



Rational Inquiry

Dare
to
think

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 3 *The San Diego Association for Rational Inquiry Newsletter* SUMMER, 2006

The San Diego Association for Rational Inquiry (SDARI) is dedicated to the encouragement of rational thought in all areas of human affairs. Composed of citizens from every walk of life, and with a variety of technical, scientific, legal, and humanistic backgrounds, the association strives to encourage rational discourse in the life of San Diego. For more information, see page seven.

Editor Needed!

We are looking for a person who is willing to become editor. The position is presently vacant. The newsletter has been published quarterly in the past, and we would like to maintain this schedule.



Global Warming A scientist looks back

By Edvard A. Hemmingsen

Fifty years ago this summer, while I was at Oslo University, I co-authored a scientific paper with Lawrence Coachman and Per Scholander entitled "Gas Enclosures in a Temperate Glacier." (1) Behind this innocuous title laid a broader idea that was first proposed by Per, namely, can clues about past atmospheric air composition be obtained from gas bubbles trapped in glacier ice centuries or millennia ago?

Our glacier study in Norway was the first step in a series of investigations that would lay the ground work for answering this intriguing question. Information about past air composition would have many interesting inferences. For example, were the vast quantities of carbon dioxide that were being added to the atmosphere by our modern, industrialized societies having an impact on the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere? Foremost on our minds was the scientific paper on the atmospheric greenhouse effect published by Svante Arrhenius sixty years earlier. He showed that carbon dioxide had a very strong greenhouse effect and calculated that a doubling of this gas in the atmosphere could increase the Earth's mean temperature by more than 5°C, which would cause much havoc. Some greenhouse effect is beneficial for life if maintained within very narrow limits. Indeed, it is this effect which has made the Earth livable for organisms for billions of years.

Without it, the mean temperature on the Earth's surface would be far below freezing. Now it is about 14°C. For comparison, our planetary neighbor, Venus, has 95 percent carbon dioxide, and a surface temperature of 477°C. Although Venus is moderately closer to the sun, the difference in distance accounts for very little of the difference in temperature between the two planets.

After finishing our studies in Norway, we organized a multinational ship expedition to West Greenland. Its primary objective



"It is essential that new non-polluting technologies be developed; the costs for this must not be a barrier."



was to attempt to find old air samples in ice released from glaciers in the form of large icebergs. Ice samples were collected, the extracted gas bubbles were analyzed and radio-carbon dated for age, and the ratios of oxygen-18 to oxygen-16 isotopes in the ice were measured in order to assess the temperature at the original precipitation location. This is possible because the ratio is a specific function of the temperature, and the deviation in the ratio from a reference temperature gives us the unknown temperature. This relationship has been calibrated at numerous locations worldwide.

Our endeavor had some suc-

cesses. However, as was pointed out in the scientific report from our expedition (2), all of the ice samples which we collected appeared to have undergone some melting before breaking loose from the ice cap, or somehow had been exposed to liquid water. This could have affected the composition of the gas in the trapped bubbles, but would not be of consequence for the radio-carbon date determinations. It was clear that ice samples that would provide all of the desired information had to be obtained from the main ice caps of Northern Greenland or Antarctica because even in the summer temperatures stay well below freezing.

In the decades that followed other groups took up this research in international collaborations, developed coring drilling techniques that yielded the desired samples from the deeper parts of the ice caps. New methods were used to examine these samples, taking advantage of many advances made in recent decades both with gas and isotope analytical techniques. These studies on the trapped air bubbles would prove to be very important.

Concurrently with our glacier ice studies, soon-to-be academic colleagues at Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, Charles "Dave" Keeling, persuaded and encouraged by Roger Revelle, began monitoring accurately the carbon dioxide content in present day air. Dave persistently carried out this monitoring project for nearly fifty years, until he passed away in 2005, providing precious data.

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Global Warming

(Continued from page 1)

We may find it amazing today, although it is not surprising to scientists in general who are familiar with arbitrary nonsensical decisions by bureaucrats, Dave at times had to struggle to obtain funds from government agencies to continue his important work. He expressed his frustration to me on many occasions.

Keeling's results (3) are now famous and astonishingly important. He found that the carbon dioxide content in air increased gradually and relentlessly for every year of his study. It started out at 0.0315 percent in 1958, and reached 0.0380 percent in 2005. To a person not familiar with the field, this may seem like a small increase, but it is large when compared with various other data that now have been obtained for past atmospheres. Foremost of interest here are the ancient air samples extracted from ice cores taken from the icecaps in Greenland and Antarctica (Vostok Station). In particular, the ice cores from Vostok have yielded some startling information (4). For more than half a million years prior to our industrial age, the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere changed relatively little, and always remained below the level characteristic of the early 1900s, namely about 0.028 percent. By the end of the 1900s, the carbon dioxide level had risen substantially above this pre-industrial level. The concomitant temperature record for this period was determined from the oxygen and hydrogen isotopes in the gas from the ice cores. These show that there have been cyclical changes in the temperature over time. But these changes until the last century have remained within the range of $\pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$, and occur in precise unison with the changes in the carbon dioxide content. These temperature fluctuations have been confirmed for the last 1000 years by such methods as studies of tree rings, lake sediments and historical data. Altogether, we know that there has been about a one degree rise in global mean temperature just in the last hundred years. But from the current rate of increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide, it has been estimated that its content probably will more than double in the next hundred years, leading to a mean global temperature rise of several to as much as 10°C , the latter being more than that predicted by Arrhenius.

In the most recent decades, the warming has been directly determined by measurements, for example, from satellites and by probes placed in the oceans and on land. It is also visible to anyone who cares to look: glaciers are rapidly receding worldwide, the icecaps of Antarctica and Greenland are shrinking, the Arctic polar sea ice cap is thinner and more open water is present in the summer, the permafrost of the Arctic is thawing, causing highly visible damage to buildings and other structures, including oil pipelines.

The continuous record of temperatures that we now have is based on unasailable scientific measurements and statistical analyses. Virtually all geophysicists, climatologists and other experts with competence to evaluate the various scientific data agree that (a) there has been a sharp increase in the carbon dioxide level in the last decades, (b) there has been a concomitant increase in the surface temperature of the Earth, and (c) both parameters are increasing at an accelerated rate because of carbon dioxide pollution from human activities. The correlations among the different sets of data are far too strong to be fortuitous. Those who denied the warming trend just a few years back have largely conceded it is occurring or, belatedly, have drifted into obscurity. The only issue still being challenged by a few, mostly politicians, bureaucrats and others with little or no scientific expertise, is whether or not the warming is caused by atmospheric carbon dioxide. They even question that human activities are the source of the carbon dioxide buildup. They reject all of the solid scientific data that exist to support the scientists' conclusions. Data with confidence levels of 95 percent are summarily dismissed. These deniers often claim that "proof" is missing. Indeed, if actions taken were dependent on scientific proofs, we still would be in the Medieval age. Only mathematics deals with absolute proofs; science deals with probabilities.

Whereas the deniers may raise their unwarranted, even irrational objections, rational people have for many years had cause for alarm. Even in the sixties when the direct empirical evidence for systematic warming was far more skimpy and our understanding of many climatic processes was very limited, a number of scientists expressed concern about the carbon

dioxide pollution and the climatic effects it may have, simply by knowing that billions of tons of carbon dioxide were put into the atmosphere every year. Such quantities added a substantial amount to the total carbon dioxide content naturally present on Earth. It was rational to predict that this was bound to have consequences.

It is an undeniable fact that water vapor and carbon dioxide will reflect some of the solar radiation back towards the Earth's surface, preventing it from escaping into space, and as a result causing a general warming trend such as we are observing now. The energy in the form of heat just cannot disappear. Yet, some have sought to ascribe warming to natural cyclical variations in the radiation emitted by the sun, in the Earth's distance from the sun, in the reflections from clouds, etc., but no credible evidence has been offered to show that any of these processes — or any other one — are large enough to contribute significantly to the observed rate of warming. Our greatest concern now should be that we have superimposed an increase in the greenhouse effect upon the normal variability, leading to conditions that have not existed for hundreds of thousands of years, or longer. That is, we have added a new warming factor to those which caused climatic changes in the past.

The long range consequences of these new conditions are unknown, but could be very serious, even catastrophic. The many problems that we are likely to be faced with in the not so distant future have been extensively dealt with in both the scientific literature and the public media, and much of this information can be found by Internet searches. Also, a documentary movie on global warming, featuring Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth* (Director David Guggenheim), was released recently. This movie gives a largely correct picture of the future events which likely will occur as a result of the warming. It is faithfully based on the existing scientific knowledge, although some details are arguable and the timing for disasters could be off by two or three decades. However, the thrust of the message of the film is definitely on target.

There are factors that may make conditions worse than anticipated. These are the "feedback loops" that may accelerate events and cause runaway warming.

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Global Warming

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One is the loss of light reflection from shrinking polar ice masses. Others have barely surfaced in the public debate. For example, large quantities of greenhouse gases may be released from melting and decaying permafrost. The decrease in gas solubility which occurs with increasing temperatures in the oceans is another factor that will furnish more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. Methane gas, which has a strong greenhouse effect, may be released from the vast deposits of solid methane hydrates (clathrates) that exist in many places on the ocean floor if there is an elevation of just a few degrees in water temperature. These scenarios would all add to the greenhouse effect generated by burning fossil fuels.

We are now at a critical point with respect to the degree of warming that societies worldwide will be able to accommodate later in this century. Perhaps we have already missed the juncture for making a truly meaningful, positive impact. It must be recognized that due to the ocean's large buffering capacity for both temperature and gases, what already has been added to the system no doubt will influence the climate for decades and possibly centuries to come. Thus, even if we could reduce the carbon dioxide emissions to a trickle now, the global warming trend would stay with use for a long time. But we should, indeed must for the sake of our descendants, try to do the best we can.

How did we get on this calamitous course? There is enough blame to dispense. Politicians and special interest

groups as well as an apathetic public deserve major blame. Perhaps scientists were not strong enough in communicating their findings to the public. For a number of years it has been evident that the early warnings about climatic changes, with global warming, were justified. But few of our leaders cared to listen to this message, and hardly anybody took it seriously. With some rare exceptions, this ignorance has continued until today. No administration in this country has ever engaged in any real efforts to mitigate the warming process, even though the evidence showing that the process potentially could be very harmful. Certainly, the scientific evidence has been convincing for more than a decade. The situation, which has progressed from levels of doubt to reckless neglect, has been particularly exasperating during the years of our current administration.

Some obvious steps could have been taken — and still can be — to blunt the warming problem, but they would require a serious national program beyond the effort and cost level of the moon-landing project. The emission of carbon dioxide has to be reduced substantially — now! Equally important, the use of available non-polluting energy generating technologies must be vastly expanded, and new ones must be developed. These include power systems using nuclear technologies, photovoltaic solar cells, and wind driven turbines. It is essential that new non-polluting technologies be developed; the costs for this must not be a barrier. Radically reducing the rate of population growth around the world, and hence, the

ever increasing energy demands, clearly would contribute to solving the problem in a big way. It would be necessary that the other industrialized countries, as well as those to be, participate in the reduction of pollution and the developments. They now produce three quarters of the total carbon dioxide emission in the world.

Are such actions likely to be implemented? In other countries with emerging industrial capabilities, probably not for a long while. In this country, not until we get a new type of leadership in the White House as well as in Congress. We need leaders who will place the welfare of the country and its people above their own personal interests. And this will not occur until the public becomes more informed, more concerned — and outraged.

References

1. *Tellus*, No. 4 (1956): 415-423.
2. *Medelelser om Grønland*, Vol. 165 (1962): 1-26.
3. *Annual Review of Energy and Environment*, Vol. 23 (1998): 25-82.
4. *Nature*, Vol. 399 (1999): 429-436.

The SDARI Social Hour

Some of the active members of SDARI meet for conversation before our public lectures; often the evening's speaker joins us. We meet at 6:00 p.m. in our regular meeting room at the Joyce Beers Center. Please join us. Bring your own dinner or snacks.

From the Editor

SDARI was incorporated as an educational organization eleven years ago. Our main goal over the years has been to try to persuade people to think rationally, and use science based knowledge rather than supernatural beliefs in their daily life. Often we try to reach out to the public when we think it ill served, harmed or placed in danger by pointing out the fallacies in the information presented to them. We do this through this newsletter, our website, and our public lectures.

Unfortunately, anti-science views are strong in this country. These may have a

religious basis, such as seen in the rejection of evolution by creationists, or they may result from economic self-interest. The industries for food supplements and herbal medications are good examples, as are "get rich" schemes that use products and services to fleece the public.

Older people tend to be set in their thinking whether it is rational or not. Younger people are more receptive to logical thinking in their school years. In both public and private K-12 schools, science education is undervalued. This results in U.S. students lagging behind students from other developed countries.

SDARI cannot remedy this, but we do encourage rational thinking by students at the middle and high school levels thanks

to our involvement with the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair. The prizes and public recognition we provide the winners surely encourages these students to continue to think rationally.

In my opinion, this should be continued and expanded, and perhaps in some way we could give some recognition now and then to a teacher who we know is encouraging rational thinking and science in the classroom. There are many teachers who are doing an excellent job with the limited tools that are available to them. Members who may know about such individuals should bring them to the attention of the SDARI Science Fair Committee. Barbara Hemmingsen, our Treasurer, is the chairperson of this committee.

Rational Musings by the President

In this column, I will discuss what's on TV, Richard Dawkins and creationism, and conclude with a Bible story.

I've been paying close attention to what is on TV lately. The Biography Channel has two new shows. *Psychic Investigators* — "A crime is committed, but cops can't close the case until...a psychic's ability uncovers undeniable truths." Undeniable truths? Really? The second show is *Beyond Death* — "true stories of reincarnation, out-of-body experiences, hauntings." Apparently, every channel on TV is now required to have paranormal programming. Must be some new law I haven't heard about!

I watched a new show called *X-Testers* on TLC (The Learning Channel), sort of a *MythBusters* for the paranormal. Special effects experts re-created paranormal events, and then asked the witnesses to the "real" paranormal events to judge the re-creations. Not surprisingly, the witnesses found the fakes to be inferior to the "real" events. No attempt was made to offer any other explanations for these events, or to examine the evidence for fraud or trickery. To be fair, perhaps the creators of the show believe that their special effects re-creations of paranormal events speak for themselves, and that viewers will use their own reasoning to see the truth.

Then there's the commercials. Pills to lose weight, to grow hair, or for "natural male enhancement." And don't worry, they're "real science, clinically proven in university studies." Some ads show huge piles of cash, and promise to end your credit card debt, or loan you money to pay back the cash you borrowed to pay off your credit card debt! Some of these companies must be making huge profits if they can afford to play their ads over and over again on every channel. I don't see how they can do that and still offer me the lowest price.

The *Man Show* had the best solution for hair loss — Hair Alternative Treatment, HAT, used by celebrities like Rob Reiner and Ron Howard! May be worn backward.

When I was a kid in the 60's, before

the popularity of implants, many magazines carried ads for products to increase the size of a woman's bust. There were pills, creams, and exercise machines. I knew some girls who bought them. These products were, of course, without exception, worthless.

Today, all these types of worthless nonsense are more popular and more prevalent than ever. Are people really this stupid? Do they never learn? How often do people need to be lied to and victimized before they wise up and take action?

Media critics will tell you that this is the direct result of massive resources and research devoted to convincing you of things that are not true. Some critics say that these people, the sellers and marketers, have psychopathic personalities, pointing out that they will not hesitate to turn our own children against us, and feel no remorse or regret for any harm they cause. If you think I'm exaggerating, read *Consuming Kids* by Susan Linn.

Are they right? I don't have all the answers, but I know that part of the solution is teaching people how to ask the right questions. In my opinion, the skeptical method is the solution. I say the skeptical method rather than the scientific method because the scientific method is for scientists, and I am not a scientist. Regular people need to know how to evaluate claims and find the truth, too. Lack of scientific training or an advanced degree should not limit a person's ability to protect themselves from deception.

Richard Dawkins, *Natural History* magazine, Nov., 2005, via *Skeptic* magazine, Vol. 12 No. 2: "One thing all real scientists agree upon is the fact of evolution itself. It is a fact that we are cousins of gorillas, kangaroos, starfish, and bacteria. Evolution is as much a fact as the heat of the Sun. It is not a theory, and for pity's sake, let's stop confusing the philosophically naive by calling it so. Evolution is a fact."

Reading about creationism in the current *Skeptic* magazine inspired this thought. There were people living in Darwin's time who thought that the universe was the result of natural causes. But the majority believed in creationism. For the idea of evolution to gain accep-

tance and eventually be taught in schools, many people who believed in creationism had to examine the evidence and be so impressed with it that they actually changed their beliefs! So the claim that creationism hasn't had a fair chance to compete with evolution is false. Creationism did compete, creationism had every advantage, and creationism lost fair and square!

How's this analogy? People used to believe that disease had supernatural causes. But natural explanations worked better and replaced those beliefs. If, today, some group claimed that disease is caused by demons and spirits, that germ theory is just a theory that is unproven and full of gaps, that doctors can't agree about what causes illness, and this group said, "be fair, let's teach both sides and let the medical students decide for themselves," would anyone take them seriously? Would creationists or IDers with kids in medical school want the school to "teach the controversy" when they're paying \$25-50,000 a year in tuition? I don't think so.

Finally, here is a story I read about in the *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine of a skeptic from the Bible. Daniel 14 is not in all Bibles, I found it in *The New American Bible* and *The New English Bible*. The story is that Daniel is a confidant to Cyrus, king of the Babylonians, who worship an idol called Bel because they believe the idol is a living god who consumes 12 bushels of flour, 40 sheep, and 50 gallons of wine each day. With Cyrus as the only witness, Daniel orders his servants to sift ashes all over the temple floor and then asks Cyrus to seal the temple doors. In the morning, when the temple doors are opened, the food and wine are gone, the floor is covered with the footprints of the priests and their families, and secret doors are soon revealed. So even thousands of years ago people knew how to investigate extraordinary claims. I wonder why this story was removed from so many Bibles?

Paul Wenger.

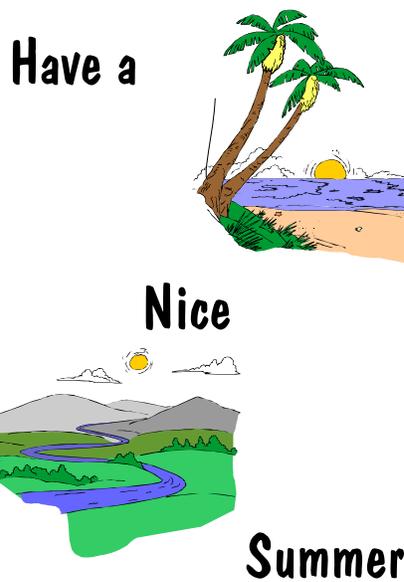
**IRRATIONALLY HELD TRUTHS MAY
BE MORE HARMFUL THAN
REASONED ERRORS.
- THOMAS H. HUXLEY**

San Diego does its bit to counteract climate change

At the June 25, 2006, meeting of SDARI, Linda Giannelli Pratt from the City of San Diego Environmental Services Department gave a very interesting lecture on their activities in this era of global warming. The lecture was primarily focused on what the city is doing to help minimize the pollution of the atmosphere by greenhouse gases, most notably carbon dioxide.

Ms. Pratt gave a number of examples of their efforts to reduce energy use as well as the emission of carbon dioxide by burning fossil fuels within the city. Through the use of more fuel efficient vehicles, energy efficient building designs, photovoltaic solar cells, solar heating, and other steps, they have achieved impressive reductions. Between 1990 and 2003, the city reduced emissions of greenhouse gases by nearly 4 million tons, or 25 percent of the total emission in 1990. Better waste management was a big part of this reduction. The city has an ambitious program laid out for the future. Because the largest energy consumption by the city is for water and sewage pumping, a reduction in water use coupled with the reuse of treated and purified sewage water would be helpful.

The lecture was followed by a long and enthusiastic discussion with full audience participation. This touched upon many of the things which we as citizens can do to lessen energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Those who did not come to this lecture missed a good, informative discussion of local and general problems associated with global warming.



On Education

What sculpture is to a block of marble,
education is to the soul.

Robert Browning

We educate one another; and we cannot
do this if half of us consider the other
half not good enough to talk to.

George Bernard Shaw

When a man's education is finished, he
is finished.

E. A. Filene

Education is a better safeguard of liberty
than a standing army.

Edward Everett

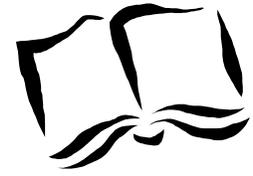
Human history becomes more and more
a race between education and a catastrophe.

H. G. Wells

Only the educated are free.

Epictetus

WE NEVER STOP INVESTIGATING. WE ARE NEVER
SATISFIED THAT WE KNOW ENOUGH TO GET BY.
EVERY QUESTION WE ANSWER LEADS ON TO
ANOTHER QUESTION. THIS HAS BECOME THE
GREATEST SURVIVAL TRICK OF OUR SPECIES.
- DESMOND MORRIS



Why We Need a Newsletter and an Editor

I (EAH) have been involved with SDARI since its start eleven years ago. For a number of years I was the editor. I received numerous comments from our members and others about how much they appreciated being informed about SDARI's activities, and how often they enjoyed the many tidbits that we published. Many of our members do not have access to the Internet. The newsletter also has been used for promotional purposes to sign up new members and encourage existing members to renew their memberships, as well as to make the public more aware of SDARI's existence.

What does the editor normally do? It is essential that he or she has available a computer with at least a simple publishing program, and a good printer. Access to the Internet is highly desirable as we can now email the newsletter directly to the printer. The program of choice so far has been Microsoft Publisher, which is powerful and relatively simple to use. The editor reviews submissions, does the editing, writes articles and notes, and collects items from various sources to insert in the unavoidable "white column spaces" of each issue. Finally, the editor makes the arrangements to get the newsletter layout to the printer. Some time is involved, but it is not formidable—and there is some fun too!

Any volunteers?



Return to the Ideas of the Middle Ages: Extremism and Intolerance are Advancing

By Barbara B. Hemmingsen

In the modern Western world, tolerance always has been fostered; intolerance, when it occurred, was expressed at the level of individuals or small groups. But beginning some 20 years ago in the U.S.A., political groups, churches, and other organizations have been taken over by people bent on following extreme interpretations of ideas expressed in the Bible. This coincided with a rise in Muslim fundamentalism especially in the Middle East and Iran. Thus, religious intolerance grew in intensity and has led to a militant fanaticism not seen since the 1600s. The humanistic, tolerant values of the Renaissance and Enlightenment are rapidly disappearing.

Once again, there are wars, warlike fighting, and destructive events based on religious doctrines and beliefs. We see it in the Oklahoma bombing, in the Balkans, in Africa, Sri Lanka, and many other places around the world. It is most forcefully carried out in the Middle East, where fanatic and uncompromising Muslims attack Jews, Christians, and other Muslims. In the extreme views of the Muslim fanatics, Islam does not allow any compromises, and they see the actions of the Western world primarily as attempts to spread Christianity. And this view has some validity. Ann Coulter, the darling of the extreme right, speaking at Northwestern University, stated: "This [the fight against terrorism] is a religious war, not against Islam, but for Christianity, for a Christian nation." Similar statements by members of our government, and by its strong supporters, have been made and seem to be affirmed by policy decisions. So it is no wonder that some Muslims fear our involvement in the Middle East as another religious crusade.

Today we see religious intolerance growing in political strength both in this country and abroad. Church leaders request that the IRS turn a blind eye to their use of tax-exempt churches for political events, others advocate violence against abortion clinics or work to deny women access to birth control, still oth-

ers work to overtly add Christian principles to the laws of our country. But these efforts pale besides the near total intertwining of religion and politics in Iran and some other Muslim countries with appalling consequences: suicide bombings, terrorist barbarism, suppression of women, kidnapping and murder of innocents. Of course, religious types have no monopoly on fanaticism which exists in many forms on both the far left (Stalin, Mao Zedong, Pol Pot) or far right (Hitler, Idi Amin) and which has killed millions upon millions of people.

Today, humans face serious problems that threaten their survival. Widespread malnutrition and hunger, spreading of new and old diseases, global warming, population growth, pollution of land and sea are present and growing in magnitude. But their mitigation or solution requires international cooperation, and this can not happen if intolerance continues to polarize nations, especially those of the West and the Middle East. Jim Hoagland addresses some of these problems in an Op-Ed piece in the *Washington Post* (July 2, 2006):

"This growing crisis of intolerance needs to be recognized and addressed by the world's political leaders, not exploited or ignored by them. Interfaith dialogues, the conscious stripping away of injurious religious stereotypes and a refusal to base state policy on narrow religious interest should become part of an international political agenda adopted and promoted by global organizations...The civil war within Islam between Sunnis and Shiites and the violent jihadist ideologies against other religions it has spawned are the most immediately malignant forms of the wave of global backlash. But they are part of a broader phenomenon. The spiraling growth of evangelical Christianity in the United States – as well as Latin America, China and Africa – reflects the central reality that also helps drive the radicalization of Islam across the Middle East, Central Asia and the northern Caucasus. When people feel threatened by rapid and mystifying change, they turn to the most lit-

eral forms of religion for explanations and justifications."

Hoagland then quotes from a talk given by Senator Barack Obama, D-III:

" 'Democracy demands that the religiously motivated translate their concerns into universal, rather than religion-specific values. It requires that their proposals be subject to argument, and amenable to reason.' " [Government must be] " 'accessible to people of all faiths, including those with no faith at all. Now this is going to be difficult for some who believe in the inerrancy of sacred scripture. But in a pluralistic democracy, we have no choice. Politics depends on our ability to persuade each other of common aims based on a common reality.' "

The price of not heeding these wise words will be a return to a world where zealots will rule, intolerance will flourish, and many freedoms that we now take for granted will disappear. Indeed, the freedoms that have been impinged upon during the war on terror are small compared to the horrors of an intolerant world. May all nations wake up in time.

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Book Reviews

We notice that many of our members are avid readers of books concerning philosophy, religion, politics, science and almost everything else. Opinions about the more interesting books are often brought out during our social gatherings. Some members are generous enough to bring their "collections" to our meetings for other to peruse or borrow.

We are encouraging these readers to take the time to write short book reviews for *Rational Inquiry* so that their opinions can be shared with a wider audience. We also like to remind our members that articles in the form of essays, as well as interesting notes and news items are welcome submissions. Without such contributions, the editor's work becomes more difficult.

Membership Application

I would like to join the San Diego Association for Rational Inquiry. Enclosed is my annual membership fee of \$20 (\$12 for students, seniors, and disabled people, \$6 if younger than 18). Name: Address: City: State: Zip+4: Special interests: Expertise: Mail to: San Diego Association for Rational Inquiry P. O. Box 623 La Jolla, CA 92038-0623 Phone: Email: For information contact contact Keith Taylor at 619-421-5844, or see our Website at sdari.org

We need your support! Please renew your membership. It costs to print and mail this newsletter and promotional fliers, award Science Fair prizes, and occasionally, to defray a small expense for the speaker. The membership gives the moral support for our cause. SDARI has been granted federal tax exempt status. Donations are deductible under section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

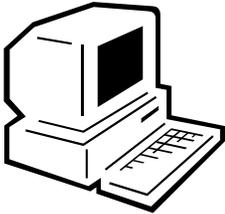
Lecture Schedule and Meeting Location

Public lectures are held at 7 p.m. on the fourth Sunday of the month (except December). The location of the meetings is the Joyce Beers Community Center, Vermont Street, 2 blocks north of University Ave., in the Hillcrest area. (The Center is near Ralphs and Trader Joe's markets in Uptown District Shopping Center. The parking is free).

The lectures are free, but a donation of \$5 is suggested.

Submission of Manuscripts Articles, essays book reviews and other written material may be submitted to Rational Inquiry. Pertinent announcements and clippings are welcome also. The submissions are subject to editing and abridgement. The approval of the author(s) will be sought for changes that materially affect the content. The Editorial Board, as appropriate, may evaluate each submitted work before publication for its suitability. Published material becomes the property of SDARI unless copyrighted by the author. Submitted articles that contain copyright material must have the permission from the copyright owners before publication. Such permission must be submitted to the editor in writing. Anonymous material will not be considered. Please send the material for publication (preferably on a medium compatible with Microsoft Windows) to: San Diego Association for Rational Inquiry P. O. Box 623 La Jolla, CA 92038-0623

Visit the webpage of SDARI to get the latest information on lectures and other events sponsored by the Association. You also will find other interesting facts and links to other organizations with goals similar to, or related, to ours. The Webmaster is Harry Sutton. We are at sdari.org



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**We are on the Web!
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Up-coming events:

in the **Joyce Beers Community Center** (See p. 7 for directions):

Sunday July 23, 2006.

6 p.m. Pre-meeting social hour.

7 p.m. *Interactive Bullshit.* A showing of Penn & Teller's well known and popular TV programs where they use examples to take issue with irrational thinking. A discussion will follow.

Sunday August 27, 2006.

6 p.m. Pre-meeting social hour.

7 p.m. Subject to be announced.

***Join our meetings. Participate and be informed. Become a member of SDARI.
The membership is tax deductible.***