



Humanists Hawaii

NEWSLETTER

February 2008

February meeting

Cleo Kocol presents

Cleo's

Humanist Memories and Reflections

February 24, 2008

10:30 a.m.

Krauss Hall 112

University of Hawaii

Cleo Kocol has presented this program recently at the Steve Allen Theater at the Center for Inquiry in Los Angeles. The program consists of original poetry, a segment about Margaret Sanger and an original skit.

In the early and mid 1980's Cleo wrote and presented her one woman, many character women's history shows throughout much of the United States. She performed that program at the American Humanist Association conference in 1982. She has won prizes for her poetry and other writings. Currently she writes a monthly column published in the *Sacramento Bee*.

According to the *Bee*: "Cleo Fellers Kocol of Sun City Roseville published fiction and nonfiction before turning to poetry. She won the international Dancing Poetry Contest in 2003, and her poetry was set to music, choreographed and danced at the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco."

Cleo has addressed our group before. Most recently (2001) with stories and pictures about the Kocol's trek along the Louis and Clark Trail. We know she will bring broad knowledge, research and experience together to give us a lively and inspiring presentation.

The Gallery on the Pali

Leap Year Art Show

By Norma Nichols

"Leap Year: UU Members and Friends" on exhibit from February 17 to March 28, 2008 showcases works of art done by members and friends of First Unitarian Church of Honolulu.

Gallery on the Pali is the oldest gallery in the state supporting Hawaii's artists. It is located at First Unitarian Church, 2500 Pali Highway, one block makai of Jack Lane where a U-turn on the Pali is ok. Entry and parking is free and the hours are Monday through Friday 9am – 8pm, Saturday and Sunday 1 – 4 pm.

Future exhibits include:

March 30 to May 2 PUA: FLOWERS and POETRY III

May 4 to June 6: ABSTRACT ART by WOMEN

June 8 to July 11: ENDANGERED IMAGES of HAWAIIAN NATURE

For more information, call Director Norma Nichols at 526-1191.

Oahu's last dairy closes

Honolulu Advertiser, 01/24/08

O'ahu's last dairy will shut the spigots Feb. 15, which will make the island's 910,000 residents entirely dependent on imported milk.

The closing of Pacific Dairy in Wai'anae Valley will leave Hawai'i with just two Big Island dairies, which produce milk almost exclusively for that island.

As recently as 1980, Hawai'i had about two dozen dairies and was totally self-sufficient in milk.

In addition to urban encroachment, farmers face other hurdles, including a lack of long-term leases on private-sector agricultural lands, said UH's Lee.

Farmers can't justify investing in their operations without long-term leases, he said.

"The inability to have long-term leases makes farmers here practice nomadic farming," Chin Lee, a dairy extension specialist at the University of Hawai'i, said. "Farmers can't be constantly in a nomadic state because you cannot nurture the land. How can you establish a business if you're constantly in a nomadic state?"

The Matrix of the Brain

A Mind of its Own: How Your Brain Distorts and Deceives by Cordelia Fine. WW Norton, 2006.

224 pages. Hardcover, \$24.95.

a book review by David Ludden from [eskeptic](#)

In the 1999 science-fantasy film *The Matrix*, people have been plugged into a giant computer that creates a virtual reality that is both pleasing and plausible. A few renegade humans have unplugged themselves from the Matrix only to wake up to a miserable underground existence below a war-scorched Earth. In a similar fashion, our brains generate a comforting version of reality that protects us from the desolation and despair of the real world.

We implicitly trust the products of our brains – our perceptions, our memories, our judgments, our sense of self. We say, “I know what I saw,” and we ask, “How could I forget?” After all, if you cannot trust your own brain, who can you trust? But all is not as it seems. More than half a century of cognitive and social psychology research has shown that much of what we see, remember, and think is an illusion. In her new book *A Mind of its Own*, Cordelia Fine lays out in a highly entertaining fashion the myriad ways in which our vain, immoral, pig-headed brains are constantly deceiving us.

Although we like to think of ourselves as rational beings, our brains covertly strive to create for us a view of the world and of ourselves that is self serving but not necessarily consistent with reality. Beliefs and opinions are formed quickly and become part of how we define ourselves, so the brain selectively perceives and recalls evidence that supports cherished beliefs while disregarding or forgetting evidence that contradicts our beliefs. Fine calls this “motivated skepticism.” We are naturally skeptical of anything that challenges our beliefs, but accepting of anything that bolsters our beliefs, and hence our egos. For example, it is for us easy to mock the tenets of other religions – “How could they possibly believe that?” – while swallowing whole the equally far-fetched teachings of our own church.

Motivated skepticism can even lead to belief polarization, a process whereby counterevidence only strengthens the convictions of our beliefs. The counterevidence is strenuously scrutinized for any weakness, which is then used to diminish the validity of evidence for our opponent’s point of view. Our selective perceptions are further bolstered by illusory correlations. These are caused largely by selective memory, in which we remember only supporting examples but not counterexamples. Or we simply dismiss counterexamples as aberrations.

Our brains also trick us into believing we have more control over situations than we really do. We feel safer driving than flying because we think we are in control behind the steering wheel. This is especially true when things turn out in our favor. We take credit for picking a winning lottery ticket, but blame a losing ticket on bad luck. It would seem that going through

life deluded by our own brains would not be a good thing, but that is not necessarily the case. Some people have markedly more balanced self-perceptions than normal people – they know clearly what their limitations are and how little control they actually have over their lives. They are also clinically depressed, and seeing reality for what it is, they become overwhelmed and lose the desire to go on living. So it seems that our brains delude us to keep us happy, healthy and ready to face life’s challenges. In fact, people who are generally optimistic tend to live longer.

Emotional arousal also plays an important role in cognitive functions. Brain damage can create a mismatch between emotion and rational thought. People who cannot experience arousal during the decision making process, for example, become incapable of making decisions or consistently make poor choices. It seems that the gut feeling we get when faced with a choice is more important than any rational decision-making process.

By three quarters of the way through the book, the reader is yearning for a return to blissful ignorance, as there seems to be no escape from what Fine calls “our innate lack of scientific rigor.” But still there is hope. Fine advises that we “[t]reat with the greatest suspicion the proof of [our] own eyes.” In other words, we need to trust in the scientific method to lead us out of the tangle of deceptions our brains weave around us. As with any other behavior, modes of thinking can be practiced until they become automatic, and so Fine is hopeful that practice in critical thinking can help guard us from the extravagances of our own brains.

One of the strongest points of this book is the way Fine deftly describes how research is done in psychology. She does not just tell what is known about how the brain deceives, she explains how we know it. In friendly terms, she presents hypotheses to test, clearly describes how experiments are set up, and shows us how reasonable conclusions are drawn from the data. Thus, she demonstrates how the scientific method can be used to overcome our false beliefs and misconceptions.

Life is pleasant inside the virtual reality of our minds. So what if we think we are more intelligent or virtuous than others and believe we are more in control than we really are? Such minor self-deceptions are, for the most part, harmless, and they may help us to get through the day. But we are not necessarily prisoners of our minds. When the deceptions become harmful to ourselves and others, there is a way out. Science gives us a way to unplug ourselves from the Matrix of our brains.

Check out the entire article at [eskeptic for November 20th, 2007](#).

Fields of Fuel wins at Sundance

American Humanist Association

Fields of Fuel, a documentary of which the American Humanist Association is a partner and fiscal sponsor, won the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival. The award was presented to the film's director, humanist Josh Tickell, at the January 26 awards ceremony hosted by actor William H. Macy.

But to those involved with the film, the award came as no surprise. For when the film had had its public premiere on Monday, January 21, it received a standing ovation that lasted the full length of the credits -- a unique phenomenon enjoyed by no other documentary at the festival. Prior to that, *Fields of Fuel* had been selected by the Sundance Institute to launch the Sundance Film Festival at Robert Redford's Preserve on Wednesday, January 16. Later, at the public part of the festival in Park City and Salt Lake City, Utah, the film was screened seven more times during the week of its premiere, two showings were exclusively for high school students. Members of Humanists of Utah, an AHA chapter, attended the Friday evening, January 25, screening.

Josh Tickell is the man who drove across the United States in a Winnebago fueled solely by used cooking oil from fast food restaurants. His appearances on national and local television made him an overnight celebrity. But *Fields of Fuel* is a 90-minute documentary that carries his work further, chronicling one man's search for an alternative to America's dependence on foreign oil. Filmed over the past 12 years in 5 countries by a team of scientists and filmmakers lead by Tickell, the documentary explores fossil fuel production and its impact.

The film is more than a critique of big oil. It also provides innovative, ethical and practical solutions. Tickell shows that it isn't necessary to tap into the food supply in order to provide the biodiesel fuel that can help give energy independence to the United States. And though he offers biodiesel as a main ingredient of that energy independence, the film is clear that biodiesel alone is no silver bullet. According to the [official Sundance Film Festival press release](#), the film can be described as "A look at America's addiction to oil, Tickell is a man with a plan and a Veggie Van, who is taking on big oil, big government, and big soy to find solutions in places few people have looked."

"The American Humanist Association is proud to be a part this award-winning documentary," said Fred Edwards, AHA director of communications, who spent days at the festival to help promote the film. "The AHA's support is one way we have acted on the humanist environmental principles expressed in [Humanism and Its Aspirations: Humanist Manifesto III](#).

"But there's more," added AHA President Mel Lipman. "We are mobilizing our more than 100 chapters and local affiliates across the country to become environmentally activist when the film hits theaters nationwide and when the tour comes to them."

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See scheduled events, pictures of officers and current and archived newsletters at our website:

<http://hawaii.humanists.net/>

HH's Meeting Place

Room 112 Krauss Hall

HH meets the last (not the fourth) Sunday of each month at 10:30 am. Here's how to get there.

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.



If you need transportation to the meeting, call another Humanists Hawaii member or Dave at the number listed above.

I was unable to find a report of Benny Hinn's recent visit, but here's one about a visit in January 2002. These by a believer who was already scandalized by Hinn's antics and was handing out fliers.

Benny Hinn on Oahu, January 2002, a report from the outside

by Sandy Simpson

. . . I and my daughter were able to hand out ALL of the fliers just about the time when the last of the people were arriving to go inside.

I think all true believers should have to do what we did. It would be a great eye opener. You begin to realize the enormity of the deception that is out there in Christendom. The looks on the faces of the people going in was one of mindless devotion. The evil looks on the faces of some who did not want us there spoke louder than words. We simply smiled at people and were kind to them, even when they threatened us with harm or cursed at us.

I especially felt sorry for two groups. The old people made me sad because some of them were surely true believers for most of their lives, but they are now shipwrecking their faith, placing it in the Gnostic "Jesus" of Benny Hinn and in lying signs and wonders, not in the truth. I also felt sorry for the islanders and Filipinos I saw flocking in. I saw some I knew and many I didn't. But I knew they were going in to be fleeced and deceived.

The offering handouts in the Hinn crusade state that people will get a blessing if they give. Then they suggest AT LEAST a \$50 donation, going up into the multiple thousands, payable with cash, check or credit card. For a person going in to seek healing, this presents a terrible implied dilemma, and Benny Hinn is banking (literally) on that. People have heard enough Word-Faith propaganda to think that they cannot get away with giving nothing because that would demonstrate a lack of faith, a necessary element in the Word-Faith healing scheme.

Therefore they are forced to at least give the lowest suggested amount. It used to be \$20. but has now gone up to \$50. Most of the people I saw going into the "show" would be hard pressed to give \$50., let alone the thousands asked for on the flier. This constitutes one of the biggest SCAMS ever foisted on the public, in my opinion. Why do the FCC and Better Business Bureau allow this type of rip off in Hawaii? You get no guarantees with Hinn, in fact you get NOTHING! I figure that Hinn walked out of Oahu, based on the attendance of between 10,000 to 15,000 at this event, with between \$500,000 to \$1 million dollars! You do the math.

Folks, people like Benny Hinn must be stopped. He is destroying the faith of many, and emptying their pocketbooks while he is doing it.

The failure of any local newspapers to report on Benny Hinn seems to be common. Here is a report to the [Amazing Randi](http://www.randi.org) in 2006.

Benny Hinn in Denmark

By Claus Larsen (in Denmark)

On April 28-30, faith healer Benny Hinn, whose ministry rakes in millions of dollars each year from sick, deluded and desperate people, held a three-day seminar in central Copenhagen. Over 20,000 people attended, from all over the world. Let there be no doubt about it: It was a huge success. TV2, one of the two major Danish domestic tv-channels, broadcast a 2½-minute-long feature prime time on the TV2 7 p.m. News. This gave the whole nation of Denmark the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the message of Jesus Christ as the Savior of all mankind, Benny Hinn version.

Curiously enough, there was absolutely no mention of a 13-minute feature on DR, the biggest Danish TV channel. Or, maybe not so curiously, because that feature took the skeptical approach, instead of the uncritical segment on TV2. Øjvind Kyrø, who also produced the television series "A Sense of Deceit" (www.randi.org/jr/060603.html and www.randi.org/jr/040403.html) took a crew from DR to the show, with permission to film what turned out to be a killer performance.

It was heart-breaking. Among the many sick and handicapped, we followed a 9-year-old girl, Kisser, who is suffering from a crippled spine, immobilized from the navel down, and thus confined to a wheelchair, probably for life. Her father had his hopes up from the start. Benny Hinn simply had to, one way or another, cure his daughter. "Today, it may be Kisser's turn", he said, with the girl on his lap.

Unfortunately, the little girl did not regain her health – she had to drive home with her parents, disappointed. She did, however, have a more pronounced desire to stand up and walk than she had before. Somehow, I think her parents hoped more than she did. She never looked as if she believed anything would happen anyway. Which, in the Land of Faith Healing, means that she is to blame for Benny Hinn's failure. If you're cured, it is the work of God (through the faith healer). If you're not cured, it's because you haven't believed enough.

Then, it was time for rationality to kick in on the Øjvind Kyrø show. A psychiatrist, Henrik Day Poulsen, explained that Hinn was merely using very simple but powerful methods to control people to give him money. He made it clear that it was extremely unethical to lure people to believe that e.g. a small child with a brain tumor could be cured in a second . . .

This left me too dispirited to seek stories of Chopra

'Gospel of Wealth' facing scrutiny

by Eric Gorski, *Associated Press*

The message flickered into Cindy Fleenor's living room each night: Be faithful in how you live and how you give, the television preachers said, and God will shower you with material riches.

And so the 53-year-old accountant from the Tampa, Fla., area pledged \$500 a year to Joyce Meyer, the evangelist whose frank talk about recovering from childhood sexual abuse was so inspirational. She wrote checks to flamboyant faith healer Benny Hinn and a local preacher-made-good, Paula White.

Only the blessings didn't come. Fleenor ended up borrowing money from friends and payday loan companies just to buy groceries. At first she believed the explanation given on television: Her faith wasn't strong enough.

"I wanted to believe God wanted to do something great with me like he was doing with them," she said. "I'm angry and bitter about it. Right now, I don't watch anyone on TV hardly."

All three of the groups Fleenor supported are among six major Christian television ministries under scrutiny by a senator who is asking questions about the evangelists' lavish spending and possible abuses of their tax-exempt status.

The probe by Sen. Charles Grassley of Iowa, the ranking Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, has brought new scrutiny to the underlying belief that brings in millions of dollars and fills churches from Atlanta to Los Angeles – the "Gospel of Prosperity," or the notion that God wants to bless the faithful with earthly riches.

Proponents call it a biblically sound message of hope. Others say it is a distortion that makes evangelists rich and preys on the vulnerable. They say it has evolved from "it's all right to make money" to it's all right for the pastor to drive a Bentley, live in an oceanside home and travel by private jet.

The modern-day prosperity movement can largely be traced back to evangelist Oral Roberts' teachings. Several popular prosperity preachers, including some now under investigation, have served on the Oral Roberts University board.

Grassley is asking the ministries for financial records on salaries, spending practices, private jets and other perks. The investigation, coupled with a financial scandal at ORU that forced out Roberts' son and heir, Richard, has some wondering whether the prosperity gospel is facing a day of reckoning.

Most scholars trace the origins of prosperity theology to E.W. Kenyon, an evangelical pastor from the first half of the 20th century.

But it wasn't until the postwar era – and a pair of evangelists from Tulsa, Okla. – that "health and wealth" theology became a fixture in Pentecostal and charismatic churches.

Oral Roberts and Kenneth Hagin – and later, Kenneth Copeland – trained tens of thousands of evangelists with a message that resonated with an emerging middle class, said David Edwin Harrell Jr., a Roberts biographer. Copeland is among those now being investigated.

The teachings took on various names – "Name It and Claim It," "Word of Faith," the prosperity gospel.

Prosperity preachers say that it isn't all about money – that God's blessings extend to health, relationships and being well-off enough to help others.

Critics acknowledge the idea that God wants to bless his followers has a Biblical basis, but say prosperity preachers take verses out of context. The prosperity crowd also fails to acknowledge Biblical accounts that show God doesn't always reward faithful believers, Palmer said.

The Book of Job is a case study in piety unrewarded, and a chapter in the Book of Hebrews includes a litany of believers who were tortured and martyred, Palmer said.

Yet the prosperity gospel continues to draw crowds, particularly lower- and middle-income people who, critics say, have the greatest motivation and the most to lose. The prosperity message is spreading to black churches, attracting elderly people with disposable incomes, and reaching huge churches in Africa and other developing parts of the world.

One of the teaching's attractions is that it doesn't dwell on traditional Christian themes of heaven and hell but on answering pressing concerns of the here and now, said Brian McLaren, a liberal evangelical author and pastor.

But the prosperity gospel, McLaren said, not only preys on the hope of the vulnerable, it puts too much emphasis on individual success and happiness.

The checks and balances central to Christian denominations are largely lacking in prosperity churches. One of the pastors in the Grassley probe, Bishop Eddie Long of suburban Atlanta, has written that God told him to get rid of the "ungodly governmental structure" of a deacon board.

Some ministers hold up their own wealth as evidence that the teaching works

In a letter to Grassley, Dollar's attorney calls the prosperity gospel a "deeply held religious belief" grounded in Scripture and therefore a protected religious freedom. Grassley has said his probe is not about theology.

"How do you determine how much money a minister like this is able to make when the basic theology is that wealth is OK?" said Hamilton, an Oral Roberts graduate who later left the charismatic movement. "That gets into theological questions."

The Ex-Muslim movement among immigrants in Europe

Rationalist International Bulletin #168

In February 2007, Mina Ahadi, Iranian-born Human Rights campaigner in Germany, took a courageous initiative. She founded the "Central Council of Ex-Muslims" to counter the all-powerful "Central Council of Muslims" in Germany.

Today, more than 13 million immigrants from Muslim countries are living in Europe. Many of them are not practicing Muslims and wish to escape the authoritarian regime of Islam that ruled their homelands. But religious tyranny is catching up with them, as they are represented and governed by powerful religious organizations dealing with European authorities on their behalf and pressing them into the traditional life of religious communities. Only a few dare to break out. Renouncing Islam still carries the death penalty in countries like Saudi-Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Sudan. And even in Europe, there are enough fundamentalists out to kill apostates in the name of Allah.

Mina Ahadi and some thirty co-fighters launched a daring campaign with the motto "We have renounced", publishing their photos and personal statements - and got hundreds of members within a few days. Death threats and necessary police protection didn't spoil Ahadi's optimism. "We want to create a new movement, in other European countries too. We hope that soon there will be 10,000 of us representing many more", she said.

Today, there are Councils of Ex-Muslims in Germany, Britain, The Netherlands and several Scandinavian countries. Membership is growing fast. Mariyam Namazie, Iranian born British broadcaster and Honorary Associate of Rationalist International, is heading the central organization in London. She is convinced the Councils of Ex-Muslims are representing a "silent majority" among Europe's Islamic population. "The people who join are just the tip of the iceberg," she says. "A lot of people call and say they would like to join but they're afraid or intimidated." But then, courage is contagious.

Rationalist mass education via TV in India

Rationalist International Bulletin #168

During recent years, the Indian fascination for miracles has gripped the ever growing scene of private TV channels competing for the highest viewership rates. Especially some Hindi language channels, catering to the uneducated rural masses, developed sensationalized "miracle" shows that would glue millions of people to their TV sets to witness the bizarre performances of unknown paranormal forces, ghosts and godmen. The Indian Rationalist Association campaigned relentlessly

against this massive re-enforcement of superstition and attacked irresponsible miracle mongers in the media. The campaign has been successful. Since 2006, more and more channels wanted to be responsible - without loosing out on the viewership rates. They decided to show miracles - but included the rationalist point of view into their programs. Sanal Edamaruku became a frequent studio guest and running commentator of all the colourful flowers of the obscure that superstition would grow in India. The result: many shows could be turned into very effective education programs.

Eventually, a unique pattern of on-the-spot exposure evolved, based on direct interaction between the rationalist in the studio and the personal of a far off rural miracle scene. Rationalist education extended its outreach immensely - and turned out to become very popular. In many programs viewers could also call in and discuss directly with Edamaruku. Some programs could not be stopped because of overwhelming participation and continued for several hours till midnight.

Over the year 2007, Sanal Edamaruku appeared in 132 TV programs in all national Hindi channels like Zee TV, Star News, Sahara Network, Janmath, India TV, Aaj Tak, IBN7 and MH1, and participated in a range of discussion programs in English language channels like NDTV, CNN-IBN, Headlines Today and Times Now and in Malayalam as well as Telugu Channels. He encountered godmen, astrologers, healers, bishops, bigot politicians and a "regression therapist" from the Netherlands - often much to their displeasure and professional damage. He gave scientific explanations how some stones can float and stone statues "grow" and change their colour, how trees can "bleed", sea water taste sweet, statues of monkey god Hanuman and Mother Marie weep, how faces appear on house walls and in certain vegetables, how bread in a lockup can double, flower garlands on holy pictures grow and how shoes can "move" all alone. He stopped mischievous "poltergeists" burning clothes and frightening mother-in-laws, redeemed transformed snake girls and reincarnations and helped a 14-year-old village boy, who appeared to have transformed into an American physics professor, "remember" his Hindi mother tongue and unlucky childhood.

Certain "miracles" just did not happen when his participation in a program was announced. That way he spoiled Sai Baba's great new miracle. The godman announced that his face was to appear in the moon and moved alongwith thousands of his followers and numerous camera teams to the airport of Puttaparti to celebrate the "miracle". But less than one hour after Zee TV started announcing a live show with Sanal Edamaruku covering the event, the godman's luxury car fleet turned home, the crowd was dispersed and the moon show postponed. Allegedly too many clouds had been spotted in the clear sky.

Do you ever wonder . . .

From the web

- . . . why we say something is out of whack? What's a whack?
- . . . whether infants enjoy infancy as much as adults enjoy adultery?
- . . . if a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?
- . . . if love is blind, why is lingerie so popular?
- . . . why the man who invests all your money is called a broker?
- . . . why croutons come in airtight packages? Aren't they just stale bread to begin with?
- . . . why a person who plays the piano called a pianist but a person who drives a race car isn't called a racist?
- . . . why a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?
- . . . why overlook and oversee mean opposite things?
- . . . why the number 11 isn't pronounced onety one?
- . . . whether if "I am" is the shortest sentence in the English language, is "I do" the longest sentence?
- . . . if lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?
- . . . if Fed Ex and UPS were to merge, would they call it Fed UP?
- . . . if Lipton Tea employees take coffee breaks?
- . . . what hair color they put on the driver's licenses of bald men?
- . . . no one ever says, "It's only a game" when their team is winning.
- . . . what the speed of lightning would be if it didn't zigzag?
- . . . if a cow laughed, would milk come out her nose?
- . . . whatever happened to Preparations A through G?

In a more serious vein . . .

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, with \$25 for individual dues or \$40 for couples, to: Marcia Lambeth at 825 Coolidge St. #310 Honolulu HI 96826.

Dr/Mr/Ms _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phones: Home: _____ Work: _____ email: _____

Humanists Hawaii dues are due

Our year-long experiment soliciting donations instead of dues is over and we've found the practice to be inadequate. Hence we'll be requiring dues for 2008 membership. We are keeping the dues at the nominal and affordable level of \$25 for individuals and \$40 for couples.

Although we are a relatively quiet organization, we do have expenses, rental donation for the space our friends at [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute](#) so generously allow us to use and this newsletter for two. Also we have food, promotion, recognitions and occasional possessions to consider. So please send in your 2008 dues with the coupon below (or a facsimile) and let us create a new membership list from the replies to this plea.

Promise: This is the last time I'll ask.

The Humanist Perspective

Coming up on *The Humanist Perspective* on [Olelo Community Television](#) VIEWS channel 54 Sunday afternoons at 3:30:

“Did Jesus Exist?” with R. Joseph Hoffmann

Sunday February 24, 2008

Building on evidence found in the New Testament, Hoffman considers evidence for the very existence of the Jesus of Scripture.

“A Humanist Chaplain” Hoffmann interviews

Greg Epstein, Humanist Chaplain at Harvard Univ.

Sunday, March 2, 2008

Epstein explains his concept of Humanism and of his position and considers the future of Humanism.

“Humanism and the Law” with Ron Lindsay

Sunday, March 9, 2008

Lindsay, who represented Secular Humanism with an [amicus curiae brief](#) to the Supreme Court, tells of legal cases involving Humanism or Humanistic beliefs.

“The Humanism of James Gouinlock”

Sunday, March 16, 2008

Pragmatist philosopher and author of *Rediscovering the Moral Life: Philosophy and Human Practice*, James Gouinlock of East Tennessee State University discusses Humanism and pragmatist philosophers.

Senator blocks openness bill

by Daniel De Bonis, [Public Citizen's](#) Congress Watch

The Bush Administration has blocked access to the very records needed to understand that history!

It's time to lift the veil of secrecy over the White House. The president's business is our business. We have a right to see the records from this administration – and all presidential administrations.

In 2001, President Bush issued an Executive Order that gives current and previous presidents power to withhold their documents and records *indefinitely*. What's more, the order extends this extraordinary authority to presidential family members, and even vice presidents.

Bush's order was a direct attack on the Presidential Records Act of 1978, a law passed in the wake of Watergate that makes presidential records the property of the American people. The president should not be allowed to flout open-government laws and lock away his records with a stroke of a pen.

Right now the Presidential Records Act Amendments of 2007, a bipartisan bill to undo the Bush order, is close to becoming a law, but it is being blocked by Senator Jeff Sessions.

Take Action NOW: Write your senators now and demand a vote on the Presidential Records Act Amendments of 2007, H.R. 1255/S. 886.



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