

NOSHA NEWS

Newsletter of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association Spring 2003

New Orleans Secular Humanist Association

5331 Bancroft Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70122
<http://nosha.secularhumanism.net>

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NATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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

MEETINGS

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

NEW ORLEANS DARWIN DAY FLEDGES Dave Schultz

New Orleans Darwin Day 2003 was held at the University of New Orleans on February 15. This year's event was coordinated and sponsored entirely by the College of Sciences, and the Graduate School at UNO. The theme of this year's event was "Belief in Evolution" and had three speakers, Dr. Michael Ruse of the Department of Philosophy at Florida State University, Dr. John Caruso of the Department of Biological Sciences at UNO, and Dr. Mark Phillips of the Department of Philosophy at UNO.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Michael Ruse, an internationally known philosopher of science with special expertise in evolutionary biology, gave a talk entitled "Darwinism and Atheism: A Marriage Made in Heaven?" Ruse examined Charles Darwin's life and times and argued that the belief in "social progress," common in England during the 19th century had a large impact on the development of Darwin's ideas. He went on to argue that Christianity through its 19th century scientific offshoot, natural theology, the proponents of which devoted themselves to documenting apparent cases of God's handiwork in the complex designs of living things, was a prerequisite for the development of the idea of natural selection. Thus, even though modern evolutionary biology is often seen as at odds with religion, it has roots in 19th century protestant Christianity. Ruse went on to show that after Darwin evolution became a popular science and a "secular religion" opposed to Christianity, with evolution providing alternative answers to dogma, and a progressive social agenda. And, even after evolution's synthesis with genetics, development, and systematics, and its development as a real science, some of its proponents (most notably today, Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett) have used evolution to advance an atheistic agenda. Ruse, a self-described "non-believer" suggested that while this advocacy may not be wrong, it should be recognized because it explains the anger it evokes in some Christians.

Dr. John H. Caruso, an internationally known expert on anglerfishes, gave a talk entitled "Anglerfishes: Fishes that Catch Other Fishes." John described and beautifully illustrated fascinating adaptations of a group of fishes that live largely out of sight of humans in the deep sea. Anglerfishes, in addition to enticing prey to feed on an artificial lure projecting above their sometimes-massive maw, have unique mechanisms for locomotion and reproduction. In the extreme, some anglerfish males, after finding a mate, attach and physiologically fuse with the female, and lose virtually all of their own internal organs except for their testes. Some anglerfishes can only be described as beautifully grotesque and aptly illustrate the interaction of form and function, and the power of natural selection to produce unimaginable designs.

The final talk of the day, entitled "Darwinian Consilience: The Same Biology, Regardless of Ideology", was presented by Dr. Mark Phillips. Mark argued that scientific and non-scientific explanations of living things deserve equal respect and should be valued for their differing contributions to our

understanding. Although, as an evolutionary biologist, I find this position difficult to understand, Philips gave some intriguing and mind-twisting philosophical arguments that kept my attention and provoked stimulating discussion.

This year's New Orleans Darwin Day celebration, planned and executed entirely by UNO faculty, is the beginning of the realization of NOSHA's original goal for Darwin Day, that it become an annual event carried out in an academic setting independent of NOSHA. Although NOSHA spearheaded this event in the past three years, in the last two years, UNO has been provided a venue and financial assistance. Dr. Robert Cashner, Vice Chancellor of Research and Sponsored Programs, and Dean of The Graduate School at UNO, was the impetus behind UNO's support. With Bob's commitment to Darwin Day, this child of NOSHA should mature nicely.

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EVOLUTION, RELIGION CONFLICTING THEORIES

Michael Duff

(Editor's note: Earlier this year, a Texas Tech University biology professor laid out his criteria for any student who wants his recommendation to graduate school in science: first they have to earn an A in his evolution class, second he should know the student fairly well, and third, the student needs to "truthfully and forthrightly affirm a scientific answer" to the question: "How do you think the human species originated?" The need to affirm evolution prompted at least one student to bring suit against Dini accusing him of discrimination on the basis of religion. The following editorial opinion on the subject appeared in the Texas Tech student-run newspaper, The University Daily on January 31. It is reprinted here with permission of the author and the newspaper.)

Let's start with a hypothetical. You get on the bus tomorrow morning and the driver announces, "I will not be using the steering wheel today. I'm going to keep my hands behind my back and let God direct my bus to its proper destination."

Would you trust a bus driver who let faith drive his bus? Would you trust a surgeon who let faith drive his instruments? Would you trust an airline pilot who let God do his landings for him? It sounds absurd, but those are the questions facing us today. What are the limits of faith? At what point does belief in God become a liability?

Those are the questions inspired by Michael Dini, a Texas Tech biology professor who will not write a recommendation letter unless the student can "truthfully

and forthrightly" give a scientific explanation for the origin of the human species.

Does Dini require his student to believe in evolution? He doesn't use the word "believe," but he clearly expects them to accept it.

From his Web site: "How can someone who does not accept the most important theory in biology expect to properly practice in a field that is so heavily based on biology?"

Dini presents two related arguments. First, he says evolution is "the central, unifying principle of biology." He says a physician who rejects this theory would be prone to "bad clinical decisions." He cites the superstitious use of antibiotics as an example.

His second argument is based on the scientific method. He says, "Good medicine, like good biology, is based on the collection and evaluation of physical evidence."

Dini rejects creationism because creationism requires the rejection of physical evidence.

That's the foundation of the scientific method. Scientists run experiments on physical evidence and draw conclusion based on their results. But maybe you don't reject the scientific method. Maybe you think God and science can co-exist. In other disciplines, perhaps. God didn't have a strong opinion about airplanes or electricity, so a Christian can work in those fields without contradicting his faith.

But what about the field of biology, where the creation story flatly contradicts physical evidence? Christians who enter the field of biology are essentially saying, "I will accept the scientific method, right up to the point it conflicts with my mystic book of revealed knowledge."

But the moment you do that, the moment you decide to put faith over evidence, you are no longer acting as a scientist. The moment you reject the theory of evolution on religious grounds, you are rejecting the essential tools that make you a scientist, just like the bus driver who refuses to use the steering wheel. In essence, Dini is saying if you don't accept the scientific method, you won't be a very good scientist. Only in Lubbock would this be a controversial position.

When Dini stands up in the classroom and teaches evolution, he is not giving his personal opinion. He is not relying on his personal authority. He is not handing down revealed wisdom from the Grand Temple of Science in Provo, Utah.

Dini is acting as a journalist, reporting the results of experiments performed by thousands of scientists who came before.

Duff opinion continued from page 2

The theory of evolution is not based on convention, authority or personal opinion. The theory of evolution is based on observations of physical evidence, conducted according to the scientific method.

A student can challenge the theory of evolution, but he better have a damn good reason, a good scientific reason for doing so.

Ultimately, this boils down to your definition of truth. Where does truth come from? Scientists say truth comes from evidence, from tedious, independently-confirmed observations of the real world.

Creationists say truth comes from God, from the ultimate authority figure and his anointed representatives. If you deny Dini’s standard of truth, he’ll withhold a recommendation letter. If you deny God’s standard of truth, you’ll burn in Hell for all eternity. And you thought Dini was tough.

Our treatment of this issue will determine what kind of school Texas Tech becomes. Can you imagine the embarrassment if we get this one wrong? A research institution that rejects the scientific method?

We see a lot about respect for religion in the media these days, but what about some respect for science? Respect for the people who spend their lives searching for needles in haystacks.

Respect for Charles Darwin, a man who collected the evidence and saw what no one wanted him to see. Respect for Jonas Salk, the physician who cured polio in one lifetime. Respect for Galileo, an astronomer who told the truth and suffered for it in the face of ignorant superstitions.

And respect for Michael Dini, defending his profession against barbarians who would tear it down.

(More of Mr. Duff’s opinions may be found on his web page at www.michaelduff.net)

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OF INTEREST TO HUMANISTS . . .

SPRINGFIELD, MA—Smith & Wesson has made a bigger gun. The five-shot revolver with an 8 ½-inch barrel weighs about 4 ½ pounds, roughly a pound more than the heretofore biggest handgun, Clint Eastwood’s .44 Magnum in the Dirty Harry movies. It fires a new .50-caliber cartridge that has “the stopping power to bring down a charging bear.” Why would anyone want a handgun that big? Not many people need to bring down a charging bear. The executive director of the Violence Policy Center predicted that the new Magnum would “create a new order of threat to law enforcement.” Of course, the bottom line here is, in fact, the bottom line – if S&W makes it, someone will buy it.

THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS—In February, the World Court ruled (by unanimous vote) that the U.S. must temporarily stay the execution of three Mexican citizens

on death row in Texas. The delay is needed while the court investigates whether the men (and 48 other Mexicans in other U.S. prisons) were given their right to legal help from the Mexican government. The UN’s court has no power to enforce its decisions, and the U.S. has disregarded them in the past.

RIPON, WI—A Lutheran congregation has been challenged to change their policy barring women from voting on church matters. The male electorate voted 25-17 to let women vote, but the rule change failed because a two-thirds majority was needed. About 20 percent of the churches in the Missouri Synod don’t let women vote – a holdover from another century.

LITTLE ROCK, AR—In a recent death row case, a federal appeals court ruled that a mentally ill inmate could be put to death even though he would be too insane to qualify for execution without his medication. The court decided that since the man’s sanity is “artificially induced” he doesn’t qualify as legally insane and therefore his original sentence to death should stand.

JERUSALEM—In a document recently discovered in a Jerusalem archive, Sir Isaac Newton allegedly predicted that the world would end in 2060, according to calculations he made based on the Bible. Newton, who formulated the law of gravity in the 18th century, was also a theologian who wrote prolifically on biblical subjects, relying heavily on Hebrew scripture. The document was discovered by a Canadian researcher and has not yet been authenticated.

MONTGOMERY, AL—The Alabama House recently passed an amendment allowing the public schools in that state to post the Ten Commandments in classrooms. Although the legality of the move was questioned what with a federal judicial ruling against posting the decalog in the Alabama Judicial building, the final vote was still 89-0 (with six abstentions). The amendment includes language exempting the state from legal costs if the legislation is challenged in court; one legislator opined that supporters would donate funds for a legal defense if need be.

“The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical midgets. We know more about war than we know of peace, more about killing than we know about living.”

--General Omar Bradley, 1948

MEMBERS' PUBLISHED LETTERS

The following letter, written by **Harry Greenberger**, appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on February 18, 2002:

I commend Bruce Nolan, Times Picayune religion reporter, for including some of the criticisms of President Bush in his Feb. 15 report (“Bush’s religious allusions cause stir”).

However, all of the critics were religious leaders, while 14 percent of the country’s population, those most obviously affronted by his political religiosity—the nonbelievers, secular humanists, freethinkers—were given no voice.

The presidential oath of office as required in the U.S. Constitution reads, “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of the President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Since our government was formed by the “consent of the governed,” and not by divine decree, that oath did not end “so help me God.”

George Bush’s holy wars against the forces evil, while pleasing those groups who elected him, should be closely examined for their motivations. Nolan included a quotation in his article that “... Bush has come to ‘a growing sense of awareness that he is in fact a divinely chosen leader ... a conviction that may cloud judgment and yield disastrous consequences.’”

Actions of his attorney general, the Justice Department and other departments, through the Patriot Act, have deprived many of us of constitutionally protected rights. His provision of taxpayer funds to “faith-based” programs violates the First Amendment.

We can only hope that the president will be impeached or defeated before his zeal and hubris allow him to change the makeup of the U.S. Supreme Court, and, consequently, the freedoms we have been guaranteed by the Founding Fathers.

The following letter, written by **Barbara Forrest**, appeared in the *Hammond Daily Star* on February 18, 2002:

As a citizen, teacher, and member of Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the ACLU, I must respond to Arthur Palmer’s 2/12/03 letter. I usually ignore him, but this nastiness is too repulsive to ignore. Worse, he is flat wrong. I hate to contemplate his misleading young people with the distorted history he promotes. And unlike him, I’ll cite sources.

Mr. Palmer “read somewhere that the U.S. Constitution does not mention God,” but the Declaration

of Independence does. He should read the Constitution—it is the only document which governs America. Nothing else counts where constitutional freedoms are concerned. He said no one argued for a “couple hundred years” about America’s foundation on “Christian principles”—*wrong again*. Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, professors at Cornell University, address this in *The Godless Constitution*: “God and Christianity are nowhere to be found in the... Constitution,... Its utter neglect of religion was no oversight;... [It] was bitterly attacked for its failure to mention God or Christianity. Our history books... seldom mention... the concerted campaign to discredit the Constitution as irreligious,... In fact, this... controversy of 1787-88... was one of the most important... debates ever held in America over the place of religion in politics. The advocates of a secular state won, and it is their Constitution we revere today” (27-28). Kramnick and Moore note that “for fifty years after its founding a strong national consensus existed on the utterly secular nature of the federal government,... It is not true that the founders designed a Christian commonwealth, which was then eroded by secular humanists and liberals; the reverse is true. The framers erected a godless federal constitutional structure, which was then undermined as God entered... the U.S. currency in 1863... and finally the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954” (143).

Palmer quoted founding fathers without sources. Possibly he used the propaganda by David Barton of WallBuilders, who peddles videotapes and books denying that the founders intended to separate church and state. When Robert Alley, emeritus professor, University of Richmond, investigated Barton’s founders quotes, he discovered some were questionable and others false. When confronted, Barton confessed, and WallBuilders issued a list of admittedly bogus or questionable quotes. Palmer’s Benjamin Franklin quote is on this list. When I researched his Thomas Jefferson quote, I discovered Jefferson wasn’t speaking of the country’s founding, but of slavery, in “Commerce Between Master and Slave” (http://douglassarchives.org/jeff_a51.htm). Jefferson was in fact an ardent church-state separationist. Readers should see Americans United’s “Consumer Alert! Wallbuilders’ Shoddy Workmanship,” (July/August 1996), <http://members.tripod.com/~candst/boston2.htm>, and “Sects, Lies, and Videotape” (April 1993), <http://members.tripod.com/~candst/boston1.htm>, from *Church and State* magazine. These articles expose the historical inaccuracies exemplified by Palmer’s letter.

Palmer boasts, “We are a majority Christian nation...” But this country belongs to people of many religions and people of none, whether he likes it or not. We are not leaving, and the country won’t change to suit him. And for his freedom to write venomous letters invoking God, he should thank conservatives *and* liberals

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who value his freedom of expression enough to defend it. That includes the ACLU and Americans United.

Kramnick and Moore warn that “Whenever religion of any kind casts itself as the one true faith and starts trying to arrange public policy accordingly, people who believe that they have a stake in free institutions, whatever else divides them, had better look out” (12). Try to imagine a government controlled by Christians with views like Mr. Palmer’s. Now that’s enough to lose some sleep over. Those who want to prevent such a future can join Americans United at <http://www.au.org/> and the ACLU at <http://www.aaclu.org/>.

The following letter, written by **Brent Fodera**, appeared in the *Monroe News Star* on March 1, 2003:

So here we go again with someone claiming that the Bible is the inerrant word of an omniscient Super-being (Donald Holloway, Feb 22).

I was reading the Bible just the other day and I was rather amused by some of these “truths.” Take, for instance, the story about a man who has a conversation with his mule, in ancient Hebrew, I presume (Numbers 22:28). Also, there is the God-directed classification of bats as unclean birds (Deuteronomy 14:18). For all of you creation scientists, bats are actually mammals, not birds. Now, to add super strength to the infallible intellect of God, we find that He is as strong as a unicorn (Numbers 23:22). The last I checked, there was no such creature as a unicorn. Perhaps it’s a fitting comparison after all.

Other biblical nonsense includes the immovable earth, the solid vault of the sky (firmament), herbivorous carnivores, giants, talking snakes and Jesus’ failed prophecy, 2003 years ago, that his earthly kingdom was “at hand” and would be established before His contemporaries were dead. (Still waiting, by the way). Next thing they’ll want us to believe is that human sickness is caused by evil spirits. What? Oh, that’s in the Bible, too. Well what do you know?

The following letter, written by **Bill Hancock**, appeared in the *Hammond Daily Star* on March 5, 2003:

Kudos to Barbara Forrest for her letter on Feb. 18, concerning the distortion of history by those who claim that the founders of our nation established a government based on the Christian religion.

Nothing is farther from the truth. As evidence I offer the following:

A treaty between nations is a formal agreement made between their respective governments to a code or codes of conduct with mutual respect to each other. Our young nation, in order to protect its ships and commercial

maritime interests along the North African Coast, made a treaty of “Peace and Friendship” with the North African state of Tripoli.

That treaty was signed in Tripoli in Nov. 4, 1796. On the advice and consent of the Senate, it was ratified by a unanimous vote on June 7, 1797. President John Adams signed it into force on June 10, 1797.

That statement in that treaty is as explicit and void of misrepresentation as it is possible. It was formulated and acted upon as a true and binding statement by our founders who were still running this country.

Christians may indeed be the vast majority in this land. There are, also, many minorities in this land whose rights are protected by the Constitution and are in no way subject to a majority vote. Life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, privacy, freedom of conscience, etc. etc. are rights that cannot be changed by a vote, no matter what the majority vote may be. The Readers Forum in the *Daily Star* may not be the place to have a dissertation on deism. However, based on their correspondence, most, if not all, of our founding fathers were either deists or down right agnostics.

One gets the impression from much of his correspondence, that George Washington had little to do with the clergy of any kind. I have heard mention of a painting by Norman Rockwell. Mr. Rockwell was born on Feb. 3, 1894, slightly less than 100 years after George Washington died on Dec. 14, 1799. Washington obviously did not pose for it, except in the imagination of Norman Rockwell.

As a member of the military during the latter part of World War II, I pledged allegiance to the flag many times. That was before Congress inserted the words “under God” into it, which is a clear violation of the Constitution. It is the Constitution that we made a solemn affirmation or oath to protect and defend. I am certain that this issue will be fiercely debated in the future even though the Constitution is, also, very clear that Congress is forbidden to pass any law or resolution favoring any religion over non-religion.

It is my understanding, based on the most recent official U.S. Census, that there are 25 to 30 million citizens who have no religious affiliation whatsoever. This, proportionally, is the most rapidly increasing group in the United States.

Yes, the Constitution protects their rights too.

“What influence in fact have Christian ecclesiastical establishments had on civil society? In many instances they have been upholding thrones of political tyranny. In no instance have they been seen as the guardians of the liberties of people. Rulers who wished to subvert the public liberty have found in the clergy convenient auxiliaries. A just government, instituted to secure and perpetuate liberty does not need the clergy.”

--James Madison, *U. S. President 1809-17*

NOSHA HONORS ACLU DIRECTOR

Joe Cook, Executive Director of the Louisiana American Civil Liberties Union addressed the January 26, 2003 NOSHA meeting. He addressed the erosion of our right to privacy under the Homeland Security Act and the new Office of Homeland Security. It was a sombering yet informative presentation.

Much to Mr. Cook’s surprise, the NOSHA Board of Directors had a surprise for him. We presented him with NOSHA’s first “Humanist Award”, for which he was humbled and grateful. The brass and wooden plaque read as follows:

**NEW ORLEANS SECULAR HUMANIST
ASSOCIATION
Presents Its
HUMANIST AWARD
to
JOE COOK
Executive Director of ACLU of Louisiana**

**For his steadfast advocacy for our Constitutionally
Guaranteed civil rights including Church/State
separation,
Despite the slings and arrows of those who are
dedicated to
Undermining those rights.**

**New Orleans, Louisiana
January 26, 2003**

**HUMANIST PERSPECTIVE TV SERIES
FILMS IN NEW ORLEANS**

Joe Beck, Host (and Producer) of the Council for Secular Humanism-funded TV series, took the show on the road taping segments to be aired on public access stations around the U.S. After filming in Florida and Alabama, Joe and his companion arrived by RV in New Orleans in early February for tapings arranged by NOSHA’s Harry Greenberger.

Half-hour segments were filmed during one weekend featuring interviewees known to NOSHA members. Dave Schultz discussed Charles Darwin, his theory of the origin of species through natural selection and NOSHA’s development of an annual Darwin Day in New Orleans. Barbara Forrest explained the role of creationists and their various organizations in attempts to impose their version on life’s origins into public school curricula, most recently through intelligent design wedge, which is the thesis of her recently completed book. Heather Collins, 15-year-

old daughter of Veronica Collins, related her experiences as an avowed freethinker during early and current school years and the reactions of other teenagers to her nonbelief. Civil rights attorney Bill Rittenberg discussed his years of handling women’s rights cases in Louisiana as well as challenging other archaic Louisiana laws, and suggested dire outcomes should the Roe vs Wade court decision be overturned. Harry Greenberger provided background as to his personal atheism and the development of NOSHA over the past three years.

At this time NOSHA has not applied for authorization to sponsor shows on New Orleans Community Access channel, but should this be arranged, NOSHA will advise everyone as to when the programs will be aired.

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OTHER NOSHA DOINGS

On January 22, several NOSHA members attended the Roe v Wade 30th Anniversary Rally. NOSHA joined other sponsoring organizations including the ACLU, NOW, Green Party, Institute of Women & Ethnic Studies, National Council of Jewish Women, Planned Parenthood, and others in a program to honor “My Grandmother’s Struggle, My Mother’s Freedom, My choice to Protect.” About 200 people attended to hear a slate of speakers discuss the precariousness of a woman’s right to choose with the impending changes to made to the U. S. Supreme Court.

Our second potluck movie night was held at Harry Greenberger’s home on February 22. The movie, “Citizen Ruth” was viewed and elicited some lively discussion afterward. The next movie night has not yet been scheduled.

The speaker at the March 16 regular NOSHA meeting was Marcy Murray, a former candidate for school board in Tangipahoa Parish. She described the underhanded tactics used against her to portray her as anti-religion and un-American. She titled her presentation, “What’s a Nice Jewish Girl Doing Running for School Board in a Parish Like This.” Hers was a truly heroic effort.

Also at the March 16 meeting, we had the opportunity to meet the new LA-ACLU lobbyist, Heather Hall, who replaces Michael Malec in that position. Although Michael is still on the NOSHA board, his new job is with the Alliance for Affordable Energy. Heather will be a capable replacement and is hard at work with the new legislative session.

The speaker at the April 6 meeting was Dr. Gerald Nosich, a philosophy professor at UNO and a noted authority on critical thinking.

SPRING CALENDAR

April 6 – Regular Meeting: Dr. Gerald Nosich of the Dept. of Philosophy at The University of New Orleans, a noted authority on critical thinking.

April 19 – Potluck dinner: home of Harry Greenberger, 5331 Bancroft Dr., 6:00 pm; special guests are Tim Madigan, former editor of Free Inquiry, and Warren Allen Smith, author of Celebrities in Hell and Who’s Who in Hell.

No Meeting on April 20

May 4 – Regular Meeting: Speaker to be announced

May 18 – Regular Meeting: Speaker to be announced

June 8 – Regular Meeting: Speaker to be announced

June 15 – NO MEETING (Father’s Day)

June 22 – Regular Meeting: Speaker to be announced

July 6 – NO MEETING (July 4 weekend)

July 20 – Regular Meeting: Speaker to be announced

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ATTENTION!! WE NEED YOUR INPUT

You’ll notice from the above calendar that we need speakers or topics for future meetings. What topics would you like to hear discussed? Do you know someone you would like to hear speak? If you would like to volunteer to lead a discussion on any topic of your choice (with some relevance to humanism), please contact either Harry Greenberger at 282-5459 or Dave Schultz at the next meeting or by e-mail at biol-ds@nicholls.edu.

VOLUNTEERS AND SPONSORS INVITED

The cover page of our pamphlet reads: NOSHA is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of free-thought, secularism, skepticism, non-theism and humanism.

“Promotion” of causes, products, candidates and ideas is facilitated and, in some cases, wholly dependent upon adequate financing. NOSHA has managed its growth so far with a minimum of expenditure of our funds. Here are two ideas for attracting new members, one of which requires volunteers, and the other, financial sponsors.

It was recently suggested that NOSHA should post meeting notices (and other related material) on bulletin boards of coffeehouses. Such notices will be provided to any of you who will volunteer to place them in your neighborhood coffeehouses.

We adapted an idea of another humanist group to read: “YOU MAY BE A HUMANIST AND NOT KNOW IT! Do you support the separation of church and state? Would you like to meet with others who support your values? Then, N.O. Secular Humanist Assn. is for you. (504) 82-5459 or hpgreenx@aol.com.” This ad could be placed one time in the zoned sections of the *Times-Picayune* or in *Gambit Weekly* for around \$200 each.

Anyone willing to post notices in the coffeehouses and/or those willing to underwrite the cost of an advertisement (in full for \$200 or half for \$100) contact Harry Greenberger at 282-5459 or hpgreenx@aol.com.

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A middle-aged woman had a heart attack and was taken to the hospital. While on the operating table, she had a near-death experience. Seeing God, she asked, “Is my time up?”

God said, “No, you have another 43 years, two months and eight days to live.”

Upon recovery, the woman decided to stay in the hospital and have a facelift, liposuction and tummy tuck. Since she had so much more time to live, she figured she might as well look even nicer.

After her last operation, she was released from the hospital. While crossing the street on her way home, she was hit and killed by an ambulance. Arriving in front of God, she demanded, “I thought you said I had another 40 years! Why didn’t you pull me out of the path of that ambulance?”

God replied, “Girl, I didn’t recognize you.”

VOLUNTEERS CORNER

On the evening of March 15, 2003, ten NOSHA members answered phones during the Spring membership drive at New Orleans’ public television channel 12, WYES-TV. Thanks to **Harry Greenberger, Connie Gordon, Dave Schultz, Tim Ruppert, Michael Malec, Phyllis Johnson, Jerry Nosich, Polly Tango, DeeDee Smith-Lewis, and Sally Mooney** for their participation. All could be seen “on TV” during breaks in programming, and station management recognized us in their commentary as well. NOSHA will continue to make community service appearances as requested. Thanks to all who volunteered for their help.