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**No Chapter Meetings during the Summer**

**Join us at the Freethought Picnics**

**June 12  
 July 17  
 August 21**

**Noon to 3:00 p.m.**

**June 12 at Columbia Park**

***HUMANISM:***

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



***This summer, join us at the Freethought Picnics! (Noon to 3:00 p.m.)***

***Sunday, June 12  
 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 shelter area has electrical outlets, a sink, and bathrooms nearby.
- The nearby playground (with sandbox) is a great gathering place for kids.
- Bring lawn games such as Frisbee, Ladder Ball, Badminton—and/or tennis balls and rackets for the nearby tennis court.

*The June picnic is hosted by Camp Quest families at Columbia Park*

**COLUMBIA PARK** is located in northeast Minneapolis.

- ▶ Take Central Ave NE (MN Hwy. 65) to Columbia Pkwy. (Between 36th Ave. and 37th Ave.)
- ▶ Turn west onto Columbia Pkwy and proceed for 0.35 miles.
- ▶ After you go under the railroad bridge, you will see the park on your left.
- ▶ Take the first left onto the service road (you will see a sign for "800 Columbia Blvd."). (You should see us by the shelter on the hill!)

## PRESIDENT'S



## CORNER

Humanists of Minnesota is more than a non-profit organization. We are a *community* of people who share a similar worldview and derive meaning for our lives from our naturalist approach to knowledge and our commitment to global ethics. While we as individuals may find personal meanings within our lives, humanists in particular create meaning by joining with others in common purpose as well. Therefore it is incumbent upon Humanists of Minnesota to effectively communicate, foster and implement our common purposes.

Humanists accept that our lives are part of the natural world and intricately bound to all others on the planet. We take responsibility for living in accordance with those facts. Our own well-being is dependent upon our ability to establish and maintain healthy, supportive relationships with others. For many years Humanists of Minnesota has been providing places for like-minded individuals to find one another. To better advance our purpose of

creating and sustaining a truly caring humanist community, one of our current objectives is to deepen our connections and broaden our outreach.

However we will not and cannot flourish if we remain in some sort of humanist cocoon. We must emerge and engage with the world. As we take up our civic and global responsibilities, it is far too daunting and unrealistic to think that any one of our actions alone can set the right course for the future or ameliorate the many abuses that the human species has inflicted upon the planet. That is why we work together as an organization and community to undertake another of our purposes of championing human rights, global ethics and planetary sustainability.

Humanists also accept that our lives are finite. Even so, we can contribute to a larger good and hence leave a legacy that goes well beyond our own personal existence. Our purpose to promote the use of the democratic process, scientific inquiry, critical thinking and moral reasoning in support of a secular society is best undertaken through group effort that can be sustained over decades and across generations. By building well-established organizations and a recognizable movement within society, humanists can leverage our communal efforts for long-term benefit. Even our local group would do well to become a storied institution within Minnesota that will outlive any of us and have greater influence in the world than we ever could have single-handedly.

Here then are some essential characteristics needed to be just such an effective community promoting humanism and fostering our values in the wider world:

- A visible community: Being tech-savvy and digitally connected is a must. We should be seen around the city, have a presence at festivals, community meetings and rallies. We can take a stand on issues when it is appropriate and communicate effectively through various media outlets.
- A generous community: Resources are needed to accomplish ambitious goals. To build an effective organization that can provide services to its members and be seen and heard in the wider world requires money. However the generosity of time and commitment by members is equally important to create meaningful community among ourselves and to be capable of living out our values in the wider world.
- A social justice community: The world is not fair and hence a comprehensive understanding of history and social systems is necessary to respond appropriately to that reality. Unless we see beyond our own experiences and perspectives, we will be ill-prepared to be effective problem-solvers, change agents or advocates.
- A service community: Practicing compassion is good for us. Service provides an opportunity to learn about the lives of others as well as ourselves. Insight can be gained into how society functions and what public policies might be more effective, and hopefully, we may help alleviate suffering, too.

*(Continued on page 4)*

# 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](http://cmfreethinkers.org) or contact them at [info@cmfreethinkers.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:jsalutz@aol.com) or (507) 280-8012.

## OTHER EVENTS

**Saturday, May 7, 3:00 p.m.**, *Humanists of Minnesota Board of Directors meeting*. Open to all members. Contact Audrey Kingstrom at [akingstrom@comcast.net](mailto:akingstrom@comcast.net).

**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](mailto:cash@cashumn.org).

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

## Death and Dying Series

**First Saturdays of the month (Oct. –June)  
Rondo Community Library, St. Paul**

**June 4th @ 10:30 am  
Celebrate Your Life**

At this session, we will consider ways to celebrate your life—near the end. Why not throw yourself a party—or a party for a loved one near death? Have the opportunity to say good-byes. Or make plans to connect with close family and friends before you die—instead of just coming to your funeral or memorial? Then, how do we help people grieve once you're gone? What parting words, music, poetry and prose are fitting for your farewell event? Make sure you get the last word. Not someone else. It's your one and only life.

This series is designed to help humanists, agnostics, atheists and freethinkers prepare for the final chapter of one's life. Through facilitated discussion, each session focuses on a particular end-of-life issue providing the opportunity to think out loud about our mortality and the pragmatic issues surrounding our impending deaths. For more information about the series, contact Audrey at [akingstrom@comcast.net](mailto:akingstrom@comcast.net).

## *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>*

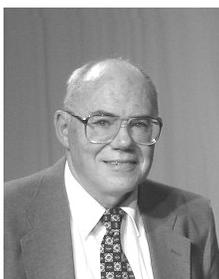
"Humanist Views," our weekly Cable program, airs at **6:30 p.m. Mondays** on MTN Channel 75.



(Continued from page 2)

- A collaborative community: We don't have to re-invent the wheel. Many organizations are doing important work that mirrors our values. Let's work with them to advance humanist causes and demonstrate to others how a naturalist approach to problem-solving best serves everyone in society.

So are we up to the task of maintaining a long-term community of humanists for life-long friendship, meaning and communal purpose? Do we have the vision to contribute to the larger humanist movement wherein it becomes a recognizable and influential force within society? That is what I am committed to. Let's strive to be known as a busy hive of naturally curious, compassionate and rational change-agents! Ω



*Freethought History:*

### *Book Notes*

*Paul Heffron, Chapter Historian*

I had planned on purchasing Roy Speckhardt's new book, *Creating Change Through Humanism* (Humanist Press, 2015), and there it was on the table of items for sale at our Humanists of Minnesota chapter meeting. Voila! I found this to be a very important book, and am glad we're making it available to our members and to newcomers. I'd like to pass on some notes about it and encourage you to do the same.

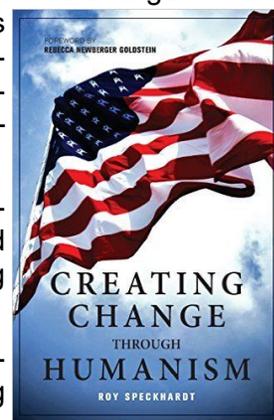
This is a much needed and concisely written book by the executive director of the American Humanist Association. It covers humanism in a way that provides an excellent introduction for newcomers and an informative and inspiring update for old hands like me. It's a paperback of only 185 pages, and yet it touches on almost everything you ever wanted to know about humanism, including what's happened since the AHA moved to Washington D.C. in 2002 and its membership and programs took off.

In the chapter on humanist history Speckhardt covers the AHA from 1941 to the present cogently and with more detail than we have in any book so far. He also touches on the origins of organized American humanism going back to the 1920s and 30s. Given my inordinate interest in our history, I wish he hadn't been so concise on the origins. He mentions the first organization to use the name "humanist," the Humanist Fellowship, formed in 1927 at the University of Chicago, and the First Humanist Society of New York founded by Charles Francis Potter at about the same time. Speckhardt also notes that the Humanist Fellowship evolved into the Humanist Press Association, publisher of the *New Humanist*, which carried the Humanist Manifesto in 1933, and after a hiatus was reborn as the AHA in 1941. (I'll do some filling in on this in my next column.)

Speckhardt sees the recent emergence of the AHA and its chapters in the context of the larger secular movement of the last fifteen years. He is at home with the four major secular identities and communities: atheist, humanist, skeptic, and freethinker. He sees the AHA in combination with all the other organizations, publishing breakthroughs, events, and projects. The AHA is part of a secular surge not seen since the Golden Age of Free-thought in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This book is quite helpful for anyone who wants to know more about applying humanism and becoming an activist. Speckhardt also offers advice on chapter programs and activities and on appealing to the younger generation. In his summing up on creating change he writes:

"Whether it be through persuading politicians, using our checkbook, creatively rethinking charitable approaches, getting involved locally, buying with a conscience, finding our message in music, or displaying our humanism in competition, we should explore every opportunity to implement beneficial humanist change in our society." (p. 154) Ω





## May Chapter Meeting

# “Grassroots Humanism: Strengthening our Community, Growing the Movement”

Summarized by Audrey Kingstrom

Our May chapter meeting was well attended with 45 members and friends actively engaged in the business of the organization. They came to contribute to the question of how we can deepen our connections with one another and grow into a more caring community. Throughout the sharing and discussion our members consistently indicated that they want to find deeper friendship and greater support within our group, but they also want to reach out into the wider community to do service and advocacy work together.



This membership meeting began however with some highlights of the year reported by President Audrey Kingstrom, with follow-up reports by other committee chairs. Overall we had 45 new members join this past year with a net increase of 25 members. And with the increased engagement by so many of our members, we are well-positioned for further growth in the coming year. Our financial situation is also sound, as reported by Treasurer Brad Bolin, not only from increased dues revenue but also by a generous memorial gift of \$1400 from the family of one of our recently deceased members, Richard Ley.

Membership team co-chairs Harlan Garbell and Ellie Bjorklund led the table discussions on building a stronger sense of community. We also brainstormed activities and events that members would like to participate in. Dozens and dozens of suggestions were made. Ellie made clear to everyone that we will need more people to step up and take some leadership if these things are to happen, but the membership team is at the ready to help with the planning and execution as desired. So don't be shy. Whether you are interested in hosting a one-time event or would like to lead an ongoing activity, be sure to let the membership team know. (Contact Harlan at hgarbell@comcast.net)

Many of our regular program leaders are taking a break this summer. But that doesn't mean we can't have fun together, stay engaged in issues or do some work out in the community. Stay tuned to events that pop

up on Meetup and Facebook. If you have not joined our [Facebook group](#), do it now. You don't have to use FB in the rest of your life—just use it as a way to stay better connected to your humanist friends if that's all that suits you. Audrey urged fellow members to make this a serendipitous summer for humanist get-togethers.

Our meeting concluded with a wonderful buffet lunch. The well-attended free lunch was partially underwritten by Humanists of Minnesota with additional contributions from Mark Thoson, Juliet Branca, Poldi Gerard, Deb Nasby, Molly Wilbur-Cohen and Sonny Taylor. Given the delicious food and great enjoyment of the lunch, suggestions also came forward to do more potluck lunch buffets in the future. Thanks to all for your suggestions and participation in another successful membership meeting! Ω

### Upcoming Critical Thinking Club Meetings

*Twin Cities Chapter. Sunday, June 5th, 10:00 a.m. to noon: “Sustainability and the Global Biodiversity Crisis,” by David L. Trauger. Uptown Bryn Mawr Community Gathering Place, 400 Cedar Lake Rd South, Minneapolis.*

*West Metro Chapter. Saturday, June 25th, 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, 13th, 7:00 p.m.: “Sustainability and the Global Biodiversity Crisis,” by David A. Trauger. Family Means Bldg., 1875 Northwestern Ave, Stillwater.*



## *Day of Reason Celebration!*

*By Nathan Curland*

Representatives Mike Freiberg, Raymond Dehn and Phyllis Kahn were all there to speak out for reason and science and voice their support for the Compassionate Care Act (Freiberg is a co-sponsor). Janet Conn and Rebecca Thoman of Compassion and Choices Minnesota discussed the status and progress of the current legislation and how the opposition is using speculation and fear to block its consideration. Shawn Otto gave a great talk—which was a teaser to his new book, *The War on Science*, which will be released in early June.

Here is the content of the rousing speech given by our president, Audrey Kingstrom:

Today humanists, atheists, freethinkers and secularists gathered at the Minnesota state capitol to pay homage to Reason and to uphold its use in our public policy deliberations. We came to implore all our political leaders and fellow citizens to draw on the most up-to-date knowledge we have in the social and physical sciences, of world history and philosophy, and to use pragmatic moral reasoning in our civic decision-making. We must commit to bring the very best of our rational capacities to our pursuit of the common good.

We also came to counter the National Day of Prayer supporters who attempt to infuse society—and our government in particular—with a sectarian faith-based worldview. In doing so, they misrepresent our role as citizens. Democracy is by design a human endeavor dependent upon our capacity to reason together. It requires a well-educated citizenry -- not a religious one. Democracy was founded on humanist principles and hence those of us who identify as humanists are strong advocates for civic engagement based on the discipline of reason and not the habit of prayer.

In a democracy no one gets to lay claim to supernatural insight or divine knowledge. In our civic lives—and especially within our governing bodies—we must sit down together—with all our differences and collectively figure out how to live together. It's an egalitarian, collaborative affair—requiring compromise and negotiation, knowledge and understanding. There is no higher authority to which we should or even can appeal; in fact, there is no authority other than ourselves to do this work.

Democracy is part of the ethical project of our species. It will always be a work-in-progress and it is incumbent upon us to learn to live with the differences we have among us—so long as such differences do not undermine the well-being of others, the principles of fairness or the common good which sustains the whole. We cannot rely on magical thinking or appeals to a higher power to ameliorate our differences. Common ground is not fashioned through prayer or platitude. If attained at all—it is through hard work—forged through rational, persistent, mutual engagement with our fellow citizens.

So whether we—as a state or nation—are grappling with the effects of climate change, the nuances of human

sexuality or preparing for death with dignity, we must employ the best knowledge available from all the scientific disciplines. And we can and must also engage in robust secular moral reasoning—drawn from that vast and deep well of human experience to ground our values and inform our decisions. Reason combines the evidence-based sciences and the meaning-making humanities to provide the foundation of democracy. Let Reason prevail! Ω

### *Maple Grove Discussion Group:*

*Saturday, June 11th, 10:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.: "Racial Justice and Racial Equality," by Rita Garcia. Maple Grove Community Center, 12951 Weaver Lake Rd, room 124, Maple Grove 55311, \$5 donation. Register at [landforsale@visi.com](mailto:landforsale@visi.com) or call Laurie at (763) 420-6350.*



*Rep. Mike Freiberg and author Shawn Otto at the Minnesota Day of Reason Celebration*

## HUMANIST NEWS & VIEWS

**Editor**, Nathan Curland

**Editorial Committee** - Brad Bolin, Dale Handeen, Mark Thoson

Articles, letters, event notices and other writings are welcome. Send to: [editor@humanistsofmn.org](mailto: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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## *Humanists Turn out for Spring Highway Cleanup!*

It was a great day for 9 humanists to get together and pick up garbage for our Spring Highway Cleanup on Saturday April 30th. The job took about an hour and a half and most stayed for the lunch that followed for lively discussions.

Many thanks to the hard-working crew!



*From l to r: Jerry Smith, Mark Thoson, Mary McLeod, Joe Fieber, Yumi Iwasaki, Greg Hart, Noah Curland, and Juliet Branca (organizer). Not shown: Nathan Curland (photographer)*

## Humanists of Minnesota

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### Historian -

Paul Heffron

### Cable Program Staff -

Scott Lohman, Nathan Curland, Brad Bolin, Grant Lohman

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June 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

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For national or international membership write to:

American Humanist Association  
1777 T Street NW  
Washington, DC 20009-7125  
[www.americanhumanist.org](http://www.americanhumanist.org)

Council for Secular Humanism  
PO Box 664  
Amherst, NY 14226  
[www.secularhumanism.org](http://www.secularhumanism.org)

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.

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Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

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(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):

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