



RENEGADE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF SJH ● WINTER 2012

FREE THOUGHTS

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Renegade*, the quarterly newsletter of the South Jersey Humanists. Our January meeting allowed many of us the opportunity to reconnect and introduced several new faces to the group. We discussed some of the latest happenings in the news such as the courage of [Jessica Ahlquist](#), [James Randi's challenge to manufacturers of homeopathic remedies](#), and the [Reason Rally](#), which is happening March 24th in Washington D.C.

We were very excited to put this issue together, and hope that it continues to grow into a valuable resource for our group. We hope your new year has gotten off to a great start, and look forward to visiting with you throughout the year!

IN THE NEWS

One of our talented members, Ilona Knudson, was recently honored to have her portrait of Christopher Hitchens included in the [Atheist Foundation of Australia's](#) magazine. What a great tribute to an amazing life and such an influential man! Yay, Ilona!



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.

- February 10:** Drinking Skeptically at the Dubliner, Galloway 6:30 - 8:30 pm
- February 25 :** Library Meet-Up 10:30 am
- March 9:** Drinking Skeptically at the Dubliner, Galloway 6:30 - 8:30 pm
- March 24 :** Reason Rally in Washington D.C.
- March 31:** Library Meet-Up 10:30 am
- April 13:** Drinking Skeptically at the Dubliner, Galloway 6:30 - 8:30 pm
- April 28 :** Library Meet-Up 10:30 am
Don't forget your food/clothing donations!

During our last meeting we were lucky to receive a visit from a citizen of EHT who recently submitted a letter to the *Press of AC*, which struck a chord with our humanist philosophy. Donal Sheahan has some great things to say about religion and politics. We hope to see more of you Donal!

Here is his recent letter to the editor:

Why must candidates profess love for Jesus?

The warped priorities we place on candidates in the electoral process concerns me. It limits us in choosing suitable leaders.

Unless you are "a lover of Jesus" and/or a lapel-flag wearer, you are considered



unacceptable or unpatriotic. For example, we have two governors - one in South Carolina and the other in Louisiana, the former a Sikh and the latter a Hindu - who both became Christian in order to get elected.

Then we have a former speaker of the House - Newt Gingrich - who has switched from being a Lutheran to a Baptist and now a Roman Catholic and who has gone through two divorces. What's next for him? Traditional Mormonism and polygamy?

With his trophy wife, Callista, he lectures me on TV on the sacredness of the sacrament of matrimony.

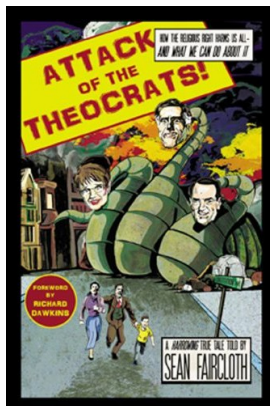
We need leaders who are well-educated, versed in the sciences and level-headed and who are not bowing and fawning to biblical fables.

DONAL SHEAHAN

Egg Harbor Township

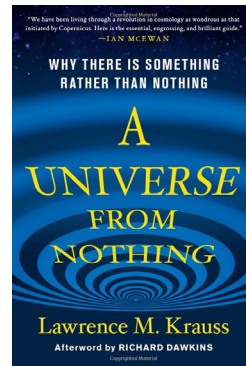
PHILOLOGY

We love books! Here are a couple of the great books members are currently reading.



Attack of the Theocrats
From Amazon: While much of the public debate in the United States over church-state issues has focused on the construction of nativity scenes in town squares and the addition of “under God” to the Pledge, Faircloth, who served ten years in the Maine legislature

and is now Director of Strategy & Policy for the U.S. Richard Dawkins Foundation, moves beyond the symbolism to explore the many ways federal and state legal codes privilege religion in law.



A Universe From Nothing
From Amazon: “WHERE DID THE UNIVERSE COME FROM? WHAT WAS THERE BEFORE IT? WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BRING? AND FINALLY, WHY IS THERE SOMETHING RATHER THAN NOTHING?”

Lawrence Krauss’s provocative answers to these and other timeless questions in a wildly popular lecture now on YouTube have attracted almost a million viewers. The last of these questions in particular has been at the center of religious and philosophical debates about the existence of God, and it’s the supposed counterargument to anyone who questions the need for God. As Krauss argues, scientists have, however, historically focused on other, more pressing issues—such as figuring out how the universe actually functions, which can ultimately help us to improve the quality of our lives.

Now, in a cosmological story that rivets as it enlightens, pioneering theoretical physicist Lawrence Krauss explains the groundbreaking new scientific advances that turn the most basic philosophical questions on their heads. One of the few prominent scientists today to have actively crossed the chasm between science and popular culture, Krauss reveals that modern science is addressing the question of why there is something rather than nothing, with surprising and fascinating results.



The staggeringly beautiful experimental observations and mind-bending new theories are all described accessibly in *A Universe from Nothing*, and they suggest that not only can something arise from nothing, something will always arise from nothing.

With his characteristic wry humor and wonderfully clear explanations, Krauss takes us back to the beginning of the beginning, presenting the most recent evidence for how our universe evolved—and the implications for how it's going to end. It will provoke, challenge, and delight readers as it looks at the most basic underpinnings of existence in a whole new way. And this knowledge that our universe will be quite different in the future from today has profound implications and directly affects how we live in the present. As Richard Dawkins has described it: This could potentially be the most important scientific book with implications for supernaturalism since Darwin.

A fascinating antidote to outmoded philosophical and religious thinking, *A Universe from Nothing* is a provocative, game-changing entry into the debate about the existence of God and everything that exists. “Forget Jesus,” Krauss has argued, “the stars died so you could be born.”

COMMUNITY FOCUS

Making a positive impact on our community has always been one of our goals. We will be having a bi-annual food and clothing drive to help residents of Atlantic County. One drive will be in the Spring and the other in the Fall.

We plan to submit our first donation to charity in May. That means we would like to receive your donation at our April 28th meet-up. If you are unable to attend our April meet-up, donations can be given to [Paula](#) or [Dale](#) in

advance. You may make arrangements with one of them via email in order to secure your donation.

Please begin saving any clothing you would like to donate!

Several of our members have expressed an interest in attending the [2012 Reason Rally](#) in Washington, D.C. this March. Represent SJH!

Contact [Michael](#) if you are interested in carpooling or meeting up while there.

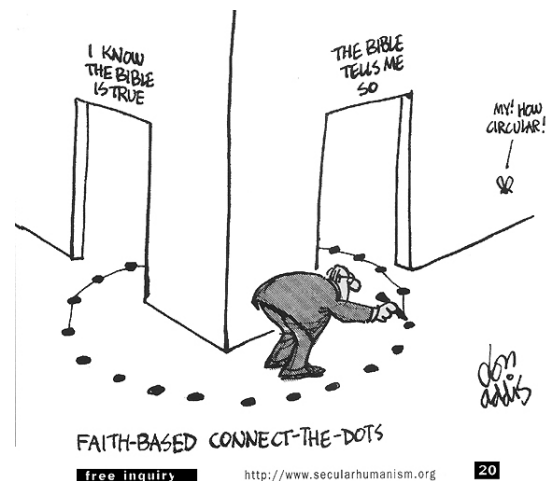
KEEP IN TOUCH

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

Website: 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

