

# RENEGADE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF SJH ● SPRING 2012

## FREE THOUGHTS

Spring is here!

March's meeting was energized by the Reason Rally the previous weekend. Those who went shared stories of atheist "rock star" sightings, comments on the strangely tame demeanor of the Westboro Baptist counter-protestors, the merits of Tim Minchin (unanimously positive), and rules against "protest stickers" within Federal parking garages.

Some of the exciting things we are currently working on include: development of a podcast, a humanist blog to be added to our website, and additional community outreach via our Spring clothing and food drives. All are encouraged to participate and innovate!

We welcome all newcomers to the group!

## IN THE NEWS

The Executive Director of the American Humanist Association, [Roy Speckhardt](#), will come to Gloucester County, South Jersey, to speak to NJHN/GloCo about Humanism and community activism. Roy will go over what Humanism is, what the AHA does to educate people about Humanism and to unite Humanists, and the importance of building Humanist communities at the grassroots/local level.

We expect a large turnout for Roy's talk, which will be held in Room A of the Gloucester County Library, 389 Wolfert Station Road,

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- South Jersey Humanists meet every last Saturday of the month at the [Linwood library](#). The meeting room is on the east side of the building.
- April 13:** Drinking Sceptically at the Dubliner, Galloway 6:30 - 8:30 pm
  - April 28 :** Library Meet-Up 10:30 am  
*Don't forget your food/clothing donations!*
  - May 3:** [National Day of Reason](#)
  - May 11:** Drinking Sceptically at the Dubliner, Galloway 6:30 - 8:30 pm
  - May 23:** [Roy Speckhardt speaks in Mullica Hill](#) 7:00 - 8:30 pm
  - May 26:** Library Meet-Up 10:30 am
  - June 8:** Drinking Sceptically at the Dubliner, Galloway 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Mullica Hill, NJ. It is a half an hour's drive south from the Philadelphia bridges.

Please feel free to connect on the [SJH forum](#) and make plans to carpool to see Roy speak!

## Notes from the Reason Rally

by Michael Cluff

Though you'd think an "Atheist Woodstock" would take aim at the Christian God, given the weather we were more likely to curse the old pagans Mother Nature and Thor at the Reason Rally in Washington this March.

Despite predictions of downpours and possibly lightning, an estimated 20,000 non-theists gathered on the Mall (*cont. pg.3*)



THE REASON RALLY

MARCH 24, 2012  
WASHINGTON, D.C.



Michael

Pictures of our very own South Jersey Humanists at the Reason Rally!



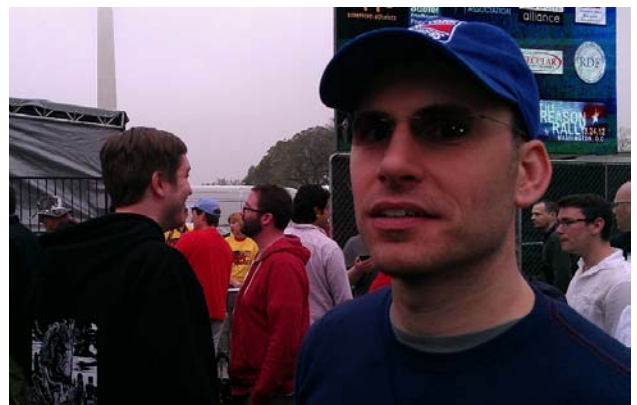
Tim Minchin with our Tim's sign!



Beth and Tim



Eddie



Damien



to see some high-profile atheists celebrating the value of reason over superstition. Where else could a biologist, a physicist, and a math teacher be greeted as rock stars? A bevy of atheist thinkers (Richard Dawkins, Lawrence Krauss), bloggers (Greta Christina, "Friendly Atheist" Hemant Mehta, PZ Myers), entertainers (Tim Minchin, Mythbuster Adam Savage, Bad Religion, Eddie Izzard), and activists from major atheist organizations each promoted rationalism in their own way, tied together with Paul Provenza as emcee.

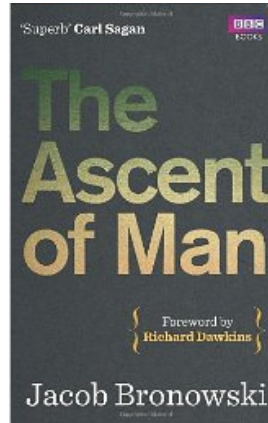
Several members of South Jersey Humanists braved the I-95 corridor and the decidedly poisonous Washington atmosphere to attend. We got there early and as a result had as good a view as one could expect (without paying \$500 for VIP seats). Tim Minchin saw our own Tim Branin's sign, "We Are Not the Crazy Ones," laughed slyly and said, "sometimes I wonder if we aren't." The highlights of the day were many, and I won't try to do them all justice here. However, I was particularly moved by [Nate Phelps' touching and humane speech](#), much of it directed toward his family from the notorious Westboro Baptist Church, who were counter protesting nearby. (Appropriately, they were positioned near the portable toilets, providing further evidence for the claim that "like attracts like.")

For me, the rally was energizing, and gave me a stronger sense of purpose to be "out and proud," and to take [Penn Jillette's](#) argument to heart that not only are we good without God, we're *better* without God.

### PHILOLOGY

Thanks to Beth for our book suggestion for this newsletter! This is one of her favorite quotes from the book:

*"There is no absolute knowledge. And those who claim it, whether they are scientists or dogmatists, open the door to tragedy. All information is imperfect. We have to treat it with humility. That is the human condition."*



### The Ascent of Man

From Amazon: Dr. Bronowski's classic history of humankind. Dr. Jacob Bronowski's groundbreaking book *The Ascent of Man* traces the development of human society through its understanding of science. First published in 1973, it is considered one of the first works of "popular science", illuminating the historical and social context of scientific development for a generation of readers. In his highly accessible style, Dr. Bronowski discusses human invention from the flint tool to geometry, agriculture to genetics, and from alchemy to the theory of relativity, showing how they all are expressions of our ability to understand and control nature. *The Ascent of Man* inspires, influences and informs as profoundly as ever.

Amazon also has *The Ascent of Man* in DVD format as presented by the BBC and Time-Life films.

### COMMUNITY FOCUS

Our clothing and food drive is fast approaching. Donations will be taken at our April 28th meet-up at the Linwood library. We will be donating to [Kathleen's Closet](#) in Egg Harbor Township.



## Light the Night Walk

Foundation Beyond Belief has formed an international team for the [Light The Night Walk](#) to raise money for blood cancer research. Light the Night is a leisure fundraising walk from the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Local chapters and affiliates are encouraged to consider joining this cause by creating a local LTN team. FBB has chosen Christopher Hitchens as their Honored Hero for 2012, and will be walking in his memory.

SJH would like to participate. We need someone to spearhead a team for a walk, or to coordinate with a nearby team.

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## National Day of Reason is May 3rd

National Day of Reason is the secular answer to National Day of Prayer. The goal of this effort is to celebrate reason—a concept all Americans can support—and to raise public awareness about the persistent threat to religious liberty posed by government intrusion into the private sphere of worship. Thus, National Day of Reason is a great way to serve our communities. Please consider volunteering at a soup kitchen or food bank, donating blood, cleaning up the highway, or donating your time in some way to make your community a better place. Write to your local government to protest National Day of Prayer as unconstitutional. Write in local papers, your blogs, and/or use social media to spread awareness about National Day of Reason!

## *KEEP IN TOUCH*

We are an official chapter of the [American Humanist Association](#).

Website: [www.southjerseyhumanists.com](http://www.southjerseyhumanists.com)

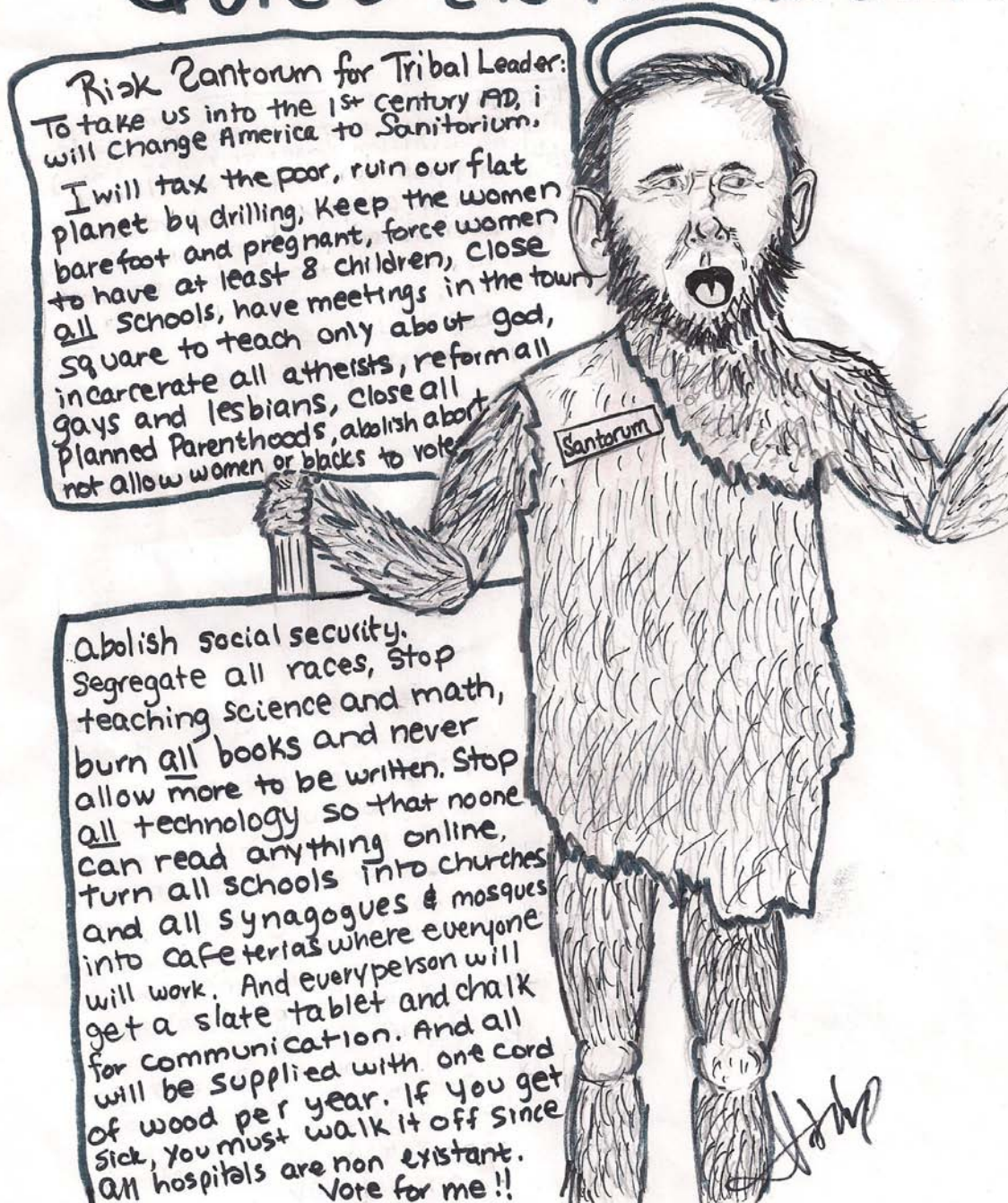
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/South-Jersey-Humanists/130523686979400>

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

Please submit any suggestions, stories, jokes, etc. to our editor: [pduntley@gmail.com](mailto:pduntley@gmail.com)



# Quiet the Neanderthal!



Cartoon by Ilona Knudson

