



# Humanists Hawaii

NEWSLETTER

February 2007

*February meeting at Krauss Hall*

*Hank Kocol presents*

## *The Manhattan Project*

*More of the story than you might have heard*

*February 25, 2007*

*10:30 a.m.*

*Krauss Hall 112*

*University of Hawaii*

Hank and Cleo Kocol are visiting Hawaii now and Hank has graciously offered to present his program on "The Manhattan Project." Hank has recently presented this talk to the "Living in Retirement" seminars at the California State University, Sacramento, and was very well received. The program includes anecdotes and explanations that cover the scientific background and the political environment of the project. Hank says of his program:

There would be, necessarily, a bit of physics which I would need to describe so the audience would be able to understand some of the terms and concepts, but that is quite basic and will be understandable by all. I would describe the technical and engineering problems involved, again at a basic level, the acquisition of the property at which the research was conducted, the missions of the three main locations (Hanford, WA; Oak Ridge, TN; and Los Alamos, NM), the security involved, living conditions, and the results. I do not expect to get into "Should we have, or not have, used the weapons," unless someone brings that up, in which case I would explain what I have found in my reading, not personally taking either side.

On their past visits, Hank and Cleo have presented enlightening and informative stories about George Washington's life and thoughts and stories and pictures of the Lewis and Clark journey of discovery and the Kocol's trek along the Lewis and Clark Trail. Their presentations have been excellently prepared and performed and have been enjoyed and appreciated by HH members.

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## **"Queerer Than We Can Suppose? The Strangeness of Science"** **Richard Dawkins speaks at UH-Manoa**

Richard Dawkins will present "**Queerer Than We Can Suppose? The Strangeness of Science**," Tuesday **February 20 at 7 pm** in the **Campus Center Ballroom** as one of UH's [Distinguished Lecture Series](#). The presentation is free and open to the public. It's sure to be a packed house so if you want a seat, you'd best arrive at least 30 minutes early.

Humanists are great fans of Dawkins, most recently because of his recent book, [The God Delusion](#).

A Fellow of [New College, at the University of Oxford](#), Richard Dawkins first came to prominence with his 1976 book [The Selfish Gene](#), which popularized the [gene-centric view of evolution](#) and introduced the term [meme](#) into the lexicon. In 1982, he made a major contribution to the science of evolution with the theory, presented in his widely cited book [The Extended Phenotype](#), that [phenotypic effects](#) are not

limited to an organism's body but can stretch far into the environment. He has since written [The Blind Watchmaker](#) (1986), [River Out of Eden](#) (1995), [Climbing Mount Improbable](#) (1996), [Unweaving the Rainbow](#) (1998), [A Devil's Chaplain](#) (2003), [The Ancestor's Tale](#) (2004), and [The God Delusion](#) (2006), and has appeared in numerous radio and television about [evolutionary biology](#), [creationism](#), and [religion](#).

Dawkins is an outspoken [atheist](#), [humanist](#), and [sceptic](#), and a prominent member of the [Brights movement](#). In a play on [Thomas Huxley's](#) epithet "Darwin's bulldog", Dawkins' impassioned defense of evolution has earned him the appellation "Darwin's rottweiler".

Dawkins visit is Cosponsored by the [Department of Zoology](#) and the [Program in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology](#), University of Hawaii, Manoa.

## President Andi promotes death with dignity

HH's Andi van der Voort responds to attacks by opponents to House Bill 675

Humanists Hawaii president Andi van der Voort, who is also president of the state chapter of the Final Exit Network, was interviewed by Treena Shapiro of the Honolulu Advertiser ("[Doctor-aided suicide back on legislative front burner](#)," February 7, 2007).

### Arguments against

Reporting on the death-with-dignity bill, House Bill 675, being considered by the state House Committee on Health, the story listed the opposition arguments:

Physicians [through the Hawaii Medical Association] have worried that the authority to help terminate a patient's life would compromise their medical relationships, since patients expect them to fight to keep them alive . . .

The disabled community, on the other hand, worries that insurance companies will make it harder to receive care and steer their clients toward physician-assisted suicide instead.

The physicians argument is weak since numerous physicians have admitted they feel themselves able to cut off life support and administer potentially lethal doses of painkillers to terminal patients in near-death cases.

In addition to that, most Hawaii physicians are not members of the HMA and a number of them have declared themselves in favor of an assisted-suicide bill. Foremost among these is Humanist Hawaii member John Spangler who is treasurer of Hawaii's Final Exit Network chapter.

The reference to nefarious health insurance companies may have some merit . . .

### Responses

Shapiro's article gave space for supporters of physician-assisted suicide to respond:

Rachel Orange, 31, said that opponents are blowing the issue out of proportion. If physician-assisted suicide is legalized, "We aren't going to start killing people," she argued. "A lot of people live out very painful ends to their lives and would

like to have more of a choice about how they go."

Andi van der Voort, president of the state chapter of the Final Exit Network, said that patients who are suffering and need relief need to have a choice whether or not to end their lives, and physicians are the only source of the lethal medication they need.

"It shouldn't be anyone else's business," she said. "It beats jumping off a freeway overhang. It beats swimming out in the ocean so far that they drown."

### Death by starvation

For some terminally ill patients, the only recourse is to starve themselves. "I don't want to have to do that," [Andi] said. "I should be able to say that I've had enough, I don't want to suffer anymore."

To Kelly Rosati, executive director of the Hawai'i Family Forum, which opposes physician-assisted suicide, the answer is better end-of-life care, such as palliative care aimed at keeping people pain-free and comfortable as they go through the natural disease process.

Such care aims at "eliminating the reasons why people request suicide in the first place," Rosati said.

But van der Voort said that argument has been used for five years and terminally ill patients are still suffering.

"I don't want to have to wait any longer. I'm just about 80," she said. "If they're going to improve it, why don't they do it? Why do we have to threaten them with getting a pill?"

### Failed in committee

Unfortunately, the bill failed in committee. The Health Committee voted 6-1 last night to hold the bill which had faced far greater numbers of opponents than supporters – although emotions had been intense on both sides. A similar bill in the Senate is also not expected to make it out of committee.

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## American Humanist Association redefines its official purpose

IRS has reclassified AHA

An email from [American Humanist Association](#) Executive Director Roy Speckhardt recently notified AHA chapters – of which HH is one – that the American Humanist Association has received notice from the IRS officially approving AHA's request for reclassification of its tax exempt status.

The AHA maintains its status as a publicly supported 501(c)(3) charity with an intact group exemption, but has successfully shifted its official purpose from religious to educational.

This change is retroactively effective as of January 1, 2003.

The original humanist manifesto of 1933 calls Humanism religious while at the same time affirming its naturalistic approach and its rejection of supernatural entities. While referring to itself as a religion, the original manifesto affirms "We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of 'new thought'." 'New thought' being the 1933 version of 'New Age'.

# Humanists Hawaii invited to join celebration of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Open House

Rebecca Goodman invites Humanist Hawaii members to join the [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute](#) (OLLI) folks for an open house on Friday, February 16 from 2 pm to 4 pm in Krauss 112. OLLI is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary after a hugely successful year of fine courses, great participation and exciting grants.

Free food and refreshments will be available. And HH members will be interested in checking out the variety of courses listed in the OLLI catalogs in the lobby.

As a testimony to its success, less than a year after receiving its first \$1 million endowment from The [Bernard Osher Foundation of San Francisco](#), the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa received a second \$1 million endowment from the Foundation. The UH Manoa program is one of only five university-based lifelong learning programs in the US to receive unsolicited second endowments from the Osher Foundation.

The endowments were awarded based on demonstrated program success, strong evidence of sustainability, and increasing local demand for services.

The OLLI program at UH Manoa has more than 1,000 members and is under the sponsorship of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences. It is an educational membership program for people 50+ who want to learn for the joy of it, connect with peers, enhance health and well-being, and give back to the community. The program provides an array of courses,

life review workshops, creative writing and poetry workshops, film series, performing arts events, museum tours, service projects and more. It received the national MindAlert Award from the MetLife Foundation and the American Society on Aging in 2004 in the category of Innovative Older Adult Learning Program.

The Bernard Osher Foundation is a charitable foundation established in 1977 by Bernard Osher, a businessman and community leader in San Francisco. His philanthropy has benefited a wide range of educational, cultural and other nonprofit organizations. Since 2002, the Foundation has been offering grants and endowment funding to university-based lifelong learning programs and scholarship programs for non-traditional students returning to university. Currently, the Foundation is supporting 93 university-based lifelong learning programs in 39 states and the District of Columbia.

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See scheduled events, pictures of officers and current and archived newsletters at our website: <http://hawaii.humanists.net/>

## Directions to HH meeting place

Driving on Dole Street past the University, turn mauka on East West Road then ewa on Correa Road. Drive to the end and turn makai toward the circle with the big tree. There's free parking on part of the circle, on the other side of Krauss Hall and various lots around campus. The entrance to Krauss Hall 112 is at the Diamondhead end of the lily pond.

We'll put up a sign by the door.

## HH's Meeting Place Room 112 Krauss Hall



HH meets the last (not the fourth) Sunday of each month at 10:30 am. Hope to see you all.

## No Bibles, No Qurans in Courts

*American Humanist Association*

Humanists take a unique approach to the North Carolina Court of Appeals January 16<sup>th</sup> ruling that an American Civil Liberties Union suit, which calls for the addition of the Quran to the Bible for use in court oaths, may go forward.

"We humanists have watched the various attempts to maintain a Christian tradition in American courtrooms, and the effort has become convoluted to the point of absurdity," said Mel Lipman, a constitutional attorney who is president of the American Humanist Association. "Today we see a seemingly noble attempt to support diversity and inclusiveness by adding a second religious text, the Quran. But where will it all lead?"

"Will the courts soon be expected to stock an entire religious library? Imagine every court in the land also having to have on hand the Pali Tripitaka for Buddhists and the Upanishads for Hindus, as well as the Satanic Bible for Satanists and numerous other texts for various other sects. Perhaps courts will be forced to adopt a BYOB approach, where potential witnesses or even court officials are told, 'Bring Your Own Book.' And if somebody wants to swear on The Little Engine that Could, they could!"

"This plan for pluralism may sound laudable on the surface but it only highlights the problem inherent in trying to include a religious text in a secular justice system," added AHA Executive Director Roy Speckhardt.

As recently as the early twentieth century some state courts didn't allow people who didn't believe in a god to give testimony because such individuals wouldn't be able to honestly swear an oath on the Bible. So freethinkers and humanists began an active campaign to allow for secular oaths in every state—a campaign that has achieved overwhelming success. And no American court today bans testimony by nontheists.

"For over a century humanists and freethinkers have struggled to make sure that nonreligious people are allowed a secular oath in our courts," Speckhardt further said. "But it is now clear that this concession was inadequate because it singles nonreligious people out in a way that can bias the jury, and it opens the door for confusion like that seen in today's case. So we are now calling for complete secularization of our judicial system."

"Courts of law are a purely secular institution," concluded Lipman. "The courts have no business singling people out for their particular religious beliefs or their lack of such. Information of this sort, if not relevant to the case at hand, can tip the scales of justice. So the time has come to take an action long overdue and completely secularize the oath process. It's the only sure way to be completely even handed and fair to everyone."

## Noam Chomsky interviewed in redesigned *Humanist* magazine

*American Humanist Association*

*The Humanist* magazine, established in 1941, has received a makeover for 2007 under its new editor, Jennifer Bardi. The January/February 2007 issue will be the first to feature a revamped Up



Front section, which includes illuminating research results, quotes from notable humanists and other like-minded luminaries, and relevant commentary from back issues of twenty-five and fifty years ago.

The cover story, by John Buell, examines future possibilities for modern transportation. Buell urges us to refigure modern transportation in a more environmentally friendly way that would improve our personal lives.

Nobel laureate Herbert Hauptman illustrates the potential of basic science by connecting a series of past discoveries to a modern application – x-ray crystallography – and its ultimate contribution to the betterment of human health.

And the *Humanist Interview* features renowned linguist, skeptic, and social critic Noam Chomsky. He discusses the human animal, the religious right, a collapse of secular nationalism, and the politics of fear.

Though it has a new look, the *Humanist* magazine as always remains committed to its core: critical inquiry and social concern from a Humanist perspective, presenting moral dilemmas, exposing various rights abuses, and grappling with the challenges of life in the 21st century, with an eye toward solutions.

In addition to the print magazine, the *Humanist Online* is being redesigned as well, with selected articles in PDF format, new web-only content, and a link to the Humanist News blog, an interactive forum for commentary on breaking news and political activities. The new website will appear today around noon. More changes will follow. The website is located at [www.thehumanist.org](http://www.thehumanist.org).

"Readers of the *Humanist* operate from a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion," says Humanist magazine editor Jennifer Bardi. "As such, they want a magazine that not only points out what's going wrong in the world but also what's going right. They like a good challenge, sharp wit, and are vitally interested in the human potential for problem solving. And that's exactly what we're going to give them."

Bardi is a former science editor from San Diego, California.

## US groups renew fight for Oxford scholar denied visa

*American Civil Liberties Union*

The ACLU and the NYCLU joined several advocacy groups in a new legal complaint in the ongoing fight to secure a visa for prominent Swiss scholar Tariq Ramadan.

The complaint also challenges the Patriot Act's "ideological exclusion" provision, which authorizes the government to deny visas to foreign citizens on the basis of their political views.

"The government is excluding Professor Ramadan from the United States not because he is a threat to national security but because of his politics, and that has been clear since the government first revoked Professor Ramadan's visa in 2004," said Jameel Jaffer, Deputy Director of the ACLU's National Security Program and lead counsel in the case. "The government is using the immigration laws as a means of censoring academic and political debate inside the United States."

The original lawsuit was filed in January 2006 by the ACLU and New York Civil Liberties Union on behalf of the American Academy of Religion, the American Association of University Professors and PEN American Center, who say that the government is preventing their members from meeting with Ramadan and from hearing constitutionally protected speech.

Ramadan was set to teach at the University of Notre Dame in 2004 until the government barred him from re-entering the United States by invoking the Patriot Act's "ideological exclusion" provision, which applies to those who have "endorsed or espoused" terrorism. Government attorneys failed to produce any evidence showing that Ramadan had endorsed terrorism and abandoned the allegation altogether during the course of litigation.

In June 2006, U.S. District Court Judge Paul A. Crotty ordered the government to stop stonewalling and either grant Ramadan a visa or explain why it would not do so.

The court also issued a ruling stating that the government cannot bar non-citizens from the United States simply because of their political views.

Facing the court-imposed deadline, the State Department offered a new pretext for excluding Ramadan last September: that he had donated about 600 Euros between 1998 and 2002 to French and Swiss organizations that provide humanitarian aid to Palestinians – information Ramadan voluntarily gave to the State Department several months prior. The organizations are legitimate charities in Europe, but the Bush administration added the groups to a blacklist in 2003 because they allegedly provide "material support" to Hamas.

The ACLU's amended complaint argues that the donations were not a basis for inadmissibility at the time they were made and the current material support provision cannot be applied retroactively.

## Attorneys face appeals court in ACLU challenge to Bush spy program

*American Civil Liberties Union*

Last week in Cincinnati, ACLU attorneys went head-to-head with the National Security Agency (NSA) over the president's illegal spying program. In a federal court room, the ACLU argued that the court must exercise its proper authority and require the president to follow the law.

The hearing was the next step in the *ACLU v. NSA* case, following the 2006 federal court ruling that found the Bush administration's program unconstitutional.

"Unchecked government spying has no place in a democratic society," said Ann Beeson, Associate Legal Director of the ACLU and lead attorney in the case. "Under our Constitution, the president does not have the authority to ignore laws he does not like, whenever he wants."

Despite unyielding claims that they could not comply with the laws that govern domestic surveillance, the Bush administration conceded in January that the Foreign Intelligence Court has an oversight role in NSA. But the president is still claiming the "inherent authority" to engage in warrantless eavesdropping, and even his own attorneys acknowledged that nothing would stop him from resuming warrantless surveillance at any time. In Cincinnati, the ACLU argued that only an order from the court saying that the president cannot violate the law would prevent that from happening.

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## Michigan court bans domestic partner benefits; ACLU vows to appeal

*American Civil Liberties Union*

The Michigan Court of Appeals ruled last week that the state's marriage amendment prohibits public employers from offering domestic partner benefits.

The decision overturns a ruling that public employers may offer domestic partner benefits without violating the marriage amendment.

"We strongly disagree with the court's decision and plan on appealing to the Michigan Supreme Court," said Kary Moss, Executive Director of the ACLU of Michigan. "It was never the intention of Michigan voters who approved the marriage amendment to take health care benefits away from Michigan families."

When voters passed the amendment in November 2004, they were told that it would not impact domestic partnership benefits that provide health coverage for same-sex couples. The ACLU argued that a public employer voluntarily offering benefits to same-sex domestic partners did not in turn create a marriage.

"Providing health insurance to same sex domestic partners is vastly different from recognition of a marriage and the over one thousand benefits and rights that marriage confers," the ACLU argued in the appeal brief.

## Humanist letter

*The Honolulu Advertiser, February 10, 2007*

### Lt. Watada one of the heroes of his generation

The judge in the first court-martial 1st Lt. Ehren Watada decided that the legality of the Iraq war was irrelevant to the case.

Under any reasonable standard, this war is one of aggression, originally based on lies and therefore illegal under international law.

It was the Nuremberg trials, led by the United States at the end of World War II, that established the principle that no one is blameless for war crimes simply because the defendant was "only following orders."

If this war is illegal, pursuing the war is a crime in itself. By taking his stand against illegal actions of this administration, Lt. Watada is one of the heroes of his generation.

Hank Kocol  
Honolulu

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## Thoughts to ponder . . .

*From the net à la Wendy T.*

For those who love the philosophy of hypocrisy and ambiguity . . .

1. Don't sweat the petty things and don't pet the sweaty things
2. One tequila, two tequila, three tequila, floor.
3. Atheism is a non-prophet organization.
4. If man evolved from monkeys and apes, why do we still have monkeys and apes?
5. The main reason Santa is so jolly is because he knows where all the bad girls live.
6. I went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman, "Where's the self-help section?"  
She said if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.
7. What if there were no hypothetical questions?
8. If a deaf person swears, does his mother wash his hands with soap?
9. If a guy with multiple personalities threatens to kill himself, is it considered a hostage situation?

10. Is there another word for synonym?
11. Where do forest rangers go to "get away from it all?"
12. What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?
13. If a parsley farmer is sued, can they garnish his wages?
14. Would a fly without wings be called a walk?
15. Why do they lock gas station bathrooms? Are they afraid someone will clean them?
16. If a turtle doesn't have a shell, is he homeless or naked?
17. Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?
18. If the police arrest a mime, do they tell him he has the right to start speaking?
19. Why do they put Braille on the drive-through bank machines?
20. How do they get deer to cross the road only at those yellow road signs?
21. What was the best thing before sliced bread?
22. One nice thing about egotists: they don't talk about other people.
23. Does the Little Mermaid wear an algebra?
24. Do infants enjoy infancy as much as adults enjoy adultery?
25. How is it possible to have a civil war?
26. If one synchronized swimmer drowns, do the rest drown, too?
27. If you ate both pasta and antipasto, would you still be hungry?
28. If you try to fail, and succeed, which have you done?
29. Whose cruel idea was it for the word "Lisp" to have "S" in it?
30. Why are hemorrhoids called "hemorrhoids" instead of "asteroids"?
31. Why is it called tourist season if we can't shoot at them?
32. Why is there an expiration date on sour cream?
33. If you spin an oriental man in a circle three times does he become disoriented?

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## Set the People Free

*"The clergy, by getting themselves established by law and engrafted into the machine of government, have been a very formidable engine against the civil and religious rights of man."*

– Thomas Jefferson, as quoted by Saul K. Padover in *Thomas Jefferson on Democracy*, New York, 1946, p. 165)

# USA: How a state funded healthcare program turned into a global crusade

*Rationalist International Bulletin #162*

The powerful Christian Right in the USA has taken control of the government's flagship program to combat AIDS worldwide. Under their influence, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) that commands a five-year budget of \$15 billion, is being misused for a crusade for conservative Christian values instead for fighting the disease.

PEPFAR was launched in January 2003. Initially, the respected world help organisation CARE was the government's contract partner in the fight against AIDS in Africa and Asia. CARE was to distribute \$50 million over two years in competitive grants to suitable subcontractors and to oversee their work. But the CARE-contract was a thorn in the flesh of the Christian Right. In their eyes, CARE committed two cardinal sins: Though they tried to cooperate with President Bush's "faith-based initiative," distributing a major part of the grants to religious organisations, they insisted that all grantees – secular or religious – be technically qualified for the entrusted work. The Christian Right wanted the grant money to be distributed exclusively within their ideological and political circles

CARE's second sin was to promote the use of condoms to prevent AIDS infection. This was in accordance with earlier US policy, but against the agenda of Christian crusaders who preached sexual abstinence as the only way to prevent AIDS. Under their pressure, official government policy shifted with the launching of PEPFAR from recommending condom use to promoting "abstinence, faithfulness, and, when appropriate, condoms". But this was still not enough of a concession. Condoms are – unofficially – banned and everybody considering them useful is eliminated from the program.

In 2006, the propagandists of Christian morality launched a furious campaign against CARE, accusing the organisation of being "anti-American" and

"promoting prostitution and drug use". The US government obliged and the CARE contract was discontinued and replaced by a \$200 million program that aims at Christian groups subscribing to the abstinence-line. After all, the smear campaign was led by President Bush's strongest supporters.

The new program is overseen by the government agency USAID. Under the guidance of the White House' "Faith-based office", USAID has been cleansed of "secular elements" and given a politically reliable and strongly evangelical management that obeys the directives of their political bosses and distributes grants to the politically correct recipients.

In 2003, Congress passed and President Bush signed a law that makes it obligatory for any US-based group receiving anti-AIDS funds to pledge that they will adopt an anti-prostitution policy. This law has been declared unconstitutional by several courts, but still stands. Several recipients of USAID grants have been successfully educating prostitutes and seeking their cooperation in preventing HIV infection. Some of them refused to sign the pledge and lost their grants.

One victim of the pledge is the American Jewish World Service, one of a very few faith-based but non-Christian recipients included under the CARE contract. The AJWS tries to stop the spread of AIDS by providing educational opportunities for children of prostitutes in Kenya, to help mothers leave brothels.

Another, the Brazilian government, lost a \$40 million grant. Brazil is running a very successful anti-AIDS program that has kept the infection rate among young adults under 1%. Pedro Chequer, director of the program, credits the fact that the program includes prostitutes as essential partners in its HIV prevention efforts. He says his country strived to adhere to "the established principles of the scientific method and not allow theological beliefs and dogma to interfere."

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Do you think that humans should search relentlessly for truth, that they feel compassion for all humankind and determine and promote what is right?

Do you think people can live meaningful, responsible and ethical lives without the need for believing in supernatural beings or places?

Would you like to join a group that shares your thoughts? Humanists – generally – believe these things.

If you'd like to join Humanists Hawaii, please complete and mail this form to: Marcia Lambeth at 825 Coolidge St. #310 Honolulu HI 96826. During 2007 we aren't collecting annual dues, but donations are gratefully accepted.

Dr/Mr/Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phones: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

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**God: The Failed Hypothesis. How Science Shows That God Does Not Exist** by Victor J. Stenger. 287 pages. Prometheus Books, January 25, 2007, hardcover.

Vic Stenger, former president of Humanists Hawaii and emeritus professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Hawaii and currently adjunct professor of philosophy at the University of Colorado, defines and attacks the God Hypothesis head-on from a [scientific point of view](#) in his new book, *God: The Failed Hypothesis*.

Historically, arguments for and against the existence of God have been largely confined to philosophy and theology while science sat on the sidelines and quietly watched the game of words march up and down the field. Despite the fact that science has revolutionized every aspect of human life and greatly clarified our understanding of the world, somehow the notion has arisen that it has nothing to say about the possibility of a supreme being, worshipped by much of humanity as the source of all reality. Stenger contends that, if God exists, some evidence for this existence should be detectable by scientific means, considering the central role that God is alleged to play in the operation of the universe and the lives of humans.

Treating the traditional God concept, as conventionally presented in the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions, like any other scientific hypothesis, Stenger examines all of the claims made for God's

existence. He considers the latest Intelligent Design arguments for evidence of God's influence in biology. He looks at human behavior for evidence of immaterial souls and the possible effects of prayer. He discusses the findings of physics and astronomy, weighing suggestions that the universe is the work of a creator and that humans are God's special creation. After evaluating all the scientific evidence, Stenger concludes that beyond a reasonable doubt the universe and life appear exactly as we might expect if there were no God.

[Richard Dawkins](#), author of *The God Delusion*, says of The God Hypothesis:

"Darwin chased God out of his old haunts in biology, and he scurried for safety down the rabbit hole of physics. The laws and constants of the universe, we were told, are too good to be true: a set-up, carefully tuned to allow the eventual evolution of life. It needed a good physicist to show us the fallacy, and Victor Stenger lucidly does so. The faithful won't change their minds, of course (that is what faith means) but Victor Stenger drives a pack of energetic ferrets down the last major bolt hole and God is running out of refuges in which to hide. I learned an enormous amount from this splendid book."



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