

Manitoba Humanist

Tony Governo and Donna Harris talk to a student at our U of M Outreach table in January. We met lots of interesting people during our two days there!



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



HAM

www.mbhumanistsatheists.ca

SAGE HOUSE AND THE SEX TRADE IN MANITOBA

Saturday February 21st, 5:30 PM

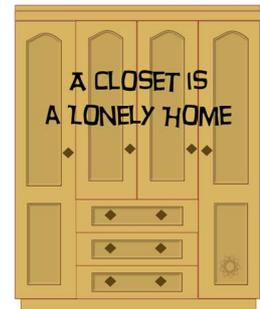
CanadInns Polo Park, 1405 St Matthews Ave



Sage House is a project of **Mount Carmel Clinic**. It is a health, outreach, and resource centre for street-involved women, including transgender women. It provides nurse practitioner services as well as meals, laundry, shower facilities, telephone, and computer access at the drop in centre. Clients receive support and advocacy regarding resources, education, addiction treatment, employment and income assistance, housing, child and family services, and justice. Sage House has a street outreach team that connects with women currently working in the sex trade, and provides them with harm reduction kits, crisis intervention, and support.

Details and speaker are still being finalized. We hope to hear why the sex trade in Manitoba is different from most other cities (not what you see on typical TV dramas), and why it's made up of a disproportionate number of Aboriginal women.

NOTE: A member of the sex trade will likely come and talk to us about her experiences, so this event will not be appropriate for children.



There is now a group of non-believers in Manitoba's Bible Belt. See page 4.

Book Club is back! Page 2.



COMING UP!

If you're new to HAAM, welcome! Our regular monthly meetings are always open to the public, but our other events are intended for members only. If you would like to check us out, you are welcome to attend one or two events before becoming a member. After that, if you wish to continue to participate, we ask that you support the group by joining. Annual fees are affordable and assist with community outreach as well as our own activities. Memberships are available at the door.

Contact and membership info is on page 6. 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.

February:

Thursday 12th, Round Table Discussion - Unequally Yoked, 6:30 PM, St James-Assiniboia Public Library.



Have you experienced conflict in your marriage or family because of disagreements over religious beliefs? You are not alone! Come join in the

discussion with others who are working through similar issues. **Jeff Olsson** will be your host and moderator.

Saturday 21st, Sage House (continued from front page)

Our social time is from 5:30 to 6:30. Come for dinner, drinks, or just chit-chat. The meeting follows at 6:30 and presentation is 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.

Sunday 22nd, Harmonizing Humanists, 12:15, private

home in St Vital. Our singers are starting up again and looking for new members. We had a blast singing at the Solstice Party in December, and plan to perform again at future HAAM events. We don't rehearse on a regular or frequent basis, so we are looking for people who can read music and learn most of it on their own. If you used to sing in church and miss the music but not the religion, then this group is for you! Email HAAM for the address.



March:

Sunday 1st, Prairie Infidel Film Fest, 1:30 – 5:00 PM, Carol Shields Auditorium in the Millennium Library. Our executive is collaborating to find a variety of films that promise to be funny, provocative, inspirational, and educational (not necessarily in that order, and not all at

once!). They will vary in length from a couple of minutes to a full movie.

We don't reveal our final choices ahead of time, so you'll have to show up to find out what we came up with. Suggestions are welcome though - email us if you have seen something that you believe should be shared. There is no admission fee but a suggested donation of \$5 will help cover the cost of the hall rental.



Wednesday 11th, Book Club Meeting - A Guide to the Good Life: The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy, by William B.

Irving. Irving is a philosophy professor at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio.

Whew! That sound like pretty heavy reading – but don't be discouraged; apparently it's not. This book has all 5-star reviews on Amazon.ca, including statements like: "I read this straight through last night. This is a really good introduction to Stoicism. Practical and jargon-free.", and "if you are looking for a life philosophy -- A Guide to the Good Life is for you."

From the publisher's summary: "Irvine offers a refreshing presentation of Stoicism, showing how this ancient philosophy can still direct us toward a better life. Using the psychological insights and the practical techniques of the Stoics, Irvine offers a roadmap for anyone seeking to avoid the feelings of chronic dissatisfaction that plague so many of us....Readers learn how to minimize worry, how to let go of the past and focus our efforts on the things we can control, and how to deal with insults, grief, old age, and the distracting temptations of fame and fortune." Sounds like something that would benefit many of us! Intrepid host **Stuart Croall** will guide the discussion.

There are 3 copies of this book in the Winnipeg Public Library. It can also be ordered in hard cover from McNally-Robinson, as an eBook from Kindle or Kobo, or as an audiobook from Audible.

Saturday 14th, monthly meeting, TBA – save the date!

Thursday 26th Secular Parenting Group meeting, 6:30 – 8:30 PM, St James-Assiniboia Public Library. Our secular



parents will meet again to share stories and parenting tips to help raise kids who are 'good without god'. New members are always welcome. This is becoming a regular group, so if you have kids, check it out!

April:

Tuesday 21st, Understanding and Completing an

Advance Care Plan, 4 – 6 PM, McNally-Robinson Book

NOW
is the
Right
Time!

Store, 1120 Grant Ave. Members of the Winnipeg chapter of **Dying with Dignity** will present this 2-hour class on how to fill out your ACP (AKA a health care directive or living will).

Most of the information is on patient rights in Manitoba, defining your wishes, how to choose a proxy in the event you can't speak for yourself, and what you need to know if you are the proxy. Don't assume that just because your spouse knows your wishes that that's what will happen in an emergency; the best way to prepare yourself and your family is to be informed! Everything you need will be provided, just bring a pen and paper if you want to take notes.

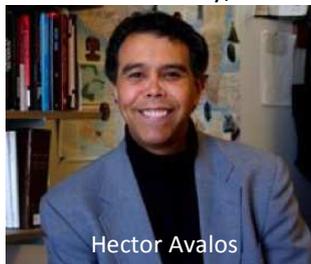
The cost is \$12 (McNally charges \$10 per student and the rest covers our printing costs), and you must register with McNally, either on their website <http://www.mcnallyrobinson.com> (under Community Classes), or by phoning 204-475-0483. Our February class is already full, so be sure to book early.

Copies of the free ACP are available on the DWD website <http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/>

Save the Dates! Upcoming meetings and events:
Monthly meetings are April 11th and May 9th
Solstice Party in Assiniboine Park is June 20th, 4-8 PM

CONFERENCE UPDATE

HAAM is excited to announce that plans are underway for our conference this fall. **River City Reasonfest** will take place **September 19th and 20th** at the Canadinn Polo Park. We have set our sights high on hosting a fantastic weekend filled with interesting and informative presentations by some very well-known speakers in the atheist community, including **Greta Christina, Hector**



Hector Avalos

Avalos and PZ Myers, as well as some talented local presenters. Our goal is to have a variety of speakers, from diverse backgrounds, to showcase the many voices in the atheist community.

We hope that you will join us for a fun-filled weekend of community and discovery. You can hear about a journey from faith to freethought, listen to a talk about science or social justice, participate in a panel discussion, or just enjoy a comfortable weekend surrounded by your fellow atheists. We hope to have a little something for everyone.

We all have our particular interest, whether it's debating creationists, living a secular life, discovering the world through science, or searching for morality outside of holy books. Whatever kind of world we are to have without god, a commitment to following the evidence and applying rational thinking will help us get there.

We hope you will help us make this conference a reality. There are many opportunities to help us get there. Contact HAAM to assist with the planning, volunteer to help out at the conference, donate to the conference fund or share your ideas with us. Stay tuned for the launch of our conference website and the opportunity to buy early-bird tickets. And most importantly save the date to join us for a weekend of fun and freethought!

STANDING UP FOR FREEDOM OF SPEECH

In response to the shooting on January 7th at the offices of Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris, HAAM issued the following statement:

For the record, as a statement of our values, we at HAAM wholeheartedly denounce the violence wrought in Paris, France, by terrorists who attacked the offices of Charlie Hebdo. This cold-blooded act of murder is offensive to our beliefs and is causing us much heartache and grief. Our sympathies go out to all of those impacted by this tragedy.

There is no guarantee in the world that, as adults, we will never be insulted, offended, or hurt by the actions of others. We can protest, exchange insults, write letters, start a law suit, or take any number of other actions in response. Violence is not an acceptable reaction. Acts of terrorism are especially heinous, being anonymous. While we may not be fans of the brand of satire practice by Charlie Hebdo, we still assert the right to freedom of speech.

Right now, we may feel helpless, wondering what action we can take – what can we do to help stop these kinds of events. At HAAM, we have decided to support the Centre for Inquiry and Humanist Canada in their efforts to repeal Canada's archaic and useless blasphemy laws.



In conclusion, we would like to just remind those reading of the names of the twelve victims. May their loss not be in vain. Frédéric Boisseau, 42, maintenance worker; Franck Brinsolaro, 49, police officer; Jean Cabut, 76, cartoonist; Elsa Cayat, 54, psychoanalyst; Stéphane Charbonnier, 47, editor-in-chief; Philippe Honoré, 74, cartoonist; Bernard Maris, 68, editor; Ahmed Merabet, 42, police officer; Mustapha Ourrad, 60, copy editor;

Michel Renaud, 69, guest; Bernard Verlhac, 57, cartoonist; Georges Wolinski, 80, cartoonist.

More info about the fight against blasphemy laws: Canada's blasphemy law: <http://tinyurl.com/pkwl3cl> CFI campaign: <http://tinyurl.com/p8qzark> Petitions to Canadian government and the United Nations: <http://tinyurl.com/mcbdq5d> and <http://tinyurl.com/leomahq>



There is now a small group for **Free Thinkers in the Pembina valley** (Morden/Winkler area). They have met several times since HAAM was at the Corn and Apple Festival and helped them to connect. They have now decided that they are going to meet on a more regular basis - informally, with no agenda, just friends with similar interests. They would like to invite other Free Thinkers, Humanists etc., who may be feeling disenfranchised by living in the Bible Belt of Manitoba, to join them. If you are interested, email HAAM and our Outreach Coordinator will connect you with them.



International Darwin Day, Thursday February 12th, will inspire people throughout the globe to reflect and act on the principles of intellectual bravery, perpetual curiosity, scientific thinking, and hunger for truth as embodied in Charles Darwin.

It will be a day of celebration, activism, and international cooperation for the advancement of science, education, and human well-being.



Local and state governments will close in commemoration of the Day, and organizations and businesses will celebrate by engaging in community outreach centered on science as a tool for the betterment of humanity. Darwin Day will be observed by the United Nations and its members as an opportunity for international partnerships through the common language of science for the common good of all.

HAAM doesn't have an event planned for this day but please join us at our regular meeting (Feb 21st) for some cake as we mark the occasion. More info at The Humanist.com <http://tinyurl.com/oyqb7yx>

CHARITY OF THE MONTH

A representative from **Sage House** will be speaking at our February 21st meeting. We'll collect donations for them at the meeting, but we'll also advance some funds



(in anticipation of your donations) before the meeting to support their 2015 S.N.O.W. Night, which takes place on Feb. 17th (SNOW = Safe Night Off Winnipeg streets).

In addition to financial contributions, Sage House also welcomes donations of everyday items that can help the women in need at Sage House. You can see a list here: <http://tinyurl.com/mz3c474>



Besides supporting our monthly charity, HAAM will also be accepting contributions toward **Ron Siwicki's** defence fund. Ron is the man who was arrested and charged with criminal negligence in December after allegedly leaving his elderly mother on the floor of their home to die. **Catherine Kreindler**, friend of Ron Siwicki, will inform the membership about his case. She will speak about the issues involved, such as the right to refuse treatment and the care of elderly loved ones. This case may very well go to the Supreme Court.



Whatever the circumstances surrounding this tragedy, Ron deserves fair representation. *Note that this is not a charity, and no tax receipts will be issued.*

ON THE WEB

HAAM has a **new web page**, and we are very excited about it! It features more space for articles that are too long for this newsletter, social media links, automated newsletter signup, an updated About Us page, and general reorganization to make navigation easier. Content is still being added, so keep checking. Our address is the same: <http://mbhumanistsatheists.ca/>. Thanks to **Heather Murray** of Cluster Web Designs!



On the latest episode of Winnipeg's own **Life, the Universe & Everything Else** podcast: **New Year's Resolutions and Behaviour Change**. The panel examines how difficult it can be to change habits and behaviours, and presents some

evidence-based ways to maximize your chances of succeeding in your goals. The discussion includes holiday weight gain, the odds of success, and willpower – why it matters, how to get it, and why it runs out.

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>.



HAAM member **Rollin Penner** now has his own blog called **Rollin On – Serious Satire**. Lots of astute observations and controversial politics in there! Check it out at <http://rollinon.me/blog/>



 HAAM is part of the **Canadian Blood Services' Partners for Life** program. 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 for an appointment.

DO HUMANISTS HAVE HOLIDAYS?

Have you ever wondered about workplaces that allow their employees time off for 'religious observances' and thought that Humanists should be entitled to these days, too? HAAM received an enquiry about this recently, and in response we provided the following letter to an employer. It is reprinted here for the benefit of others with the same or similar questions:



Dear Sir / Madam - Although humanism is not a religion, it is a life stance and set of beliefs based in philosophical naturalism. To that end, there are days of the year that are observed by humanists and humanist groups to varying degrees worldwide. It is to be noted that unfortunately, religion is in a protected class when it comes to observed holidays, but humanism, it seems, is not. Therefore it is often the case humanists will observe these days when they can. In regard to these special days observed by the humanist community they are as follows:

December 10 - International Human Rights Day proclaimed in 1950 by the United Nations and fully supported by the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) and humanist organizations around the world.

February 12 - Darwin Day is a call for celebration, activism, and international cooperation for the advancement of science, education, and human well-being. It is also a

time to reflect and act on the principles of intellectual bravery, perpetual curiosity, scientific thinking, and hunger for truth as embodied in the life and work of Charles Darwin.

June 21 - World Humanist Day is celebrated annually around the world on the June solstice. The day is a way of spreading awareness of Humanism as a philosophical life stance and means to effect change in the world. It is also seen as a time for Humanists to gather socially and promote the positive values of humanism.

If you would like more information about humanists or humanism, you can find more information here: <http://www.humanistcanada.ca>, <http://iheu.org>, or drop us a line at <http://www.mbhumanistsatheists.ca>. Kind regards, **Donna Harris**, President



The **Book of Psalms** is the first book of the Ketuvim (Writings) section of the Hebrew bible. There are 150 of these poems which seem to be in no particular order..... so this'll take a while. Seventy-three are attributed to King David, but that's disputed by modern scholars (no surprise there – like just about everything else in the bible, authorship and historicity are questionable). The psalms can be roughly divided into five primary types: hymns (songs of praise); communal laments for some type of disaster; royal themes (praising the king or celebrating a coronation or battle); individual laments and pleas for help; and individual songs of thanksgiving.

Chanting or singing psalms is a part of many Christian and Jewish faith traditions; a book containing the words set to music for church choir and/or congregational use is called a Psalter (pronounced Salter). More elaborate musical arrangements have been composed by such varied artists as Bach, Vivaldi, and Handel (baroque era); Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Saint-Saens (romantic era); Vaughan Williams, Holst, Ives, and Kodaly (early 20th century); Britten and Rorem (modern), and U2 (contemporary). It's impossible to avoid them if you're a serious choral or vocal music student.

Readings for the week of:

Feb 1: Psalms 9-16; 17-20; 21-25; 26-31; 32-35

Feb 8: Ps 36-39; 40-45; 46-50; 51-57; 58-65

Feb 15: Ps 66-69; 70-73; 74-77; 78-79; 80-85

Feb 22: Ps 86-89; 90-95; 96-102; 103-105; 106-107

Mar 1: 108-114; 115-118; 119:1-88; 119:89-176; 120-132

Please share your comments or questions on our

Atheist Bible Study Facebook group page

<http://tinyurl.com/gf88xho>

HAAM's Executive:

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

Members at Large:
Todd De Ryck
Chad 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



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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, 112 - 230 Barkman Avenue, Steinbach, MB R5G 0Y5.

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