



HAGSA Bulletin

Published monthly by the
Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area (HAGSA)
A Membership Chapter of the American Humanist Association
2008, December

Fostering
Reason, Ethics
and
Civic Values

Coming HAGSA Events

Unless otherwise stated, all Friday HAGSA meetings are held in the Room 7/8 and all Sunday HAGSA meetings are held in the Fahs Room of UUSS, 2425 Sierra Boulevard, Sacramento 95825.

Friday, December 5

19:00 (7:00 pm), Room 7/8

It's Your Turn: Help Us Plan Our 2009 Meetings

This is where you get to contribute your ideas regarding the kinds of program meetings you'd like to see in 2009. Do you want more speakers? If so, on what kinds of topic? More member-participation meetings? More panel discussions?

Note that this meeting is also the occasion of the official announcement of the Nominating Committee's slate of candidates for the February 2009 Board Election.

Sunday, December 21

12:00 (noon)

Southside Park Cohousing Community Common House

HumanLight and Winter Solstice Potluck Celebration

Again, this joint HAGSA/AOF event will include a celebration of the

Winter Solstice and will be sustained by the usual potluck fare.

As it was for the last two years, it will be at the Southside Park Cohousing Common House. It's at 434 T Street, but cannot be seen from T. The community in which it is situated is at the southwest corner of 5th and T streets, which can be entered from either 5th or T Street. The Common House is within the complex.

If you enter the complex from T Street, you'll see the Common House, within the courtyard, almost straight in front of you. As it's the only non-residential building, it's unmistakable. If you enter from 5th Street, you'll see the Common House on the left side of the courtyard.

Note: HAGSA members should note that the occasion of this meeting is the final opportunity to nominate Board members by petition (signed by two members in good standing and by the nominee, who must also be a member in good standing). As usual, the election will be in February.

Other Meetings

**Unitarian Universalist
Society of Sacramento
2425 Sierra Boulevard**

UUSS Public Forums

**Sunday, December 14
13:15 (1:15 pm)**

William A. Dorman

After the Historic Election of 2008: What Changes Can We Expect?

Bill Dorman is familiar to HAGSA members, having been a speaker in January 2002 and March 2007. He is Professor of Government, Emeritus, at Sacramento State, where he taught American foreign policy and other subjects. He also taught in the university's journalism program. He has written extensively on for-

eign affairs and on press performance for publications ranging from *Columbia Journalism Review* to *World Policy Journal*. He is co-author of a groundbreaking book, *The U.S. Press and Iran* (U.C. Press, 1987). He has also written extensively about the 1991 and 2003 wars with Iraq.

**Atheists and Other Freethinkers
Sierra II Community Center
Room 10, 2791 24th Street**

**Sunday, December 14
13:30 to 16:00 (1:30 to 4 pm)**

**General Meeting:
Soapbox Social (A Potluck and a
Not-So-Silent Auction)**

The meeting is open to the public.

Friday, January 2

19:00 (7:00 pm), Room 7/8

(To be announced)

Sunday, January 18

15:00 (3:00 pm), Fahs Room

Dr. Peter Lindert

The Economic Meltdown

Dr. Lindert, who is a Professor of Economics at the University of California at Davis, spoke to us shortly before the 2004 national elections on the respective economic platforms of the two major political parties. At this meeting, we expect him to try to make some sense of the current downturn in the economy.

2009 Meeting Dates

Date	Event	Location
Jan 2	Program meeting	Room 7/8
18	Program Meeting	Fahs Room
Feb 8	Darwin Day	LSCC
22	Program Meeting	Fahs Room
Mar 6	Program Meeting	Room 7/8
22	Program Meeting	Fahs Room
Apr 3	Program Meeting	Room 7/8
12	Special Event *	SPCC
19	Program Meeting	Fahs Room
May 1	Program Meeting	Room 7/8
17	Program Meeting	Fahs Room
Jun 5	Program Meeting	Room 7/8
28	Summer Solstice Potluck	TBD
Jul 19	Mid-July Potluck	TBD
Aug 9	Early August Potluck	TBD
Sep 4	Program Meeting	Fahs Room
20	Program Meeting	Fahs Room
Oct 2	Program Meeting	Fahs Room
11	Freethought Day	WPOS
18	Program Meeting	Fahs Room
Nov 6	Program Meeting	Room 7/8
22	Program Meeting	Fahs Room
Dec 4	Program Meeting	Room 7/9
20	HumanLight Potluck	SPCC

LSCC = La Sierra Community Center, Carmichael

SPCC = Southside Park Cohousing Community

TBD = To be determined

WPOS = Waterfront Park, Old Sacramento

* = Tentative

**HAGSA Website
<http://hagsa.org>**

Functionaries

Board

Bill Potts, President 773-3865
 Beverly Church, Vice President 359-5423
 David Henderson, Treasurer 987-1237
 Brian Jones, Recorder 765-5987

Directors at large

Kristi Craven 992-5467
 Margo Gunnarsen 427-0369
 Tom Ikelman 765-8329
 Wayne Luney 383-9393
 Chuck O'Neil 391-6274

Archivist

Brian Jones 765-5987

Program Committee

Wayne Luney (Chair) 383-9393
 Beverly Church 359-5423
 Margo Gunnarsen 427-0369
 Ted Webb 925-6034

Hospitality

Elaine Potts (Friday meetings) 773-3865
 Diana Ruth (Sunday meetings) 684-1350
 Shirley Robertson 421-1942
 Carl Seratt 920-7880

Caring

Margo Gunnarsen 427-0369
 Diana Ruth 684-1350

Membership

(Open)

Publicity

Beverly Church 359-5423

Youth Issues

Kellee Craven 992-5467

Newsletter and Website

Bill Potts 773-3865

**HAGSA Phone Number
 for interested non-members**
 916 285-9367 (leave message)

Email Addresses

Beverly Church vp@hagsa.org
 Kellee Craven dan-cer@sbcglobal.net
 Kristi Craven nightingale23ks@aol.com
 Margo Gunnarsen jwgunnarsen@comcast.net
 David Long Henderson nadell@jps.net
 Tom Ikelman tikelman@yahoo.com
 Brian Jones brian kentjones@gmail.com
 Wayne Luney wluney@comcast.net
 Chuck O'Neil chuckconeil@gmail.com
 Bill Potts president@hagsa.org
 Elaine Potts elp@wfpconsulting.com
 Diana Ruth alanddiana@surewest.net
 Carl Seratt tteratt1175@calweb.com
 Ted Webb theodorewebb@surewest.net

Meeting Reports

November 7

Discussion: Election Retrospective

The group was small, but the discussion was lively. Although everyone was happy that the the dynamic duo, McCain and Palin, didn't win the presidential race, Leon Lefson pointed out, with much agreement from others, that however lofty Barack Obama's motives may be, we still have to contend with the reality of very clearly entrenched vested interests, including uncritical support of Israel, a bloated defense budget, the Bush foreign policy record, and so on. With respect to Israel, Leon is disappointed with the appointment of Rahm Emanuel as Chief of Staff. Emanuel is well-known for his hawkishness on the Israeli position and his adherence to the AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) line. It remained to be seen who else would be appointed to the Cabinet.

Victories for reason were discussed, including the defeat of draconian propositions that would have imposed further restrictions on reproductive rights in South Dakota and Colorado, and of California's Proposition 4, which would have required parental notification for girls under 18 seeking an abortion, endangering those living in a hostile family situation.

The group lamented the passage of Proposition 8 and its counterparts in Florida and Arizona, but was cheered by the fact that the fight against prohibition of same-sex marriage continues, including a lawsuit brought in California by the ACLU, based on the unconstitutionality of modifying the Constitution by referendum. (Page 3 of the November issue of the *HAGSA Bulletin* has information on the topic.)

Chuck O'Neil and others expressed pleasure at the passage of Proposition 11 (redistricting).

Discussion was not, of course, limited to the above topics.

—Bill Potts

November 23

Bob Schmidt

Molly Ivins

Bob Schmidt, a retired newspaper reporter for the *Long Beach Press Telegram* and the *San Jose Mercury News*, gave a tribute to a great reporter and syndicated columnist, Molly Ivins, who died nearly two years ago of cancer. Molly was that rare breed who combined professional reporting, belief in causes (hers were liberal), and a great sense of humor. Born in California, she was raised in Texas and spent most of her professional life there. She worked for a time for *The New York Times* but it did not work out well and she returned to Texas. However, Texas had more than its share of the type of politicians Molly loved to skewer. Of one she said, "If he were any dumber, he would need to be watered." She always exhorted people to notice what was happening and to do something about it.

Although Bob worked for out of town papers, he has lived in Sacramento for forty years, reporting for them on the goings on in the capital. In retirement, he is the editor of *The Renaissance Recorder*, the monthly publication of the Renaissance Society.

—Wayne Luney, Program Chair

Notice Board

Caring Group

If you know of a HAGSA Member who is sick or undergoing suffering of any kind, please call or send an email message to one of the members of the **Caring group**. Its members are listed under **Functionaries** (on the left).

Also call the Caring group or a Board Member if you are having trouble getting to meetings because of poor health, poor vision, or other problems of mobility.

Humanist Counselor/Celebrant

HAGSA member Phillip LaZier is one of fourteen Humanist Counselors and Celebrants in California. He can be reached at 362-7224 or, via email, at phillazier@aol.com

Submitting Articles

Do you have an article to submit for appearance in *Human Interest*? Send it as an email message, or as an attachment to a message, to:

articles@hagsa.org

Alternatively, please call me at 916 773-3865 for mailing instructions.

—Bill Potts, Editor and Publisher

HAGSA is a Membership Chapter of the American Humanist Association

1777 T Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20009-7125
 Phone: (202) 238-9088
 Toll-free: (866) HUMANISM
 Fax: (202) 238-9003
<http://americanhumanist.org>

AHA 68th Annual Conference Humanism Rising

This will be from June 4 to 7, 2009, at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel in Tempe, Arizona.

If you plan to attend, book your room early by calling 1-800-547-8705 or visiting <http://missionpalms.com>. Use the group code 2TD8WJ to get the special conference rate of \$119/night. (Please note that the Tempe Mission Palms also charges a daily hospitality fee of \$10.95, which is not included in the rate.)

HAGSA Website
<http://hagsa.org>

Letters from Members and Friends of HAGSA

Policy regarding the publication of letters in this section

Letters submitted by HAGSA members, of which a copy has been sent to HAGSA, will appear here (subject to space limitations) whether published or not. All other letters will appear here only if they have been published. For those who are not HAGSA members, it is the letter writer's responsibility to provide either a link to or a copy of any published letter he/she has written. Other usable references (e.g., the name of the on line edition of the publication and the date of appearance) may be acceptable as long as they are provided on the day of publication and the letter can, as a result, be found. If the Editor comes across letters to the Sacramento Bee by known friends of HAGSA, those will be included anyway. However, that cannot be guaranteed.

To The Bee

Court test of Prop. 8 valid [appeared 2008-11-11]

The letter writers opposing a court appeal concerning the vote on Proposition 8 should take time to understand the U.S. Constitution. While it is generally true that the "majority rules" when voting, there is an important caveat. The basic law of the land is not majority rules but the U.S. Constitution. Thus if a very misguided majority would vote to reinstate slavery, that vote would not make it so, as the Constitution disallows slavery. It is perfectly valid for the opposition to the proposition to test that vote by taking the issue to court, where, if they are successful, the vote will be properly overturned.

Please, people, review your high school civics lessons.

—Hank Kocol, Roseville

Crisis demands radical reformation [appeared 2008-11-19]

Re "Deficit is clear, remedy is not" (Page A1, Nov. 16): The story lays out the issues and reviews the possible solutions.

However, the story is confined to the disastrous economic box created by the governor and the Legislature. The proposed solutions do not solve the problems.

Chopping and slashing education budgets is self-destructive. Cutting support of programs for children, persons with disabilities, health care, elderly, etc., demonstrates a fundamental crisis in moral, ethical and religious values.

Resolving the crisis requires thinking outside the box:

- Redesign the dysfunctional government: objective reapportionment, revise term limits, enact "clean money" campaigns, lobbying reform, eliminate the two-thirds budget requirement, limit initiatives.
- Generating additional revenues is the critical necessity for California: Create a more progressive tax structure, eliminate loopholes, revise Prop. 13.
- Develop long-term, systematic planning processes: Focus on prevention and early intervention, set goals, multi-year budgeting, and systematic evaluations and accountability.

California's moral and fiscal crisis urgently requires:

- An outraged and organized citizenry, rejecting finger-in-the-dike solutions.
- And supporting a radical transformation of the failed political system.

—Emanuel Gale, Sacramento

To the Washington Examiner

Voters reject vouchers, embryonic stem cell ban [appeared 2008-12-02]

Nelson Marans (letter, Nov 28) wants school vouchers tested. They have been tested and the results show that they do not improve education. Further, millions of American voters in 25 statewide referenda from coast to coast have rejected vouchers or their variants by an average margin of two to one. And anyone familiar with nonpublic schools knows that vouchers would mean taxing everyone to fund pervasively sectarian schools that usually discriminate in hiring and admissions. Vouchers would wreck public education, fragment our population, and increase educational costs unnecessarily.

John Naughton (letter, Nov 28) opposes expanding stem cell research, on the unbiblical, unscientific ground that human personhood begins at conception. What to do about stem cell research should be left to qualified scientists, not laymen with a theological ax to grind. On November 4 Michigan voters, average Americans, approved further stem cell research in a statewide referendum.

—Edd Doerr, Silver Spring, MD

Nominating Committee Report

Here is the slate of nominees submitted by the Nominating Committee for the upcoming board election:

Officers

President: Bill Potts
Vice President: Beverly Church
Treasurer: David Henderson
Recorder: Roger Zabkie

At-large board members

Margo Gunnarsen, Tom Ikelman, Wayne Luney, Chuck O'Neil, and Jim Woodhouse.s

The election will take place at the February 22, 2009 meeting.

The members of the Nominating Committee are Esther Franklin (Chair), Julius "Pete" Holmquist, and Patricia Pratt.

HAGSA members may submit additional nominations. The rules for doing so are simple:

1. The nomination must be in writing,
2. The nominee must be a HAGSA member in good standing at the time of the nomination,
3. The nomination must be signed by the nominee and two other HAGSA members in good standing, and
4. The written nomination must be submitted on or before December 21, 2008.

—Esther Franklin

A Fair Trade Carol

Oh Global Way

Fair Trade lyrics by Esther Franklin, Sacramento, California

Tune: Oh Tannenbaum (Oh Christmas Tree)

Oh Global Way, Oh Global Way
Your Fair Trade path invites us
Not just on holidays
But all the year
We help these ways
Oh Global Way, Oh Global Way
Your Fair Trade path invites us
Oh Global Way, Oh Global Way
We want to help world neighbors
Let those who pick
Our cocoa beans
Get cash to buy
Their own new jeans
Oh Global Way, Oh Global Way
Your Fair Trade path invites us

From the *Fair Trade Holiday Caroling Toolkit* at Global Exchange (<http://globalexchange.org>).