

Manitoba Humanist

TURN OFF
THOSE DING-
DONGED LIGHTS
ALREADY!



Join us for our April meeting as HAAM members learn about
ELECTRICITY AND GLOBAL WARMING

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



HAAM

www.mbhumanistsatheists.ca

WILL YOUR FRIDGE SPELL THE DOOM OF HUMANITY?

Saturday April 11th, 5:30 PM

CanadInns Polo Park, 1405 St Matthews Ave

HAAM member **Todd De Ryck** will discuss

- how electricity is generated globally,
- which generation sources are growing the fastest and why,
- electricity generation and poverty,



- how key countries are generating electricity,
- local electricity generation, pros and cons of various electricity generation sources, and
- what might be the future for electricity generation.

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

BE THERE OR BE

Not everything that goes on at our meetings can be reported in the newsletter. Sometimes you've just got to be there!
See page 4.



CEF
CHILD EVANGELISM
FELLOWSHIP®

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.

April:

Sunday April 19th, "How to Die in Oregon" – Film Screening and Panel Discussion, 1:30 PM, Carol Shields Auditorium, Millennium Library.



This event is hosted by the Winnipeg Chapter of **Dying With Dignity**. Speakers at the intermission will include Natasha Griffiths, daughter of Susan Griffiths, and the Hon. Steven Fletcher, MP, author of the proposed federal legislation on physician-assisted death. Admission is free (donations gratefully accepted to offset costs). For more info check the DWD website (Events) <http://tinyurl.com/o4vsbe6>

Monday April 20th, Winnipeg School Division #1 Special Board Meeting, 7:00 PM, 1577 Wall St East (Board Room, 2nd floor). See the Call to Action (opposite) for details.

Tuesday April 21st, Understanding and Completing an Advance Care Plan, 4 – 6 PM, McNally-Robinson Book 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).

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. Copies of the free ACP are available on the DWD website <http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/> Our February class sold out, so be sure to book early.

May:

Saturday May 9th, Monthly HAAM Meeting, Ethics and Humanism: Is it Ethical to Talk Someone Out of their Faith?, 5:30 PM,

CanadInns Polo Park. If religious belief gives comfort in a comfortless world, should we deny ourselves



that benefit? Should we try to deny others that benefit? Is it ethical to talk someone out of their faith if it brings them comfort? Renowned ethicist Arthur Schafer will talk to us about the ethics of religion.

Save the Dates!

Saturday June 20th, Solstice Party in Assiniboine Park, 5-8 PM

September 19th and 20th, River City ReasonFest



CALL TO ACTION!



The **Child Evangelism Fellowship** is a well-funded, well established, international organization that teaches an inerrant, fundamentalist version of Christianity. Its members believe that if children are not saved they are lost, and will be tortured in a lake of fire forever. CEF promotes a narrow view of the world that is both anti-gay and anti-science. As the law stands right now in Manitoba, with the proper paperwork and a minimum of support they can preach this worldview in our public schools at lunchtime and after classes... and they would really like to share their beliefs with your children. CEF's

teachings - reinforced often enough – rob children of the innocence and enjoyment of childhood, which are then replaced by a negative self-image, preoccupation with sin, fear of hell, and an aversion to critical thinking. CEF’s teachings are not conducive to a society that values pluralism, multiculturalism and freedom of conscience.

As Humanists we believe that children have a right to develop in conditions of freedom, open inquiry, and empathy, and which respect their inherent dignity and equality. On April 13th, Winnipeg School Division #1 trustee Lisa Naylor will present a motion to the Winnipeg #1 School Board demanding that the province amend the legislation that allows CEF to conduct prayers and Bible studies for kids in public schools. That will hopefully end the intrusion of fundamentalist and evangelistic religion into Winnipeg #1 schools.

On **April 20th** there will be a **Special Meeting** where residents, parents and guardians, and students of the Winnipeg School Division will have a chance to speak to the school board directly about this topic. Those who wish to address the board do not have to be parents of current students as long as they live within the division boundaries, but the opinions of families with children in the division will naturally carry more weight in the discussion. HAAM will be represented by a delegation of members who live in the division, but we hope and encourage others to join us and strengthen our collective voice. **If you are a resident of Winnipeg School Division #1** and are willing to speak at the meeting, you will need to register in advance – *please contact HAAM for more information* (see page 6).

On May 4th Trustees will debate the issue and vote on the motion. It is our hope that HAAM members and supporters who are residents of WSD #1 will join us to help bring an end to religious indoctrination in our public schools.



COMING SOON - THE NEW TESTAMENT

Our **bible study group** began reading in June 2014 and we are nearing the end of the Old Testament. But even if you haven't joined us or read the bible before now, it's not too late! All of the posts and comments from previous readings are still available on our Facebook group if you scroll down the page, and past monthly reading guides are available in the archived newsletters on our website. There's no point in kidding you that this last part of the OT will be fun; most of it was written by prophets who preached non-stop gloom and doom. But it's worthwhile reading, since this is probably the least-

read section of the whole Bible, and knowledge of what's in there (and how horrible it is) is empowering.

Here is a "Heads Up" for those planning to join us for the New Testament. Plan to begin by reading Isaiah with us in April. Even if you skip all the rest of those awful

prophets, Isaiah is very important in understanding the NT. Most Christians believe that the OT



prophesies, predicting the rise of a Messiah, refer specifically to Jesus. They claim that his birth was the fulfillment of those prophesies. If you read Isaiah, you will find it much easier to understand the context when those OT prophesies are referred to and quoted (and often misquoted) in the NT and by apologists. (There are Messianic and End Times references in the books of other prophets as well, but Isaiah seems to contain the largest number.) We will begin the NT the first week in July and finish in early November. *Note that we will read the Gospels in the order they were written, with Mark first, then Matthew, Luke, and John.* See page 5 for the April reading guide.



CHARITY OF THE MONTH



Our April charity is **Darcy's ARC** (Animal Rescue Centre), a non-profit organization that has been rescuing cats and dogs from situations of abandonment, homelessness, neglect and abuse in Winnipeg and the

surrounding area since 2001. At any given time, Darcy's has over 150 animals awaiting permanent homes where they will be treated well and treasured for life.

Darcy's staff provides every animal in their care with an initial veterinary checkup, follow up veterinary care and/or medication, comfortable and safe temporary living quarters, opportunity for socialization, assistance with emotional issues, exercise, high quality food, fresh water, and soft beds. They also work towards alleviating animal overpopulation by ensuring that every animal they handle is spayed or neutered.

How can you help? In addition to money, the shelter can make use of *Canadian Tire Money* and *HBC Rewards Points* to buy supplies. They also need pet food, and cleaning and office supplies (see the “*Wish List*” on their website for specifics). Check out their two *thrift stores* (one on Main Ave and one on Sergeant Ave). And they have two current fundraisers – a golf tournament on June 4th, and a “7 Dinners for 7 Nights” raffle (gift cards for 7 different restaurants). HAAM will accept donations of money or other needed items, and have a few raffle tickets to sell, at our meeting on April 11th. Check their website for more details. <http://www.darcysarc.ca/>



HAAM SUPPORTS SPI

The **Secular policy Institute** is a think tank based in Washington D.C., with a mission to influence public opinion and promote a secular society. The SPI believes that governmental decisions and public policies should be based on available science and reason, and free of religion or religious preferences. Its leadership is made up of 30 academics, some of whose names will be quite familiar. It is supported by a coalition of almost 300 atheist, humanist, free thought, and secular groups from all over the world, even including some churches.



So why support an American lobby group? According to the 2011 census, “Nones” (people with no religious affiliation) in Canada are 23.9% of the population. Collectively that’s more people than any other religious group except Christians, yet we are not represented and we don’t have a cohesive voice. It’s much the same in the United States, with numbers for the non-religious sitting at about 16%. We have to start showing these numbers in a really tangible way. We need to stand up and be counted! In addition, what happens in America does not stay in America; the ripple effects of US policies affect us and others world wide.

The injection of more secularism and less supernaturalism into decision-making is a movement we can really get behind. This is why HAAM has decided to ally with groups that promote our values in Canada and internationally. There is power in numbers. The SPI does not push any particular political agenda; it exists to promote secularism and the separation of church and state - two very humanistic values. Supporting this

organization costs us nothing and it’s our way of adding our voices to a much bigger group and saying “Hey! We’re here and we matter.” If you’d like to read more about the SPI and the work they do you can find them at <http://secularpolicyinstitute.net>



YOU HAVE TO BE THERE!



We did not have an external speaker at our March meeting. Instead, we heard from three of HAAM’s members. They shared their own stories about what

brought them to atheism/humanism, and what brought them to HAAM.

Our first speaker was an ex-Muslim from Saudi Arabia, who shared a fascinating story about growing up in that country. Imagine wanting to speak out, but needing someone in another country to post blog entries for you. The next speaker was born into a Catholic family with deep roots in Europe, and, particularly, the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima. Our last speakers were a husband and wife who talked about their journey out of fundamentalist Christianity, and all the losses and consequences (both good and bad) for their family.

However, we won’t be giving any more details about their stories. We asked these individuals to share their stories with us in person at our meeting, and we respect their right to privacy. Members are always welcome to share their stories publicly. If they like, they can have their story added to the ‘Meet the Humanist’ page on our website.

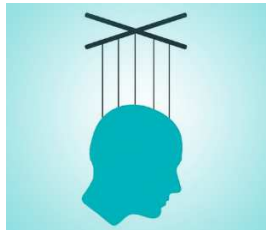
Rest assured, we’ll have more meetings in the future where members share their stories. And there will be other meetings featuring sensitive topics that cannot be reported about in full in our newsletter or website (like our February meeting, where we learned about the sex trade in Manitoba, for example). You’ll just have to be there in person to hear all the details.



On the latest episode of Winnipeg’s own **Life, the Universe & Everything Else** podcast: Our panelists talk about **free will, determinism, and what it means to make a choice.** Also on this episode, HAAM



president **Donna Harris** sits down with **August Berkshire** of Minnesota Atheists to discuss the moral implications of a world without free will. This straightforward discussion will help you to untangle what can seem like a complicated subject. It went a little long, but don't blame them: determinism exempts them from all responsibility!



August was the guest at our January general meeting. If you were unable to attend and hear his excellent presentation on Free Will then, here is your chance to catch some of what you missed.

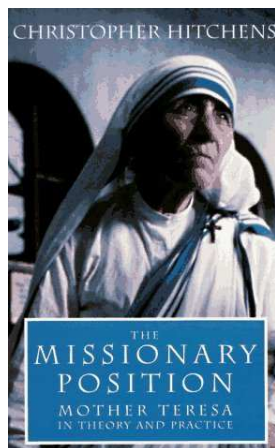
LUEE podcasts promote secular humanism and scientific skepticism and are presented by the Winnipeg Skeptics and the Humanists, Atheists & Agnostics of Manitoba. You can listen to LUEE on your computer or from your mobile device. Just search iTunes or Stitcher for "Life, the Universe & Everything Else",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



ON THE BOOKSHELF

This month we begin a new feature, recommending a **'Must Read'** book from our HAAM library. Books may be chosen for a variety of criteria - informative, inspirational, or just something that one of our members has read and found fascinating enough to want to share with others. Books chosen for 'Recommended Reading' will differ from those we select for our Book Club meetings, which tend to be more controversial and aimed at generating group discussion.

For the first month, HAAM's VP and Outreach coordinator **Pat Morrow** suggested **The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice**, by the late Christopher Hitchens. It's an old book from 1995, and at only 128 pages, it's a short and easy read. So why promote it now? Because when it was first published, it was viewed by most of the public and critics as just another polemic by Hitchens against a revered public figure and religion in general. But time has revealed otherwise, and a study of Mother



Teresa's life by Canadian researchers in 2013 has shown that Hitchens was right about her, after all. Too bad he did not live to see himself vindicated (he died in 2011). He was not known for mincing his words, and he certainly didn't hold back in this expose of Mother Teresa's shortcomings; this book is a real eye-opener.

The Missionary Position is available in the Winnipeg Public Library as well as in our HAAM library, and if you are interested in the 2013 study, check the 'Why Evolution is True' blog post of 5 March, 2013 at <http://tinyurl.com/krxvcqe>



Isaiah is purported to have been written in the 8th century BCE by a prophet named Isaiah ben Amoz. However, like much

of the bible, its authorship and timeline are in dispute. Scholarly consensus is that it was written by at least two authors, with the latter part of the book written in the 6th century, during and after the exile. The gist of the book is that after 'cleansing', Jerusalem will become the centre of god's worldwide rule. A righteous Davidic king will take the throne and a messiah will emerge. The book continues with themes of keeping the covenant, the restoration of Israel, and the pilgrimage of nations to Zion (Jerusalem).

Jeremiah is a dark, gloomy book in which the prophet ruminates about his role as a servant of God, with little good news for his audience. It takes place historically from the reign of King Josiah about 627 BC through the subjugation of Judah by the Babylonians in 605, and the destruction of Jerusalem in 587/586. It was written in complex poetic Hebrew by Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, and there are two known versions, one Hebrew and one Greek, both heavily edited in later ages. The gist of it is that the destruction of Israel and the Babylonian exile are god's punishment for disobedience and pagan worship. Jeremiah calls for repentance, is consumed by bitterness at those who oppose or ignore him, and accuses God of betraying him.

Readings for the week of:

Apr 5: Isaiah 9-12; 13-17; 18-22; 23-27; 28-30

Apr 12: Is 31-35; 36-41; 42-44; 45-48; Is 49-53

Apr 19: Is 54-58; 59-63; 64-66; Jeremiah 1-3; 4-6

Apr 26: Jer 7-9; 10-13; 14-17; 18-22; 23-25

Please share your comments or questions on our Atheist Bible Study Facebook group page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/234461256751696/>

HAAM's Executive:

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Todd De Ryck
Norm Goertzen
Tony Governo
Dorothy Stephens – Newsletter



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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.