

Manitoba Humanist



WE ARE NOT ALONE!

After 2 years of planning, our transit bus advertising campaign is finally a reality! We have had 10 buses sporting our ads on various routes around the city since Sept 9. Hopefully many of you have seen one of them by now. The project officially wraps up on October 8. Congratulations to Alan Simpson for sending in the first photo and winning a scarlet "A" lapel pin.

GRAYLING'S GROUPIES

This month, Winnipeg was fortunate to host distinguished visiting philosopher and humanist A. C. Grayling. Professor Grayling was in the city to give the first in a series of lectures titled *Fragile Freedoms*. When some of the members of HAAM heard that Professor Grayling, unofficially known as the Fifth Horseman of the atheist movement, was going to be in town, a few members made the effort to stay up late to secure some tickets to the first lecture.

Luckily for us, our president Donna Harris was able to arrange an opportunity for a meet and greet with Professor Grayling. We gathered at the Inn at the Forks, together with our bus, hoping to get a few pictures with him. Unfortunately due to flight delays, we did not get a chance for the bus photos, but Professor Grayling was still able to meet with us for a private chat session shortly after arriving at the hotel.

Even though he must have been exhausted, he graciously gave us an hour or so of his time to talk about our common interest of

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Agnostics of Manitoba

*"We are beyond
belief"*

HAM

www.mbhumanistsatheists.ca



UPCOMING EVENTS

All of our upcoming events can be found on page 5 of this newsletter.



A.C. Grayling signing
his books at our Meet
& Greet event

humanism. He was gracious and considerate with thoughtful, inspiring words and encouragement and was able to sign some books as well.

For the next few days I became a Grayling Groupie, along with some other members, following him around the city to the venues where he was making appearances. By Wednesday, he was calling some of us by name and recognizing Pat Morrow by his HAAM T-shirt. It was a blast.



A.C. Grayling is one of those people with the rare gift of great intellect, highly regarded and respected in the academic community for his contributions to philosophy, and yet also having the ability to present complex ideas to a general audience, making these brilliant ideas accessible to all. An excellent choice to give the inaugural speech on human rights at the new Canadian Museum of Human Rights.

The first presentation, held Monday evening at the museum, was an eloquent summary of how our concepts of human rights have developed since Martin Luther took a stand for the fundamental right of Freedom of Conscience. In breaking away from the stranglehold that the priests and church held on people's minds, he set the stage for all of the rights that we so cherish.

The second presentation, held at the University of Manitoba, focussed on atheism, secularism, and humanism. The two presentations spoke to me as having one theme. In bestowing upon ourselves the right of Freedom of Conscience, we have an obligation to ourselves to ensure that what we do believe should be critically examined for its truth value. Unfortunately for religion, when placed under the bright light of reason, it fails this test. Professor Grayling presented quite a devastating case to demonstrate this failure. Having left religion behind though, presents us with the great challenge of how should we live?

Fortunately, the worldview of humanism fits this bill quite nicely. Instead of having to consider the opinions of the various gods, all equally unable to be demonstrated, we can then look to each other to determine the answers to this question. When we look to other humans, with our shared biology, needs, and desires, and critically examine ideas about how we should treat each other, tempered by our human abilities to feel empathy and show compassion, we will have truly made progress towards a better world for us all.

- Diana Goods

STRAIGHT TALK ON DYING WITH ARTHUR SCHAFFER

On September 10, an audience of about 80 people, including over a dozen HAAM members, attended in information session hosted by Dying With Dignity. This national organization provides education about patient rights, end-of-life options, and advance care planning; advocacy for those whose rights are being abused; support for individuals at the end of life; and information about why appropriately regulated medically assisted dying should be available in Canada.

HAAM is pleased to endorse the aims of DWD, and we set up a small booth with our own information. In her opening remarks, DWD's executive director, Wanda Morris, acknowledged that although proponents of assisted suicide come from all backgrounds, support has been consistently high among Humanists.

We were very privileged to have as our guest speaker for the evening Arthur Schafer, the Director of the Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics at the University of Manitoba. Schafer is also a Full Professor in the Department of Philosophy, an Ethics Consultant for the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at the Health Sciences Centre, and for ten years was Head of the Section of Bio-Medical Ethics in the Faculty of Medicine.



Arthur Schafer with DWD's executive director, Wanda Morris

Prof Schafer began by outlining individual rights under current law surrounding refusal of treatment. Many people are unaware that they can refuse life-sustaining treatments such as feeding tubes or dialysis, and that even if such treatments have already been initiated, they can ask to have them discontinued or removed.

He continued on to discuss many different scenarios and circumstances which may affect either the law or the decision-making process. These included patients with dementia, those with non-terminal but chronic illnesses, and resistance of physicians to become involved. Years of consulting directly with medical professionals led him to become animated when discussing specific examples.

It was inevitable that Canada's most famous court cases around the issue of dying should be mentioned, and so Schafer discussed Robert Latimer, Sue Rodriguez, Susan Griffiths and a case before the courts now, that of Gloria Taylor. Last year, Taylor, a victim of ALS, successfully won the right to assisted suicide in BC, but the federal government appealed the

decision. Taylor passed away before the case was decided, but the appeal continues, with the decision due any day.

Schafer is well-versed in the experiences of jurisdictions where forms of assisted suicide are legal, and used his expertise to refute the most common misconceptions, including that it's a slippery slope to non-voluntary euthanasia, a recipe for abuse of the poor and elderly (in fact, where legal, it is overwhelmingly a choice of the wealthy and educated), a threat to those with disabilities, or that it leads to a reduction in the quality of palliative care. Interestingly, in Oregon, where assisted suicide is legal only for those who are already terminally ill, only about 1/800 patients actually avail themselves of it, although as many as 1 in 6 discuss it. It seems to be comforting for people just to know they have the option.

Prof Schafer held his audience enrapt for around an hour, and then held a Q and A for almost another hour, but it was clear from the number of questions that the discussion could have continued well into the night.

Dying With Dignity currently has no chapter in Winnipeg, and is looking for a group of interested individuals to form one. For more information, or to join, check dyingwithdignity.ca.
- Dorothy Stephens

CHECK THIS OUT!

The James Randi Educational Foundation (JREF) is a non-profit organization founded in 1996 by magician and skeptic James Randi. The JREF's mission includes educating the public and the media about the dangers of accepting unproven claims, and supporting research into paranormal claims in controlled scientific experimental conditions.

In 1964, Randi began offering a prize of \$1,000 to anyone who could demonstrate a paranormal ability under agreed-upon testing conditions. This prize has since been increased to \$1 million in bonds and is now administered by the JREF as the One Million Dollar Paranormal

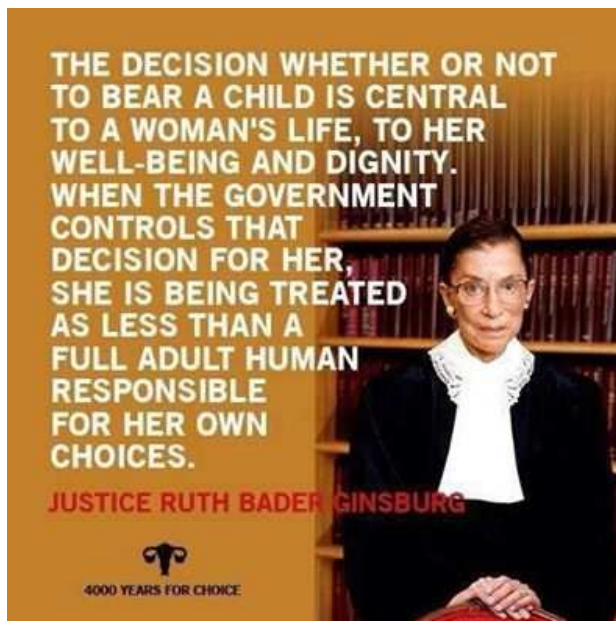
Challenge. Since its inception, more than 1000 people have applied to be tested. To date no one has either been able to demonstrate their claimed abilities under the testing conditions or have not fulfilled the foundation conditions for taking the test; the prize money still remains to be claimed.

To promote this challenge, the JREF prints tongue-in-cheek 'checks' for \$1,000,000 with the memo "prove any paranormal ability, and we'll replace this fake check with a real one". HAAM has a book of these checks to share with members. Consider taking a couple and keeping them on hand, ready for the next time you meet a fortune-teller, psychic, palm reader, dowser, or anyone claiming that their particular brand of 'woo' really works.

*These checks are fun – the fine print at the bottom reads "totally fake check * unimaginably ersatz check * not a real check" etc. Come 'check' them out! They will be available at regular meetings starting in October.*

BUSY FALL SEASON AHEAD!

On October 3rd, anti-choice groups across Canada will be rallying to defund abortion. Please join the counter protest to defend women's rights. Be at the legislature at noon!



PARANORMAL FUN IN OCTOBER!

*Our October 19 meeting will feature a **Halloween theme** and 2 very special guest speakers.*

Kristen Verin-Treusch is the owner of "Muddy Water Tours", which offers a plethora of tours focusing on the darker side of Winnipeg's history. Kristen will share with us some of the **ghost stories of Manitoba's past** with her own fun and interactive story telling flair.



Brian Hubner is currently an archivist with the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections. He has a Master of Arts (History, in Archival Studies), and a Master of Arts (History). He has published in the area of the history of Western Canada. Brian is currently studying the archival history of spirit photography. He will be speaking about **The Hamilton Family of Winnipeg and Evidence of the Paranormal.**

TWO NEW GET-TOGETHERS TO BEGIN SOON

To expand our opportunities for both learning and socializing beyond our regular meetings, we will be introducing 2 new get-togethers. No prior knowledge necessary!

*In November we will begin a series of **Round-table Discussions**. Our aim is to provide an opportunity for participants to get together in an informal setting to examine issues relevant to*

our community. As with most roundtable models there is no formal agenda; participants will determine the flow of the discussion. The topic for the first session will be *Secular vs. Faith-based Moral Arguments*. Your facilitator will be *Diana Goods*.
Date: November 21

HAAM Book Club

December 11, 2013—7 pm

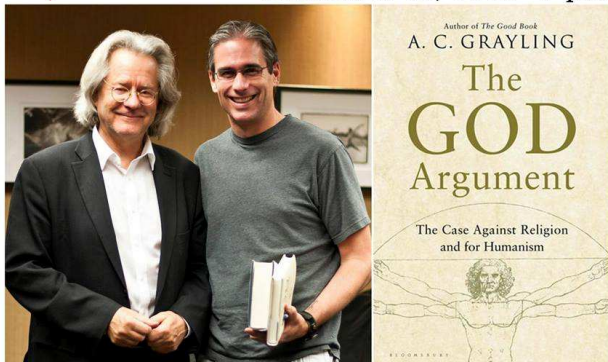


Photo: A.C. Grayling (author), Scott Burton (host)

You are invited to HAAM's first Book Club meeting! Do you need a little extra motivation to read? Or simply love a great conversation or debate? This is for you!

Scott Burton will be hosting the meeting at his home in Charleswood (email for address and RSVP by Nov. 11). The book: "The God Argument" by A.C. Grayling. Please come with topics and questions to discuss.

December marks the first meeting of our **HAAM Book Club**. Come discuss books about atheism/religion/humanism and related topics. Our first book will be *The God Argument* by A.C. Grayling.

More details on these events to follow. Please join us!



Jake and Allison are finally getting married!

We're having a Halloween-themed wedding social on **Saturday, October 19th**, immediately following our next HA²M meeting. Come out to the meeting and then continue your Halloween fun by joining us at the social for dancing, lasers, food, drinks, zombies, witches, and friends! Wear a costume for a chance to win a prize! Tickets are \$10. You can get one by emailing Allison, at allison.allison@gmail.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Saturday, October 19th, 2013

Regular Meeting
Location: Canad Inn Polo Park
Time: 5:30 pm

Saturday, November 9th, 2013

Regular Meeting
Location: Canad Inn Polo Park
Time: 5:30 pm

Thursday, November 21st, 2013

Round Table Discussion
Time: 7:00 pm
Location TBA

Wednesday, December 11th, 2013

Book Club
Time: 7:00 pm
Location TBA

Saturday, December 14th, 2013

Winter Solstice Party
Details TBA
Location: Belgian Club, 407 Provencher Blvd

If you donate blood let the staff know that you wish your donation to count towards the Humanist Association of Manitoba's yearly pledge of just 10 donations. Our ID number is **HUMA008484**. Call 1 888 2DONATE.

Thank you! to all who donated at the September meeting to C.A.R.E. (Cat Advocacy, Rescue, and Education). We collected a large bag of cat food and \$79 in cash and gift cards.

Executive:

Donna Harris, President
Heather McDonell, Vice President
Helen Friesen, Treasurer
Allison Nelson, Secretary

Members at Large:

Scott Burton
Cheri Frazer
Diana Goods – HAAM Librarian
Pat Morrow
Jeff Olsson
Jake Peters
Grant Rogerson

Newsletter Editor:

Donna Harris
ham_librarian@yahoo.ca

We're on the Web!

See us at:

mbhumanistsatheists.ca

HA²M



Yes, I would like to **BECOME A MEMBER** of the
Humanists, Atheists & Agnostics of Manitoba

New Member Renewal

Membership Category:

Individual Membership \$30.00
 Individual Limited Income \$10.00
 Household Membership* \$50.00
 Household Limited Income \$15.00

* After July 1st, just pay ½ the yearly fee for the rest of the year.
After October 31st, pay full fee and get the entire next year.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone#: _____ Cell #: _____

Email address: _____

*Household Memberships: Please give the names of all
additional Humanists in your household 18 years or over:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DONATION (Tax receipts issued for all donations of
\$10 or more)

I would like to make a donation to HA²M of:

\$10 \$20 \$30 \$50 \$100
 Other: _____

PAYMENT: Cheque Money Order
 Visa Mastercard

Please complete the following if paying by credit card:

Account No. _____

Expiry Date: ____/____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

Please make cheque or money order payable to:
Humanist Association of Manitoba and mail to:
Humanist Association of Manitoba, 7 Pinehurst Lane,
Mitchell, MB, R5G 2J3.

Or bring your form and the fees to any HA²M meeting
and give it to Helen Friesen, or any member of the
executive.