



FROM THE PRESIDENT

– STEPH CAMPBELL

I want to take this opportunity to welcome you to the first newsletter of the Orange County chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

If you didn't know that Americans United had a chapter in Orange County, well, we're very new. We officially formed in December 2004 and have a Steering Committee which meets monthly and has been working hard on getting our first big event organized.

December was mostly about getting organized. We filed all of our paperwork as a chapter with the national organization and then began to think about what we were specifically going to do.

In January we launched our web site (www.au-oc.org) and had an organizing meeting where we were lucky enough to have Harry Schwartzbart, of the very successful San Fernando Valley chapter, come and speak with us and provide us with organizing ideas.



Harry Schwartzbart speaking to the January 20, 2005 meeting of Americans United-Orange County

President's Message
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PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT:

MAY 22, 2005 1:00 – 3:00

IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT

15600 SAND CANYON AVE, IRVINE

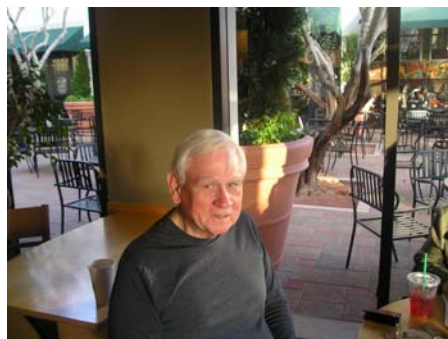
CREATIONISM VS EVOLUTION

—A BATTLE ENGAGED

PRESENTED BY DR. JOHN BUSH

Evolutionary biology, based on Charles Darwin's account of the origin of species, is an extremely successful branch of biology, fundamental to a modern understanding of living creatures. However there is a persistent movement by the Religious Right in the United States, to either prohibit its teaching in public schools or to require that it be taught as a controversial theory without a solid basis in science. This effort can be understood as one aspect of a broader movement to establish the beliefs of the Religious Right as basic to all aspects of contemporary culture: science, art, literature....

In this talk we will review the historical background of the conflict between evolution and its attackers, characterize the strategies and institutions on both sides of this conflict, describe what is at stake and summarize the current situation in the Congress and legislatures, in the courts, the school boards, the classrooms, the secular universities and the media in the United States.



We hope that many of you will be able to join us for Dr. Bush's program on May 22nd. We recommend that you contact the chapter to reserve a spot as seating will be limited. For reservations, please email:

orangecountyau@yahoo.com or leave a message at 714-957-0748.

We look forward to seeing you on May 22nd!



KEEP UP TO DATE ON AU-OC CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES.

Are you a member of our Yahoo! Group? That's how we let our members know of church/state related issues and other events. To subscribe, send an email to:

au-oc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



GREAT AMERICAN WRITE-IN A ROUSING SUCCESS

By Bob Macias, AU-OC Chapter Member

Proving once again that progressive causes have a real home in Orange County, the Annual 'Great American Write-In' held Saturday, March 5th at the Woodbridge Senior Center in Irvine saw over 400 people attend and participate in this exercise of democracy in action.

The 'Write-In' format is designed to give participants a chance to hand-write personal letters to California and United States Representatives, Senators and Congressmen about issues they should care about. Unlike e-mails or form letters that are normally tabulated only on a 'for-or-against' basis in government offices, handwritten letters get more attention and are more likely to be read by the recipient.

Great American Write-In
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President's Message
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I spoke to the non-partisan organization, Women For: Orange County (www.womenforoc.org) in February on issues of separation of church and state with a particular focus on the faith based initiative from both a national perspective as well as from the California perspective. In March we tabled at the Great American Write-In, also sponsored by Women For: Orange County – and we generated a lot of interest there.

Three of the Steering Committee members were fortunate enough to attend a Grassroots Organizing training sponsored by AU National and held in San Francisco. We were treated to many dynamic speakers including the Rev. Barry Lynn as our lunch time keynote. I believe we all left the training energized to go out and do more.

I hope to see many of you at our first event on May 22nd which is discussed on Page 1 of the Newsletter.

Thank you for your continued support.

--Steph Campbell



**SOKA UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, MAY 7TH 10:30-5PM.**

AU-OC will be tabling at this event. Come join us. We will be handing out literature and discussing ideas and issues surrounding church state separation.

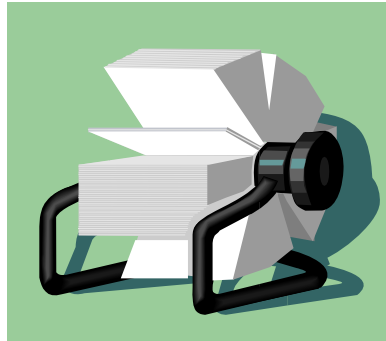
This is a fun event for the whole family. In addition to the tables, they have 3 stages with continuous international entertainment all day, storytelling in the Library's Ikeda Reading Room, two art exhibit openings, student projects, international food, games, and inflatable rides.

For more information or to work at our table, please send an email to: orangecountyau@yahoo.com.

**AU-OC OFFICERS AND THE
STEERING COMMITTEE**

The officers and steering committee meet monthly and work together to provide focus to the chapter as well as work on ideas for speakers and other events.

If you would like to get more involved, contact one of the officers or steering committee members:



Steph Campbell, President
smcampbell@comcast.net
714-299-4551

Alison Young, Vice President
Alison.young@phs.com
714-569-9225

Ann Stern, Treasurer
faastar@aol.com
949-644-8336

Rich Gillock, Secretary
r.r.gillock@ieee.org
714-330-1805

Ad Hoc Steering Committee

Elaine Booth
esbooth1@cox.net

Paul Gilbert
poorpaul@hotmail.com

Bob Macias
bobmacias13@juno.com

Want to join the Steering Committee?
Contact any one of us.

There's always room around our table!

**WHAT IS AMERICANS UNITED
ABOUT?**

The Orange County Chapter works to promote the separation of church and state separation through its grassroots activities in the community, meetings, tabling, speaking out to different organizations and through the media. We are involved with activities at School Boards and City Councils throughout the County. As well, we work with the national organization whenever we encounter an Orange County religious liberty issue.

The National Organization

Speaks Out through the media, public forums, debates, lectures, and other avenues in defense of religious diversity and church-state separation. Americans United staffers are not afraid to debate top Religious Right leaders in any public forum - though they are sometimes afraid to debate us!

Works with the Media, national and local, to help reporters understand church-state issues. Our representatives frequently appear on television broadcasts, on talk radio, and in the pages of newspapers like USA Today, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, and The LA Times.

Defends separation of church and state in the federal and state courts, filing lawsuits and legal briefs in key cases. AU works to defuse church-state problems through dialogue before cases go to court.

Mobilizes Americans at the grassroots and through state and regional Americans United chapters to monitor church-state relations in their own communities and respond effectively to local Religious Right activity.

Advocates for separation of church and state in the U.S. Congress and state legislatures, working with lawmakers at all levels to help them understand the importance of respecting the separation of church and state.

**BRIEF BOOK REVIEW OF THE
FIRST FREEDOM: THE
TUMULTUOUS HISTORY OF FREE
SPEECH IN AMERICA BY NAT
HENTOFF, 1988
REVIEWED BY CHAPTER MEMBER
PAUL GILBERT**

Ed. Note: Full text of the book review is available on our web site www.au-oc.org.

This book reviews the origin of the First Amendment with chapters on freedom of—and from--religion under the First Amendment in chapter 5.

Although some colonists fled European countries because of religious prosecution (Pilgrims to Boston, Quakers to Philadelphia and Catholics to Baltimore) within 200 years they had managed to prosecute Ann Hutchinson for her religious views, to prosecute non-Catholics in Maryland, and denied citizenship to Jews in Rhode Island in 1762. In Virginia, colonists were taxed to support churches of some denominations.

The First Amendment was written to prevent religious wars which had wracked many European countries and the Middle East before the U.S. was established. In addition, the founders, especially James Madison wanted to avoid mixing the state and religion. Indeed, in the Constitution as originally adopted the word God is deliberately missing.

The author cites many Supreme Court cases regarding freedom of religion including the idea of keeping religious institutions separate from Government; it gives the reader a brief, but incisive understanding of the struggle to interpret the first Amendment by the Supreme Court.

I do not doubt that future Supreme Court cases will again force the Court to distinguish between teaching morality and/or ethics and/or religion; or with using school buildings to present religious plays or art. Cases are likely to come to the court's attention about public meetings held in public buildings that begin with prayers.

<continued in Column 2>

Book Review
<continued from Column 1>

The importance of present and future judges' backgrounds will affect us all in Court cases involving religion. Decisions on future cases will depend upon the thoughts of future judges which will be influenced greatly by future judges' experience, education judicial temperament, and judicial scholarship. Since these decisions will affect us all, we should expect our Senators to use logic and reasoned careful debate to decide on the qualification of Supreme Court and other judges.

And dear reader your thoughts on these issues are?



Great American Write-In
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Over 40 different organizations, from the ACLU to the 'Save Laguna Canyon' consortium took part in this year's event, sponsored by the 'Women For: Orange County' Coalition. Each group distributed information on their cause or issue and provided prepared text for attendees to use when writing their letters. AU-OC was represented by members Steph Campbell, Rich Gillock and Bob Macias, talking with attendees and handing out AU Information.

"I am so pleased and proud of today's turnout" said Elaine Booth, President of the OC Chapter of Women For: Orange County (and AU-OC Steering Committee member). "We have an amazing diversity of groups displaying here, and the number of high school and college students taking part just goes to show how important raising your voice is, especially in Orange County!" Also attending the event were California State Attorney Bill Lockyer and State Assemblyman Tom Umberg, thanking the crowd.

Events like the Great American Write-In are ways that AU-OC can raise the issues of separation of church and state and gain publicity, new members and new ideas. We look forward to next year's Write-In and other similar activities.

**ARE YOU LOOKING TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT THE SEPARATION OF
CHURCH AND STATE?**

There are a lot of great resources on the Internet – and you're just a few clicks away from them. Here are a few we think you'll find interesting.

First of all, to keep current in the religious liberty issues in Orange County you should bookmark our own web site which is www.au-oc.org.

Our number one pick for information on the issues is www.au.org which is the web site of the national organization; it is a fountain of information about what is currently going on nationally in the fight to preserve separation of church and state, legislative actions, how to get involved as well as some excellent material on our issues.

If you want to venture further a field, we suggest that you check out <http://www.religioustolerance.org> which has a lot of interesting links – be sure to go to their church-state separation page.

www.theocracywatch.org is devoted to exploring the theological agenda that the theocratic right is imposing on secular society.

www.interfaithalliance.org; a national non-partisan advocacy voice of the interfaith movement with members from more than 70 faith traditions who work to promote democratic values, defend religious liberty, challenge hatred and religious bigotry and support informed civic participation.

<http://members.tripod.com/~candst>, a discussion of the constitutional principle of church state separation with many useful links.



Want to get involved but not sure what to do first? Well, first, join AU. After that, watch your newspaper and elected officials for how they react to church/state issues. Write letters to the editor, visit your representatives, go to City Council and School Board meetings. And let us know what you've done and what you've observed and what results you've had. **We're in this together!**





Join the Orange County Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State

Basic membership is \$25 and includes an annual subscription to Church & State magazine. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and donations beyond the \$18.00 value of the subscription to Church & State magazine are deductible to the full extent of the law. Email any questions to orangecountyau@yahoo.com; to join, complete this form and mail to the address 3337 S. Bristol, #251, Santa Ana, California 92704

Visit us on the web at:
www.au-oc.org

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Email:- _____

Check (payable to Americans United – Orange County)

\$25 \$50 \$75 Other _____

Americans United for Separation of
Church and State
Orange County Chapter
3337 S. Bristol St., #251
Santa Ana, CA 92704

Calendar of Events

May 7, 2005

*Tabling at Soka
University*

May 22, 2005

*Creationism vs.
Evolution with
Dr. John Bush
At the Irvine Ranch
Water District*

