

NOSHA NEWS

Newsletter of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association Winter 2009

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
Dominion Learning Center
Audubon Park Zoo

N.O. COX CABLE TV

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

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

A STREETCAR NAMED DISBELIEF

Thanks to many generous contributions and to the dedication and artistry of our advertising committee, the first of our streetcar ads has run the entire length of Canal Boulevard for the entire month of February. The committee, composed of Doug Stewart, J. Michael Malec and Harry Greenberger, is to be commended, as is J. Michael Malec for his brilliant design of the ad, which was a perfect adaptation of the Mardi Gras theme.

The photos below are also the work of J. Michael Malec.



Pictured from left to right above are Will Hunn, Harry Greenberger, Charlotte Klasson, Doug Stewart, Paul Babcock, and (holding a photo of a distant relative) Percy Prestenbach.

The ad has generated several new members, additional donations, two *Times-Picayune* articles, two radio talk show appearances and one local TV interview for Harry Greenberger. But mostly, it has raised awareness of our existence in south Louisiana, not only for the community as a whole, but for those individuals who didn't realize that there are others like them, so that they know they "are not alone." Plans are currently underway to run a similar ad on the St. Charles Avenue streetcar line within the near future.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MR. DARWIN

This year, 2009, marks the 200th birthday of British naturalist Charles Darwin, and the 150th anniversary of the publication of what is probably the most important scientific publication in history, *On the Origin of Species*.

This banner year is being celebrated around the world, but probably nowhere moreso than in Darwin's native England, while here in the U.S., the controversy still wages. Following are some excerpts from various publications on the importance and controversy surrounding Darwin's "theory of evolution."

From Dan Vergano in *USA Today*:

... "Modern biology begins with Darwin, who died in 1882 at 73, and his recognition that every living species evolved from a shared single-cell ancestor formed in Earth's earliest days, [Robert] Carroll says, 'Primarily because of the anti-evolution reactions going on despite the science, we have to celebrate this anniversary.'

... 'Certainly without Darwin, we would have had (discoveries about) evolution, but we wouldn't have had natural selection,' says science historian Peter Bowler of Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland.

Darwin proposed in 1859 that natural selection – 'preservation of favorable individual differences and variations, and the destruction of those which are injurious,' in his words – was the inherited mechanism of evolution, how living things endured by hanging onto the traits that helped them survive and eventually losing those that didn't."

From an OpEd in *The Washington Post*:

... "Darwin was a mostly Anglican biblical literalist when he set sail on his famed voyage aboard the *Beagle*. Like many Americans today, he believed that God created the world as it is, with all its countless species intact from the start. But Darwin's studies of rocks and fossils opened his eyes to the immensity of geologic time. And his keen observation of life's variations and adaptations sowed the seeds of his eventual revelation that mutation and natural selection, acting on simpler forms of life, could account for all biological diversity.

Darwin's basic insight threatened some conventional religious beliefs, of course. If we humans shared a common ancestry with apes – and if we got here by dint of the same trial-and-error slog as every other species on Earth – then so much for our being God's favorites, lovingly crafted in his image. And, yes, over time Darwin rejected a literal reading of the Bible, concluding that, as history text, it was 'no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindus, or the beliefs of any barbarian.'"

From Joe Palca on *National Public Radio*:

"This year marks the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth, and to say Darwin mania is gripping England does not overstate the case.

The Royal Mint has created a Darwin coin, the Royal Mail has made a Darwin stamp set, and there are countless lectures and exhibitions throughout the country.

... In other words, Darwin is not the controversial figure in the United Kingdom that he continues to be in the United States. [Bob] Bloomfield says the reason for this is science has proved Darwin right.

'Unless you want to disregard the weight of evidence, there's not really a controversy,' says Bloomfield. 'Most difficulties come from people who have a fixed perspective on either the nature of time or either the created nature of the natural world.'

But in Britain, even those who see the hand of a creator in the natural world don't have a problem with Darwin. The reason is that science and religion answer different questions, says the Right Rev. Lord Harries of Penregarth, a member of the House of Lords and the former bishop of Oxford for the Church of England.

'Science is trying to address the question, How do things happen?' says Harries. 'In answer to that you get the theory of evolution. Things happen gradually over a very long period of time by natural causes. But if you ask, Why did things happen?, then you get a completely different answer.'

From an Editorial in *The New York Times*:

... "Perhaps one day we will not call evolution 'Darwinism.' After all, we do not call classical mechanics 'Newtonism.' But that raises the question of whether a biological Einstein is possible, someone who demonstrates that Darwin's theory is a limited case. What Darwin proposed was not a set of immutable mathematical formulas. It was a theory of biological history that was itself set in history. That the details have changed does not invalidate his accomplishment. If anything, it enhances it. His writings were not intended to be scriptural. They were meant to be tested.

As for the other fate of so-called Darwinism – the reductionist controversy fostered by religious conservatives – well, Darwin knew plenty about that, too. The cultural opposition to evolution was then, as now, scientifically irrelevant. Perhaps the persistence of opposition to evolution is a reminder that culture is not biological, or else we might have evolved past such a gnashing of sensibilities. In a way, our peculiarly American failure to come to terms with Darwin's theory and what it's become since 1859 is a sign of something broader: our failure to come to terms with science and the teaching of science."

* * * * *

"...when I see how little the public questions a temperature forecast, how wildly it misconstrues the nature of probability, and how fervently it believes in the prediction of a hurricane's landfall—all the while treating evolution like something someone dreamed up while smoking crack—I can't help but get a bit annoyed."

--Katrina Voss, broadcast meteorologist (in *Free Inquiry*)

DARWIN DAY at UNO

**Saturday, March 14 (10am – 2pm) – Alumni Center
Celebrating the 200th Birthday of Charles Darwin
& the 150th Anniversary of *The Origin of Species***

The event is free and open to the public

Speakers

Danny Povinelli (UL Lafayette), author of *Folk Physics for Apes*, will speak about “Humanizing the Human Mind”

Steven Darwin (Tulane, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology) will address “Darwin’s Legacy”

Barbara Forrest (Southeastern) will discuss “Back to The Future: The Louisiana Science Education Act of 2008”

Mark Phillips (UNO), “What’s so Great about Charles Darwin?”

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NOSHA’S OWN FAMOUS DARWIN

Steve Darwin, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at Tulane recently received a plaque for being the 1,000th scientist named Steve to sign a statement supporting the teaching of evolution and opposing the imposition of such topics as so-called scientific creationism and/or intelligent design in public school classrooms.

The statement is sponsored by Project Steve, which limits signers to people named Steve—or Steve, Stephen or foreign equivalents such as Esteban or Etienne. It is named for Stephen Jay Gould, the late Harvard scientist who published and lectured worldwide on the topic of evolution.

Our Steve claims no known relation to the even more famous Charles Darwin, but we congratulate him anyway.

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NOSHA CELEBRATES DARWIN’S BIRTHDAY

On Thursday, February 12, 2009, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, about 30 NOSHA family and friends gathered at the Monkey Hill Bar to celebrate. There was a Darwin quiz with prizes and a real birthday cake to celebrate. We even sang the happy birthday song. Following are some pics depicting the revelry:



Winners of the Darwin Day quiz included Amy Smith, Will Hunn, Corky Willhite, Joshua Paxton, Joseph Billingsley, Vernon Hargis, Desler Galjour, Lanny Goldfinch, and Michelle Marcombe. Prizes included a stuffed monkey, Darwin Fish bumper decals, a NOSHA t-shirts, a British Ten Pound Note with Darwin on the back, and copies of Michael Shermer’s *Why Darwin Matters*, *From So Simple a Beginning*, *The Book of Evolution* by Philip Whitfield, and Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*.

* * * * *

“It inevitably follows, that as new species in the course of time are formed through natural selection, others will become rarer and rarer, and finally extinct.”

--Charles Darwin in *On the Origin of Species*, 1859

**ON: THE LANGUAGE OF GOD:
INTELLECTUAL REFLECTIONS OF A
CHRISTIAN GENETICIST PRESENTED WED.,
FEB. 4 AT TULANE UNIVERSITY**

James Rogers Conrad

It was billed as a lecture but it was really a glorified book signing. Presented by a religion-promoting campus group which absurdly calls itself The Veritas Forum, the evening turned out to be a presentation by Dr. Francis Collins of ideas from his book, *The Language of God*, which he was glad to sign copies of after.

For the 200 or so members of the audience, most of whom came to be convinced of what they already thought to be true, Collins spent the first third of the evening promoting his own credentials as the director of the Human Genome Research Project, a role in which, by all accounts, he acquitted very well – ask him. It is the burden of this role that he uses to spring the major theme of his talk, namely that as a scientist studying DNA he is expected like the rest of his colleagues to be an atheist. This is a role, by his own admission he “gladly” accepted, until that is, one beautiful sunny day, after much study of religious texts (mostly western), while walking in the Cascade Mountains, he realized that, “I no longer wanted to resist and I gave in.” (Yes, those are his exact words.) What he gave in to was a belief in the veracity of the Bible and the message of Jesus. Yes, he was going to have to fact his fellow scientists and admit he has become a believer.

It was then that he got to the crux of his talk, namely that as a scientist he will be forced to explain his belief to his fellow scientists. (This even though he later on says, “Faith is just that, it doesn’t need proof.” (Again, his words.)) With this as a background, he then goes into his main arguments for the existence of god. They boil down to two: the existence of a worldwide morality, and the second, that evolution can be seen as god’s way of doing things – you get it, the language of god. Readers of this journal will, of course, recognize both of these as rather tired old shams.

The first was introduced (much more elegantly one must say) during the Second World War in a series of radio broadcasts and later published under the title “Mere Christianity” by C.S. Lewis. To his credit, Collins acknowledges his debt here, but that doesn’t make it any more valid. He argues that the worldwide existence of morality, the same in every culture, proves that there is a god. This will doubtless come as a surprise to anthropologists.

And then, following that, he made the other by now familiar argument that evolution cannot be used to explain its existence. What becomes quickly evident here is that his understanding of evolution is not much more sophisticated than the childish “survival of the fittest”

level. He argues that, for example, Mother Theresa and Wesley Autry (whom you may remember saved an autistic man who was having a seizure that landed him on the tracks of the NYC subway a few months ago) were “...a scandal to evolution.” That is, they fought not for their own survival, but for the survival of others. As further “proof” he argues the fact that human beings have a pseudo gene for vitamin C is god’s way of making man special. How or why, I’m not sure, but the best I could figure out is that it caused sailors to get scurvy making them different from rats who did not. Yeah, I scratched my head at this point, too. I also looked at my watch, as the evening was getting long. Frankly, I was stunned overall by his apparent unsophisticated understanding of Darwin in particular and biology in general. In any event, what his argument boils down to is the rather old and hackneyed idea of “theistic evolution” which he dresses up with the new name “biologos.”

But more was to come. When he moved into the area of history, things got outright laughable. Did you know, for example, that “Jesus Christ’s life is well-documented,” and “...so is his rising from the dead!” These statements had most of the audience cheering, and a few of us wondering. This led him, finally, to make his one cogent statement: “If god has any meaning, he is outside of nature.” Unfortunately, it is exactly this kind of statement he uses to prove the existence of god!

Lastly, in his rather impressive catalogue of misunderstandings is the concept of atheism. Like all too many people, he sees it as being an antireligious organization whose only intention is to disprove religion. His understanding is much like mine was as an undergraduate struggling with the absurdities of Catholicism. If I learned anything from this evening it is to stay with what you know. I’m thankful he’s good at genomics. He should leave the rest alone.

The audience, which seemed to be mostly townies and only a few students, seemed well-pleased with his sophistry, and from what I could tell, went home with smiles on their faces. What perhaps summed up his approach most was, at the beginning of his slide presentation he showed a slide that had on one side the rose window from Westminster Abbey next to a configuration of DNA molecules made to look like the rose window. Draw your own conclusions. To me, *The Language of God* is just another attempt on the part of religion to take back the playing field from evolution. This time it is not a crazed right-wing preacher, but rather a respectable scientist trading on his respect in science to become a leader in the religious world and make some money on a book.

(Dr. Conrad is a retired professor of Anthropology from Essex College in Maryland, and currently teaches sociology courses part-time at Tulane.)

PUBLISHED LETTERS

The following letter by member **Harry Freeman** appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on January 2, 2009:

Re: “*More religion, please,*” *Your Opinions, Dec. 19.*

Chris Rivette does not get it. There should be no place at public functions for Christians evangelizing, which is all public prayers are about.

Christians don’t claim that God more easily hears prayers over sound systems. So why do it unless it is just to “spread the word” to others, many of whom do not want to hear it?

What is wrong with freedom from religion anyway?

What right does the religious community have to impose its beliefs on the rest of us, just because it is holding the microphone?

The following letter by member **Kit Senter** appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on January 24, 2009:

Re: “*Ruby Bridges’ long walk,*” *Living, Jan. 19.*

I want to commend Chris Rose on a well-written piece about Ruby Bridges and to commend Ruby on her enormous contribution to civil rights.

I first saw Ruby when she was 6 years old and being escorted to William Frantz School by the federal marshals. I was a driver for some of the white children who were also attending Frantz School, defying the white boycott. To me, it seemed the most difficult part of Ruby’s ordeal was not riding through the crowds of screaming segregationists, but being alone with only her teacher, all day, every school day. She did not get to go outside to play during PE, to share lunch with other children. She certainly deserves her rightful place in history.

My only regret is that the white children who attended Frantz got no recognition. They didn’t set policy when it came to the segregation within the school. But they had to endure going to school with only a handful of children.

They were stoned and beaten up by former friends, neighbors and classmates. It was not safe for them to walk down the street: hence the reason they needed escorts to school. They had to endure the enmity of their neighbors and sometimes members of their families. Their parents were often fired from their jobs. They too deserve to be recognized.

In addition to the William Frantz School, McDonogh 19 School was desegregated at the same time. The three girls who desegregated the previously all-white school were Leona Tate, Gail Etienne and Tessie Provost. They too deserve their place in history.

I met Ruby for the first time 25 years later at an anniversary commemoration and found her to be lovely, gracious and an effective advocate for parental involvement in the schools. All the children involved in

the first school desegregation in New Orleans in the fall of 1960 need to be remembered.

The following letter by member **Rod Gates** appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on January 30, 2009:

Re: “*And now comes the hard part,*” *Other Opinions, Jan. 22.*

In a completely predictable sour-grapes jeremiad exhorting us to put our faith in his religion and not in politicians (at least, not Democratic ones), columnist Cal Thomas casts his chronically jaundiced eye on President Obama’s pledge to “restore science to its rightful place” – which, Mr. Thomas fears, will be “above morality and common sense” and will exclude scientists who don’t agree with Mr. Obama’s politics.

This is way beyond chutzpah, coming from a knee-jerk apologist for an administration and political party whose quasi-official policy was to suppress any science that was ideologically inconvenient or offended contributors.

Mr. Thomas’ concern that science will now be above morality and common sense betrays just how poorly he understands science. Science’s bedrock principle is a highly moral one: unswerving intellectual honesty.

In fact, the scientific method might be described as applied, systematic intellectual honesty: the determination to honor valid data and results regardless of one’s personal bias. And – just the opposite of religion – the correction of errors is built into the scientific method.

The findings of science, consequently, *are what they are*, not what we’d like them to be. Whether we use them to help or to harm is up to us, not science.

Common sense has held that the earth is flat and that the sun revolves around it; that earthquakes and lightning mean a god is angry; and that darker-skinned folks are the natural inferiors of lighter-skinned folks.

Science has disproved all these “common-sense” clunkers, because science is the enemy of the irrational, the intellectually lazy and the intellectually dishonest.

Those qualities of science are the real reason Mr. Thomas is uneasy.

The following letter by supporter **Marshall Harris** appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on February 9, 2009:

Re: “*RTA gives ad its blessing,*” *Metro, Jan. 31.*

Why did the RTA’s board of directors feel so guilty and defensive about allowing the secular humanists’ streetcar sign? Does every bus and streetcar advertisement require legal scrutiny before approval, or just the ones that might offend religious bigots?

The secular humanists’ sign (“Don’t believe in God? You are not alone”), which will appear during Carnival,

doesn't demean religion – it simply offers support for some of the millions of non-believers in the country.

This is the land of freedom of religion, or freedom from religion. What's the big deal?

Hats off to Harry Greenberger for his courage in getting this message out to many who feel isolated in the community.

The following letter by board member **Barbara Forrest** appeared in the *Monroe News-Star* on February 8, 2009. It was written in rebuttal to an earlier op-ed by David DeWolf. Dr. Forrest wrote the rebuttal as a member of the Louisiana Coalition for Science and a member of the board of directors for the National Center for Science Education. The letter appeared under the title "DeWolf misled readers."

In his Feb. 3 New-Star op-ed, David DeWolf misled readers, who should know the truth about him. I wrote about him and his creationist colleagues in my book, *Creationism's Trojan Horse*, which was a resource in the first legal case involving intelligent design creationism, *Kitzmiller et al. Vs Dover [Pennsylvania] School District 2005*. I was an expert witness for the plaintiffs.

Holly Wilson is correct that ID creationism is inconsistent with Catholic theology. It is essentially a Protestant evangelical movement that includes a few Catholics who are at odds with their church regarding evolution.

DeWolf, a fellow at the Discovery Institute, a creationist think tank in Seattle, is an example. His op-ed and the online comments of DI's president, Bruce Chapman, responding to Wilson's Jan. 25 letter, proves that they are monitoring Louisiana closely. Working on behalf of "academic freedom" with the Louisiana Family Forum, which wrote Ouachita Parish's creationist "Science Curriculum Policy," DeWolf helped write the creationist Louisiana Science Education Act.

DeWolf's portrayal of ID as scientific is falsified by his defining it as involving the "actions of an intelligent agent as the cause of phenomena that natural processes are unlikely to produce." If phenomena are not naturally caused, they are supernaturally caused. There is no other alternative.

His DI colleague William Dembski admits that "the Designer of intelligent design is ... the Christian God." ID is religion, as I demonstrated in the *Kitzmiller* case (from which lawyer DeWolf was conspicuously absent, although two of his DI colleagues testified for the creationist school board, which lost the case). DeWolf's op-ed talking points have been repeatedly debunked. He pretends to be concerned that Louisiana students cannot "question the materialist dogma ... peddled in the guise of science instruction." Let's examine what DeWolf is peddling.

DeWolf falsely stated DI "has never advocated mandating the teaching of intelligent design" but encourages students to learn "the strengths and weaknesses of ... evolutionary theory." However, in his 1999 booklet for school administrators, *Intelligent Design in Public School Science Curricula: A Legal Guidebook*, he wrote otherwise while discussing a Supreme Court case that began in Louisiana: "In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Edwards vs. Aguillard* that 'teaching a variety of scientific theories about the origins of humankind to school children might be validly done with the clear secular intent of enhancing the effectiveness of science instruction.' As this guidebook will show, teachers and school boards who ... tell students about the evidence and arguments for intelligent design actually fulfill this Supreme Court mandate." In its strategy document, "The Wedge," DI vows to "pursue possible legal assistance in response to resistance to the integration of design theory into public school science curricula."

DeWolf's op-ed also mentioned "irreducible complexity," the creationist concept of Michael Behe, a "distinguished Catholic scholar from Lehigh University." However, the Web site of Behe's own biology department at Lehigh features a disclaimer saying that his views are "in no way endorsed by the department" because "intelligent design has no basis in science, has not been tested experimentally and should not be regarded as scientific." Behe admitted under oath in the *Kitzmiller* trial that under his definition of science, which he loosens to include ID, astrology is a scientific theory. So much for distinguished scholar status.

Ouachita children are being used as potential legal guinea pigs by DeWolf and his creationist friends, not to mention the LFF. If anyone doubts this, consider that in 2002, when DI attacked Ohio's science standards, its spokesman announced, "All we need is one state to stand up and say we are going to permit academic freedom on this issue, a test case." But I guarantee the people of Ouachita Parish that these folks will not be around when your children get to college and realize that their elders permitted them to be wrongly educated about a subject as vital as science.

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"Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call on her tribunal for every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear. ... Do not be frightened from this inquiry by any fear of its consequences. If it ends in a belief that there is no god, you will find incitements to virtue in the comfort and pleasantness you feel in its exercise, and the love of others which it will procure you."

--Thomas Jefferson to Peter Carr, 1787

"Although atheism might have been logically tenable before Darwin, Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist."

--Richard Dawkins

NOSHA’S FOUNDER MOVES AWAY



In the summer of 1999, Gina Cedotal contacted the Council for Secular Humanism to find a local Secular Humanist group in which she could participate. Their advice to her was to start a New Orleans group and, if she were willing, they would send notices to the New Orleans area subscribers to their *Free Inquiry* magazine. That resulted in the first

secular get-together in August 1999 at the Barnes & Noble Bookstore in Metairie.

Gina did not want to serve as President of the newly formed group, but has been a valuable member of NOSHA’s board of directors for the past ten years. During that time, her second daughter was born into the family, which she reports also includes her supportive husband, Steven.

This January, Gina wrote, “My husband Steven has gotten a new job in Huntsville, Alabama and we will be moving our family up there at the end of this month... I consider myself very fortunate to have been associated with such a fine group of people who, with patience and self perseverance strive to get the word out and educate the public about the truth.”

But for Gina, NOSHA might not exist. Our growing group owes her a debt of gratitude. We wish the best of luck to Gina and her family in Alabama.

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NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The election of new board members was presented to the general member audience for nominations and voting at the December 20 meeting. Up for re-election were Gina Cedotal, Denis Dwyer, Barbara Forrest, Connie Gordon, David Schultz, and Harry Greenberger. All were re-elected unanimously.

Two new members were also elected to the board. They are **Doug Stewart** and **Serena Bodellini**. We welcome them both to the board.

Generally, elections for membership to the board are held at the last meeting of the year. If you would like to serve on the board or would like to nominate someone, let the president know about a month before the next elections in December 2009.

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IN MEMORIAM

On February 4, 2009, **Gigi Sandberg**, wife of Glen Sandberg, passed away at the age of 83, after a 10 year battle with cancer. She died peacefully in her sleep. Although Glen and her friends and other family will miss her, we know she lived her life fully and on her own terms, something which we can all strive for.

OTHER NOSHA DOINGS

On the evening of December 21, about 25 members converged on the home of **Doug and Lynette Stewart** in Mandeville to celebrate the winter solstice. The Stewarts put on a great spread and hosted an evening of fun. Thanks to the Stewarts for opening their home.

For the January 17 regular meeting, NOSHA member **Denis Dwyer** hosted a discussion about “why people believe strange things.” Using several references, he listed some of the more absurd things many people seem to hold to as gospel, from abominable snowmen and alien abduction to spontaneous human combustion and stigmata.

For the February 21 meeting, we met at our new location for the first time, the Dominion Learning Center at the Audubon Park Zoo. Our speaker was **Marjorie Esman**, Executive Director of the Louisiana ACLU. Marjorie addressed us on the topic of “Politics, Religion and Sex in Louisiana Today.”

The speaker for the upcoming March 21 meeting will be the Reverend Kevin Wildes, President of Loyola University and Chairman of the state Ethics Board nominating committee. His topic will be “Searching for Public Ethics in New Orleans.”

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INAUGURATION LAWSUIT STILL ALIVE

We received e-mail from Michael Newdow regarding the lawsuit to remove prayers from the Presidential inauguration ceremonies and “So help me God” from the oath of office, in which NOSHA is a Plaintiff. In part, his message read:

“I would like to file an amended complaint . . . There are a number of technical reasons for filing the amended complaint, which may make a critical difference in the outcome of the litigation. Thus, I want to file the amended complaint right away, before an answer gets filed. (It won’t be the end of the world if the answer gets filed first. We can always ask the Court’s permission, and that is usually granted, especially at such an early stage of the proceedings.) Nonetheless, although Judge Walton seems eminently reasonable, I’d prefer not to leave that to his discretion, when there is a rule that gives us an absolute right.”

“Therefore, what I need from each (and ALL) of you – ASAP – is a revision to the “blurb” each of you has listed in the Complaint. We need to change the information to reflect what actually transpired for each of you on January 20.”

Harry provided the requested revision for himself and on behalf of NOSHA. We await any new developments.

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“If this is the best God can do, I’m not impressed.”

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