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Donate to Camp Quest!

**Saturday  
May 21st, 2016**

**Monthly  
Chapter Meeting**

**First Unitarian Society  
900 Mt. Curve Drive  
Minneapolis**

**Doors open at 10:00 a.m.  
Program 10:20 a.m.-noon**

***HUMANISM:***

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

***Special Humanists of Minnesota Chapter Meeting***

***Grassroots Humanism:  
Strengthening our Community, Growing the Movement***

***Saturday, May 21st, 2016***

This month, *you* will be one of our featured speakers! We won't have the customary honorarium for you, but we will provide a free lunch. Please don't disappoint by not showing up! It will be our loss--and yours too--if we do not have input from a good share of our members (and followers) at this our annual membership meeting. We are an all-volunteer, democratically-run, grassroots organization. The ongoing support and engagement of all the dedicated members who built and maintained this community for so many years is essential. For the vitality and future of the organization, our newer members are needed to step forward to help strengthen and grow our movement with your fresh ideas and additional energy. (Like, no pressure, or anything.)

The good news is that the time is ripe for our humanist community to flourish. More and more people are leaving religion behind. According to the latest [Pew research](#), 23% of the adult population is religiously unaffiliated (comprising the "nones") and within that group only 27% feel certain that God exists. Secular millennials are increasing at even higher rates.

Also, we have a solid foundation on which to build. Humanists of Minnesota has a sound organizational structure in place, modest but accessible financial resources, ever-increasing Meetup and Facebook outreach, dedicated event leaders and many committed volunteers.

So come to our May meeting and learn the details of what has been happening this past year and some of our plans for next program year. Come share your ideas for strengthening our community—how this group can better represent your interests and meet your needs. Come explore how you can get more involved to promote our values and extend our reach . Come deepen your connection with fellow humanists and engage in small group brainstorming sessions. And of course come enjoy a free lunch and good camaraderie all around! Ω

## PRESIDENT'S

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Community. The word is so ubiquitous and perhaps overused, is it even possible to say anything meaningful about it? Stick with me though, I'm going to try. In the end, I want you to reflect on your own thoughts about community especially in preparation for our upcoming chapter meeting.

Of course, we all belong to various cultural and geographic communities by virtue of our birth and our access to mobility. When we "own" these communities we live in, they become important places of connection for us. A genuine home with a sense of belonging and acceptance, and for geographic jurisdiction to become a real "community," people have to invest in the place. That's why healthy (and desirable) geographic communities have a high rate of home ownership, local businesses and good governance.

Likewise, it's useful to think of intentional communities—those "communities" we seek to become a part of as a matter of interest, occupation, or world-view—in much the same way. So what makes a group like ours—Humanists of Minnesota—*more than* a nonprofit organization and *more of* a "community?"

I would argue that it must be a place of meaningful, long-term connections where members feel acceptance and belonging. People must be willing to invest not only some of their financial resources in the community, but more importantly their time and energy. Not just to keep the organization/community "running" but to invest time and energy in each other. Making a commitment to each other so that deep friendships can develop and enriching connections can emerge.

So what kind of culture do we need to foster to strengthen this sense of community that so many people are looking for? Here are some characteristics that are essential.

- A welcoming community: an inviting hospitality should pervade all our events and programs—with concerted efforts to especially reach out to those who are newcomers.
- An intergenerational community: attending to the needs and interests of people at every life-stage is a must if humanism is to be regarded as a viable life stance for everyone throughout their lives.
- A supportive community: an ethos of caring, compassion and acceptance should be fostered among ourselves as members share life experiences, work together on projects and "are there" for each other in times of need.
- A reflective community: the unexamined life is not worth living. That value should be cultivated in all our programming for personal growth, ethical living and thinking critically about our engagement with the wider world.
- An inclusive community: the humanist imperative is to bridge the social divides of race, class, gender and culture not only to enrich our lives but to model how we can find common ground amidst our differences.
- A democratic community: participation in governance must be open to everyone and leadership development should be encouraged and supported.

Our organization—our would-be community—clearly cultivates some of these characteristics better than others. But to flourish as a community we need to be deliberate and diligent about our aspirations. What more can we do to create that authentic sense of community so many are seeking? There will be opportunity at our upcoming meeting to discuss these ideas further.

As humanists we take responsibility for our lives, the kind of communities we want to live in and the kind of world we want to inhabit. Next month in this column I will focus on the characteristics needed as a community to effectively promote humanism and foster its values in the wider world. Stay tuned. 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*, 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*, Old Country Buffet, County Road B2 between Fairview and Snelling. 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>



## Rally for Reason at the State Capitol Lower Mall @ Noon-1:00pm Thursday, May 5, 2016

Join us at the capitol to champion the use of reason in the public sphere! Let's come out in force and show our legislators that lots of Minnesotans care about church-state separation and an evidence-based approach to public policy. Speakers include—

- [Shawn Otto](#), internationally renowned author, science writer and advocate, will be our featured speaker. He may even have advance copies of his soon-to-be-released new book, [The War on Science](#), for purchase and signing..
- [Compassion and Choices](#) advocates Janet Conn, Rebecca Thoman and David Breeden, will be speaking on the initiative to pass aid-in-dying legislation here in Minnesota.
- Several of our elected representatives have accepted our invitation to welcome us and address our concerns.

(Event is co-sponsored by Humanists of Minnesota and Minnesota Atheists)

## Death and Dying Series First Saturdays of the month (Oct. –June) Rondo Community Library, St. Paul

**May 7th @ 10:30 am  
Your Life as Legacy**

At this month's session, we will think together about how we frame our life's story. What is our legacy? Hopefully as humanists we're mindful of such considerations throughout our whole lives, but certainly these thoughts become more focused as we age. Most of us at least make a will, but we will especially discuss ethical wills, unresolved relationships, unfinished business and ending one's digital 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).

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





*April Chapter Meeting*

## **“Climate Leadership in 2016”**

*Summarized by Nathan Curland*

50 Humanists and friends showed up at the April Chapter meeting to listen to a dynamic presentation by J. Drake Hamilton on the *Clean Power Plan* and how Minnesota is leading the nation in implementation of renewable power. Hamilton is the Science Policy Director for *Fresh Energy*, a 25 year-old non-profit whose mission statement is to “shape and drive realistic visionary energy policies that benefit all.” She has a background as a climatologist with degrees in Physical Geography and also serves on the board of the United States Climate Action Network.

The *Clean Power Plan* is an EPA-sponsored set of regulations whose purpose is to reduce carbon pollution and at the same time grow the economy. Its final version was revealed to the public at a ceremony by President Obama on August 3, 2015. At the occasion, Hamilton represented Minnesota non-profits and was invited to a small group meeting with the President (along with Xcel Energy CEO Ben Fowke). On February 9, 2016, in response to state lawsuits, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered a temporary halt in EPA enforcement of the Plan, but many states (including Minnesota) are continuing implementation plans.

*Fresh Energy* has focused on solutions to the energy/pollution problem with emphasis on bi-partisan actions. Hamilton gave examples of partnerships that were formed with the American Institute of Architects (to influence policy of design for energy efficiency and use of renewables) and the Health Professionals for Clean Air (to influence air quality improvement from burning coal plants). Local clean energy efforts are focused on keeping more dollars in the state; clean water and air; growing markets in efficiency, wind and solar; and projects that get a ‘big bang for the buck’. She noted that Minnesota’s solar potential is similar to southern cities such as Houston, Texas, and Jacksonville, Florida (due to similar number of clear days/year) and therefore cannot be dismissed due to latitude.

Hamilton went on to discuss that the effects of global warming are now being felt and recognized around the world. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data shows that 2015 wasn’t just the warmest year on record but was so by a large amount. CO2 emissions are the focus as the major greenhouse gas source since they remain in the atmosphere for an extremely long time (19% will still be there in 1000 years). The 2015 Paris Conference on Climate Change was the largest gathering of heads of state in history (114) and there were, for the first time, no climate denial speeches. Furthermore, the United States was able to stand and take a credible leadership role due to large investments made here in LED lighting, solar, and wind implementation, which has helped drive the technological costs down so they can start to be effectively used throughout the world.

Burning coal has now been identified as the largest single source of carbon pollution. So reducing reliance on coal has been a major focus and many large companies are coming on board. *Fresh Energy* is working on getting tax credits for solar and wind to be extended. The *Clean Power Plan* goal is to reduce CO2 emissions 32% by 2030; Xcel Energy has said its goal is a 60% reduction. Governor Dayton has come out in support of a long range goal of 100% renewable (we are 21% renewable today). Furthermore, Hamilton presented a chart which showed that many Minnesota coal burning plants are being closed voluntarily due to economic reasons.

In summary, J. Drake Hamilton gave a very surprisingly upbeat presentation which was well-received by the audience.

After the presentation and Q&A period approximately half the group stayed for an excellent lunch organized by Mark Thoson and provided by Rudolph’s Bar-B-Que. Ω

***Hot-off-the-Press News Alert: 4/19/2016***

### ***Judge Recommends Minnesota Use Federal “Social Cost of Carbon”***

***A new report, by the administrative law judge for the Public Utilities Commission, recommends using the federal “social cost of carbon” when estimating externalities costs (the health and economic impacts) of carbon dioxide pollution in the State of Minnesota. This would increase the estimated cost by more than a factor of 10 over currently used figures. This will greatly impact PUC decisions about future investments in electricity generation in Minnesota.***

***For more information go to:***

***<http://fresh-energy.org/2016/04/judge-recommends-use-of-the-social-cost-of-carbon/>***

**Book Review:**

***Islam and the Future of Tolerance***  
*(Harvard University Press, 2015)*

by **Sam Harris and Maajid Nawaz**

*Reviewed by Nathan Curland*

This book sparked my interest because it was advertised as a dialogue between the two authors who many have deemed to be on the ‘opposite sides of the fence’ with regard to Muslim/West relations. Sam Harris is a well-known atheist writer philosopher who is noted for his anti-religion views and especially for his condemnations of the teachings of Islam. Maajid Nawaz is a former radical Islamist who had worked with organizations in Pakistan and Egypt to undermine the respective governments with the goal of establishing Islamic states and, as a result,

eventually spent 5 years in an Egyptian jail. Upon his release he returned to the United Kingdom, completed a Masters program in Political Science, and co-founded the counter-extremist organization, Quilliam, whose goal is to promote non-violence and help secularize Muslim attitudes throughout the Muslim world. (His journey is recounted in his autobiography *Radical*.)

This work is organized as a discussion between the two principals. It is 128 pages long with no table-of-contents. However, the authors have inserted a number of headings throughout the piece to try and compartmentalize the discussion which is set out in a logical progression. I found the narrative ‘tight’ and compelling and had to read through the entire book twice to really let the concepts that were discussed sink in.

Harris starts the discussion by ‘laying down the gauntlet’. In brief, he states, Islam is not a religion of peace. Extremists are seeking to implement the most honest reading of the Qur’an. Therefore, the path to reforming Islam is one of pretense. Nawaz responds with a long soliloquy whose essence is that Islam, like most religions, is not a religion of war or a religion of peace, but simply a religion. Its writings, just like all religious books/writings, do not have their own “voice”. The voice is in the interpretation its readers give to their scripture. These positions form the basis of the entire remainder of the dialogue.

The *Roots of Extremism* section is very much a description how Nawaz was radicalized as a teenager. Growing up in Britain he felt marginalized and harassed as a minority (not unlike persons of color in the US) and thereby easily came under the influence of a recruiter. Nawaz notes that he has identified four elements of ideological recruitment: a grievance narrative (whether real or imagined); an identity crisis; a charismatic recruiter; and an ideological dogma.

In trying to discuss *The Scope of the Problem*, Nawaz makes the point to Harris that there are many different forms of Islamic belief and the politics cannot necessarily be divided along religious lines. He himself tends to describe four major divisions: The Jihadists, who want to create an Islamic State via violence; the Islamists, who want to create an Islamic State via political, non-violent means; the Conservatives, who are deeply religious but just want to practice their religion; and the Reform, who want an Islam that supports a

secular, democratic government that respects human rights. He and Harris agreed that the Jihadist/Islamist represent about 25% of the world’s Muslim population (which is alarmingly large!) with the bulk of the remainder being Conservative and a smaller percentage being Reform (such as himself).

I found the section entitled *The Nature of Islam* to be the most interesting. Harris reopens his original challenge by asking whether or not all Muslims consider the Qur’an to be the literal word of God? Nawaz semi-dodges the question by arguing that it depends on how one approaches the text. Islam has a rich history of different scholars interpreting passages differently, of reconciling parts of the texts that contradict each other in different ways, and of having different linguistic interpretations of words and phrases. Similarly, to Harris’ assertion of intolerance in the Qur’an for infidels and the elevation of martyrdom as a quick ticket to

*(Continued on page 6)*

### ***Upcoming Critical Thinking Club Meetings***

*Twin Cities Chapter. Sunday, May 1st, 10:00 a.m. to noon: “Another Look at the Cuban Missile Crisis,” by Dick Taylor. Uptown Bryn Mawr Community Gathering Place, 400 Cedar Lake Rd South, Minneapolis.*

*West Metro Chapter. Saturday, May 28th, 10:00 a.m. to noon: “GMOs: Beneficial? Destructive? What are the GMO Impacts on Our Health?” by Janet O’Connell. Ridge Point Apts. Meeting Room, 12800 Marion Lane W., Minnetonka.*

*Stillwater Chapter. Monday, May 9th, 7:00 p.m.: “GMOs: Beneficial? Destructive? What are the GMO Impacts on Our Health?” by Janet O’Connell. Family Means Bldg., 1875 Northwestern Ave, Stillwater.*

(Continued from page 5)

heaven, Nawaz applies similar arguments. For example, he notes that *shari'ah* is not for the most part a legal system as much as a moral, advisory system. He gives many detailed examples to support these views. Jihadists, in his view, tend to apply a 'vacuous literalism' since it suits their political ends. Harris ends this section by respectfully demurring and noting that perhaps a "politically correct mythology is replacing history" in the narrative.

Another interesting section is entitled *The Betrayal of Liberalism*, in which both Harris and Nawaz bemoan the fact that western liberal political correctness disregards any effort to tie violence and betrayal of human rights to Islam and labels anyone who does so Islamophobic. Nawaz goes on to make the point, that for him, it is an example of reverse racism, which holds Muslims to a lower standard than other religions. It prioritizes group identity over individual autonomy, promotes tribalism, and supports the rise of anti-Muslim Fascism.

In the final section, *Finding the Way Forward*, the participants review what needs to be done to urge Muslim societies to be more secular and for the West to recognize the importance of doing so. Nawaz, in particular is passionate about the need to defeat The Islamic State both militarily and culturally. "Islamism must be defeated ... Jihadism is the use of force to spread Islamism." In addition, many more grassroots efforts (such as *Quillium*) are needed to reform Muslim identity, scriptural interpretations and cultural affiliations. Furthermore, secularism by itself is not enough (observe the many secular dictatorships that still exist in the Middle East) but the need is to work toward secular democracies. Harris, for his part, admits his past role in feeding the narrative that the "West is at war with Islam", echoes Nawaz's goals and wishes him well going forward.

*Islam and the Future of Tolerance* is a thought provoking read and I highly recommend it. Ω



## ***Congratulations to the New Humanists of Minnesota Board of Directors!***

Congratulations to our new Board of Directors that was elected to office at the April chapter meeting:

President:	Audrey Kingstrom	At-Large Members:	Susan Campion
Vice-president:	Harlan Garbell		Mahad Muhammad
Treasurer:	Brad Bolin		Christina Royal
Secretary:	David Guell		

They join current at-large members Mark Coffey, Dale Handeen and Rohit Ravindran who are halfway through their 2-year terms. Contact information for all board members is on page 7 of this newsletter.



### ***Highlights from the Board***

*by Juliet Branca  
Secretary*

From the April board meeting:

- Along with May Day Festival, Day of Reason, Pride Parade and Festival, Humanists of Minnesota will participate in "Juneteenth" for the first time.
- The Finance Team proposed using *Quickbooks* for our accounting and finances. A motion passed unanimously to sign up for *Quickbooks* for \$125 a year.
- Humanist Families and Friends will hold an event at FUS titled "Adult conversation/discussions". Childcare will be available

### ***Maple Grove Discussion Group:***

Saturday, May 14th, 10:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.:  
"Education Funding: How Much is Enough?" with Mark Haveman, Executive Director, MN Center for Fiscal Excellence. 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)

### ***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 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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## *Donate to Camp Quest Minnesota!*

*It's that time of year that Humanists of Minnesota launches its annual drive to raise scholarship funds for Minnesota's secular summer camp, Camp Quest!*

*Seven volunteers met April 22 to stuff envelopes with our fundraiser flyer and mail it to our membership. Please give generously either via snail mail or at <http://humanistsofmn.org/donate-now>*



*(l. to r.) Canan Karatekin, Ron Lien, Audrey Kingstrom, George Kane, Susan Champion, Greg Hart (not shown), Nathan Curland)*

## Humanists of Minnesota

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May 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.

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):

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Visit our website at:  
[www.humanistsofmn.org](http://www.humanistsofmn.org)

