



RENEGADE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF SJH ● WINTER 2015

FREE THOUGHTS *from the President*

What a thrill it is to welcome you to our latest issue, our first since 2012! So much has changed since then, but I'll resist the lazy temptation to spit out a list. These changes all add up to suggest that we're evolving in the best sense of the word. Though it may not seem exciting to report that we've enacted bylaws, created [membership levels](#), and elected leadership. The deeper story is that we're more committed and better organized than ever before.

Almost daily I drive past the enormous Church of the Assumption here in Galloway, where acres of trees were felled to make way for its multiple buildings, countless parking spaces, Calvary crosses and an enormous "Keep Christ in Christmas" banner. It's tempting to despair at this monstrosity and envy their huge numbers and vast resources. But then I remind myself how recent polls show a decline in religious beliefs among the young, and then I think of Assumption as a hapless dinosaur blissfully unaware of the generational comet heading its way. Of course, what we're building here in South Jersey may not -- and should never -- be as massive nor as ostentatious as Assumption. Instead, we're creating a safe habitat for our plucky band of mammals to support one another and to have a small but vital impact on our community.

Your energy and commitment inspires me to show more energy and commitment of my own. Thank you for that.

I look forward to seeing what our group can accomplish together in 2015!
-Michael

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

South Jersey Humanists meet every last Saturday of the month at the [Unitarian Universalist Congregation](#) building in Galloway (75 S. Pomona Road and Liebzig St.)

- January 19:** Martin Luther King Jr., [Day of Service](#)
- January 31:** Monthly Meeting at UU, 10:30 am
- January 9:** Drinking Sceptically at Hangtime Bar and Grille, [343 E. White Horse Pike](#), Galloway, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
- February 12:** Darwin Day
- February 13:** Drinking Sceptically at Hangtime Bar & Grille Galloway 6:30 - 8:30 pm
- February 22:** [Day of Solidarity for Black Non-Believers](#)
- February 28 :** Monthly Meeting at UU, 10:30 am
- March 13:** Drinking Sceptically TBD
- March 28:** Monthly Meeting at UU, 10:30 am

IN THE NEWS

New Officers

South Jersey Humanists elected their first slate of officers in November. Serving a one-year term are:

Michael Cluff – President
Tim Branin – Vice President
Treasurer—Lindy Resnick
Secretary—Eddie Hicks
Publicity—Paula Duntley and Ronda Cluff

FBB Recognition

The humanist charitable organization, [Foundation Beyond Belief](#), selected South Jersey Humanists as their October 2014 "Team of the Month" thanks to our community work. In



2014, we tended a community garden and donated the produce to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, southern branch; we raised funds while participating in the South Jersey AIDS Walk and the Light the Night Walk for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (we raised around \$500 for each charity); and we tabled at the ACUA Earth Day event with a successful children's craft.



Spread the Word

Growing our membership is one way to increase our programs and expand the charitable work we can do. We now have [flyers](#) you can print and post on bulletin boards far and wide to spread the word about our group.

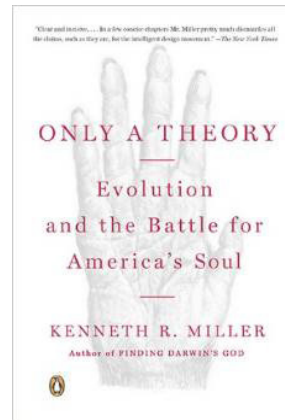
Podcasters in Our Midst

In case you didn't know, Tim and Mike have been running the [Secular Nation podcast](#) for the Atheist Alliance of America. This has given them an opportunity to connect with atheist activists around the country, covering topics like humanist perspectives on death with Greta Christina, atheism and Islam with Heina Dadabhoy, Maryam Namazie and Faisal Saeed al Mutar, helping the homeless with LaDonna York, and more. Don't miss their live podcast from Seattle!

You can download episodes and subscribe to the feed at:

AtheistAllianceAmerica.org/articles/category/secular-nation-podcast/

BOOK CLUB



Our January book selection, [Only a Theory: Evolution and the Battle for America's Soul](#) by Kenneth R. Miller, will be presented by Rich Mendell at our Jan. 31st monthly meeting.

From Publisher's Weekly (on amazon):

“Thoroughly enjoyable and informative, this new book by Miller (Finding Darwin's God), a Brown University biologist and leading proponent of evolution, dismantles the scientific basis of intelligent design piece by piece. He does this by taking seriously the claims of intelligent design (though with tongue often in cheek), such as irreducible complexity, and looking at the biological facts and the dubious conclusions ID concepts would lead to. He turns to the peer-reviewed scientific literature to demonstrate that the two biological phenomena ID proponents say could not have evolved—blood-clotting proteins and bacterial flagella—are now well-enough understood to fully rebut intelligent design. Looking at the underlying philosophical issues, Miller explains that ID's proponents want to replace modern science with a 'theistic science'... that would use the Divine not as ultimate cause, but as scientific explanation. Miller effectively explores the devastating consequences such a change would have on both science and society. In a measured, well-reasoned book, Miller explains why evolution does not deny us our humanity or our unique place in the universe. “



LOOKING AHEAD

Volunteering with the Community Food Bank of New Jersey

There are lots of options for volunteering with the CFBNJ. Here is their FAQ:

http://www.cfbnj.org/_assets/library/2013/02/Volunteer-FAQ-EHT.pdf

Groups like ours would be scheduled in two-hour shifts:

Weekday shifts occur M-F until 4pm
Saturday shifts happen from 9-11am (Saturdays are full through February 14th.)
Evening shifts can be arranged from 5-7pm.

In the coming weeks we will be deciding on dates for shifts, likely on weekends or evenings.

Contact Mike if you're interested in volunteering so that we can give CFBNJ some numbers!

Late Winter / Early Spring:

Movie Night! Saturday Night Live alum Julia Sweeney's [Letting Go of God](#). is a memorable and remarkable monologue on her loss of faith.

This Summer

[Dr. Paul Offit](#) has been on the Daily Show, The Colbert Report, and NPR. And now he's graciously agreed to speak with us! He's a nationally-recognized expert on vaccines and has written the terrific [Do You Believe in Magic? The Sense and Nonsense of Alternative Medicine](#). Our group is even more likely to appreciate his upcoming book, [Bad Faith: When Religious Belief Clashes with Modern Medicine](#), which is coming out in March.

KEEP IN TOUCH

We are an official chapter of the [American Humanist Association](#), and an affiliate of [American Atheists](#), and [Center for Inquiry](#).

Website: www.southjerseyhumanists.com



<https://www.facebook.com/SJHumanists>



<http://www.meetup.com/South-Jersey-Humanists/>

Please submit any stories, jokes, or suggestions along with some chocolate to [Paula](#), or coffee to [Ronda](#).

