

Manitoba Humanist



Some of our HAAMsters at the fossil dig – L to R: Trevor Donald; Anthony D. (standing); Pat Morrow; our guide Aaron; Laura Stephens, Sherry Marginet; Dorothy Stephens; Donna Harris (standing); Grant Rogerson; Mike Stephens; Todd DeRyck; David and Clayton Donald. **Please help replace this old van!** Details page 5. **Story** on page 3.

Published by and for the Humanists, Atheists, and Agnostics of Manitoba

www.mbhumanistsatheists.ca

Is the science of Jurassic Park real? Can we clone a mammoth?

Saturday September 20th, CanadInns Polo Park
5:30 Meet & Greet/Socialize/Dinner (optional)
6:30 HAAM meeting
7:00 Speaker **Dr. Kevin Campbell**



Professor Kevin Campbell will be our guest speaker to kick off the fall season. He is a biologist and paleontologist, and will talk about **“Resurrecting genotypes and phenotypes from long-extinct species: Promises and perspectives.”** Fossils tell us a lot about how the anatomies of animals evolve and adapt to exploit new habitats, but what about their biology? Biochemical processes might be just as important, or more so, in the evolutionary process, but they don’t fossilize. Recent technical advances in ancient DNA capture and sequencing promise to “resurrect” extinct animals at relatively low cost, which would open exciting new avenues of research, bringing together biochemistry, genomics, paleontology, and structural biology in the study of natural selection.

Correction: Dr. Campbell was previously identified as the Director of the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre. He is actually a Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Manitoba; however he is also President of the Board of Directors for the CFDC.

Humanists support freedom of expression!
See page 4.

HUMANIST
Ceremonies

♥♥ Weddings ♥♥
Baby Namings
Life Celebrations

Details page 3.

COMING UP!

In September, we will be trialling a change to the agenda order. In order to better accommodate those who cannot make it in time for 5:30, or who will be eating elsewhere, our main social and meal time will take place before the meeting, from 5:30 to 6:30. Come for dinner, drinks, or just chit-chat! Get to know your fellow HAAMsters and help us to develop a friendly and supportive Humanist community!

The short business portion of our meeting - announcements, discussions, and Humanist Moment, will take place between 6:30 and 7:00, followed by our main presentation or speaker from 7:00 to 8:00. Late-comers and drop-ins are welcome, so if you can't make it for the start or stay till the end, don't worry about it. And you can still eat during the meeting if you're late - the buffet is open till 8:00.

Remember HAAM meetings are always open to the public. If it's your first time out, grab a chair and join us! Feel free to participate in the discussion, or just kick back and listen. Our members are always willing to answer any questions you may have. We also have some new ideas to run by our membership so plan to be there on the 20th to hear all the details.

All events are subject to change, and some details may be TBA. Watch future newsletters, our website, Facebook page, or join us on Meetup for more information as it becomes available.

We welcome input and help from our members. Get involved! Make new friends! **Memberships are available at the door at all our events.** Annual fees are affordable and help support community outreach as well as our own activities. Contact and membership info is on page 6.

September:

Saturday 13th – Sunday 14th. Zeteticon, Best Western Doublewood Inn in Fargo, North Dakota.

Great Plains Atheists of Fargo, will be hosting an inaugural convention for the discussion of critical thought, education, science, and reason: ZetetiCon 2014. Please visit www.Zeteticon.org for more information and to purchase tickets.



A number of HAAM members will be attending. Everyone is

welcome to join them for what promises to be a fun and educational weekend!

October:

Saturday 4th. Dying With Dignity presents Death and Dainties. St James-Assiniboia Public Library, 10:30 AM - noon.

Death – it won't kill you to talk about it! This is an informal gathering in a relaxed setting to talk about death and eat pastries. Increase your awareness of issues related to death and dying, and understand your rights, no matter what your values on the subject. Note that this is not a grief counselling session. For more info, please email the Winnipeg Chapter of Dying With Dignity at infowinnipeg@dyingwithdignity.ca or call 1-800-495-6156.



Thursday 9th. Round Table on Secular Parenting, St James-Assiniboia Public Library, 6:30 PM. Parents – let's support each other! Details to follow.

Save the dates:

Tentative dates for our remaining fall meetings:

October 18th

November 8th

December 20th (Solstice Party)

OUTREACH REPORT

HAAM had another very successful excursion to the **Morden Corn and Apple Festival** in August. Twelve of our members, including 4 'newbies', spent one or more days meeting people from all over,

comparing worldviews, and promoting science and critical thinking. Rather than the usual formal newspaper-style report of our adventures, two of our outreach 'veterans' share their personal thoughts about the experience. Enjoy!



Volunteers Tony Governo (L) and Todd DeRyck

Dear Bible Belt Christians,

Despite what you may have heard, we really do know the story of Jesus. We live in a Christian dominated country, not an uncontacted village in the Amazon. This is not new information.

When discussing the origins of the universe, "I don't know" is the honest answer. It doesn't mean you've won the debate.

When you're in a discussion and one of your points has been refuted, the polite thing to do is acknowledge the point, not pretend it didn't happen and move on to something unrelated.

When speaking of evolutionary biology, "kind" is not a scientific term.

When you stop to speak to atheists, a short, staccato barking tone and threatening body language is somewhat off-putting. You also might want to consider letting your wife speak.

I hate to rain on your parade, but you're not the first person to come up with Pascal's Wager. It's not as profound as you think it is.

When you're the omnipotent creator of the universe, dying for a couple of days is not actually a supreme sacrifice. I'd say on the grand scale, it's maybe about as bad as stepping on a piece of Lego in the dark.

For the Teen Challenge folks, you're not "walking with Jesus" when you yell at, laugh at, or mock the atheists walking by your booth.

And lastly, most of you are pretty nice, and way more moral than the God you worship.

Respectfully, the woman who is going to burn in hell for all eternity for the crime of not believing something she finds unbelievable

-Diana Goods

understand a logical fallacy even as it's biting them in the ass.

But I'd like you to think of our successes. The young woman who last year could only parrot Bible verses and tell us about the good news of the gospel actually visited our booth this year for almost an hour and a half, and asked many questions. We were invited to speak to two school classes, and were able to connect a couple in the Bible Belt with other like-minded rational thinkers in their area. Maybe a couple of these contacts will turn into lifelong friendships and people won't feel so isolated.

Don't forget the few YECs, evangelicals and fundamentalists who acknowledged some of the points we made. Who knows, maybe that was just the dent that their belief system needed to send them down the road to becoming the next Seth Andrews. The young gay woman who last year was worried that she was going to be booted from her home, stopped by the booth to let us know that everything's going a lot better. We even managed to hook up an atheist visiting from Alberta with the Society of Edmonton Atheists and other groups that she didn't know about.

All in all a pretty damn good weekend. So kick back awhile and be proud of yourself HAAMsters, but remember we still have work to do. See ya in September!

-Pat Morrow



Volunteers at HAAM's Outreach Booth L to R: Catherine Smith, Diana Goods, Donna Harris, Amy Braun, and Pat Morrow.

Another outreach done! I wanna thank our volunteers and my fellow exec members for putting it all together. All of you did an excellent job and kept the face-palming to a minimum. I know it's mentally exhausting dealing with the same bad arguments and the impenetrable faith of the gullible. Especially those who believe that a sentence of eternal torture for simply not believing is perfectly moral. Then there is the pseudoscience of the Young Earth Creationists (YEC) who refuse to acknowledge what science is, and wouldn't

NEW HUMANIST OFFICIAN

HAAM is pleased to announce that one of our members, **Catherine Kreindler**, has been appointed a **marriage commissioner** for the province of Manitoba. She will perform non-religious/humanist weddings. She will also lead life celebrations (funerals and memorial services) and baby-namings if asked. This is important news for many of us who wish to celebrate life events



without invoking the supernatural, but are not sure how to do it or who to ask.

Catherine will offer a 25% discount on her services to HAAM members. You can reach her at catherine.kreindler@gmail.com.

FOSSIL DIG!

Fourteen HAAMsters headed out to Morden in August for a guided tour of the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre and a chance to find real fossils. Highlights were seeing the amazing 43 foot tylosaur

skeleton affectionately named Bruce; and a 'backstage pass' to the work, preparation, and storage areas, including a sneak peak of the new 9 foot long fossilized crow shark (not on display to the public the day after we were there).

Then onward to the actual digging. We were driven to an active site on a gully where several fossils had been recently been unearthed. The plan was to carefully excavate the entire bank. With that in mind, we were given our digging tools – dental picks! This gave new meaning to the word 'patience'. But after an hour or so of picking at the



soil, 3 people came up with real fossils – Pat Morrow found an *Enchodus* tooth (in photo), Trevor Donald a rib bone, Jennifer D. a fish vertebra. A fun and educational experience!

IMPORTANT STATEMENT ABOUT FREE SPEECH

The Oxford Declaration on Freedom of Thought and Expression was approved by delegates at the August 2014 **World Humanist Congress** and the **International Humanist and Ethical Union General Assembly**.

Highlights of the declaration and important implications for us as Humanists include:



- Protect the dignity and freedom of all people by protecting their right to their personal beliefs.
- Pressure to conform to ideologies of the state or to doctrines of religion is a tyranny.
- The right to freedom of expression is global in its scope.
- There is no right not to be offended, or not to hear contrary opinions. **Respect for people's freedom of belief does not imply any duty or requirement to respect those beliefs.** The expression of opposition to any beliefs, including in the form of satire, ridicule or condemnation in all media and forms is vital to critical discourse.... Violence and censorship are never legitimate responses. All laws that criminalize language on grounds of 'blasphemy' or of offense to beliefs and values impede human freedom and should be abolished.

- States must not restrict thought and expression merely to protect the government from criticism.
- Freedom of belief is absolute but the freedom to act on a belief is not.

The full text of the declaration can be read here: <http://iheu.org/oxford-declaration-on-freedom-of-thought-and-expression/>

ON THE WEB

Recent episodes of Winnipeg's own **Life, the Universe & Everything Else** podcast that you won't want to miss:

Interview with a Mariachi Ghost: A conversation with Rafael Reyes, guitarist for local Winnipeg band *The Mariachi Ghost*. Rafael shares his experiences growing up Catholic in El Salvador, how his skepticism gradually led to leaving the faith, and his current musical career.

A Middle East Primer: Background and context for some of the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, including basics of the types of Islam, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Zionism, and Islamic terrorism.

LUEE podcasts promote secular humanism and scientific skepticism and are presented by the [Winnipeg Skeptics](#) and the [Humanists, Atheists & Agnostics of Manitoba](#). You can listen to LUEE on your computer or from your mobile device. Just search iTunes or Stitcher for "Life, the Universe & Everything Else", or visit <http://lueepodcast.wordpress.com>.



We have another talented blogger in our midst! Check out these thoughts by **Amy Braun**, who writes (under the pseudonym *Amaryllis*), about getting

her life together after leaving fundamentalism. <http://postmid2014.blogspot.ca/>

DO YOU LIVE IN THE BIBLE BELT?

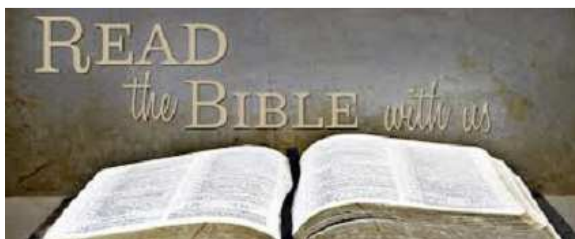
Are you a non-believer living in the Pembina valley? HAAM was contacted by a woman in that area who would like to connect with other non-

believers. She and her family identify as agnostic or Unitarian Universalist and are having difficulty finding like-minded people in their community because everyone assumes that all their neighbors are Christian. She would like to be part of a community without having to join a church, and is interested in possibly starting a 'meetup fellowship' on Sundays.



HAAM has already collected several names through our booth at the Corn and Apple Festival, so it looks like there will be a group forming. If you are interested in joining them, please email HAAM and we will put you in touch with each other.

OPERATION READ THE BIBLE



We'll cover a lot of territory this month – Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and then into 1 Samuel. Joshua tells of the entry of the Israelites into Canaan and their conquest and division of the land. The killings continue; Joshua's God is a God of war. This is also the book in which God makes the sun stand still. Although tradition holds that it was written by Joshua, it is probable that it was written by multiple editors and authors far removed from the times it depicts.

Judges features Gideon and Samson, and carries this content warning: "Judges is a violent book even by biblical standards... Read it yourself, if you have a strong enough stomach." (SAB) The highlights are so grisly, I'll refrain from posting them here. The stories follow a repetitive pattern: unfaithfulness to Yahweh, suffering and punishment, repentance and obedience, prosperity, unfaithfulness, etc.

Finally we get a brief reprieve from the violence in Ruth. It tells the story of the great-grandmother of David, and, according to the Gospel of Matthew, an ancestor of Jesus. Ruth contains the famous "Your people will be my people and your God my God" speech. Its stress on the need for an inclusive

attitude towards foreigners suggests an origin in the fifth century BCE, when intermarriage had become controversial.

Back to the violent history of the Israelites as we start on 1 Samuel. God orders Saul to kill every Amalekite "man and woman, infant and suckling", smites the Philistines with hemorrhoids, and kills 50,070 men for looking into the Ark of the Covenant.

Readings for the week of:

Sept 7: Josh 5-8; 9-11; 12-15; 16-18; 19-21

Sept 14: Josh 22-24; Jud 1-2; 3-5; 6-7; 8-9

Sept 21: Jud 10-12; 13-15; 16-18; 19-21; Ruth

Sept 28: 1Sam 1-3; 4-8; 9-12; 13-14; 15-17

Please share your comments or questions on our Atheist Bible Study Facebook group page <http://tinyurl.com/qf88xho>

CHARITY OF THE MONTH



In August, the CFDC was given an opportunity to purchase a **Chevy 3500 extended van** with a raised roof (currently seats 8; adding a row will seat 11) with only 40,000 km on it for \$2,500. It is in excellent condition (it actually has air conditioning which will be a first). The seller is willing to let it go for \$2,500 for the CFDC (down from \$6,000). Their current vehicles both have more than 500,000 km on them and are in desperate need of replacement. There is no budget for this and so they are raising the funds through donations. **Donors will be recognized on the Centre's Donation Wall, and those who contribute \$250 or more will have their name or logo applied to the side of the van.**

Let's help make it happen! HAAM is committed to raise \$250 as a group. That's a win for everyone – the CFDC gets their much-needed van; HAAM gets public recognition; and you'll get a tax receipt. Please make your donation to HAAM (not the CFDC). Our treasurer will forward the total amount to the CFDC and issue tax receipts to each individual donor for contributions of \$10 or more. Donations may be made at the September meeting, or by mail or website if you can't make it to the meeting (include a message that the donation is for the Charity of the Month).

HAAM's Executive:

President Donna Harris
Vice President Heather McDonell
Treasurer Helen Friesen
Secretary Cheri Frazer

Members at Large:

Todd De Ryck
Chad Froese
Gloria Froese
Diana Goods – Librarian
Pat Morrow – Outreach
Bob Russell
Dorothy Stephens – Newsletter



Contact us at:

mbhumanistsatheists@gmail.com

or Phone 204-612-0601



Humanists, Atheists, and
Agnostics of Manitoba



Humanists, Atheists, and
Agnostics of Manitoba



@MBHumanists



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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Province: _____

Postal Code _____

Phone #: _____

Cell #: _____

Email: _____

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

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Registered Charity # 85080 5326 RR0001

New Member Renewal

Membership Category:

- Individual Membership \$30.00
- Individual Limited Income \$10.00
- Household Membership* \$50.00
- Household Limited Income \$15.00
- Lifetime Membership \$1000.00 or more

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

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: _____

*Please DO NOT send cash in the mail. Make
cheque payable to: **Humanist Association of
Manitoba** and mail to: Humanist Association
of Manitoba, 7 Pinehurst Lane, Mitchell, MB,
R5G 2J3.*

*Memberships are also available by credit card
on our website, or by cash or cheque at any
HA²M meeting or HA²M event.*

June 2014