

# NOSHA NEWS

Newsletter of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association  
Winter 2004

## New Orleans Secular Humanist Association

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

## DIRECTORS / OFFICERS

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## NATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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

## MEETINGS

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

## HISTORY IS MADE IN NEW ORLEANS

*Proclamation*



THE COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

CITY HALL: January 8, 2004

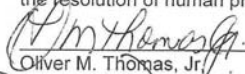
WHEREAS, the application of reason, more than any other means, has proven to offer hope for human survival upon Earth, improving conditions within the universe, and cultivating intelligent, moral and ethical interactions among people and their environments; and

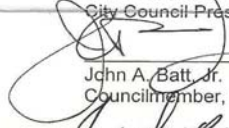
WHEREAS, those who wrote the Constitution of the United States of America, the basic document for governing the affairs of humankind within the United States, based it upon principles delineated within the philosophies distinguishing the historical Age of Reason; and

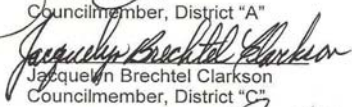
WHEREAS, most citizens of the United States purport to value reason and its application; and


WHEREAS, it is the duty and responsibility of every citizen to promote the development and application of reason; now, therefore


BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, That this Council hereby proclaims **Thursday, the 8th day of January, 2004 a Day of Reason** and encourages all citizens, residents and visitors to join in observing this day and focusing upon the employment of reason, critical thought, the scientific method, and free inquiry to the resolution of human problems and for the welfare of human kind.

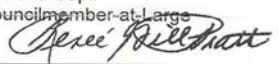
  
Oliver M. Thomas, Jr.  
City Council President

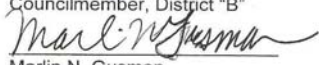
  
John A. Batt, Jr.  
Councilmember, District "A"

  
Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson  
Councilmember, District "C"

  
Cynthia Willard-Lewis  
Councilmember, District "E"

  
Eddie L. Sapir  
Councilmember-at-Large

  
Renee Gih-Pratt  
Councilmember, District "B"

  
Marlin N. Gusman  
Councilmember, District "D"

**HISTORY MADE IN NEW ORLEANS**

On January 8, 2004, at the new year’s opening session of the New Orleans City Council, NOSHA’s own president Harry Greenberger gave the invocation. Councilman Marlin Gusman graciously arranged for this historic event as well as for the proclamation of that day as “A Day of Reason” in the City of New Orleans. Several NOSHA members were present to hear Harry Greenberger of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association give the first ever secular invocation for a meeting of the New Orleans City Council. Following is the text:

**Over 200 years ago when our founding fathers held their constitutional convention to produce the document to establish the rules of governance for their new country, one of the members of that group, Benjamin Franklin, proposed that a clergyman be invited in to open each session with a prayer. The other authors of the constitution, including future Presidents of the United States, did not vote to issue such invitation and the world’s first entirely secular government, instituted by the consent of the governed, came into being without invoking supernatural assistance.**

**It is therefore appropriate that your first meeting of this new year allow a secular humanist to open this City Council meeting and I thank you for that opportunity.**

**I don’t ask that you close your eyes nor bow your heads, but instead observe your multicultural neighbors who are here for the betterment of this city, in our different ways, sharing a commitment to make the most and the best of this world through which we are passing and to treat our fellow human beings with respect and dignity.**

**We invoke the Constitution of the United States and ask that this Council’s deliberations always take into account the rights of all minorities, as well as humanist morality, in your decisions.**

**We ask this, not in the name of the supernatural, but in the name of reason, humanity, the golden rule, and the freedoms guaranteed us by the United States Constitution.**

**To that we should all be able to say “amen.”**

In all fairness, we should report that Harry’s invocation was followed by a lengthy religious one given by the pastor of a local Baptist church. Further, Harry’s original request to Councilman Gusman was for the entire month of January to be proclaimed as “Separation of Church-State Month.” This was a great start, Harry, and all of us at NOSHA salute you for your efforts.

**YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT**

While we welcome everyone to our meetings and our mailing list, your membership in NOSHA is important to support our credibility as an organization deserving recognition.

We guarantee that our mailing list has not been and will not be shared with anyone. As we previously announced, it is a cost saving to us if dues-paid members advise us of their willingness to receive this newsletter online via the internet only; but for those who prefer printed copies, we will continue to mail them.

For those who are not dues-paying members, the newsletter will be available on the internet for those with e-mail, but other will only continue to receive the newsletter for an annual cost of \$4.00 to cover copying and postage costs. However, everyone will continue to receive meeting notices.

Please show your appreciation for NOSHA officers, directors and other volunteers by sending your membership application with 2004 dues today.

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**NOSHA ON PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION**

As previously reported, NOSHA now appears weekly on New Orleans Cox Cable channel 77 at Saturday midnight and Sunday noon. This channel is only available to Orleans Parish Cox Cable subscribers. Presently shows prepared by the Council for Secular Humanism in Amherst, New York are being aired, with frequent references to NOSHA providing information about our website and telephone number.

Although our first two locally produced shows featuring Edd Doerr, President of Americans for Religious Liberty, as our guest were of poor sound quality, they are being reworked and hopefully will be aired soon. In the meantime, two more programs were recently taped, one featuring the Rev. Guy Lamothe of the First Unitarian Universalist Church., and one featuring book reviews given by local NOSHA members.

These programs will air intermittently with CSH programs. It would be appreciated if some of you who subscribe to Orleans Cox would tape these half-hour shows so they may be shared with our members outside Orleans Parish.

NOSHA would like to give a special thank you to all who have participated in the local tapings: Harry Greenberger, Lanny Goldfinch, Michael Malec, Gina Cedotal, Dave Schultz, and Connie Gordon. We also thank our guests, Edd Doerr and Rev. Guy Lamothe.

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## PEW POLL QUESTIONS TOLERANCE

*(The following is reprinted from "Voice of Reason," the quarterly newsletter of Americans for Religious Liberty.)*

Half of Americans say they would not vote for a "generally well qualified candidate" if he were an atheist. This prejudice exceeds that of any other religious group. About 38% said they oppose a candidate who was a Muslim, while 15% would oppose an "evangelical Christian," 10% would not support a Jewish candidate and 8% would still vote against any Catholic—43 years after JFK won the presidency.

The poll, conducted in July by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, found that a considerable percentage (38%) of voters say their religious beliefs affect their political decision, "at least occasionally." About 58% of voters say their religious beliefs "seldom if ever" affect their voting decisions. White evangelical Protestants and African-American Protestants are more likely to report their religion shapes their votes than Catholics or mainline Protestants.

Nearly 58% of white voters see the Republican Party as "friendly" toward religion while only 41% see the Democrats as pro-religion. Among black voters, 53% see Democrats as friendly toward religion while 27% view Republicans in the same light.

Religion colors the views of many Americans toward conflict in the Middle East. Fully 44% of Americans believe that "God gave the land that is now Israel to the Jewish people" and 36% think that the state of Israel is a fulfillment of the biblical prophecy about the second coming of Jesus."

Evangelical Protestants are by far the most likely to hold these views. African-Americans are the second most likely group to agree with these apocalyptic views toward Israel, while Catholics and mainline Protestants were the least likely to do so. (The Jewish sample was too small to draw valid conclusions.)

Slightly over half of voters (52%) supported churches and clergy addressing political issues while 44% opposed that involvement.

Anti-Muslim feeling is also rising sharply. Fully 44% of Americans now believe Islam is more likely than other religions "to encourage violence among its believers," compared to 25% who held this view a year ago. During the same year, from 2002 to 2003, the percentage of Americans who believed that Muslims hold anti-American views rose from 36% to 49%. The numbers of Americans who say their religion has a lot in common with Islam has declined from 31% to 22%. The most negative views toward Islam are held by white evangelical Christians, political conservatives, and Republicans.

Finally, 62% of Americans think President Bush's religious rhetoric is acceptable and 58% think his reliance on religion in policymaking is appropriate.

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## OF INTEREST TO HUMANISTS . . .

*WASHINGTON*—In comments to author Joel Mowbray about his book which paints a negative picture of the State Department, religious broadcaster Pat Robertson said, "I read your book. When [I] got through, [I said], 'If I could just get a nuclear device inside of Foggy Bottom, I think that's the answer.'" Robertson later took back his words saying he didn't really mean it but was merely attempting to characterize the book in question in "laughing fashion." Neither the book nor Robertson's comments are funny.

*SEATTLE*—Late in 2003, a Washington newspaper became concerned when it received two identical letters signed by U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq. The form letters stated "After nearly five months here, the people still come running from their homes, into the 110 degree heat, waving to us as our troops drive by on daily patrols of the city." *The Olympian* forwarded the letters to Gannett News Service, which discovered that at least 11 newspapers had printed identical letters. A commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 503<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Infantry Regiment admitted it was his idea to print the letters for different soldiers' original signatures. Ah, propaganda is alive and well in the USA.

*UNITED NATIONS*—The United States recently vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution that would have condemned Israel for building a barrier cutting into the West Bank, basically separating Israelis and Palestinians. The U.S. was the only dissenting vote on the resolution as well. Have we forgotten how long it took to bring down the Berlin wall?

*WASHINGTON*—The Traditional Values Coalition has compiled and distributed to federal officials, a list of some 200 scientific researchers who currently receive federal funding to study human sexuality and related health issues including HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, and adolescent sexual behavior. The coalition's executive director, Andrea Lafferty said that the group, representing more than 43,000 churches, is truly unique because they "truly represent the body of Christ." She also said that they believe homosexuality is a behavior-based lifestyle, not inborn, and that far too much money is being spent on AIDS research stating, "How many times do you have to study something to find out how to stop the spread of AIDS?" The list continues to circulate in political circles much to the dismay of health researchers.

*Of Interest continued from page 3 . . .*

**MILWAUKEE**—America’s 275 bishops have formed a task force for the purpose of imposing Catholic doctrine on elected officials of that faith. But one bishop’s letter encouraging a Wisconsin state senator to adopt church views on political issues was met with opposition. Lawmakers reminded the bishop that it is the Constitution, not religion, that guides political action. The state legislator’s response to the bishop stated “Under the Constitution, the public has a right to know that, in the end, the votes I cast are driven by my own independent judgment and conscience, not by a set of marching orders given by any church hierarchy, prelate, or associated lobby group.”

**SALT LAKE CITY**—The Mormon Church has a long-standing practice of collecting names from government documents and records worldwide for use in temple rituals during which stand-in Mormons are immersed in water to offer the dead salvation and entry to the Mormon religion. They believe an individual’s ability to choose a religion continues beyond the grave. The practice has enraged Catholics and Jews in the past, and now the Russian Orthodox Church is upset by the practice. They claim that the Mormons are buying up lists, at 10 cents a name, of dead Russian Orthodox members. A spokesman for the Russian Orthodox Church in America stated, “It takes away the most essential gift God has given people, their freedom. . . It turns religion into magic.”

**PARIS**—French President Jacques Chirac has called for a law banning the wearing of religious symbols in French public schools. The move is perpetuated by the increasing number of Muslims in the French population and the insistence of Muslim women to keep their heads covered. In an effort to make the proposed new law fair to everyone, it would not only restrict the wearing of scarves by Muslim females, but would also ban the wearing of skullcaps by Jewish boys, essentially any “symbols which conspicuously show religious affiliation.” Chirac did say students should be allowed to wear discreet symbols of their faith: “medallions, small crosses, Stars of David, hand of Fatima, or small Qurans.” So it’s not the expression of their faith he objects to, it is the size of the expression.

**OTTAWA**—After 10 years in office, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien recently retired, with reaffirmation of controversial decisions made while in office, including keeping his nation’s troops out of Iraq, pushing for gay marriage, and liberalization of drug laws. “I don’t think a kid of 17 who has a joint should have a criminal record,” he said. In response to President Bush’s displeasure at Canada’s refusal to send troops to Iraq, Chretien said, “Of course he was not happy. I did not expect him to send me flowers.” When told by a Canadian bishop that he was

risking the fires of hell by supporting gay marriage, Chretien replied, “God and I will decide that. We’ll discuss, and he will decide.”

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## BOOK SIGNING

NOSHA Board Member, Dr. **Barbara Forrest** is the co-author, with Paul R. Gross, of a new book entitled *Creationism’s Trojan Horse: The Wedge of Intelligent Design*, published by Oxford University Press. The purchase price is \$40.00, but if you order directly from Oxford University Press before May 31, 2004, you can obtain a 25% discount.

Amazon.com offers the following description of the book: “Forrest and Gross expose the scientific failure, the religious essence, and the political ambitions of “intelligent design” creationism. They examine the movement’s “Wedge Strategy,” which has advanced and is succeeding through public relations rather than through scientific research. Analyzing the content and character of “intelligent design theory,” they highlight its threat to public education and to the separation of church and state.”

Dr. Forrest has a book-signing scheduled for March 9 at Octavia Books at 513 Octavia St., New Orleans. The appearance is sponsored by the ACLU.

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## BOOKS TO LOAN

From time to time NOSHA receives complimentary copies of books which the promoters believe to be of particular interest to secular readers. We add them to our lending library, though many of them are available for purchase as well. Recently received books are described below:

*Biblical Religion: The Great Lie*, by Michael Kalopoulos, published by Xlibris Corporation, available from Xlibris Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Borders.

This new book cries religious fraud, explaining the ‘miracles’ of the Old Testament as the result of professional Chaldean sorcery. The author shows the Bible to a human fabrication using a thoughtful correlation of evidence from the Bible, archaeology and mythology.

*Instincts—The Hidden Spirits That Drive You*, by Norris Ray Peery, published by Universe, available from Universe.com.

This book is the third in a series of four books dealing with Intelligence, Instincts, and Consciousness. The simple and truthful realization of what we are, and how we got to where we are within nature’s world, is the

*Books to Loan continued from page 4 . . .*

ultimate truth that any philosophy could ever propose to know.

*Religion on Trial*, by Chester Dolan.

This is a 600-page scholarly reference book with 82 chapters, each covering a specific topic and, in addition to interesting reading, can serve as source material for quotations on each of the subjects. The bibliography lists about 80 names from Felix Adler to Israel Zangwill.

*Beach Blanket Atheism. Atheism: It isn't just for spoilsports anymore*, by Edward P. Tolley, published by CeShore.

Atheism hasn't exactly been the topic of a lot of laughs. That is, until now. Consisting mainly of quotations and quips from a host of famous scholar, philosophers, celebrities and politicians, this witty work delves deep into skepticism, agnosticism, rationalism, and other topics relating to atheism.

These and other books and videos are available through NOSHA's librarian, Doug Hinton, or president Harry Greenberger. You may call Harry at 282-5459, or Doug on-line at [Hintondougk@aol.com](mailto:Hintondougk@aol.com). Since we have no permanent location for our books, they are loaned on the honor system and may be mailed to you or picked up at the next NOSHA meeting.

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### MEMBERS' PUBLISHED LETTERS

The following letter from **Timothy Ruppert** appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on October 21, 2003:

Letter-writer Erik Johansen may have read the Constitution, but clearly he does not understand it.

He is correct that nothing in the First Amendment is intended to restrict individual religious belief or ritual. He is correct that its restrictions apply only to government.

But he confuses his individual right to religious expression with government's establishment prohibition. When the Tangipahoa School Board, its schools, teachers and coaches engage in school-sponsored prayer, they do so not as individuals, but as agents of the government. That is why it is wrong.

No one is suggesting that students, teachers or spectators at football games cannot pray. It is the endorsement of prayer by government that is being challenged.

The following letter from **Connie Gordon** appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on November 8, 2003:

When President Bush signed the so-called "partial-birth" abortion ban Wednesday, he stated that "this right

to life cannot be granted or denied by government, because it does not come from government—it comes from the creator of life."

There are several problems with that statement.

First, ours is a secular government and he is once again injecting his personal religious beliefs into the mix.

Second, his statement is totally inconsistent with his stand on the death penalty, first as governor of Texas and now as president. He is certainly willing to have the government *take* life.

And finally, the creators of my life were my parents, just as my ex-husband and I created our son's life. The choice to have a child was ours alone and not the business of any government, state or federal.

The following letter from **Harry Greenberger** appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on November 19, 2003:

Your editorial importantly clarified the reason for Judge Roy Moore's removal from office—his refusal to obey orders of a federal court, and not his public religiosity.

It is the rationale for the court order, which is misunderstood and decried by the politically aggressive religious fundamentalists, that still needs to be presented to the people of the country clearly and without unreasoned emotion.

Courts have ruled time and again that the First Amendment was intended to keep governments out of religion and religion out of government. Judge Moore's clandestine placement of his granite Ten Commandments monument in the rotunda of the Alabama Supreme Court building clearly espoused the Judeo-Christian religion, to the exclusion of all other faiths and of those with no religious beliefs.

The church-state separation arguments have not been resolved by the Roy Moore decision, but will be with us for years to come.

The following letter from **Brad Ott** appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on November 27, 2003:

The electorate answered! Bobby Jindal could not respond any differently to Kathleen Blanco's campaign citations about Jindal's cuts in state health and hospital programs. They were real cuts. Blanco simply stated facts.

Jindal had to instead hope that we, the electorate, would buy his contention that the funding and programs of the beleaguered yet revered Charity Hospital System deserved to be cut even further.

The election results speak loud and clear: The cuts Charity hospitals suffered must be restored.

*Letters continued from page 5 . . .*

The following letter from **Will Hunn** appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on November 27, 2003:

In view of the veritable mountain of evidence supporting evolution that has been discovered over the past 70 years, it would have been bad enough to invoke the authority of Arthur Conan Doyle, who died in 1930.

However, his credentials as a reliable thinker concerning almost anything become even more doubtful when you consider that in 1917, Doyle (as well as lesser luminaries) was completely taken in by the infamous Cottingley Fairy Hoax perpetrated by two young girls. The girls presented pictures of what they claimed were tiny winged fairies cavorting in the foliage near their home. The “fairies” turned out to be cutouts that they had snapped with an early home camera. Evidently, the steel trap mind and unfaltering logic which had so ably served Sir Arthur in the crafting of his fictional Sherlock Holmes stories failed him woefully in another realm: real life.

The following letter from **Brent Fodera** appeared in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* on November 29, 2003:

Dan McKnight argues for the right of the individual states to establish laws regulating religion.

The hollowness of McKnight’s argument is readily apparent when one considers what would be if our federal government had not intervened to eliminate slavery, that other state’s rights once thought worth killing for, and which led to tyranny, oppression, murder and despair for millions of human beings.

Neither state nor federal powers should have the authority to abridge human rights. The Founding Fathers knew that it is a bad idea to intertwine governmental and religious authority, as they were familiar with the history of Europe’s religious warfare.

That is why our Constitution, contrary to fundamentalist misrepresentation, mentions religion only in exclusionary terms.

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## **MORE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

In early November, the U. S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case of Judge Roy Moore’s granite display of the ten commandments in the Alabama Supreme Court building. Therefore, the lower U.S. district court’s ruling stands and the monument was ordered removed—actually so was Judge Moore several weeks later. However, he and others continue their fight insisting that U.S. law is based on the Judeo-Christian decalog. A quick study of the subject reveals that, in fact, U.S. law is based on English common law. Further, Judge Moore and his

followers never suggest which ten commandments to follow. If one studies the Judeo-Christian scripture, one finds several versions. Further, few, if any of the commandments are relevant to society today.

The following missive on this very topic appeared August 27, 2003. on the MSNBC website, but is still timely.

### **The Immorality of the Ten Commandments Christopher Hitchens**

The row over the boulder-sized version of the so-called “Ten Commandments,” and as to whether they should be exhibited in such massive shape on public property, misses the opportunity to consider these top-10 divine ordinances and their relationship to original intent. Judge Roy Moore is clearly, as well as a fool and a publicity-hound, a man who identifies the Mount Sinai orders to Moses with a certain interpretation of Protestantism. But we may ask ourselves why any sect, however primitive, would want to base itself on such vague pre-Christian desert morality (assuming Moses to be pre-Christian).

The first four of the commandments have little to do with either law or morality, and the first three suggest a terrific insecurity on the part of the person supposedly issuing them. I am the lord thy god and thou shalt have no other ... no graven images ... no taking of my name in vain: surely these could have been compressed into a more general injunction to show respect. The ensuing order to set aside a holy day is scarcely a moral or ethical one, unless you assume that other days are somehow profane. (The Rev. Ian Paisley, I remember, used to refuse interviewers for Sunday newspapers even after it was pointed out to him that it's the Monday edition that is prepared on Sunday.) Whereas a day of rest, as prefigured in the opening passages of Genesis, is no more than organized labor might have demanded, perhaps during the arduous days of unpaid pyramid erection.

So the first four commandments have almost nothing to do with moral conduct and cannot in any case be enforced by law unless the state forbids certain sorts of art all week, including religious and iconographic art—and all activity on the Sabbath (which the words of the fourth commandment do not actually require). The next instruction is to honor one's parents: a harmless enough idea, but again unenforceable in law and inapplicable to the many orphans that nature or god sees fit to create. That there should be no itemized utterance enjoining the protection of children seems odd, given that the commandments are addressed in the first instance to adults. But then, the same god frequently urged his followers to exterminate various forgotten enemy tribes down to the last infant, sparing only the virgins, so this may be a case where hand-tying or absolute prohibitions were best avoided.

*Ten Commandments continued from page 6 . . .*

There has never yet been any society, Confucian or Buddhist or Islamic, where the legal codes did not frown upon murder and theft. These offenses were certainly crimes in the Pharaonic Egypt from which the children of Israel had, if the story is to be believed, just escaped. So the middle-ranking commandments, of which the chief one has long been confusingly rendered "thou shalt not kill," leave us none the wiser as to whether the almighty considers warfare to be murder, or taxation and confiscation to be theft. Tautology hovers over the whole enterprise.

In much the same way, few if any courts in any recorded society have approved the idea of perjury, so the idea that witnesses should tell the truth can scarcely have required a divine spark in order to take root. To how many of its original audience, I mean to say, can this have come with the force of revelation? Then it's a swift wrap-up with a condemnation of adultery (from which humans actually can refrain) and a prohibition upon covetousness (from which they cannot). To insist that people not annex their neighbor's cattle or wife "or anything that is his" might be reasonable, even if it does place the wife in the same category as the cattle, and presumably to that extent diminishes the offense of adultery. But to demand "don't even *think* about it" is absurd and totalitarian, and furthermore inhibiting to the Protestant spirit of entrepreneurship and competition.

One is presuming (is one not?) that this is the same god who actually created the audience he was addressing. This leaves us with the insoluble mystery of why he would have molded ("in his own image," yet) a covetous, murderous, disrespectful, lying, and adulterous species. Create them sick, and then command them to be well? What a mad despot this is, and how fortunate we are that he exists only in the minds of his worshippers.

It's obviously too much to expect that a Bronze Age demagogue should have remembered to condemn drug abuse, drunken driving, or offenses against gender equality, or to demand prayer in the schools. Still, to have left rape and child abuse and genocide and slavery out of the account is to have been negligent to some degree, even by the lax standards of the time. I wonder what would happen if secularists were now to insist that the verses of the Bible that actually recommend enslavement, mutilation, stoning, and mass murder of civilians be incised on the walls of, say, public libraries? There are many more than 10 commandments in the Old Testament, and I live for the day when Americans are obliged to observe all of them, including the ox-goring and witch-burning ones. (Who is Judge Moore to pick and choose?) Too many editorialists have described the recent flap as a silly confrontation with exhibitionist fundamentalism, when the true problem is our failure to recognize that

religion is not just incongruent with morality but in essential ways incompatible with it.

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### CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 1 – Regular Meeting, topic to be announced
- February 14 – New Orleans Darwin Day 2004, UNO  
Speakers include Patti Gowati, a Darwinian feminist and Trent Holliday, a Tulane anthropologist.  
Times and room number to be announced
- February 15 – NO MEETING
- February 28 – Potluck Movie Night – film to be announced – at the home of Harry Greenberger
- March 7 – Regular Meeting, topic to be announced
- March 21 – Regular Meeting, topic to be announced
- April 4 – Regular Meeting, topic to be announced
- April 18 – Regular Meeting, topic to be announced

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### A SPECIAL THANK YOU

NOSHA would like to extend our deepest gratitude to **Mike Sandras**, Director of the Kenner Planetarium, who graciously donated his time and place for our December 21 Winter Solstice Celebration. The planetarium show explained the astronomical basis for the solstice as well as reasons why so many celebrations are held at that time of year. It was an exciting, informative, and enjoyable afternoon. Thanks again Mike for your hospitality.

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### C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S

NOSHA board member **Doug Hinton** and his lovely new wife **Lyn** were married in a humanist ceremony on October 12, 2003. In NOSHA's four years, Doug is the first member to make such a leap. We welcome Lyn into the humanist fold and wish them a long and happy life together.

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Thanks to **Polly Tango**, **Harry Greenberger**, and **Connie Gordon** who volunteered on behalf of NOSHA at WYES-Channel 12 public TV's annual art auction in October.

Thanks to **Jules DeBarros** and **Tim Ruppert** for helping at the Safe and Free Coalition Forum.

Thanks to **Bill Seirichs**, **Bill Vanderwall**, **Mike Malec**, **Dave Schultz**, and **Lanny Goldfinch** who gave talks or led discussions at NOSHA meetings.

*"The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood."*

-- Martin Luther King, Jr. (1968)

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:

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone and/or e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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