. Charlotte Klasson, who coordinated NOSHA's efforts is not pictured.



On Sunday, September 28, NOSHA members will participate in the NO/AIDS Task Force annual walk to raise funds for AIDS prevention. Camie Kiefe and Harry Greenberger are the team organizers. Please contact Harry Greenberger at 504-282-5459 or hpgreenx@yahoo.com to make your pledge and to reserve a NOSHA t-shirt to wear at the walk.



Another upcoming community project is participation in the "Rebuilding Together New Orleans" on the October 4 and 11. We will be helping to scrape and repaint a house in the Broadmoor neighborhood of New Orleans. If you would like to participate, please contact our team captain, Doug Stewart, at dougusapome@yahoo.com and let him know..

A special thank you to Charlotte Klasson, Camie Kiefe, Doug Stewart, and Harry Greenberger for organizing these volunteer efforts.

MEMBERS' PUBLISHED LETTERS

The following letter, written by **J. Michael Malec**, appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on June 24, 2008:

Signing the anti-evolution bill, SB733, will play well with the North Louisiana guns and God crowd that put Gov. Bobby Jindal into office.

But when he goes farther north, say to Wall Street, to look for economic development for our state, this anti-science bill will ensure that the best he can hope for is a Tyson chicken plant or more Wal-Mart's.

The following letter, written by **Barbara Forrest**, appeared in the *Monroe News Star* on June 30, 2008:

Wiley Hilburn's excellent column, "The prophet leaves his people behind," concerning the governor's refusal to veto the legislative pay increase, raises a similar question about another bill.

The governor refused to veto the Louisiana Family Forum's attack on the education of Louisiana children in the form of Senate Bill 733, the deceptively titled "Louisiana Science Education Act."

It's a shame that people in Louisiana could not get as upset about the undermining of the education of their children as they have about a legislative pay raise. When people get as mad at the governor for refusing to stand up for good science education as they are about a legislative pay raise, then we will have reason to be hopeful about the state's future.

The following letter, written by **Robert Carver**, appeared in the *Monroe News Star* on July 7, 2008:

Harold Henderson's commentary, "Life has purpose: Teach that," spuriously misrepresented evolution facts. His is a hoary argument that somehow teaching our children fact-based science will turn them into juvenile delinquents.

Faith-based dogma teaches children this life is worthless and must be suffered through before gaining your reward after you die. This viewpoint shows children things of the world are wicked, and if they don't follow whatever religious belief the authority figure is pushing, they threaten the children with eternal damnation.

Understanding evolution's implications made me appreciate how fragile life is and that I have this one opportunity to make a difference by working for a better world for myself and all children.

Religion preaches a post-death reward while reason and scientific inquiry do their best to make this life worth living by caring about humanity while striving for a better future. As a historian, I have read "Mein Kampf" and other documents about the Third Reich, and Hitler made it

clear he was doing "God's work" by eliminating Jews. Just like it was deeply faithful Muslims who flew planes into the World Trade Center and Pentagon on 9/11. Teaching any religious belief system is a gross violation of our Constitution, which is why it has been left to the church and the family to indoctrinate their children about the supernatural.

Teaching children fairy tales does nothing but inhibit ethical growth and critical thinking skills. We need to move Louisiana into the 21st century by evolving past this 14th century mindset Henderson presented.

The following letter, written by **Harry Greenberger**, appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on July 23, 2008:

Re: "Boucher plan ignores schools' progress," Other Opinions, July 18.

Kudos to Jarvis DeBerry, whose column exposes ignorance in the misguided legislative- and governor-approved transfer of children from public to private schools.

This year's National Assessment of Educational Progress show private school students across the nation do not perform better than public school students, and DeBerry points out that schools with religious names can also be failures.

Of the Orleans Parish schools receiving almost all of the vouchers, only one is non-religious; 14 are Catholic. The 17 listed for Jefferson Parish are all religious.

All of these schools will have classes in their religion, but neither DeBerry, nor your editorial on the same topic questions the constitutionality of state taxpayers' money allocated for religious training. Who's afraid of the big, bad Supreme Court?

The following letter, written by **Robin White**, appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on August 1, 2008:

Let us not forget that English is not, strictly speaking, this country's first or only language. Most native South Louisianans recall a family member who spoke French, Creole, even Spanish.

One of the reasons that Louisiana French, Cajun, Creole and Spanish are dying out is that speakers tended to use their languages at home and between family members, i.e.: rarely in public.

Having been a university French instructor, I can vouch for the fact that many of my best students have been Vietnamese-Americans. I believe, that in part, young Vietnamese-Americans are excellent language students because they take pride in bilingualism.

Imagine how South Louisiana would benefit from global economic, cultural and social networks with more truly bilingual people.

In addition to which, here's to the Terrebonne Parish School Board members who recall the humiliation of not being able to learn and speak their native tongue, French, in class and in public.

The following letter, written by **Tim Ruppert**, appeared in the *Monroe News-Star* on August 12, 2008:

The Aug 10 letter "Court strays from Founders" by Scott O'Neal makes unfounded and outrageous claims. The most pungent of those wild assertions is that "the mention of Christ is official banned in any governmental facility or function, which is the exact opposite of what the Founding Fathers wanted."

If the Founding Fathers had intended the United States to be "the greatest bastion of Christianity," why then is there absolutely no mention of this in the Constitution? Why is there no reference to the biblical gods? No mention of Jesus, Mary, Moses or the Ten Commandments? Did they forget?

What about the Great Seal of the United States? It's been used by every president since Washington and appears on the back of the dollar bill. It includes an eagle, the motto "E Pluribus Unum," a pyramid with an eye, and a reference to the "New Secular Order." Why is there no cross?

If seeking someone who continues to "wreak havoc on the nation," consider dominionists who pasted "In God We Trust" on our money in the 1950s. They took an entirely different path from the Founding Fathers.

Religious belief is a personal matter that neither requires nor should receive the endorsement or encouragement of civil government. The founders understood this well enough and acted bravely to establish secular government.

It is truly disappointing that people in this day either misunderstand or deliberately work to undermine that noble principle, which set America apart from the rest of the world.

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WHY ISN'T THE DMV "GODLESS"?

Doug Stewart

I moved to Louisiana from California earlier this year and duly registered my car in my new home state. There's a Department of Motor Vehicles website where Louisianans can request a personalized license plate at www.expresslane.org. The requested wording of the customized plate can be typed in and it immediately lets you know if that plate is available or if it is considered "inappropriate".

I typed in the following personalized license plates and found that they had been taken and were therefore presently driving the roads of Louisiana: **GOD4ME, ME4GOD, 4GOD, ALL4GOD, GOD4ALL, GO2GOD, 1WTHGOD, LOVEGOD, GOD4U, GOD, 4JESUS, JESUS4U, JESUS, CHRIST**, and many more I'm sure. I just ran out of ideas. I've been an atheist all my life and coming from the very un-religious England to the very religious Louisiana, I thought I'd have some fun. I typed in, **GODLESS**, saw that it was available, and filed the application.

I soon received the following short e-mail: "Your plate request cannot be approved."

This made the secular hairs on the back of my neck stand up. I can hear you cry, "Is this not blatant bias on the side of religion by the government-run Department of Motor Vehicles of Louisiana, and therefore a violation of the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment and of the Louisiana Constitution?" Bearing in mind the recent enactment of the Louisiana Science Education Act which is effectively a back-door attempt to include creationism in the science curricula, I'm sure the DMV's answer would be, "Yes... so what's your point?"

I wrote back to the DMV explaining the inequality of the situation. I also mentioned that I was a member of NOSHA. To my surprise, and I must admit, a little disappointment that the fight was over so soon, I received the following email: Your request for the prestige plate, "GODLESS", has been reconsidered and will be approved.

So, I've paid my SIXTY-FIVE BUCKS, and I'm waiting the required SIXTEEN WEEKS (I guess that's par for the course for a government organization) to get my **GODLESS** plate. Three cheers for NOSHA and also for, if not a separation of church and state, at least equal treatment for theist and non-theist alike. One would have hoped that all government organizations would be secular, but from the license plates stated above, that ship has long sailed.

But it doesn't end there. If wording that is obviously vulgar is requested, four letter words, racial slurs, etc., the message immediately comes back saying the plate is "inappropriate," which, of course, I wholeheartedly agree with. However, I initially typed into the website, **NO GOD**, which instantly received the same "inappropriate" response. I am presently in 'hand-to-hand combat' with the DMV trying to get the "inappropriate" label for **NO GOD** lifted from the website so other non-theistic Louisiana residents may request it. But as you can imagine, battling with the bureaucracy and apathy of the DMV is like a fight to the death with feather dusters.

So, I'd like to throw down the gauntlet to my fellow freethinkers and ask them to apply for similar theistically unflattering license plates. You don't have to buy them; just push the edges of the DMV's religious tolerance envelope.

Some relatively tame and cryptic ideas include **OVERGOD**, **4GETGOD**, (forget god), **ENUFGOD**, (enough god), **WHY GOD, Y JESUS, YY4 GOD**, (too wise for god), **26E4GOD**, (too sexy for god), **2QT4GOD**, (too cute for god), or **GOD LOL**, (god, laugh out load). Some more radical plates could read, **I H8GOD**, **GODH8R**, **H8JESUS**, **H8FAITH**, **GODSBAD**, **GOD SUX**, **MAD GOD**, **CRZYGOD**, **CYCOGOD**, and **DAMNGOD**. Some suggestions that would probably be rejected on the grounds of vulgarity are **FAWQGD**, **FCK GOD**, **4Q GOD**, **FU GOD**, **GOD WTF**, (god, what the f***), **GOD BFD**, (god, big f***** deal), **DOGKCUF**, (read it backwards), but, what the hell?... I mean heck.

Or, if you can perform miracles, like getting the DMV to do the right thing, how about, **I AM GOD?**

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H. L. Mencken, the American journalist who covered the Scopes trial for the *Baltimore Sun* once said: "Even a superstitious man has certain inalienable rights. He has a right to harbor and indulge his imbecilities as long as he pleases, provided only he does not try to inflict them upon other men by force. He has a right to argue for them as eloquently as he can, in season and out of season. He has a right to teach them to his children. But certainly he has no right to be protected against the free criticism of those who do not hold them. He has no right to demand that they be treated as sacred. He has no right to preach them without challenge."

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OF INTEREST TO HUMANISTS . . .

DENVER—Just prior to the Democratic convention, the political arm of the conservative group Focus on the Family pulled a video from its website that had asked people to pray for "rain of biblical proportions" to interfere with Sen. Barack Obama's acceptance speech scheduled for the outdoor Invesco Field on Aug. 28. The video was pulled after complaints from Focus members. A Focus representative said he had asked Christians to pray for rain that would "create flash flood warnings" and "swamp the intersections," and he hoped the rain would start "two minutes before the acceptance speech begins."

SAN FRANCISCO—A federal judge has ruled that the University of California can deny course credit to applicants from Christian high schools whose textbooks declare the Bible infallible and reject evolution. Judge

James Otero's ruling focused on specific courses and texts following an earlier decision that found no anti-religious bias in the university system's review of high school classes. A group of Christian schools has appealed Otero's rulings claiming, "It appears the UC is attempting to secularize private religious schools." But the UC's vice president for legal affairs said that the ruling "confirms that UC may apply the same admissions standards to all students and to all high schools without regard to their religious affiliations."

COLORADO SPRINGS—Biblical scholars here have uncovered startling "evidence" that Senator John McCain may be the Antichrist. One of the things that started the True Bible Society to start the investigation was McCain's declared intention to maintain U.S. forces in Iraq for a hundred years, which they interpret to mean that "McCain wants to control Babylon for at least a century." According to scholars of the Book of Revelation, the Antichrist will try to rebuild the ancient city of Babylon in order to use it as a springboard for an international effort at world domination and ultimately spark a showdown with Christian and Jewish-led forces in the battle of Armageddon.

PHOENIX—A federal judge has blocked the state of Arizona from enforcing a new law that makes it a crime to sell anti-war T-shirts that list the names of troops killed in Iraq. In 2007 the ACLU of Arizona filed a lawsuit challenging that state's law that prohibited the use of the name of any soldier, alive or deceased, on any item for sale without permission of the soldier or a legal representative. The law was specifically intended to prevent the sale of T-shirts designed by Dan Frazier like the one that lists the names of deceased soldiers and the phrase "Bush Lied . . . They Died." Judge Neil V. Wake ruled that the T-shirts' sentiments are "themselves core political speech fully protected by the First Amendment."

VATICAN CITY—The Vatican recently reiterated their stance that the theory of evolution was compatible with the Bible, but they have no plans to issue a posthumous apology to Charles Darwin for the harsh words they had for him 150 years ago. The Catholic Church teaches something called "theistic evolution," a stand that accepts evolution as a scientific theory and sees no reason why God could not have used this process in forming the human species. They have apologized to Gallileo and others for his house arrest after asserting the sun was the center of the universe. You'd think they could apologize to Darwin now that they accept his theory – maybe it's because Darwin wasn't Catholic. But February 12, 2009 is his 200th birthday. It'd be nice.

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"Religion is excellent stuff for keeping common people quiet."
--Napoleon Bonaparte

REFLECTIONS ON THE PEW SURVEY OF RELIGION

Harry Greenberger

Talk to Community UU Church, July 27, 2008

Thanks for inviting me to talk to you today. The presidency of New Orleans Secular Humanist Association is as an organization facilitator—not a spiritual leader. So, since I won't be talking about "the meaning of life," I'd like to tell a very old story on that subject, which you've probably heard, but which gives me some wry satisfaction in telling.

This story is intended to be drawn out as long as possible, but here's my condensed version. A man seeking the "meaning of life" decided to dedicate his time and fortune to the quest. He began locally and at each stage was told that he had to go higher for such knowledge. After meeting with every level in the Catholic hierarchy, he ended in Rome with an audience with the pope. "His Holiness" advised that even he did not have the answer to his question, and recommended a Buddhist monk, an eremite living in a hut high in the Himalayan Mountains, who had spent his life pondering just that question. On to Tibet where a Sherpa then led him to the mountaintop, where he confronted the monk with his question. The bearded old man solemnly said, "Life is a Fountain." Totally nonplused, the seeker said: "Life is a fountain! After all your years of contemplation, that is all you say?" And the wizened old philosopher replied, "Well isn't it?"

That is why I won't be talking about life's meaning or other transcendental concepts.

So, within my limitations, let's talk about what we might be "looking for," which brings me to my topic: the 2008 Pew "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey," based on over 35,000 interviews, and what it portends for Unitarians and secularists. Throughout the talk, when I say "we," "us," and "our," generally I mean Unitarians and secularists.

While accepting the Pew findings generally, I question some level of authenticity. For example, they report that 21% of atheists believe in God, and their makeup of the category "unaffiliated" is weird.

The national news media found the most interesting of the results to be the movement of Americans between religions. Pew reports that 28% have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion—or no religion at all. If change of affiliation from one type of Protestantism to another is included, roughly 44% of adults have switched. The survey found that the number of people who say they are unaffiliated with any particular faith today at 16.1% (up from 8% in the 1980s) is more than double the number who say they were not affiliated with any particular religion as children. Of those

between 18 and 29 years of age, 25% say they have no current religious affiliation.

Where do you stand in the tabulations? "Unitarians and other liberal faiths" were 0.7% of the total, with Unitarians at 0.3%, while we, the unaffiliated, were 16.1%.

In England, a survey of 2000 people by the Orthodox Jewish organization "Aisha," found that more than half of Britons think Christianity is likely to have disappeared from the country within a century. Also, according to *Religious Trends*, an analysis of religious practice in Britain, the huge drop off in attendance means that the Church of England, Catholicism and other denominations will become financially unviable.

How meaningful are the Pew survey answers? If a respondent says he is affiliated with the Catholic or the Baptist or other denomination, does that mean he attends services—accepts their tenets—believes in god? Consider "cafeteria Catholics" and all others who shun pejorative labels like "nonbeliever." To quote Christopher Hitchens, "I am absolutely sure that just as many real doubters and infidels are to be found concealed within the apparent majority that Pew's routine census-takers are not equipped even to ask about, let alone discover." And, even for those who might attend church services with some regularity (weekly for 39% of the total population), how much of that is for social, familial or geographic reasons, which could explain the ease with which they are moving between formal religions.

Not so widely covered by the media were some other findings, which I find of interest.

People who "have never been married or who are living with a partner" are much more likely than their married counterparts to be unaffiliated with any particular religion. Twenty-six percent of the "Unitarian and other liberal faiths" group fall into this classification; 28% of the "unaffiliated," which included 37% of the atheists and 36% of the agnostics. By contrast only 3% of the overall married people are atheist or agnostic.

Who are these unmarried people? And why have we (Unitarians and secularists) such a large percentage among our groups? I see two possible clues. Twenty-five percent of young adults (ages 18-29), who are not marrying young these days say that they are not affiliated with any particular religion and my guess is that they would also be more inclined toward Unitarianism. But, look around your and our meetings, and these young people are not visible here in New Orleans.

Another apparent explanation of "never married and living with a partner" would be the number of homosexuals doubtlessly included in the group. The Pew survey responses as to whether homosexuality "should be accepted" were 50% of the national total, with the following statistics: Evangelical churches 26%; Catholics, 58% (remember the pedophiles?); Jews, 79%; Buddhists,

82%; other faiths, 84% and unaffiliated, 71%. Respondents' answers to "homosexuality should be discouraged" were: National total, 40%; evangelical churches, 64%; Catholics, 30%; Jews, 15%; Buddhists, 12%; other faiths, 8% and unaffiliated, 20%. So it appears that we and the Jews and Buddhists are the most welcoming of the homosexuals. It is not likely that many who are changing their denominational choice would become Jews or Buddhists. Incidentally, as you would know, in 1996 the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations passed a resolution in support of same-sex marriage.

The views expressed on the subject of abortion closely followed the results on the question of homosexuality. As to "legal in all cases," the national total was 18%, with the Jews, Buddhists, other faiths and unaffiliated ranging from 29 to 40%. For "illegal in most cases," the national total was 27%, with the same dissenting groups ranging from 9 to 16%.

So WE should attract both the homosexuals and the women's rights groups.

Who has the education? Those with less than high school education were 83% Christian, 2% "other" and 15% unaffiliated, while college graduates were comprised of 76% Christian, 6% other and 16% unaffiliated. Eleven percent of the total population had postgraduate education, with Christians at 68% of that group and "other," which had 1.2% of the total population, had 13% of the "postgraduates" and "unaffiliated," with 16.1% of the total, had 19%. Relative to our percentage of the total population, we are the "smarties," and should appeal to other best-educated Americans.

Was it our "smarts" that resulted in 25% of the atheists and agnostics earning over \$100,000 a year, while the total population was at 18%? But are we receiving proportionately larger contributions?

The most racially segregated assemblies in the country are the Sunday morning churches. Black people still do not feel welcome in many white Christian churches, but would be enthusiastically received by "us." So where are they?

An article on the Pew survey in the June/July issue of *Free Inquiry* magazine includes: "if the old-time religions no longer satisfy, then we need to build secular centers that DO—places where intelligent men and women can meet like-minded people and share ideas and values . . ." It concludes with "these new humanists . . . may have a deep appreciation for nature and a sense of awe about the magnificence of the universe . . . their focus is on the good life here and now for themselves and their fellow humans. . ." (sounds like us, doesn't it?). Continuing the quote, "If today's polls are correct, there is an eager audience for what we have to offer." I will add that their "we" includes you, Unitarians.

If all of the above is what the Pew survey reveals, then why haven't our ranks swollen?

I think one explanation is our PR—our timid promotion of our superior philosophy. We have no sizzle in our salesmanship.

Want to know who is getting a plethora of those religion-shifting people? Look at Joel Osteen. He took Lakewood Church's positive message of hope to over 100 million households in the U.S. His church has become the largest, fastest growing and most diverse congregation in America, with over 38,000 attending weekly services. In 2005, they moved into a 16,000-seat facility, a former sports arena, transformed into a church at a cost of \$100 million in addition to the original purchase price. There are no crosses or stained glass windows.

While Osteen's list of what "we believe" includes all of the conservative Christian tenets, the last one of the list reads: "WE BELIEVE...as children of God, we are overcomers and more than conquerors and God intends for each of us to experience the abundant life He has in store for us." That's it! His sermons are not about sin, heaven and hell—only reassurance that everyone can achieve an abundance of what they wish for, their three major concerns being relationships, health and finances.

I see the Pew survey, which provides clues as to the future direction of religious affiliations, as defining an opportunity for our growth. But will our dedication to integrity and reason keep us from emulating Osteen by suggesting that our lifestance will guarantee abundance? I think it will. But if we believe that ours is superior to dogmatic religions and those former adherents are looking for change, should we learn to sell ourselves?

Alternatively, since other studies have shown that Americans want their President to be traditionally religious, shall we then settle for, as Senator Henry Clay, with multiple unsuccessful candidacies for President, later voiced, "I'd rather be right than to be President"?

POSTSCRIPT: Unlike the new Republican VP candidate, Sarah Palin, Alaskans in general are far less religious. According to the Pew Forum, Alaskans are less likely to believe in God, pray or attend religious services than the national average. Only 22% of the state's respondents attend religious services at least once a week, and nearly half, 47% say they "seldom" or "never" attend.

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NOSHA'S TV SHOW NOW ON YOUTUBE

"The New Orleans Humanist Perspective," taped at N.O. Access TV studios and aired on New Orleans Cox Cable Channel 76, can now be seen by everyone as programs get transferred to the YouTube format. NOSHA member, Farrar Hudkins, works from DVDs of the programs to post them to a NOSHA site, separating the 30-minute shows into 10-minute segments, which is the

size limit allowed on YouTube. Viewers will select a program and proceed from “part 1” to parts 2 and 3. To see these programs, long your onto: <http://www.youtube.com/neworleanshumanists>.

Harry Greenberger who hosts the TV program had tapes of several years’ worth of shows in his home prior to Katrina, all of which were lost to the flood. The masters held by NOA-TV were considered by them to be unusable due to the lengthy exposure to humidity. Since Katrina and through July 2008 there have been 42 post-Katrina programs, many of which will be transferred to the YouTube format.

We hope to publicize the accessibility of “New Orleans Humanist Perspective” so others not on the NOSHA mailing list can get to know more about us. You can help by spreading the word to your e-mail friends and others whom you think are open-minded about secularism.

Pictured below are Dave Schultz, Lanny Goldfinch, and Harry Greenberger on the set of the “New Orleans Humanist Perspective.”



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NOSHA’S BOLD OFFER

Atheist Alliance International is one of the organizations with which NOSHA has been affiliated since our first year. In response to a recent inquiry from them as to whether NOSHA would be interested in co-hosting the AAI convention in 2009, our President, Harry Greenberger, advised that such commitment would require Board of Directors’ action. Their Vice President (and presumed 2009 President) wrote back: “I would love for you to be able to come back and say that NOSHA is interested in hosting the 2009 convention. I have very fond memories of New Orleans . . .”

Following our Board meeting on September 20, we did just that and now await a decision of their Board of Directors as to the 2009 site. Should we be named their convention site, be prepared to volunteer for some of the many support tasks we will be asked to perform.

AMERICANS UNITED IN LOUISIANA

On the evening of September 22, the newly organized Louisiana Chapter of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State hosted a forum at the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge. The national organization’s Executive Director, the Rev. Barry Lynn was there as was NOSHA and AU board member Professor Barbara Forrest.

About 18 NOSHA members were present to hear Dr. Forrest and Rev. Lynn discuss “Creationism by Stealth: The LA Science Education Act.”

LET’S GO TO THE MOVIES

Comedian Bill Maher’s documentary film, entitled “Religulous” is opening at select theaters around the country on October 3. In the film, Maher portrays some of the more ridiculous aspects of organized religions. NOSHA members and friends are invited to see the film at Canal Place in New Orleans for the early Sunday matinee on October 5. Afterwards we will go to a nearby café to discuss what we have just seen. More information about specific times is forthcoming.

THE WINTER SOLSTICE

On the weekend of our December 20 meeting, we will be celebrating the winter solstice once again. Several suggestions have been made as to how we should celebrate this year. Which of the following would you prefer? Please let Harry Greenberger know your preference.

- cake and punch at the regular meeting
- evening dinner party at a restaurant
- potluck at someone’s home (afternoon or evening)
- cocktails at a local restaurant/bar
- other (let us know your ideas)

We voted on these ideas at the September meeting, and we will vote again in October. Either call Harry or bring your ideas to the next meeting.

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“Religion *easily* has the best bullshit story of all time. Think about it. Religion has convinced people that there’s an invisible man...living in the sky. Who watches everything you do every minute of every day. And the invisible man has a list of ten specific things he doesn’t want you to do. And if you do *any* of these things, he will send you to a special place, of burning and fire and smoke and torture and anguish for you to live forever, and suffer, and burn, and scream, until the end of time. But he loves you. He loves you. He loves you and he needs money.”

“I’m completely in favor of the separation of Church and State. My idea is that these two institutions screw us up enough on their own, so both of them together is certain death.”

--Late Comedian George Carlin

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: _____

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
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