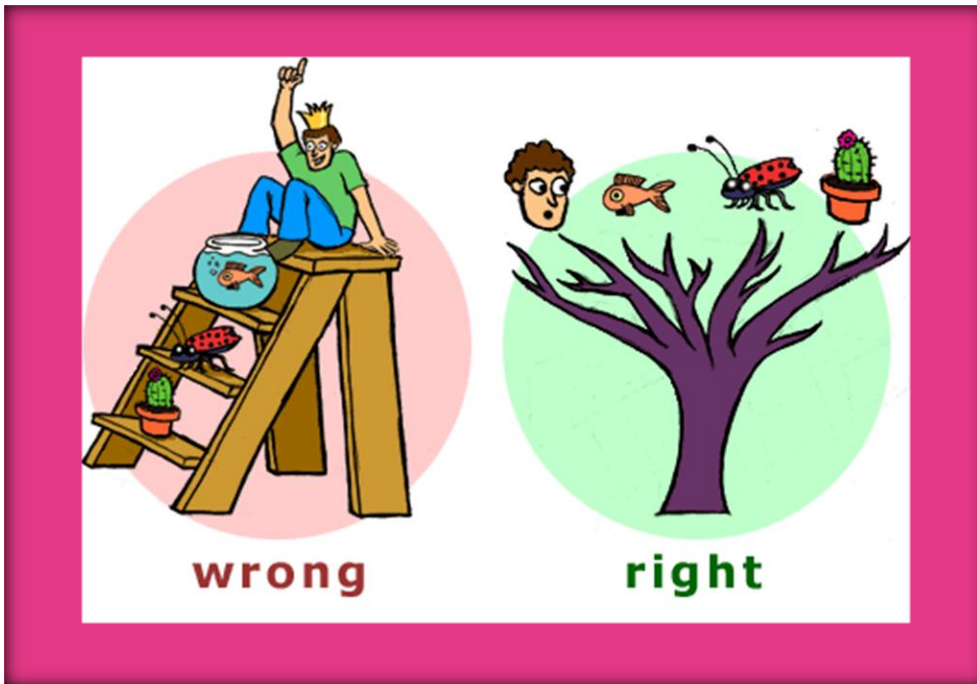



Manitoba Humanist



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



HAAM

www.mbhumanistsatheists.ca

HAAM presents
EVOLUTION 101

Saturday February 13th

Canad Inns Polo Park, 1405 St Matthews Avenue

As rational people, we all know that creationism is bunk – but can we explain WHY it's bunk? We accept evolution as the best scientific explanation for the diversity of modern flora and fauna – but how well do we really understand it?

As requested by a number of Reasonfest participants, HAAM member and science teacher

LUC BLANCHETTE

will be at our February meeting to explain the basics of evolution.

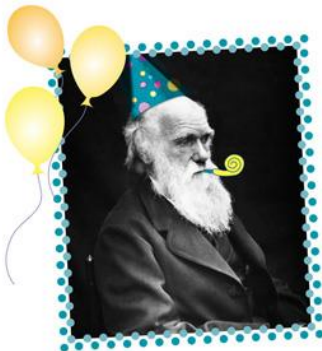
And while we're learning about evolution, we will celebrate **Charles Darwin's birthday** (he'll be 207 on Feb 12th).

Don't miss the party – or the cake!

5:30 Meet and Greet and (optional) dinner

6:30 HAAM meeting

7:00 Speaker



Congratulations to
Helen Friesen
on receiving an
Honorary Life Membership



And **THANK YOU** for all your
years of hard work!
Story on page 3.

UPCOMING EVENTS!

If you're new, welcome! Our regular monthly meetings are always open to the public, but our other events are intended for paid members. 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.

Contact and membership info is on page 6. Past newsletters and more information are on our website.

All events are subject to change, and some details may be TBA. In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, events may be subject to cancellation. Watch future newsletters, our website, Facebook page, or join us on Meetup for updates.

February

Come and Sing!



Sunday Feb 7th, Harmonizing Humanists Rehearsal, 10:30 AM, Private Residence. Calling all singers! We sing at meetings and events, and welcome new

members. Ability to read music is an asset. Contact HAAM for further information and the address.

Wednesday Feb 10th, Knitting Circle, 7-9 PM, Private Residence. Put your knitting skills to good use while socializing with your fellow HAAMsters. These **Rainbow Babies** are so much fun and easy to make! They would make great gifts for children, like refugees, immigrants or other needy kids in Winnipeg. These are easy! Only plain knit and purl stitches are required.



Beginners welcome - we can help you.

Join us and give it a try! Bring odds and ends of yarn, and knitting needles (small sizes like 2-5 mm), if you have some.

Contact HAAM for the address.

March

Saturday 12th, monthly meeting, 5:30 PM. Topic TBA.

Sunday March 13th, Prairie Infidel Film Fest, Sir William



Stephenson Library, 1:30 PM. This year we will focus on the positive aspects of **Humanism**. How do we, as non-believers, live our lives, treat each other, and cope with death? We will explore how people from all walks of

life and backgrounds challenge the false stereotypes of atheists as immoral and evil, and live their lives filled with love, compassion, hope, and wonder!

Tuesday March 15th to Saturday 26th. The Black Hole Theatre Company is the resident theatre company of the University of Manitoba. They put on 8 shows annually, on the University of Manitoba Campus, partnering with the Theatre department to teach students how to work in a theatre.

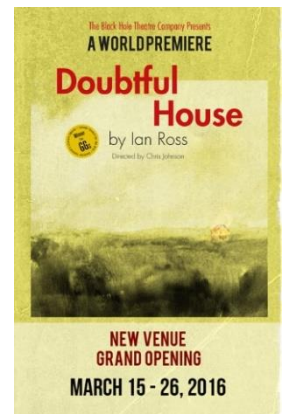
In March they will be performing the World Premiere of **Doubtful House**, a new play by Governor General Award winning playwright Ian Ross. Our own president, **Donna Harris**, is thrilled to have a part in this play! Let's give her a big show of support, and at the same time enjoy a fun and inexpensive night out at the theatre!

Shows are at 7:00 pm on March 15th and 22nd, and at 8:00pm on March 16th-19th and 22nd-26th.

Cost is \$15 for adults; \$12 for Students and Seniors.

Performances will take place in the newly renovated Conklin Theatre, in the Tache Arts Centre at the U of M.

For tickets and more information, visit <http://www.bhtc.ca/> or call 204-474-6880.



April

Saturday Apr 2nd, Visit to the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, and Pastafarian Dinner at the Old Spaghetti Factory. Time and details TBA.

Saturday Apr 9th, monthly meeting, 5:30 PM. Vicki Burns, director at the **Save Lake Winnipeg Project**, will be there to talk to us about environmental concerns regarding the lake. More details to follow.

Saturday Apr 30th, Shift To Reason Conference in Regina Sask, 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Did you enjoy River City Reasonfest, listening to the speakers and mingling

with fellow non-believers? Or did you miss it and now wish you had attended? Here's another opportunity!

With our own conference past, we're looking forward to **CFI Regina's Shift To Reason Conference** in April. It's only one day (a Saturday), so you can drive out Friday evening and return Sunday.



The outstanding and dynamic speaker line-up includes **Nathan Phelps** (son of Westboro Baptist Church leader Fred Phelps); **Matt Dillahunty** (The Atheist Experience); **Seth Andrews** (The Thinking Atheist); **Aron Ra** (science advocate); **LaVada Luening** (the Secular She-Thinker); **William Arnal** (New Testament Scholar); and **Angela Reddekopp** (ex-fundamentalist).

Don't miss this! There is already a group of HAAM members planning to attend. Please join us for all the fun! If you are looking for a ride or roommate, let us know - maybe we can match you up.

Tickets and more information are available at the Shift to Reason website. <http://www.shifftoreason.com/>

May

Saturday 14th, monthly meeting, 5:30 PM. Save the date!

MEET YOUR NEW EXECUTIVE

We are fortunate that everyone on last year's executive has agreed to another year. President, **Donna Harris**, and VP/Outreach expert, **Pat Morrow**, are entering their second year of two-year terms. Current members-at-large (MAL) **Todd DeRyck**, **Norm Goertzen**, **Tony Governo**, and **Dorothy Stephens** are continuing. **Helen Friesen** is stepping down as Treasurer and **Cheri Frazer** is leaving the Secretary position, but both of them will be staying on as MALs.

Helen first joined HAAM in 1996. She has completed 13 years as our Treasurer, and in total has served almost 20 years on the exec. She deserves more than just a big pat on the back for that, so we presented her with an Honorary Life Membership at the AGM.

Thank You Helen!

New this year, we welcome **Henry Kreindler** as our new Treasurer. **Rick Dondo** has stepped up to fill the Secretary position. And finally, **Tammy Blanchette**, **Sherry Lyn Marginet**, and **Jim Taylor** join us as MALs.

Ever wonder what those MAL people do? Lots! Mostly "Whatever's needed", and "Other duties as required"... We always need help planning and hosting events, so if you have a suggestion or an hour to spare, come help out - you don't have to be officially 'on the exec' to become involved.

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

The topic "**Conversations with Believers**" made for some fascinating and animated discussion at our January meeting. Of course, it's impossible to recount it – you had to be there. We covered tone and attitude, as well as context, and we explored different approaches. What works better – firebrand atheism, or respectful conversation? Or is there a place for both?

If you missed the meeting, here are the videos we showed and discussed (all are on YouTube):

- [Dr Peter Boghossian: Changing Minds](#)
- [The Place – David Silverman: Fighting God](#)
- [5 min Street Epistemology: Neville](#)

Most of those present found Magnabosco's approach (shown in the third video, and modeled after Boghossian's book *A Manual for Creating Atheists*) to be the most helpful in individual conversation. For a more in-depth look at his work, check out "[Anthony Magnabosco – We're Doing it Wrong: How to Conduct More Effective Talks with Believers](#)"



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

In keeping with our meeting theme of evolution and the celebration of Darwin Day, the obvious choice for our February charity is to support an institution that promotes science and the study of evolution. And when such an institution is located in Manitoba's Bible Belt, it needs a little extra help.

The **Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre** is in Morden. In an area where many kids are taught that the world began "when God created light", it offers grade-specific school tours that correspond to the Manitoba Science curriculum. It also offers summer day camps, with activities related to dinosaurs, local birds and plants, and science experiments.

Join us in supporting science education in Manitoba.



LEGAL NOTICE

In the spring of 2015, HAAM was one of many organizations that joined an international coalition of atheist groups known as the **Secular Policy Institute**. Its stated goals fit with our mission, which is to foster communication and community among non-believers. Membership cost us nothing, and SPI sounded like a worthwhile organization at the time.

Subsequent news reports and allegations about SPI caused our executive to rethink that decision and withdraw our membership. We notified SPI, and asked to have HAAM removed from their list of supporters. As of January 2016, despite a follow-up letter in the fall, our name has not been removed from SPI's website.

At this time, HAAM wishes to officially notify our members that we are in NO WAY ASSOCIATED with SPI.

OUTREACH REPORTS



Many of you will remember that our November charity was the **Kasese Humanist Primary School** in Uganda. At the time we sent the donation, we told the directors to put it towards whatever was needed most. We recently received an email from the school informing us that they have used the money to sponsor an orphan who attends the school. His name is **Bogere John**. Our donation will provide him with tuition fees for one year.



Past HAAM president **Jeff Olsson** was a guest speaker at the **Pembina Valley Secular Community** meeting in January, and he had this to say about the event: *"That was awesome! I got to do a presentation in Morden yesterday. I spoke about humanistic thought and the rise of humanism through the renaissance and enlightenment periods in Europe. We all had a great time and I spent an hour chatting with the audience after the presentation. What a nice group of people".*

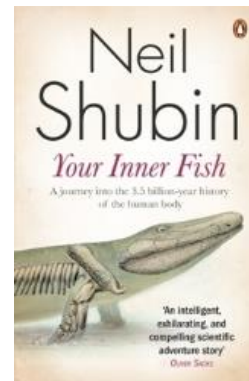
Jeff fit in a visit to 'Bruce', and 'T-Rex' at the **Fossil Discovery Center** while he was there. He says *"the staff let me go inside*



the rope so I could have a picture with that beautiful big mosasaur". What a HAAM!

IN OUR LIBRARY

In honour of Darwin Day, it's fitting that this month's feature book be about evolution. We have several in our library on the subject, none better than **Your Inner Fish**, by **Neil Shubin**, the paleontologist and professor of anatomy who co-discovered Tiktaalik. Haven't heard of **Tiktaalik**? It's the transitional fossil that creationists always claim doesn't exist...



Shubin looks at aspects of human anatomy and senses (touch, smell, hearing, vision, etc) and traces them back - way back, explaining what paleontology, comparative anatomy, genetics, embryology and developmental biology have to tell us about the human body. Reviewers note that Shubin excels at explaining the science, and that his writing style is engaging, funny, and informative.

All HAAM members are welcome to borrow books. Browse our collection on the website (under the 'Resources' tab). If you are interested in a particular book, contact HAAM and we will have it at the next meeting for you to borrow. *Note that in an effort to keep track of our books and prevent loss, borrowing privileges are now limited to paid members only.*



Check out the **What is Humanism** page for everything you need to know about Humanism – or refer family and friends there when they ask you about it. The page now

contains links to additional sites, videos, and even an online 'course' on Humanism.

News and information is now being regularly updated on our Home page. Check there for announcements, event updates, and last-minute cancellations.

The **'Search this Site'** feature has been improved. It can now be used to find past events, speakers, meeting topics, charities, opinion pieces, and even library books. So if you can't remember which meeting featured an owl as guest 'speaker', or you want to go back and read Pat Morrow's inspiring rant about why non-believers

need to be 'out' and speak publicly about social issues, you're set!

The study notes for the **Atheist Bible Study** are now complete.

MEDICALLY ASSISTED DYING UPDATE

The Supreme Court of Canada recently granted a four-month extension to their ruling last year which would have removed medically assisted dying from the Criminal Code on Feb 6th. Assisted dying will now become a reality across Canada on June 6th, 2016, and all the major stakeholders are scrambling to get their ducks in a row.

The federal government has no law yet proposed, and many supporters of physician-assisted dying (PAD) question whether one is needed at all. No new abortion law was enacted when abortion decriminalized; it was simply left up to the health care system to regulate. There is no reason why PAD could not be handled in the same way. That said, the health care system does not appear ready to handle PAD.

Many of the questions that remain to be answered relate to one of two major areas – logistics, and handling of conscientious objectors.

Logistics concerns mostly practical problems like who will pay for ambulance rides if a patient must be transferred to another facility to receive this service. How will doctors be paid? How will PAD be provided to patients in rural and remote areas? How will physicians be trained and who will train them? Most of these issues are likely to be worked out over the next little while, as with any new treatment or service, and policies and procedures are put into place.

Conscientious objectors pose a different dilemma. Is it reasonable to allow publicly funded institutions to refuse to provide a legal, government-insured service? Most religiously-affiliated hospitals and care homes will certainly attempt to refuse PAD on their premises. They are already allowed to refuse to provide abortions.

What about the duty to refer? The Manitoba College of Physicians recently announced new policy guidelines on PAD. They are [available to read](#) on the college's [website](#). They clearly state that a doctor who does not support PAD is not required to participate in it, provide any information about it, or refer to a doctor who will provide it. Doctors *are* required to refer their patients to a 'resource' that will provide information, but 'resource' is defined as 'physicians, health care providers, counsellors and publicly available resources which can be accessed without a referral.' That's a pretty broad definition, and it suggests there will be

loopholes similar to those encountered by women seeking abortions – referrals to 'pro-life' organizations masquerading as counselling services.

There are other considerations. Refusals and referrals will cause unnecessary delays and frustration for patients. What about doctors who refuse to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for PAD so that they can deliberately claim that they are not competent to carry it out? What about physicians in religious communities who fear that their practice may be boycotted if they participate in PAD? What if they fear not just for their livelihood, but for their personal safety? Will physicians become the targets of radical opponents of PAD in the same way as abortion providers have been? What about patients in religious communities who cannot find anyone in their area to meet their request?

The Supreme Court decision on PAD clearly favors patient autonomy over provider values. This is because the patients who request assisted dying rarely have other options; very few have the money and personal resources to travel to Switzerland. The Supreme Court made it clear that all Canadians are entitled to choice in dying. Too much tolerance of conscientious objectors will result in patchy or severely restricted access to this service, and the people most adversely affected will be patients who are already suffering.



Almost a year has passed since the Supreme Court decision, and sadly, it appears that most of the major groups affected by it (health care facilities, professional regulatory bodies, and governments) have failed to adequately address its implications and formulate policies and procedures to accommodate assisted dying as part of the health care spectrum. Many groups seemed to be hoping that the issue would go away, that the government would stall, or the decision would be overturned. Others seem to be trying to see how little service they can legally offer. Let's hope that in the near future, all the interested and affected parties will get their act together and put a plan in place to provide this service to those requesting it. We know there are already people waiting.

- Sherry Lyn Marginet

Dying With Dignity Winnipeg Chapter

HAAM's EXECUTIVE

Officers:

President Donna Harris
Vice President Pat Morrow
Treasurer Henry Kreindler
Secretary Rick Dondo

Members at Large:

Tammy Blanchette
Todd De Ryck
Helen Friesen
Norm Goertzen
Tony Governo
Cheri Frazer
Sherry Lyn Marginet
Dorothy Stephens
Jim Taylor



Contact us at:

<http://mbhumanistsatheists.ca/contact-us/>

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
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*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

Special Offer for New Members!

If you are a **NEW** member joining for the **FIRST TIME**, and you join after September 1st, your membership fee will include membership for the 2016 calendar year.

DONATION (Tax receipts will be issued for 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, 181 St. Cross Street, Winnipeg, MB R2W 3Y4

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