

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 President's Corner
- 3 Social Action Team
- 4 Announcements
Discussion Groups
May Day!
- 5 Caring Connection
Corner
- 6 Annual Meeting
Summary
- 7 Contact Information
More Discussion Groups

**No Chapter Meetings
during the Summer**

**Join us at the Free-
thought Picnics**

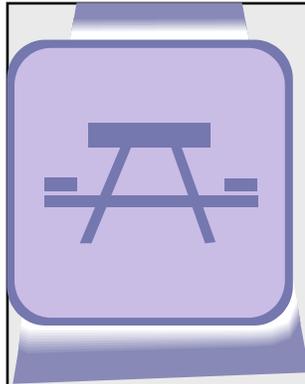
**June 11
July 16
August 13**

Noon to 3:00 p.m.

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!***

***Sunday, June 11
Sunday, July 16
Sunday, August 13***

Lots of friendly people.
A play area for the kids.
Lively discussions for the adults.
Bring games, instruments, etc.

These are potluck picnics so bring some picnic food to share. The shelter area has electricity and a sink. (Don't forget to bring your own beverage, plate and utensils.)

***The June Picnic is Sponsored by Camp Quest Minnesota
(CQMN) cqminnesota.org. Noon to 3:00 p.m.***

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.
- ▶ Proceed along Columbia Pkwy. (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."). Proceed to the second parking lot on your left (0.2 miles). (You should see us by the shelter on the hill!)

PRESIDENT'S

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I was at the State Capitol on May 4th with fellow members of Humanists of Minnesota, Minnesota Atheists, and Americans United for Separation of Church and State, to celebrate the National Day of Reason. The American Humanist Association has been championing a Day of Reason since 2003 in response to the ever-increasing encroachment of religious dogma in public policy decision-making. Now many secular groups across the country observe it as a counterpoint to the National Day of Prayer which is traditionally held on the first Thursday of May. This year five state legislators addressed our assemblage in the capitol rotunda (!): Representatives Mike Freiberg, Raymond Dehn, Ilhan Omar, Susan Allen and Tina Liebling. In addition, various leaders of our local secular organizations spoke on the theme of *the wall of separation*. My remarks follow:

“As most any student of American history knows, the ‘wall of separation’ between church and state grew out of the First Amendment. But like so many other constitutional issues, the anti-establishment clause remains open to interpretation even today. While the meaning of ‘religious liberty’ itself seems to be more fraught than ever, I am particularly concerned that religion has a way of encroaching on the public square – permeating that wall – because so many Americans believe that a god or higher power is necessary to ensure morality – the very morality upon which our civic life is built.

“But given our history, it’s really no wonder. Many of the early European colonists who settled in North America came here explicitly to practice their own religion without persecution. The Founding Fathers could not – nor did they attempt to – take away anyone’s brand of religion. The framers wisely devised a church/state separation that kept state-sanctioned religion out of the constitution yet provided for individual religious freedom in the Bill of Rights. It was a monumental feat for its time.

“But few of the Founding Fathers – let alone ordinary citizens of the new republic – were ready to disavow religion’s moral authority. Thomas Jefferson was the most notable outlier in that regard. Not only had he edited the Gospels to exclude all supernatural references and is credited with coining the phrase “wall of separation,” Jefferson is also quoted as saying – ‘*Reason and free enquiry are the only effectual agents against error.*’ On the other hand, in his Farewell Address of 1794, George Washington warned: ‘*[L]et us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. . . [R]eason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.*’

“While the Founders were successful in designing our government *not* to be the repository of *religious* authority, the locus of *moral* authority remained unsettled in our country. Hence throughout much of our history, Bible reading was part of the moral and character education of students in our public schools, and in some regions, well into the 20th century. Without a state religion, the culturally dominant religion came to be used in the public arena as *the* source of moral authority and provided the competitive advantage in culture wars and public policy debates. Our history is replete with social movements – antislavery, women’s rights, worker’s rights, prohibition, civil rights – to name a few – that religious folks on all sides have both championed and contested.

“Even with so many competing religious values at work in our society, religion remains widely accepted as *the* wellspring and *the* warden of all morality. It makes no sense, but so many people and politicians still draw on some religious precept or another to bring gravitas to important events and decisions. Our politicians look to religious leaders for blessing and they frame their policies according to the religious values of their most ardent supporters. And they often invoke a higher power to guide their deliberations – just as many of them do on the National Day of Prayer early in May.

“As a humanist and proponent of secular government, I would argue that we not only need to protect the

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

church/state wall of separation, but we must also strengthen it. Humanists in particular – but most secularists, freethinkers and atheists as well – believe that we ourselves possess the moral agency needed to govern our civic lives. The democracy envisioned by our Founding Fathers is based on that same understanding of human moral agency.

“Now in our own time, we must be diligent in getting that message across – that the moral authority of our government – our civil, secular government – resides with us – the people. It’s a kind of humanity-based moral authority that exists when everyone counts, when everyone’s voice is heard and respected, and when everyone uses informed reason and verifiable evidence as the common currency of our shared civic lives. We as human beings have the capacity, and we as citizens have the responsibility, to determine public policy and establish the rule of law based on this moral authority – a moral authority that arises out of our mutual deliberation and our inter-dependent lives.

“This is democracy at its best and that is what we celebrate on the National Day of Reason.” Ω



Humanist Community

Social Action Team Notes

By Suzanne Perry

Humanists March for Science, Climate

Humanists of Minnesota contingents joined the March for Science, then the People's Climate March on two consecutive Saturdays in April. Both offered a great opportunity for us to showcase our support for facts and evidence over dogma and denial. Before the marches, the HofMN Social Action Team organized a sign-making session at a workshop led by Activated Artists Coalition. The accompanying photo of March for Science participants shows some of the results.



In other social action news:

Join an End-of-Life Action Team

Humanists of Minnesota is working with our partner, Compassion and Choices, to build support for the End-of-Life Option Act, which would allow terminally ill Minnesotans to get a prescription to bring about a peaceful death. We will focus on the next legislative session since lawmakers did not move the bill forward this year.

We have set up action teams that will work in their communities to 1) seek backing from their state legislators and 2) build public awareness and support for the bill. The teams represent the following areas: St. Paul and South St. Paul (includes Mendota and Inver Grove Heights); Minneapolis; South Suburbs (Bloomington, Burnsville, Apple Valley, Eden Prairie, Edina); West Suburbs (Plymouth, Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Crystal, Minnetonka, Excelsior etc); Northfield; and Shorewood. If you would like to join a team, or start one in an unrepresented area, please contact Suzanne Perry, suzanneper@msn.com, or Bobbi Jacobsen, bjacob67@gmail.com. Ω

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*, Pizza Luce, 800 W. 66th St., Richfield

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, 11:00 a.m., *Sunday Assembly*. 514 Lowry Ave. NE, 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

2nd Wednesday, 7 p.m., *Humanists of Minnesota* Board of Directors meeting. Open to all members. Contact Audrey Kingstrom at 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.

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

Humanists of Minnesota Booth at May Day Festival

Humanists of Minnesota, once again, had a presence at the annual May Day Festival in Minneapolis. It was a beautiful spring day and the booth attracted hundreds of interested passer-bys.



Volunteers—Shirley Campbell, Harlan Garbell and Greg Hart – gave out “I Believe in Good” stickers. These were a big hit!



Volunteers—Suzanne Perry, Ellie Bjorklund, and Nick Hayden

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



How to Write a “Letter to the Editor”*By Mary McLeod*

Have you ever read something in a newspaper/magazine that made you want to write a letter to the editor and get it published? It’s not that hard, but here are some tips to help you increase the odds that it does!

To begin the letter (including an e-mailed letter) use: **To the Editor:**

- a. Make it cogent — punchy, no extra words. Don’t beat about the bush or use too many qualifiers.
- b. Make it short — try to keep it well under 200 words.
- Count the number of words in your letter. (Take 4 average lines of your letter, count the words, and divide by 4.) This will give you a good rule of thumb for the number of words in one line for the size and font you use.
- Count the number of lines, combining half-sentences, and multiply by the number of words in a line. This estimates the total number of words in your letter.
- If you are using Word or Google Docs, they have tools that do this for you.

The shorter it is, the more likely it will be printed, since it will attract more readers (eyeballs) and “clicks,” and allow the editor to print more letters.

- c. Don’t rant or use overly strong words, especially about particular individuals.
- d. Offer proof, don’t just accuse or declare something without evidence.
- e. Write about something new or unique — they can only use so many anti-stadium letters.
- f. Follow your passion and expertise. If you have a relevant title, use it.
- g. Include an unusual word and/or an amusing line or expression, if you can.
- h. Be timely — e.g., if you’re responding to a newspaper article, submit your letter the day an article appears., preferably that morning.
- i. Above all, BE ACCURATE.
- j. Check the online comments to your letter — you might learn something.

Some useful addresses: opinion@startribune.com ; letters@nytimes.com Ω



Humanist Community:

***Caring Connection
Corner***

In our May newsletter, Paul Heffron discussed prisons and our criminal justice system and referred to four of our members who are incarcerated in state facilities. Here is a profile of the first of these.

Calvin Newnam

Calvin is a longtime member of HofMN who has been incarcerated since he was a young man. (He is currently in his late 50’s.) For many years he forwarded his magazines and newsletters of all the humanist and freethought organizations to us for distribution at our literature table. To save money he was farmed out from the Bismarck, ND, prison to the Minnesota prison at Oak Park Heights because there they could provide on-site kidney dialysis for him three times a week. Last fall he was diagnosed with heart failure. On five minutes notice and without explanation on Feb. 13, he was transferred back to the Bismarck prison. He’s probably better off there but misses the weekly visits by Hiero Russell and Paul Heffron, the only friends, he says, he’s ever had. You can send him letters, thanking him for all the literature he sent to us over the years and wish him well. He is very politically active and knowledgeable, and contributes generously to political campaigns, environmental and human rights organizations and other causes. He has just over two years left on his sentence, and we hope he can live that long and enjoy some years of freedom.

His current address is:

Calvin Newnam 14379

P.O. Box 5521

Bismarck, ND 58506-5521

(No need to include the prison name but you must include his prisoner number right after his name.) Ω



Humanists of Minnesota Annual Meeting

Summary by Harlan Garbell

Humanists of Minnesota (HofMN) members and other guests braved the cool and wet weather to attend the organization's Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 20th, at the First Unitarian Society. HofMN president Audrey Kingstrom welcomed everyone and kicked off the meeting with introductory remarks and an outline of the day's agenda.

Audrey then introduced Nicole Infinity from Camp Quest who discussed the upcoming season for the camp and its financial and other needs. She thanked HofMN for its generous support of Camp Quest as we account for 10% of its fundraising.

Reports were then provided from the HofMN's various teams and committees:

Harlan Garbell, co-chair of the Membership Team, reviewed the team's efforts over the past year. (Ellie Bjorklund, who prepared this review, was not able to make this presentation due to travel problems.)

Brad Bolin, our outgoing Treasurer, presented an overview of the organization's financial situation. The attendees were pleased to learn of the organization's solid balance sheet. Brad has been instrumental in keeping HofMN on a sound financial footing for the past nine years.

Suzanne Perry, the team leader of our Social Action Team, reviewed the recent activities of the team as well as future planned events. She informed the attendees of the four major areas in which the team has focused on: end of life issues, health care reform, climate change, and prison/sentencing reform.

Rohit Ravindran and Dave Guell of our Tech Team have been working hard to revamp the organization's website to make it more accessible and user friendly for our members. Rohit announced that the rollout of the new platform, MembershipWorks, will occur shortly. This will allow the organization to: 1) have a dynamic email newsletter; 2) increase its social media outreach and presence; and 3) enhance its web reporting and analytics. Rohit also discussed the creation of a membership directory where members can "opt-in" so they may be contacted by other members.

The election of a new board was held and the announced slate was elected unanimously by acclamation. Audrey Kingstrom will serve as President; Harlan Garbell as Vice-President; Nick Hayden as Treasurer; and Dave Guell as Secretary. At-Large Directors are Rohit Ravindran, Mark Coffey, Ellie Bjorklund, Molly Wilbur-Cohen, and Suzanne Perry. All officers and directors will serve two-year terms except Molly and Rohit who will serve one-year terms. (Mahad Mohammad will continue as an At-Large Director, completing his two-year term.)

Audrey then discussed the year ahead. She provided information on "Envisioning the Future." This was followed by Nick Hayden who then discussed "financing the future."

The final speaker was Chris Stedman, Executive Director of the Yale Humanist Community. Chris discussed the important need for people who identify as "secular" to be able to find their own community in the Twin Cities. He is moving back to Minnesota where he hopes to start up a Humanist Center. Chris will seek to finance this initiative with donations from area organizations and institutions that wish to promote the humanist message. In announcing Chris, Audrey mentioned that she was able to receive a grant from the AHA for \$1500 to help jumpstart his work in this regard.

The meeting ended with a lunch prepared by Mark Thoson and Juliet Branca. Mark, Juliet, and Jerry Smith have provided the coffee and lunch services for HofMN for the last several years. This will be their last year doing this and the organization owes a huge debt of gratitude to them. Along with Brad Bolin and Suellen Carroll, Mark, Juliet, and Jerry were honored by Audrey for their years of service to the organization.

During lunch, members and guests were invited to participate in table discussions for the purpose of providing input on options for future chapter meetings as well as other programming ideas. Ω



HUMANIST NEWS & VIEWS

Editor, Nathan Curland
Editorial Committee - Harlan Garbell, Suzanne Perry,
 Mahad Muhammad, Nathan Curland

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 23rd of the prior month.

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Upcoming Critical Thinking Club Meetings

Twin Cities Chapter: Sunday, June 4th, 10:00 a.m. to noon: "Wisdom Isn't Rocket Science," by Judith Carol Stern. Augsburg College, Christensen Center 1st Flr, 720 22nd Ave S., Minneapolis. \$4 charge.

Stillwater Chapter. Monday, June 12th, 7:00 p.m.: "Bias, Morality, and Politics: Can't We All Just Get Along?" by Kevin Hawkins. Family Means Bldg., 1875 Northwestern Ave, Stillwater.

West Metro Chapter: Saturday, June 24th, 10:00 a.m. to noon: "The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy," by Dr. David Trauger, based on the book by William Strauss. Ridge-Pointe Senior Apts, 12600 Marion La. W, Minnetonka.

Maple Grove Discussion Group:

Saturday, June 10th, 10:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.: "Kabbalah and the New Age Based on Energy," with Joy Gordon. Maple Grove Community Center, 12951 Weaver Lake Rd, room 133, Maple Grove 55311, \$5 donation. Register at landfor-sale@visi.com or call Laurie at (763) 420-6350.

Humanists of Minnesota**Officers:****President -**

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 (952) 924-1039, akingstrom@comcast.net

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Harlan Garbell:
 (612) 928-0888, hgarbell@comcast.net

Treasurer -

Nick Hayden:
treasurer@humanistsofmn.org

Secretary -

David Guell:
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Webmaster -

Clint Buhs

Associate Webmaster -

Rohit Ravindran:
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Humanists of Minnesota is a nonprofit educational corporation and has been granted a 501(c)(3) tax exemption as an educational, scientific and charitable organization. Donations to Humanists of Minnesota are tax deductible. HofM is a chapter of the American Humanist Association (AHA) and an affiliate of the Alliance of Secular Humanist Societies of the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH). Address inquiries to the Humanists of Minnesota, P.O. Box 582997, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2997. E-mail us at president@humanistsofmn.org or visit our web site: www.humanistsofmn.org

HUMANISTS OF MINNESOTA
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Minneapolis, MN 55458-2997

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June 2017

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

For national or international membership write to:

American Humanist Association
1821 Jefferson Place NW
Washington, DC 20036
www.americanhumanist.org

Council for Secular Humanism
PO Box 664
Amherst, NY 14226
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.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

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):

Visit our website at:
www.humanistsofmn.org

