Dr. Chic Schissel on "The Religion of Alternative Medicine"

Coming 7:15PM, Thursday, November 21 at the Plainview-Old Bethpage Public Library, 999 Old Country Road, Plainview; Dr. Chic Schissel will speak on the topic of "The Religion of Alternative Medicine." It's FREE!

Dr. Schissel is a frequent lecturer about dental topics and health fraud; he has spoken before dental groups, lay-person groups, and at Columbia, Penn, NYU, and Stony Brook Dental Schools. He is an Officer, New York Chapter of the National Council Against Health Fraud.


CFI-LI/EHS LI MUSICAL BLOOD DRIVE!
Monday, November 24, 3 to 9:45 PM, at the Ethical Humanist Soc. of LI building, 38 Old Country Rd., Garden City. A blood drive with music, featuring Sonny Meadows, Buddha Box, Gerry Dantone and (Meeting on page 2)

By Gerry Dantone

Confronted with allegations that he groped women, now totaling 15, Arnold Schwarzenegger apologized and pleaded with voters just days before California’s recall election for the chance to show that he has changed. "I have behaved badly sometimes. Yes, it is true that I was on rowdy movie sets and I have done things that were not right, which I thought then was playful but now I recognize that I offended people," he said. From this point on, Schwarzenegger said, he would prove he is a "champion for the women." As he made that pledge, the crowd interrupted him with cheers.

The admission came hours after the Los Angeles Times reported the accusations of six women who accused Schwarzenegger of sexually harassing and groping them over the past three decades. Three of the women told the Times that Schwarzenegger groped their breasts. One said he tried to take her bathing suit off in a hotel elevator, and another said he put his hand up her skirt and grabbed her buttocks. Still another said he pulled her on his lap and asked if she ever had a particular sex act performed on her. The LA Times, quoting two of the women by name and the rest anonymously, said the incidents occurred as far back as 1975 and as recently as 2000. "All is not forgiven. He's got a pattern of this for 30 years, it just doesn't just go away," Karen Pomer, a spokeswoman for the women's group CodePink, said after the apology. Megan Seely, president of the California chapter of the National Organization for Women, said: "It's clear Schwarzenegger is not safe for women." But Julie Vandermost, president of the California Women's Leadership Association, a Republican group that endorsed Schwarzenegger, said she was pleased the actor was truthful, and added that his admission does not mean he is an unworthy candidate for governor. "I don't expect Schwarzenegger to be groping people in Sacramento," she said.

Schwarzenegger dismissed the Times story as "trash politics" and said much of it was not true. "But at the same time, I have to tell you that I always say, that wherever there is smoke, there is fire. That is true," he said. "Those people that I have offended, I want to say to them I am deeply sorry about that and I apologize because that's not what I'm trying to do."

The Times said that none of the actor's political opponents put reporters in touch with the women and that none had come forward on their own.

Since Mr. Schwarzenegger is running as a Republican, does anyone think it is hypocritical that some Republican commentators are making apologies for Arnold's admitted perpetration of sexual battery, when in the past they may have supported the impeachment of a president over a lie about embarrassing consensual sex?

Since many non-Republicans supported President Clinton in the past it is right for them to castigate Mr. Schwarzeneg-
Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor

9/26/03 I would like to thank you for printing and commenting on the story about Charles Miller. He was the man that was refused his last rites by the Rev. Cajetan Uchendu. Charles Miller was my father. My mother and I have continued to write letters to Bishop Murphy and speak to anyone who saw us in the news and has questions. Sadly, we feel that Cajetan Uchendu is still here in NY somewhere. No one will be honest with us and say if this is true or not. Again, thank you for printing our story and your oh so true comment, we truly appreciate it. Cheryl Bartges via Internet.

Response: We appreciate your comments and will continue to inquire freely into matters others avoid. G.D.

10/9/03 It was a sad day in my life when I learned that LISH had decided to change its name. Not all doubters of Divine Revelation are Secular Humanists. I believe you become a doubter first and a secular humanist second. Many doubting organizations publish articles but they are not all dominated by secular humanists. Up to now, ours have been.

I had a fifth grade school teacher who liked to give us advice between classes. One day she said it is not too early to be thinking about the line of work you want to follow. She then reeled off a long list of descriptions of occupations and professions. I have forgotten them all but one. She said, "Philosophers ask questions, oh you don't have to answer them, you just have to ask them." I am asking why? Perhaps we shall see. Wes via Internet.

Response: Long Island Secular Humanists still exists as a non profit corporation. However, to ensure continuity, better funding, and a broader base by including skeptics who may not be humanists, we decided to experiment and try out being a Center for Inquiry branch. It has not meant much in the way of changes in actual practice. I hope CFI-LI can supply what LISH used to supply and more for our supporters, though your concerns are reasonable and ones that we have considered ourselves before making the change. We'll see how it works out. G.D.


10/3/03 I think the term is offensive and not at all a good idea. It will exacerbate the resentment of those who consider naturalists, humanists, Ethical Culturists, etc. overly intellectualized elitists. Judith D. Wallach, Long Island, via Internet.

Response: This may be true and it may also be true that "humanist" is a better option except for one thing – not all persons who have a naturalist philosophy are humanists. The challenge is to find the right word to not only encompass everyone, but also promotes this philosophy positively.

Do we need such a word? Following is the first definition for atheism one would find if searching the words atheism and definition on (Letters on page 3)

(Opposite page)

WBAI 99.5 FM Radio
EQUAL TIME FOR FREETHOUGHT!

Listen to the show for and by humanist, freethinkers, atheists, agnostics, etc. on Sundays @ 6:30 PM, WBAI FM, 99.5 on the dial.
From the Institute of Humanist Studies:
Silenced Again in Kabul

By Preeta D. Bansal and Felice D. Gaer

American efforts to build a democratic, tolerant Afghanistan are facing a serious challenge: the draft of the Afghan constitution, which may be made public as early as this week, does not yet provide for crucial human rights protections, including freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The United States and the international community should insist that the draft presented by the constitutional commission explicitly protect these core human rights for all Afghans.

Despite reports to the contrary, the current draft versions of the constitution enshrine particular schools of Islamic law, or Shariah that criminalize dissent and criticism of Islam through blasphemy laws.

If this draft is ratified in December by the loya jirga, or grand council, the freedoms of Afghan citizens would continue to be in the hands of judges educated in Islamic law, rather than in civil law. Official charges of blasphemy, apostasy or other religious crimes could still be used to suppress debate, just as they were under the Taliban.

Making changes in the draft is all the more important because, as Afghanistan's Human Rights Commission and the United Nations' Assistance Mission in Afghanistan have reported, Afghan reformers seeking to express their views on their new constitution have been hindered by threats, harassment and even imprisonment. In one case, an editor and a reporter have been charged with blasphemy for publishing an article questioning the role of Islam in the state.

On our recent trip to Kabul as members of the bipartisan United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, we met many Muslims who recognize the compatibility of Islam with human rights. Yet, these Muslims are being intimidated into silence by vocal and well-armed extremists.

Freedom-loving Afghans won't be able to rely on conscientious judges to protect religious freedom without an explicit reference to it in the constitution. Afghanistan's chief justice, Fazl Hadi Shinwari, for example, has shown little regard for those who disagree with his hard-line interpretation of Islam. He told us that he accepted the international standards protected by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights with three exceptions: freedom of expression, freedom of religion and equality of the sexes. "This is the only law," the chief justice told us, pointing to the Koran on his desk.

Even in a self-proclaimed Islamic republic, however, all citizens, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, must be free to debate the role of religion and to question prevailing orthodoxies without fear of being subjected to trials, prison or death. At a minimum, Afghan leaders should amend the draft constitution to specifically ensure the human rights guarantees that Afghanistan has already accepted and ratified in six international treaties. Furthermore, the United States must ensure the safety of reformers who want to speak out at the loya jirga to ensure that the constitution of Afghanistan makes possible a free and just society based on the rule of law.

While respecting that Afghans should determine their own future, United States officials must not let a "hands off" policy lead to political conditions that will embolden repression and enable a few to hijack the future from the many Afghans who hope to embrace freedom.

After all, it is not just Afghanistan's future that is at stake. Iraqis are watching to see what minimum standards of individual rights will be acceptable to the United States. Unfortunately, the message that the Afghan draft constitution is giving Iraq is the wrong one. We should instead send our own message to President Hamid Karzai, to Afghan officials and to the Afghan people: Americans will only support a state with a constitution that clearly and unequivocally enshrines human rights and religious freedom.

Preeta D. Bansal and Felice D. Gaer. Bansal is the former solicitor general of New York State and Gaer is the director of the Jacob Blaustein Institute for Human Rights. Both are members of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Response: At this point although I personally prefer "secular humanist" or "humanist" or even "atheist" as a term, I see no problem with the attempt at marketing "brights." It may see odd, arrogant or stupid now, but I believe the risk is minimal consider our current low percentages of freethinkers, and virtually term. It is guaranteed to alienate a huge percentage of freethinkers, and virtually everyone else.

Futile? My guess is yes. But hey, I'm not all that bright. Maybe it'll catch on.

A great idea? The idea of seeking that big freethought umbrella is noble. This moniker – ghastly.

My informal, highly unscientific sampling of reactions among a few fellow members of Capital District Humanist Society suggests widespread agreement with the above: Interesting idea – maybe not “great”, but “good” is ok. Implementation: disappointing; abysmal tending toward disastrous. Dick McMahan via Internet

Response: It would be most informative to learn about the history of the “gay” movement. How was that received at first? G.D.

(letters from page 2)

www.google.com:

From Webster's 1913 Dictionary:

“The disbelief or denial of the existence of a God or supreme intelligent Being.

Atheism is a ferocious system, that leaves nothing above us to excite awe, nor around us to awaken tenderness. R. Hall.”

I don't think we can do worse than the image we currently have. G.D.

10/4/03 I think it's about time we accept the idea that we're atheists and stop looking for euphemisms. I don't believe in god. I am an atheist. That's it. Dipsey Dumpster via Internet.

10/4/03 I prefer the word "Atheist." I think it is gaining acceptance and will become a positive descriptor, but I'm not against any "Bright" ideas. Pete via Internet.

Response: At this point although I personally prefer "secular humanist" or "humanist" or even "atheist" as a term, I see no problem with the attempt at marketing "brights." It may see odd, arrogant or stupid now, but I believe the risk is minimal consider our current low percentages of freethinkers, and virtually term. It is guaranteed to alienate a huge percentage of freethinkers, and virtually everyone else.

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Alternative Medicine - A Religion?
By Dr. Chic Schissel

"Define your terms" is the old cry of the debater. Confucius said "When words lose their meaning, men lose their liberty." This comes to mind when we consider words used today related to "alternative medicine", words that are losing their meaning.

"Holistic" is a favorite word of the alternative crowd. Medically speaking, "holistic" means evaluating the whole person, considering any and every available therapy that might help the patient. Every doctor should be holistic. But the healers who call themselves holistic have turned the word upside down. If you go to a holistic acupuncturist you'll get stuck with needles; a holistic chiropractor will scrub your spine; a holistic nutritionist will ply you with whatever herbs or nostrums he can make a profit with - no matter what your complaint is. Instead of exploring every avenue of useful therapy these "alternative" healers limit themselves to the narrowest range of treatment. This is the exact opposite of what holistic means. Another word distorted by the alternative crowd is "traditional". Standard medicine is put down as "traditional", hide-bound, and stuffy, as opposed to alternative medicine which, they say, is "non-traditional". But "traditional" means following traditions, long-established beliefs and methods handed down over time. Scientific medicine is exactly the opposite: treatments are changed, improved, or discarded in response to new information. On the other hand, the methods of alternative medicine do not change, not even when faced with compelling evidence that they do not work. Recent studies which convincingly refuted the claims of therapeutic touch and homeopathy have had no effect on the practice of these scams. So it is alternative medicine which is traditional and scientific medicine which is non-traditional. The words are being stood on their heads.

Now how about the word "alternative", which means another way of achieving an effective result. If you want to get to Manhattan from here you can take a train, or a bus, or an automobile; these are reasonable transportation alternatives. But a pogo-stick is not a reasonable alternative, not if you want to get there. In real Medicine Advil is an alternative to aspirin; erythromycin is an alternative to penicillin. But a coffee enema is not an alternative to chemotherapy: a quack remedy is no alternative to legitimate treatment. An unproven remedy is not a real alternative to standard treatment.

The chief defining feature of what is called alternative medicine is absence of scientific evidence. This is by definition. If there were real evidence that any of these alternative methods worked it would become mainstream, no longer alternative. So to connect the words "alternative" and "medicine" is a contradiction in terms. There is no alternative to proper treatment. Either it is medicine or it isn't. Either there is evidence that it works or there is no proof that it works. In this sense there really is no such thing as alternative medicine. It's not an alternative, and it's not medicine.

Since it's based on faith, not evidence, it's a religion.
Rush Limbaugh and His Football Agenda

By Gerry Dantone

On a recent “NFL Sunday Countdown,” radio personality Rush Limbaugh uttered the following statement leading to his exit from the show:

“The media has been very desirous that a Black quarterback do well. There is a little hope invested in (Philadelphia Eagle quarterback Donovan) McNabb and he got a lot of credit for the performance of this team that he didn’t deserve. The defense carried this team.”

What is wrong with this statement? Is it racist? Is it unfair? Is it true?

Donovan McNabb is indeed the quarterback for the Eagles but he has been named to the Pro Bowl on multiple occasions, has led his otherwise offensively mediocre team to the championship game, and has generally been considered one of the game’s better quarterbacks. These are not the media’s doings – one can look at the standings over the years for evidence of his talent.

There are other successful African-American quarterbacks as well: Brooks, Culpepper, Blake, McNair, Carter and quite a few others. The “media,” however, has not canonized them all however. McNair, for example, is underrated or overlooked often despite his abilities, and others, such as Cordell Stewart, are taken to task quite a bit for their failures. As sportswriter Mike Lupica has said, he missed receiving the memo on promoting Donovan McNabb.

In addition, African-American quarterbacks are no longer a novelty, except perhaps, to those uneasy with successful African-Americans. There have been a number of top quarterbacks over recent years, including Doug Williams, who won a Super Bowl, Randall Cunningham, who was quite good in his day, and Warren Moon, an all-time great.

The idea that McNabb is a media darling because he is a minority is without basis; his performance and winning personality and style are more than enough explanation.

Furthermore, what would explain the media’s championing of Chad Pennington and Peyton Manning and any number of non-minority quarterbacks? What is the “media” trying to do in those cases?

The truth is that the “media,” if anything, has been conservative when covering sports over the years. Twenty years ago it was rare for an African-American to be a quarterback, and in fact, it is still rare for them to be offensive centers, of all things. The media generally did not and still does not make the stink over this obvious prejudice that it should since the media itself bought into many of the stereotypes that limited opportunities for African-Americans in football. If anything, the media is behind the curve. The media in practice can be documented as being slow to embrace increasing opportunities for African-American athletes in football. This leads to Limbaugh’s motivation. Even though the media for years did not “invest” in an African-American quarterback or successfully promote increasing opportunities for such athletes, Limbaugh sees a monolithic media now promoting Donovan McNabb despite his “obvious” mediocrity.

What Mr. Limbaugh is really saying is that the “liberal” media deliberately distorts reality and has an unspoken policy of affirmative action, and has focused attention on McNabb to prove that African-American athletes deserve the opportunities now given them, even though they really haven’t earned it.

What other motivation can Limbaugh assign to the “media”? Why otherwise would the “media” invest in McNabb? It can only be, according to Limbaugh’s unsaid but implied opinion, that the media is prejudiced against white men, or against equality of opportunity in a world where it is white men that get short shrift!

Is this possible in a world where African-Americans are still not represented fairly in the center position in football? Where they are not fairly represented in executive positions in football, as well as in other sports?

Equality of opportunity had never been an issue with many (not all) conservatives until minorities and women started receiving consideration for positions formerly held exclusively by white men, coincidentally, like Rush Limbaugh. Now any means taken to level the former uneven playing field is branded “reverse discrimination” by those who had no previous problem with direct discrimination.

Unfortunately, Mr. Limbaugh’s methods and beliefs are those embraced by a large segment of the American public and their leading politicians. In a country ruled by religious white men, they have created a myth of discrimination against religious white men. You can only do this with the help of the media, of which poor old Mr. Limbaugh is somehow one of its biggest stars.

GIVE BLOOD & HEAR MUSIC!

Give blood at the CFI-LI & EHS LI Blood Drive on Monday, November 24, @ the EHS LI building, 38 Old Country Road, Garden City. To make an appointment, call Richard Rapp @ 718 321 1525.

Cable Access Producer Bob Goldberg to Receive Award!

The Long Island Alliance For Peaceful Alternatives is a local organization that works to make this a less violent, more civilized world. The Alliance educates people about alternatives to war and tries to influence those in government about non-violent, humane ways to run this world and solve its problems.

Each year the Alliance gives Kairos Awards to people and organizations in recognition of their efforts and achievements that promote a more peaceful, civilized world. This year the Kairos Awards Dinner will be held at Hofstra University on November 15th, starting at 6:00 PM. The Awardees are: Professor Carolyn Eisenberg, a brilliant historical analyst and passionate advocate for peace; Long Island Pax Christi, a Catholic peace organization and LISH and Center for Inquiry supporter.

You are encouraged to attend and support this important organization. The cost is $50, which includes dinner. There is also a commemorative Kairos Dinner Journal in which people can place ads or congratulations to the honorees. To reserve places or for more information, please contact Megan O’Handley at (516) 741-4360 or lipeace@broadviewnet.net.
**QUICKIES!**

By Gerry Dantone

**Item:** (NY Daily News) Vice President Dick Cheney was sighted in public on September 14, 2003 on NBC’s Meet the Press TV show where he stated the following: The current battle in Iraq is preventing another terrorist strike on the US and that was the place where “we” want to take on the terrorists; that a suspect in the WTC bombings in 1993 was linked to Al Qaeda was given “support” by Iraq; that we “just don’t know about Saddam Hussein’s “connection” to 9-11; and that when Iraqis are asked what model of government they would prefer among five, 37% chose the US model while 28% chose the Saudi Arabian model according to a Zogby poll. Cheney said on the show that Iraq was “the geographic base of the terrorists who have had us under assault for many years, but most specifically on 9/11,” while two days later, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said in a statement “I’ve not seen any indication that would lead me to believe that I could say” Saddam was linked to the hijackings. President Bush also issued a Hussein-9/11 disclaimer that week. Recent polls have shown 70% of Americans believe without supporting evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved in 9/11.

In a later speech on Oct. 10, 2003, V.P. Cheney said, regarding efforts to stymie Iraqi WMD programs via targeted air strikes and sanctions during the 1990s, “all of these measures failed,” when in reality, they had completely succeeded as far as is known.

**Comment:** If these are Cheney’s best arguments justifying current Bush Administration policy, they’re in a whole bunch of trouble! It turns out the “suspect” he referred to was questioned and released by the FBI, and then fled to Iraq, where he was immediately jailed. In 2002, Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz, now under US arrest, offered, on the “60 Minutes” news show, to turn over the suspect to the US but was refused. The suspect himself also appeared on the show and claimed, “I am very sorry for what happened.” None of this was revealed during Cheney’s appearance on “Meet the Press”, giving the public watching the show an entirely different impression.

The idea that Iraq is the preferred location for the war on terror and somehow is making America safer is ludicrous. Since Iraq was not a haven previously for Al Qaeda, and now is, it is more likely that the war in Iraq has simply expanded opportunities for Islamists that previously did not exist.

Cheney also misstated the findings of the Zogby poll of Iraqis: only 21.5% favored the US model of government while 16% favored the Saudi model according to the Washington Post review of the Zogby raw poll data. Cheney claimed this poll was “very positive news …with respect to the attitudes to what Americans have done.”

And does anyone suppose that Cheney and the rest of the Bush Administration feel guilt for contributing to the American public’s confusion over Saddam and 9/11? Nahhh! It was only a “parison” of the truth about war and peace, not about something important, like sex.

**Item:** (Rationalists International) Naseem Bibi, 45, was jailed in Lahore’s Kotlakhpat Jail in Punjab province since May 2002. Accused of blasphemy, she was awaiting her trial. She died on 25 August, tortured and beaten to death by fellow jail inmates. The jail authorities tried to hush up the case, saying she died of “heart failure”. Her lawyer Pervez Aslam informs that his client had complained since one week that she was threatened and attacked. The jail authorities had been alerted, but failed to protect her. He demanded an inquiry.

Naseem Bibi was living together with her two teenage sons. Her neighbor used to make advances at her, which she rejected. In May 2002, he decided to revenge. He called police and alleged that Naseem had burned a copy of the Quran. She denied the allegation. Though there were no other witnesses for the deed, the neighbor’s false claim was enough to file a blasphemy case against her.

**Response:** The real tragedy, of course, was that she was even arrested and placed in jail in the first place. Even if she did what was claimed, should she be arrested? And still, there are those in THIS country who seek a religious foundation for the laws of our country.

**Item:** An Islamic court in Nigeria overturned the conviction of accused adulterer Amina Lawal. Some hailed the acquittal as a victory for Islamic justice while others say Ms. Lawal should have been executed by stoning. She was acquitted on technicalities including insufficient witnesses, improper number of judges and lack of legal support for the defendant.

**Comment:** This ruling will allow some to continue to live in denial of the injustice of the sharia system. The law and the unsupportable concept of “sleeping embryos” were not declared invalid. The overturning was nothing more than an attempt to deflect world criticism at Nigeria, and avoiding facing the facts. The court, in effect, ruled that if there were a sufficient number of witnesses, proper legal representation and a period too long for a “sleeping embryo,” she could.

The Movie Hollywood is Afraid to Make: Heart of the Beholder

From Producer Diane Lieblich

Our proposed movie, “Heart of the Beholder,” is based on a true story of how a young couple was ruined by a group of religious fundamentalists because they were the only video store owners who dared to carry Martin Scorsese’s controversial film, “The Last Temptation of Christ.” When the couple refused to buckle, the religious zealots blackmailed the District Attorney into destroying their business and family.

Last June 1 through August 31, we produced a grassroots attempt to reach out to fellow humanists and freethinkers. We tried to raise a minimum production budget of $500,000 by pre-selling DVDs and video of the film as well as by accepting donations. The goal was not met and all of the funds have been returned as of September 8, 2003.

We aren’t giving up yet. We are now asking our fellow freethinkers to consider loaning us the money to meet our minimum production budget. There has never been a better time for a film to come out that addresses the hypocrisy of religious fanatics and the strength of freethinkers who believe in family, friends and themselves instead of myths and fables. Non-binding pledges can be sent to pledge@beholder.com, minimum of $100, maximum of $2,000,000. For all the details, go to the website www.beholder.com.

(Note: INQUIRER editor Gerry Dantone’s music is being considered for this movie.)

(Quickies on page 7)
belief has been shattered in light of the
tected and rewarded by the heavens. This
preciated in certain circles.
prevailing beliefs in the ultra-Orthodox
high ranking church official sent a letter
while working on a watchdog panel, a
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was stunned that no bishop investigated
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An enormous tragedy with so many
victims doesn’t point to the sins of each
individual, but to a significant common
sin of the people of Israel believes this
community. The reason for the present
event, therefore, is “immodest behavior.”
One member of the ultra-Orthodox com-

Comment: Is Karl Rove the guilty
party? If so, we know a religious person
that may be a suitable replacement. Read on…

Item: (NY Daily News) Former Okla-
oma Gov. Frank Keating says he was the
victim of a smear campaign – by the Ro-
an Catholic Church. He claimed that
while working on a watchdog panel, a
high ranking church official sent a letter
to the bishops alleging that Keating was
keeping a mistress. “Every word was a
lie,” Keating wrote in the October issue
of Crisis Magazine, a conservative Catho-
lc monthly. The letter was written by the
vicar general in the Oklahoma City dio-
cese, the #2 man there. Although Chi-
ago’s Francis Cardinal George has
apologized, the former governor said he
was stunned that no bishop investigated
the matter. Keating quit the watchdog
panel after complaining that priests were
covering up for perverts and said the
church was acting like “La Cosa Nostra.”

Comment: There might be a job open-
ing in the Bush administration for the
vicar general come election time. Imagin-
ative smear campaigns are always ap-
preciated in certain circles.

Item: (World Press Review) One of the
prevailing beliefs in the ultra-Orthodox
community in Israel is that each event has
a reason and that each person has individ-
ual divine protection. A person who is
charitable, studies the Torah, and lives
according to Orthodox laws will be pro-
tected and rewarded by the heavens. This
belief has been shattered in light of the
toddlers who had not sinned and yet were
killed in the cruelest way in the bombing
of a bus in Jerusalem on August 19, 2003,
that killed 20, most ultra-Orthodox, and
many children.

An enormous tragedy with so many
victims doesn’t point to the sins of each
individual, but to a significant common
sin of the people of Israel believes this
community. The reason for the present
event, therefore, is “immodest behavior.”
One member of the ultra-Orthodox com-

Comment: See what happens when you
mess with the 1st Amendment! (Sent by
Dave Miller)

Item: (Newsday) A trace on vulgar
phone calls to a Catholic High School
principal led detectives to the Queens
home of a pistol-packing priest, who col-
lected porn and Nazi memorabilia and had
$87,000 he skimmed from a Long
Island church in Bethpage, according to
colice sources.

Comment: Hey, nobody’s perfect. But
as long as his faith remains steadfast,
heaven awaits.

Item: (Newsday guest columnist D.S.
Thompson, asst. Prof. of Theology, Ford-
ham Univ.) “John Paul’s long reign has
been dedicated to reconstituting Catholic
identity in an era when, to his mind, it has
become more diffuse and hence, more
contaminated with outside influences –
everything from Western liberalism and
rationalism to feminism and uncritical
acceptance of the beliefs and practices of
others religions and a whole host of other
problems of modernity.”

Comment: Actually, words like
“modernity” and “rationalism” and
“uncritical acceptance” are code words
that the orthodox use to express their
dissatisfaction with the fact that the
Catholic Church no longer gets to bless
kings, approve of civil laws or receive
special favors to the degree that they did
in the past. Why don’t they get the privi-
eges that they used to enjoy? Liberty,
democracy, tolerance, etc.; in other
words, modernity. Bin Laden would
agree except that it would be Islam sub-
stituted for Catholicism in his case.

Item: (Gannett News Service) -- Let-
ters from hometown soldiers describing
their successes rebuilding Iraq have been
appearing in newspapers across the coun-
try as U.S. public opinion on the mission
sours.

And all the letters are the same.
A Gannett News Service search found
identical letters from different soldiers
with the 2nd Battalion of the 503rd Air-

(Quickies from page 6)
have been executed. Would that have been just?

Item: The Justice Department opened
an investigation into the leaking of the
identity of a CIA agent to columnist
Robert Novak, who claimed two senior
administration officials gave him the info.
The revelation was seen as retaliation
against the CIA agent’s husband, Joe
Wilson who wrote an article exposing the
Bush Administration’s duplicity in the
Iraq/Niger/uranium matter. Wilson
claims that reporters have told him that
Bush’s senior political advisor, Karl
Rove, said that Wilson’s wife was “fair
game,” and encouraged further disclo-
sures of her identity. Exposing the iden-
tity of a CIA agent is a felony.

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“uncritical acceptance” are code words
that the orthodox use to express their
dissatisfaction with the fact that the
Catholic Church no longer gets to bless
kings, approve of civil laws or receive
special favors to the degree that they did
in the past. Why don’t they get the privi-
eges that they used to enjoy? Liberty,
democracy, tolerance, etc.; in other
words, modernity. Bin Laden would
agree except that it would be Islam sub-
stituted for Catholicism in his case.

Item: (Gannett News Service) -- Let-
ters from hometown soldiers describing
their successes rebuilding Iraq have been
appearing in newspapers across the coun-
try as U.S. public opinion on the mission
sours.

And all the letters are the same.
A Gannett News Service search found
identical letters from different soldiers
with the 2nd Battalion of the 503rd Air-

(Quickies on page 9)
Making the Rounds with Norm

By Norm Roscoe

August 29 to September 1, Highlands, North Carolina, a conference of Unitarians and Universalists: As the openly proclaimed atheist I found myself surrounded with mostlyagnostics with various views of Pantheistic, neo Pagan, liberal Christian, and assorted folks who claimed Humanism of various sorts. These folks pretty much did not accept any supernatural (transnatural) being in any personal sense. The major focus was a desire for aesthetic symbolic ritual. The desired language was what some of us refer to reverence. As I worked with these folks I used such terms as honored, appreciated, grateful; words which were secular forums of reverential language. Many tried to relate to me that they had the same idea; just the wish for the more "spiritual" terms.

I developed the theme of coming together, appreciating the created community, and departing with renewed vigor to go back to the hinterlands of conservatism to develop coalitions with others. Because of the internet, etc., we can be connected with those with the more liberal perspectives.

Language continues to be a struggle; we find similar referents with different symbols. I do appreciate the aesthetics of coming together. We engaged in music, poetry, story telling, drama and of course the usual talk. (Some folks used sermon, homily etc).

I myself helped to lead two services with readings reflecting my Humanist values along with song and drama. This was well received and folks continue to insist that they also even as Neo pagans, Liberal Christians, and other assorted views held these same views a la common moral decencies.

I have previously raised the idea of aesthetics in our activities; do we comfortably consider these artistic expressions to be a part of our Humanist environment? I wonder what folks think about this area. I would love to hear folk from about this issue.

My weekend was one of being treated with great respect and friendship; some of these UU's are quite friendly. I do hope that our humanist groups can show great friendliness also. I feel that often we do.

Friday, Sept. 12, SUNY @ Stony Brook. "Interdependence Day": It was fascinating to find out that only about a dozen groups were invited to this event; apparently we were recommended by former professor Dr Futyuma. Such groups as Amnesty International, NYPIRG, ACLU along with a number of student groups were also present.

The large gathering focused on the dichotomy between the "haves" and the "have-nots". The key note speaker was Joan Ross Frankson of the Women's Environment and Development Organization; or WEDO.

The challenges faced are political, economic, environmental and cultural. The hope is that folks will be more "involved, informed, even educated" and better learn about the situation confronting us. Workshops were scheduled later one to take more specific acts to get somewhere.

I attended a workshop on "Citizenship Skills." Other folks went to workshops on the Iraq situation, others on Economic Globalization and some on Student international interaction.

Our workshop centered on citizen responses to our difficulties. We presented two possible avenues: Voting and where we spend our money. Some folks felt frustrated about the effectiveness of voting; others felt we go with what we have.

Others called for various levels of demonstrations from passive to almost violent. Some forms of civil disobedience were described and various forms of positions about this area were discussed.

We may still have frustrated folks but we felt that maybe we should deal with the lesser of two evils rather than going for the ideal which may hurt the chances of the "lesser of two evils choice". It seems that "Knowledge is at least more powerful" than ignorant resignation.

People were not too familiar with CFI-LI/LISH but some were interested in our publications; some asked about the Humanist and some about the CFI-LI/LISH newsletter: They did not know much about us but did ask questions. It was interesting that European students showed interest in Humanism and the importance of philosophy. We handed out information. We hope some will follow-up.

Sunday Sept 14, Danbury Conn: On this day I attended another memorial service for a very important Humanist. Robert Wolsch was a humanist Counselor at Western Conn. State University. He also was a member of the Central Conn. Humanist group which is a chapter of both AHA and the Council. He performed many services for Humanists such as weddings, memorial services and others. He was a professor in communications at Western Conn. I was asked to address his history as the founder of Unitarian Universalist for Jewish Awareness: This was a sub movement within the UU movement very comparable to Sherwin Wine's movement. Robert started this program in 1979. I personally have conducted a number of services among UU such as Passover Seders, and Hanukah events. Robert organized this around secular aspects of Judaism. It was an impressive event with about 400 people attending.

CFI-LI forum, Friday Sept. 19 at 7:15 PM Plainview Public Library: At first I was uncertain as to what the focus of the talk was. I felt like it was a friendly conversation about free thought people and Mr. Taylor's personal experiences thereof. It was easy to find this speaker to be very likeable and provided an appealing presence.

After some conversation with a few other folks we found that Keith was bringing to us exchanges from cyberspace...
and how this new form of community becomes quite personal; this form of community helps us reinforce our various humanist values. Some issues involved the "atheists in foxholes" and the challenges of non believers in general.

It was also apparent that folks within the "community of reason" can show various levels of compassion and feelings. Mr. Taylor displayed emotional moments in his presentation. Mixed with this was a nice sampling of humor both during the presentation and during the question and answer period. He was also open to a nice range of ideas.

This speaker provided a very positive experience and is a fine model for the Humanist community.

September 27, 10:00 AM, Saturday at the Community Center in Cen-tereach, the newly created Suffolk Jewish Cultural School: This Rosh Hashanah event was a secural as it could get and still be reflective of a Jewish celebration. A large intergenerational group of about 75 people attended this event. As one who is not of Jewish heritage, I nevertheless felt quite at home as the major humanistic values were expounded. Numerous readings from folks of all ages were delivered. There was some music as well.

I am struck that even secular folks found the desire, and perhaps even the need to find connections during these times of the year. Shariee Calderone along with others such as Joan Kurtz did such a fine job in bringing so many together for these occasions.

Saturday, September 27 I attended the Long Island Havurah's Rosh Hashanah in Lido Beach at the Fire House at 2:00PM: Here we found about thirty folks, mostly older with a few younger adults in attendance.

This was also a well organized event with some of the readings and songs performed by a "Cantor" who did a nice job. This service did seem more to reflect the Jewish connection with some Hebrew but I also felt quite comfortable here as well. This ritual featured a talk by Len Cherlin helping us understand the more historically accurate account of the Jewish people. Len has much to teach us in the area. We appreciate his wisdom and knowledge.

Sunday, Sept. 28, Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island 11:00 AM: This platform featured Dr Joseph Chuman, a long time leader who is in Bergen NJ. The talk was titled "Reclaiming the Enlightenment." Dr Chuman laid out the circumstances around the background of the Enlightenment and the changes leading to the current state of affairs. (He did not use the term "Post modernism..."

He referred the current situation as just "Relativism." During the middle third of the platform address one could almost hear a great support for this "relativism." He made strong arguments against the Modernist perspective showing the acceptance of such evils as slavery, racism, gender chauvinism, as well as scientific mis-adventures such as military buildups and pollution. If one didn't pay attention one could leave believing that modernism is the greatest of evils.

However, Dr. Chuman then turned the tide to take advantage and defend modernist and Enlightenment approaches. We first realize the errors of past deeds. It is because of Modernist ways that we can make corrections. We can even see how the relativists had to use modernist tools to make their assessments themselves. We wonder if the "post modernists" could put together solutions or just continue to find problems to decry.

We can learn from past cultural biases, and with the use of reason can put together plans to rectify these errors.

Joseph Chuman is a most dynamic speaker who held the attention for what may have been a longer platform delivery than usual; but nobody left this platform early.

Friday Oct 3, 7:30 PM, Ethical Humanist Society, Garden City: Five organizations including CFI-LISH sponsored this event on Clean Money Clean Elections. This was an exciting meeting discussing the campaign finance reforms in Maine and Arizona with initiatives in a few other states.

This meeting was the effort to initiate this program in New York State. This reform would allow candidates to make very modest funding efforts to get in the program to receive public support. It would still allow some candidates to go the private route but the public funded folks would get competitive financing. This is a great effort to equalizing the campaign funding for less affluent candidates. This also empowers voters to choose the clean money campaign with a minimum of confusion. I hope this initiative could be followed up and get support not only on the New York State level but maybe on the national scene. Thanks to Gerry Dantone and Carol Pincus for spearheading this effort and of course for speaker Jon Bartholomew from Citizen Action of New York.
TIME TO GROW SOS!
The Council for Secular Humanism is requesting donations specifically for SOS programs administration.

Send your donations to:
CSH, PO Box 664, Amherst, NY 114226, and note that the gift is for SOS – NY.
The home page of SOS is http://www.secularsobriety.org. This web site has much information for downloading on running SOS groups.

SOS (Secular Organizations for Sobriety/Save Our Selves), a support organization for people recovering from alcohol and drug abuse, have added a new local group. Meetings will be held Thursday nights, at 7:30 P.M. at, 280 Suburban Avenue, #F, Deer Park, Suffolk County, NY. Open to all persons who need sobriety in their life. For info about this planning meeting or directions, contact Drew @ 631 242 2498.

BOOK DISCUSSION CLUB!
If you are interested call Bill Wade @ 631 765 2941 or write to him @ Box 631, Southold, NY, 11971.

Date: 14 November 2003, 8PM, Place: Bill Mohrman's house 143 St. Marks Place, Massapequa, NY 11758, 516 - 795 - 3318, skeptic1@optonline.net, Book: Morma Khouri, "Honor Lost: Love and Death in Modern-Day Jordan."

All future meetings will move to the
Plainview-Old Bethpage Library, 999 Old Country Rd., Plainview, @ 7:30PM!
Date: 5 December 2003, Book: Eric Alterman, "What Liberal Media? The Truth About Bias and the News."

Date: 2 January 2004, Book: Kurt Vonnegut, "Player Piano."

Date: 6 February 2004, Place: To be determined, Book: Richard Ellis, "The Empty Ocean: plundering the world's marine life."

Date: 5 March 2004, Book: Jon Entine, "Taboo: why black athletes dominate sports and why we're afraid to talk about it."

Date: 2 April 2004 Book: Michael Moore, "Stupid white men: -- and other sorry excuses for the state of the nation!"

Date: 7 May 2004, Book: Patricia Daniels Cornwell, "Portrait of a killer: Jack the Ripper case closed".

Date: 4 June 2004, Book: Jared Diamond, "Guns, germs, and steel: the fates of human societies."

SECULAR HUMANISM is the philosophy of life guided by reason and science, freed from religious and secular dogmas, motivated by an appreciation of life and the lives of others, seeking to reach goals of human happiness, freedom and understanding on this earth, in this life.