HUMANISTS OF MINNESOTA
HUMANIST NEWS & VIEWS

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No Chapter Meetings during the Summer

Join us at the Freethought Picnics

July 17
August 21

11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

July 17 at Wabun Picnic Area, Minnehaha Park

HUMANISM:

A better life for all through education, democracy, free speech, reason, and science, without reliance on arbitrary dogmas, revelations, and faith.

Join us at the Remaining Freethought Picnics!

Sunday, July 17
Sunday, August 21

During the summer, the MN freethought community comes together for three jointly-held monthly picnics. Whether you attend one of our groups regularly or just want to get acquainted and socialize with like-minded folks in a relaxed atmosphere, do join us:

- This is a potluck picnic, so bring some food to share and your own beverage.
- Plates and utensils will be available, but to reduce waste, bring your own re-usable items if you can.
- The picnic goes on rain or shine! We've reserved a shelter for eating and socializing.
- The nearby wading pool and playground are great for the kids. Modern bathrooms are also nearby.
- Disc golf course nearby--so bring a Frisbee or additional lawn games such as Ladder Ball or Badminton.
- 11:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m. Come early to get a good parking space!

The July picnic is hosted by Humanists of MN at the Wabun Picnic Area, Shelter B, Minnehaha Park.

Directions to Wabun Picnic Area in Minnehaha Park, Minneapolis

- ***Take 46th Ave south from either E 46th St or Godfrey Road***
- ***Make very first left***
- ***Shelter B will be the first one you see on the left!***
- ***Note: more parking spacings available if you go down the service road***

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I am a citizen of the world. First and foremost. That's just the way I identify. It's no doubt one of the reasons I am drawn to the philosophy of humanism. However if one listens to the current political discourse, messages to put America and Americans first proliferate. Effective leadership is characterized as the ability to advance the standing of our own deserving "tribes" of "real" Americans above everyone else. Our nation is increasingly becoming a place where it is acceptable to disregard and/or demonize the "other" in our midst—often described through coded and loaded language—and to isolate ourselves from the rest of the world. Like many of my peers, I am disturbed by this proffered trajectory for America's future.

It was heartening then to spend a few days at the end of May surrounded by my own tribe—fellow humanists from across the country—at the annual American Humanist Association conference in Chicago. The emphasis throughout much of the conference however was what we as humanists could do to get outside ourselves and engage with others beyond our own tribe. A challenging but necessary goal if we are to live up to our humanist principles.

Take for example the talk Mark Reimers of Michigan State University gave on neuroscience. Humanists are notorious for trumpeting "logic" and "reason" in our approach to the world. In fact, we are convinced that we have arrived at our more enlightened worldview because we applied these cognitive skills so competently. But now neuroscientific studies suggest that social identity rather than logic drives most strong beliefs. We underestimate how much our social environments influence our learning and beliefs.

So how do people move beyond religious thinking and commitment? Logic and reason may not be the sure path. Making meaningful social connections with those who are not in our "tribe" may be the more successful course. Creating humanist communities of support may offer a more appealing and welcoming niche in which to demonstrate our worldview. I know I still like to teach the "Tenets of Humanism" but clearly it isn't the only way to advance the humanist message.

Likewise, one of the more provocative panels of the conference was "What Humanists Can Bring to Interfaith Dialogue." I have long struggled with the concept of working with "people of faith" —especially in regard to public policy around social justice issues. As a staunch supporter of the separation of church and state, I insist on approaching public policy from a secular ethical perspective and prefer not to sully myself with faith-based perspectives. But this group of panelists made a compelling argument replete with positive experiences of their work with interfaith groups. They recounted how progressive "people of faith" are often our natural allies and dedicated activists who within the larger interfaith movement are largely committed to global ethics—the very kind we humanists tout. When we show up at the table of interfaith dialogue and action—and even in some cases *demand* a seat at the table—we actually have the opportunity to demonstrate how evidence-based approaches to problem-solving are what unites us as citizens of a shared world. When people don't come to us, we can go to them. Let's not be ignored; let's engage. And let's not be dismissive of our allies from another tribe—especially when they share our values!

Another provocative panel discussion was "The Intersection of Humanism and Social Justice Work." Yes, humanists accept a naturalist worldview—along with atheists and other freethinkers. But humanism demands that we tackle the ethical issues confronting humanity in every age. It's not enough to celebrate and embrace the ethical advances of the past; inequities remain that are embedded in our society and we accept our responsibility for addressing them.

The question becomes—how? How do we engage with social justice issues when today's humanists --who espouse egalitarianism—are predominantly white Americans and have more power and privilege than those whom we seek to help? We aren't necessarily from the same tribe and we don't particularly understand each other. Our engagement then must begin with listening and learning. But our being identified with the work of equality and justice may do more for the advancement of humanism than any lecture series or discussion group.

Racial and religious tensions, nationalistic and ethic division, and rampant individualism are all rearing their ugly heads across America and the globe. More than ever, people throughout the world must coalesce

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around humanistic ideals. We need this universal egalitarian philosophy to bring us together as citizens of the world if everyone is to "live long and prosper." Only by engaging with people from all walks of life with a humanism that is practiced—not just preached—will we have any real effect in advancing our humanist principles. Ω

Humanist Community:

Want to 'Make Friends and Influence People'? Host an Event!

By Harlan Garbell

For those of you who were not able to make it to the May chapter meeting, the attendees at the meeting addressed the issue of how to make our organization a more welcoming community for new and existing members. We first discussed what the essential elements that make a successful community were and then we discussed specific programs and activities that would bring people together to help create such a community.

The attendees at the meeting came up with well over a hundred specific ideas on activities that would enable members to interact more and make it possible to create durable relationships. Some of these ideas were nothing unusual e.g. pot lucks, hiking/biking, movies and dinner. Others were more exotic. There was also a significant desire for more volunteer opportunities that would engage people in making a positive contribution consistent with our humanist values.

As co-chair of the recently formed Membership Team of the organization, my job is to help facilitate this feedback from our members from ideas to action. As a result, our team created the "Just Members" program for current members. (Meetup events for members and non-members alike will continue as usual.) This new program is specifically designed to increase the value of your membership and enable you to interact with other members in more intimate settings. Hopefully, this program will enable you to meet new friends who share your values, or just provide you with opportunities to have a good time with old friends.

Yes, I can organize a walk around the lake or host a potluck but that will not get us very far. We need members to step-up and organize, or host, other activities, including volunteer opportunities. This should not be very difficult or expensive. For example, let's say you enjoy going to the Minnesota State Fair and you would like to go with 2-6 other members. Just email me at hgarbell@comcast.net and I will help facilitate communicating your proposal to the membership. There are many other simple, inexpensive ways to get people to connect and help make a stronger, more vibrant humanist community. As the commercial says- "Just do it." Ω

Highlights from the Board

by David Guell
Secretary

From the June board meeting:

- Vice President Harlan Garbell reported that the Membership committee is considering a number of activities and mechanisms designed to increase membership and member engagement.
- Treasurer Brad Bolin reported that, as of June, the organization is positive $1613.88 for the current year.
- The question of whether to make the Facebook group open or closed was discussed as were options for creating a member directory.
- The board will attend a strategy retreat on Sunday July 10.

Maple Grove Discussion Group:

Saturday, July 9th, 10:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.: "Race and Eyewitness Memory," by Joe Vitroil, PhD, University of Minnesota. Maple Grove Community Center, 12951 Weaver Lake Rd, room 124, Maple Grove 55311, $5 donation. Register at landforsale@visi.com or call Laurie at (763) 420-6350.

Announcements

DISCUSSION GROUPS ETC.

2nd Friday 5:00 p.m., *Humanist Happy Hour St. Paul,* Green Mill Restaurant & Bar, 57 Hamline Ave S.
4th Friday 5:00 p.m., *Humanist Happy Hour Minneapolis,* Salsa a La Salsa--2841 Hennepin Ave., Mpls.
2nd Friday 10:00 a.m., *Coffee and Current Events,* Loring Park Dunn Bros., 329 W. 15th St., Mpls.
2nd Saturday 10:30 a.m., *Blasphemers' Brunch***,** Pizza Luce, 800 W 66th Street, Richfield
2nd Sunday 2:00 p.m., *Sunday Assembly.* First Unitarian Society. 900 Mt. Curve Avenue, Minneapolis.
1st Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-noon, *Lake Superior Freethinkers monthly meeting.* Radisson Hotel Duluth, Viking Room. For information contact Bill van Druten, (218) 724-4176.
1st Sunday, 10:00 a.m., *Central Minnesota Freethinkers, St. Cloud Coffee Social.* Check their website for details*: cmfreethinkers.org* or contact them at *info@cmfreethinkers.org*
Mondays, 5:00-6:30 p.m., *Atheists for Human Rights Happy Hour,* Ol' Mexico Restaurant, 1754 Lexington Ave., Roseville (just north of Larpenteur). Tables on terrace level. Call Paul Craven, (763) 788-8918.
1st and 3rd Mondays, 6:30 p.m., *Freethought Toastmasters Club*, Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1276 Larpenteur Ave. W., St. Paul. Contact George Kane, nup@minn.net or (651) 488-8225.
2nd & 4th Mondays, 5:00-7:00 p.m., *Freethought Dinner Social*, Davanni's, 8605 Lyndale Ave So, Bloomington. Call Marilyn Nienkerk, (612) 866-6200.
1st Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m., *Freethought Lunch,* Dragon House, 3950 Central Ave. NE, Columbia Heights, MN. Call Marilyn Nienkerk, (612) 866-6200.
3rd Wednesday, 11:30 a.m., *Freethought Lunch*, Dragon House, 3950 Central Avenue NE, Columbia Heights. Call Bill Volna, (612) 781-1420.
2nd Thursday, evening, *Rochester Area Freethinkers (RAFT),* Downtown Rochester Public Library, Meeting Room A. Contact Jim Salutz, jsalutz@aol.com or (507) 280-8012.

OTHER EVENTS

Second Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., *Humanists of Minnesota* Board of Directors meeting. Open to all members. Contact Audrey Kingstrom at akingstrom@comcast.net. Note: no meeting in July!
Thursdays, 7:00 p.m. (during school year), *Campus Atheists, Skeptics and Humanists (CASH)* general meeting. 3rd floor Coffman Memorial Union, 300 Washington Ave. SE, Minneapolis. Contact cash@cashumn.org.

Check out our Meetup events at http://www.meetup.com/humanism-166

Upcoming Critical Thinking Club Meetings

Twin Cities Chapter. Sunday, July 3rd, 10:00 a.m. to noon: "Do Federal Regulations Regarding the Use of Human Subjects in Research Work?" Uptown Bryn Mawr Community Gathering Place, 400 Cedar Lake Rd South, Minneapolis.

West Metro Chapter. Saturday, July 23rd, 10:00 a.m. to noon: "Sustainability and the Global Biodiversity Crisis," by David A. Trauger. Ridge Point Apts. Meeting Room, 12800 Marion Lane W., Minnetonka.

Stillwater Chapter. Monday, July 11th, 7:00 p.m.: "The War on Science," by Shawn Otto. Family Means Bldg., 1875 Northwestern Ave, Stillwater.

Membership Report

As of May 2016, Humanists of Minnesota membership was at 194 vs. 170 in the May of 2015.

Welcome to all our new members!

Support Humanists of Minnesota! Painlessly!

Do you shop at Amazon.com?

If so, Amazon will donate some of their profits to Humanists of Minnesota! Just use the following URL to enter their website when you shop there (note: though the charity listed is the AHA, the funds will go to HofMN):
http://smile.amazon.com/ch/41-1570800

"Humanist Views," our weekly Cable program, airs at **6:30 p.m. Mondays** on MTN Channel 75.

Humanist Action:

Humanists Support Camp Quest!

By Brad Bolin, Treasurer

I recently had the pleasure as Treasurer of Humanists of Minnesota of writing our annual check to a charity that we have ardently supported for years. I forwarded $2,495 that we collected from our membership (the largest in my nine years as Treasurer and I'm sure the largest in our history) to Camp Quest Minnesota.

Camp Quest is affiliated with National Camp Quest in running the first network of secular summer youth camps in the country. National Camp Quest (established in 1996) now helps operate 19 week-long camp sessions in 14 states (plus one each in Switzerland and Norway as well as two in the United Kingdom). Additional information on our local unit can be found at www.cqminnesota.org.

As always, a sincere thank you to our membership for all of their generous donations in our continued efforts to promote Humanism and to help draw positive attention to Humanists of Minnesota. Ω

Humanists at the Pride Festival!

Humanists of Minnesota had a dozen volunteers help out at our PRIDE booth over the two day festival. Many people stopped at the booth and were interested to hear about humanism. The volunteers had a great time with each other and engaging with the public. We also had a booth at the May Day Festival and Juneteenth this year.

Book Review:

Spooky Action at a Distance

(Scientific American / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015)

By George Musser

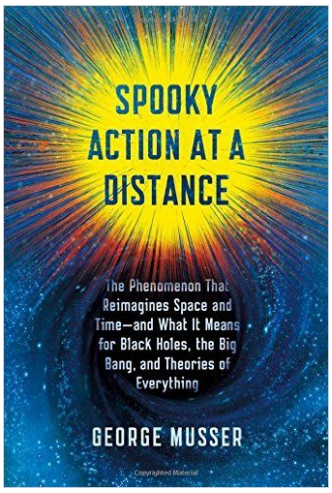
Reviewed by Nathan Curland

If you have any knowledge of Quantum Physics (QP) or Albert Einstein, you know that the title of this book, *Spooky Action at a Distance,* refers to Einstein's famous comment in a letter to Niels Bohr (considered the founder of Quantum Physics) on his skepticism of the notorious QP prediction of the concept of particle entanglement. This maintains that two fundamental particles (e.g. photons) can become connected to each other so that even if they are separated by any distance, they will respond to each other instantaneously, i.e. if one is found to be in a certain state, so will the other. This implies that 'flipping' the state of particle A will result in an instantaneous flip of particle B, ergo an unexplainable action at a distance.

George Musser is a science journalist who studied physics both at the university and throughout his career and is a contributing editor to Scientific American. In this book he discusses the concept of 'locality', that is that everything has its place and can only interact with other things by contact, either directly of via intermediaries (such as electromagnetic forces or other particles) which would require some sort of time delay (with the speed of light being the fastest possible speed). Einstein, whose greatest contribution to physics was the replacement of Newton's 'spooky force' of gravity with the concept of space-time curvature, could not conceive of a world without locality. Yet in the many decades that have passed since the Bohr-Einstein letters, physicists have come up with more and more cases of what appears to be non-locality and have postulated more and more theoretical and mathematical constructs to try and explain them.

In this book, Musser takes us through the history of locality and non-locality from the times of the ancient Greeks to the present. Along the way he describes the experiments that give rise to the concerns about non-locality but in such a manner as to try and make everything understandable to a layperson. As such he makes frequent use of metaphors and humor to explain how some of the outlandish and non-intuitive concepts are supposed to work. The result is quite a romp through not just QP but a discourse on how physics is conducted in the modern world. He makes it quite clear that non-locality is not accepted by all physicists and in fact, the various theories that have arisen put physicists at odds with each other to an extent that in many cases they refuse even to communicate or acknowledge the other's position. Much of this is due to the fact that the theories have outpaced the experimental evidence and the field is in dire need of more of the latter.

In recent years, the concept of non-locality has been applied to try and better understand phenomena such a black holes or give a better theory for the big bang and the apparent extreme uniformity of the early universe without having to postulate 'the great inflation'. Dark matter and dark energy are also subjects which are being tackled by non-locality theories. However, the most mind-blowing concepts are introduced in the last few chapters, where Musser goes on to argue that non-locality relegates the concepts of 'space' and 'time' to emergent quantities of a more fundamental reality based on 'quanta' and how well they are interconnected to each other.



I found the book to be a fascinating and thought provoking read. However, I felt that if you know something of physics, it is easy to find holes in the constant stream of metaphors that Musser utilizes and therefore the resulting explanations are less that convincing. Furthermore, it is clear that the theoretical physicists who are coming up with String Theory, Quantum Gravity, Quantum Mechanics, Quantum Graphity (to name just a few of the constructs) are developing mathematical models (and in some cases, new math) to describe this new reality, but to actually explain what the math means is yet to be accomplished. To his credit, Musser himself shows us some of these blemishes. What *is* clear is that modern physics is at a stage where an understanding of the fundamental processes that govern the workings of reality is still 'up for grabs'. An exciting time. Ω

HUMANIST NEWS & VIEWS

Editor, Nathan Curland
Editorial Committee - Brad Bolin, Dale Handeen, Suzanne Perry

Articles, letters, event notices and other writings are welcome. Send to: *editor@humanistsofmn.org* with the word "newsletter" in the subject line, or to P.O. Box 582997, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2997. (E-mail submissions are preferred.) All submissions must include the writer's full name, postal address, telephone number and e-mail address. All submissions become the property of this newsletter and cannot be returned. Submission deadline is the 22nd of the prior month.

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Freethinkers Gather for First Freethought Picnic of the Summer!

On June 12th approximately 50 folk showed up at Columbia Park in northeast Minneapolis for the first of three summer family picnics. The weather was perfect and everyone enjoyed the conversation, food and facilities.

This picnic was jointly sponsored by Camp Quest and the Freedom from Religion Foundation. The July picnic will be sponsored by the Humanists of Minnesota and will be held at the Wabun Picnic Area near Minnehaha falls.

Humanists of Minnesota

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July 2016

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Your membership is vital to the growth of Humanism and the Humanist community. Our membership categories are:
(For categories at RH and above, married couples or domestic partners will be considered as one membership, if you so indicate.)
( ) (B) Budget, $25.00
( ) (RI) Regular Individual, $40.00
( ) (RH) Regular Household, $60.00
( ) (S) Sustaining, $100.00
( ) (P) Patron, $250.00
( ) (BN) Benefactor, $500.00
( ) (L) Life Membership, $1000.00
( ) (T) Trial subscription for 3 months, just ask
*Full time students at an accredited institution can receive a complimentary subscription

Please check the appropriate box, complete the information and mail with your check to Humanists of Minnesota, P.O. Box 582997, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2997.

Name: _____

Address:_____

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Phone number:_____

e-mail:_____
(for special announcements, blogs etc. Keeps you in touch!)

I would like my newsletter sent via email ( ) (in color!)

Second Member at same address (for RH and above):

_____

For national or international membership write to:

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www.americanhumanist.org

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www.secularhumanism.org

Visit our website at:
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