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**Saturday  
 September 16th, 2017**

**Monthly  
 Chapter Meeting**

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

**Doors open at 3:00 p.m.  
 Social Hour at 5:00 p.m.**

***HUMANISM:***

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

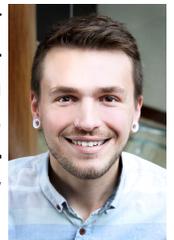
*Humanists of Minnesota Chapter Meeting*

*Why We Need Humanism Now*

*By Chris Stedman, Humanist Center of Minnesota*

*Saturday, September 16th, 2017 (NEW START TIME: 3:00 p.m.!)*

Join author and activist Chris Stedman at our inaugural chapter meeting of the new program year for a discussion on why humanism is so important, especially in this specific moment in our nation and world. **Our new start time is 3 p.m. and CHILDCARE is available upon request. Please contact Audrey at [akingstrom@comcast.net](mailto:akingstrom@comcast.net) to reserve a spot for your children by Wed., Sept. 13.**



As outlined in his memoir [Faitheist](#), Chris is a former evangelical Christian turned gay atheist who has been working to build understanding between atheists and the religious. He has been published widely and appeared on many TV programs (even taking on Bill "War on Christmas" O'Reilly on Fox News).

Chris is founding executive director of Yale Humanist Community and worked as a humanist chaplain at Harvard University. He is now working to build a new Humanist Center of Minnesota.

In his talk, Chris will tackle some critical questions facing the humanist movement: How can humanism encourage and empower us to stand up for our values when our political landscape is so polarized? How can we address the gap in civic engagement between the religious and the nonreligious during a time when evangelical Christians have a voter registration rate that is three times higher than the religiously unaffiliated, the fastest growing "religious" bloc in the U.S.? How does humanism speak to the current moment in ways that atheism alone cannot? And how can we work together to build institutions and resources that will support the nonreligious and promote humanism as a viable—and vital—worldview?

The Humanist Center of Minnesota is a collaborative project of Humanists of Minnesota, the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, the Humanist Institute, and others. In addition to serving as incoming executive director there, Chris is a fellow at the Sabo Center for Democracy and Citizenship and at the Christensen Center for Vocation, both at Augsburg University.

Chris, who is currently writing a book on messiness and vulnerability, has spoken at hundreds of conferences and universities, and has written for publications including *Salon*, *The Advocate*, *USA Today*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Rumpus*, and *The Washington Post*. *Details* magazine named him one of "five next-gen gurus who are disrupting religion's status quo" and *Mic* called him "the millennial who's busting every stereotype about atheists." Ω

## PRESIDENT'S

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I surely thought this summer's political drama would end in early August with Congress in recess and the president on vacation. The White House had been in *huge* disarray most of the summer with its inability to deliver on Trump's many campaign promises or present a coherent message to friends and foes abroad. But Trump just kept the drama going well into the August recess. He made an already tragic situation worse with his injudicious response after a woman was killed at a white-supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Trump's presidency was brought to a new low with his most chilling failure to date -- his inability to provide moral leadership to a nation in need.

Most Americans, however, weren't expecting much out of him in that regard. Unmistakably, Trump wasn't elected for his upstanding moral character. But how about past presidents? If they all had had to endure the same no-holds-barred scrutiny that today's leaders must, surely many more wouldn't look so good either. To further skew any comparisons one might make, our history books present a pretty sanitized picture of past leaders -- at least those typi-

cally found in our elementary and secondary schools-- so few citizens have a very accurate perception of them. Nonetheless, Trump probably holds the dubious distinction of flaunting his colorful oversized ego and plying his many indiscretions in ways that are unmatched by previous leaders.

Let's be clear about what we should expect from our political leaders and presidents. Certainly not moral perfection or perhaps not even to be a moral exemplar. Americans have only elected ever-such-mortal men with nary a saint among them. (Humanists would argue that no such creature exists anyway!) Of course, character still matters, but even when the moral failings of our leaders are not evident at the time they serve the nation, usually their misdeeds both private and public are revealed later -- much to our dismay. How, then, can we expect and demand moral leadership from these all-too-mortal beings?

How can we not? Leadership by definition includes a moral component. The ability to discern the right course -- or at least the better course -- in a given situation is essential to good leadership. Like any leader, a president is entrusted to rise above his or her own frailties and partialities to draw on the best available knowledge in history, science, human relations, philosophy and ethics to make good judgements in challenging times and circumstances. Relying on natural instincts or popular sentiment are not good enough; that's the know-how of one or rule of the mob. We know from experience that human beings are capable of much better -- that is, of a well-reasoned approach to moral leadership.

That kind of moral leadership requires a good grasp of world history, a keen understanding of an unsettled present, and an apt vision for an emerging more just future. Many of our past presidents -- despite their many flaws -- have risen to the occasion to move us toward a more inclusive and egalitarian nation. Trump, however, is backward-looking and exhibits none of the attributes needed for moral leadership. He can't distinguish between past accomplished visionaries who deserve our recognition and those infamous wannabe heroes who stood on the wrong side of history. He can't differentiate between contemporary activists who champion the nation's best values and the reactionary hooligans who glorify the failings of the past. Absolutely defend everyone's right to be heard, but leaders cannot remain morally neutral. Good leadership employs the moral compass of history, reason and inclusion and commends all who do likewise.

Humanism as a worldview serves as that kind of moral compass. It doesn't offer perfection through its method or in its results. As a life stance, it doesn't turn its adherents into saints. But it functions as a very useful and time-tested guide -- to lead us toward a better life for all. Humanism by definition is inclusive and egalitarian. That's not necessarily easy to practice given the many differences across our species, but it is an aspiration and guide. Each of us is a work in progress. We strive to transcend ourselves, to understand others, to recognize another's need and work toward shared goals. Such endeavors require mutual engagement and collective deliberation -- not self-aggrandizement and insularity.

Democratic ideals are intertwined with this humanist worldview. Our nation sorely needs leaders who can provide that kind of moral leadership. But when the leadership at the top fails, others can and must step up. The good news is that people around the country are doing just that. Leaders in business and philanthropy. Everyday citizens, volunteer activists and professional organizers. None are perfect or pure. But that's not a

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

realistic standard. Each of us must step up and do what we can to make the world a better place for all -- not just for oneself. My future (and good fortune) is tied up with your future (and good fortune) -- and everyone else's. Paul Wellstone, that icon of moral leadership, said it most simply: we all do better when we all do better. Ω

*Important Notice to our Members:*

## ***HofMN Electronic Newsletter to Make Its Debut***

*By Suzanne Perry*

Next month, your Humanists of Minnesota newsletter will have a new look. After much discussion, the board has decided to introduce an electronic newsletter so we can take advantage of modern technology's bells and whistles.

What does that mean in practice? As a HofMN member, you now receive a paper newsletter by postal mail, or a PDF of the paper version by email. Starting in October, you will instead get an email that will present news about HofMN in an online format -- one resembling a web page.

Obviously, this will save us money on postage and printing. But we are most excited about the change because it will allow us to more easily share news about humanism with each other and with the outside world. All of the articles will be hosted on our website for easy reference. Each will have its own link, which means you will be able to email them to your contacts or share them on Facebook, Twitter, or other social media.

You will also be able to comment below articles and opinion pieces (instead of muttering under your breath!).

An electronic format will give us more layout flexibility as there is no fixed number of pages to fill, and we will be able to feature more photos and colorful graphics. We will also be able to track how many people read each article. And we can feature links to must-read articles in other publications.

We'd also like to attract new content and this is where you come in. Want to opine about the latest political atrocity or violation of church-state separation? Write a review of a movie, play, or book? Tell us about something moving or humorous that you witnessed? Or, have you experienced a life event (new job, new city, marriage, etc.) that we can include in a "member news" section? Don't be shy. I will be editor of the new publication so please contact me at [suzanneper@msn.com](mailto:suzanneper@msn.com) and we'll put your name in lights (well, sort of)!

Before signing off, I want to thank Nathan Curland, editor of the print newsletter, on behalf of the HofMN board. I helped proofread the newsletter for Nathan way back in the early to mid-2000s, before I moved to Washington, D.C. When I returned to Minnesota in 2014, I was amazed and impressed that Nathan was still putting out the newsletter every month with minimal help -- even folding and mailing each issue himself. Thanks, Nathan, for your many years of service. And we hope to continue seeing your name in the newsletter as a contributor.

***Note to members who receive the newsletter by postal mail:*** We have included a letter with this mailing that includes more information about how this will affect you. Please contact me if it failed to arrive. Ω

***“Philosophy is always going to be the default home of non-naturalists and anti-naturalists. Since no other discipline will take them seriously, they gravitate toward philosophy and find each other.***

***...It is fortunate for us that philosophy is largely ignored by the rest of the society.”***

***Daniel C. Dennett (2017)***

# 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](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.

**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

**2nd Wednesday, 7 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>

## *Mortal Matters: Preparing for the Last Chapter*

*Third Thursdays @ 10am  
Sept. 2017 – May 2018*

*Northeast Bank Community Room*

This series is designed to help humanists, agnostics, atheists and freethinkers prepare for the final chapter of one's life. We will explore the unique challenges of aging given the prospect of increased frailty, debilitating illness, loss of independence and the medicalization of death and dying. How do we keep shaping the story of our lives and preparing for our inevitable deaths in ways that are consonant with our humanist values?

Each session will focus on a particular end-of-life issue including health care directives, long-term care options, palliative and hospice care, death with dignity, disposition of the body, memorial services and more. No medical or legal advice will be provided, but instead, here is an opportunity to think out loud about our mortality and the pragmatic issues surrounding our impending deaths. Facilitated by Humanist Celebrant, Audrey Kingstrom, and guest presenters.

We will meet the third Thursday of the month at 10am -- Sept. 2017 through May 2018 (except in Dec. when we will meet on the second Thursday). See our Meet-up post for more info on each session and to RSVP. The series will be most beneficial to those who attend regularly but everyone is welcome to come to any session as they are available and interested.

This event is free for members of Humanists of Minnesota. There is a suggested donation of \$3 for non-members, the proceeds being used to support this and other educational offerings of the organization.



## *Building Bridges Through Story Telling*

*By Molly Wilbur-Cohen*

There's a unique community gathering place on the East Side of Saint Paul. Four years ago the Arlington Library, one of the historic Carnegie library buildings in the Payne – Phalen Neighborhood closed and was left vacant. Peter Rachleff, 30 year professor of labor, immigration and African American history at Macalester College and Metro State University decided to take a bold

step. One year later Rachleff and his partner Beth Cleary, professor of theater and the arts at Macalester, signed a lease with the City of Saint Paul for the historic building. This was the start of the East Side Freedom Library with the mission of inspiring solidarity, advocating for justice, and working toward equity for all. The library houses non-circulating research collections for the general public and scholars. Through book readings, group discussions, film screenings, workshops, and public performances, local residents and other interested persons can learn about the histories of the East Side and hear the stories of new immigrants.

The East Side of Saint Paul is a working class neighborhood where much of the labor movement grew out of and is home to descendants of Swedish, Norwegian, Irish and German immigrants. African Americans, people from Latin American countries, Asians, and more recently African immigrants, including Somalis, have also made their home on the East Side. Bringing the ethnically diverse communities together through story telling is how people find out what they have in common.

I recently attended a Neighbors Meet Neighbors event at the East Side Freedom Library where a group of Somali immigrants spoke individually about their refugee experience and how forging a new life in Minnesota has brought many challenges but also hope for the future. I want to return to the Library soon to attend more of the events at this unique community gathering place. I hope others who haven't found this gem on the East Side will pay a visit too. Ω

### *Humanist Community:*



## *Caring Connection Corner*

*The Caring Connection Corner is a place for members to share with our community. It's a space to share good news, life events, health updates, and times of need. Communities flourish with openness and support, so let's unite in celebrations and difficult times. If you have an update you'd like to share (for yourself or on behalf of another), please send it to [editor@humanistsofmn.org](mailto:editor@humanistsofmn.org).*

### **Nancy Leong**

Nancy is a member of Humanists of Minnesota residing in the Crestview Lutheran Home, a health care center.

I visited her in March. She seemed more vibrant and upbeat than the previous time I saw her. I took her into the main living room and played piano for her (we both like jazz). Most times I find it difficult to carry on a normal conversation with Nancy. Instead we would talk about the music I play and about what's going on in our humanist community. I visited her again in August. I had woken her from a nap and had to carry the conversation, but she seemed responsive and appreciative.

Nancy needs additional people who will visit her. Anyone interested should contact me to get info about her and directions to the Crestview facility in Columbia Heights. My contact info is:

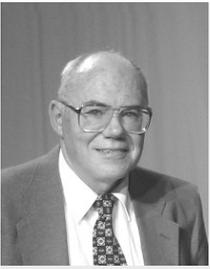
[paul-peg-heffron@comcast.net](mailto:paul-peg-heffron@comcast.net) , 612-483-9222 Ω



### *Highlights from the Board* *by David Guell* *Secretary*

From the August board meeting:

- The Board approved up to \$910 to provide childcare for attendees at this year's chapter meetings
- The Board approved a budget of \$250 for advertising on Facebook for the year
- Chris Stedman presented some ideas on how he and the organization might cooperate in the future.



### ***Book Notes:***

## ***A Book on Humanism for Kids***

***By Paul Heffron***

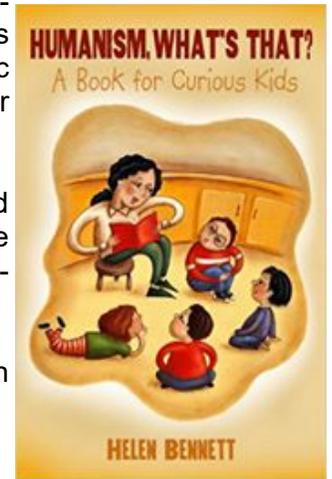
When we were in Florida in January, my wife Peg went to a garage sale and snapped up a colorful paperback book in mint condition for a dollar. The book is *Humanism, What's That? A Book for Curious Kids* (Prometheus Books, 2005) by Helen Bennett. The author has impressive academic

and professional credentials and does an excellent job of presenting humanism for kids ages 10 and up.

Bennett uses a dialogue method in which the kids in a classroom ask questions and the teacher answers on their level. For example, it starts with news that a classmate has been hospitalized for serious injuries and a pupil suggests that they all pray together for her. That, of course, starts a discussion.

The book also includes some poetry, activities that the kids can do, and discussion questions. Also included are some recommended books for older youth. Ω

*(Note: The book is available on Amazon—Ed)*



## ***Social Action Team Update!***

***By Suzanne Perry***

Social Action Team leaders met in late August to kick off Humanists of Minnesota advocacy activities under a new captain. Meline Juarez, a former union organizer with lots of advocacy experience, has agreed to head the team, taking over from Suzanne Perry. Suzanne will remain a team member but will shift some energy to HofMN communications activities.

The team also welcomed Molly Wilbur-Cohen, an environmental activist who has agreed to lead advocacy efforts on climate change and related issues. Joyce Edwards continues to head work on health care, Bobbi Jacobsen on end-of-life options, and Audrey Kingstrom on criminal-justice reform.

Watch Meetup, Facebook, and the newsletter for announcements about upcoming advocacy events. And if you would like to join the Social Action Team, please contact Meline at [melinejuarez@gmail.com](mailto:melinejuarez@gmail.com). Ω



*L. to R.:*

*Social Action Team leaders (front) Molly Wilbur-Cohen, Meline Juarez, Joyce Edwards; (back) Harlan Garbell, Bobbi Jacobsen, Suzanne Perry.*

*Photo by Audrey Kingstrom.*

**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](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 23rd of the prior month.

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**Upcoming Critical Thinking Club Meetings**

*Twin Cities Chapter: Sunday, September 3rd, 10:00 a.m. to noon: "IQ: A Most Politically-Incorrect Topic," by Cynthia Schield. Augsburg College, Christensen Center 1st Flr, 720 22nd Ave S., Minneapolis. \$4 charge.*

*Stillwater Chapter. Monday, September 11th, 7:00 p.m.: "9-11: Cover Up and Consequences," with Colleen Rowly, former FBI agent. Family Means Bldg., 1875 Northwestern Ave, Stillwater.*

*West Metro Chapter: Saturday, September 23rd, 10:00 a.m. to noon: "Has Artificial Intelligence Arrived?" by Dave Schuck. RidgePointe Senior Apts, 12600 Marion La. W, Minnetonka.*

**Maple Grove Discussion Group:**

*Saturday, September 9th, 10:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.: "Credibility," with Prof. Jeremy Rose, University of MN. Maple Grove Community Center, 12951 Weaver Lake Rd, room 133, Maple Grove 55311, \$5 donation. Register at [landfor-sale@visi.com](mailto:landfor-sale@visi.com) or call Laurie at (763) 420-6350.*

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Paul Heffron

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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](mailto:president@humanistsofmn.org) or visit our web site: [www.humanistsofmn.org](http://www.humanistsofmn.org)

**HUMANISTS OF MINNESOTA**  
PO Box 582997  
Minneapolis, MN 55458-2997

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September 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
- (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

\_\_\_\_\_

For national or international membership write to:

American Humanist Association  
1821 Jefferson Place NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
[www.americanhumanist.org](http://www.americanhumanist.org)

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

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.humanistsofminn.org](http://www.humanistsofminn.org)

