



News & Things

January 2005

published for and by the
Humanist Association of Manitoba

Next meeting: Saturday, January 8, 2005, 5:00 pm

**Kelsey Room
Viscount Gort Hotel
1670 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg
(corner of Route 90 and Portage Avenue)**

All welcome (advance booking required)*

**Dinner cost: \$20.58 per person (incl. tax and tip)
*liquor extra***

5:00 – 6:00 pm: a time to meet-and-greet

6:00 – 7:00 pm: dinner

7:00 – 9:00 pm: after-dinner program

Creation or Evolution video

“The video *Creation or Evolution?* is an attempt to bridge the gap between science and religion. It contains an explanation of the belief in ‘intelligent design’. Some people of religious faith believe in ‘micro-evolution’ but not ‘macro-evolution’. This means they believe that within a species there may be signs of evolution, or improvement of the species over time. There is (according to them) no evidence of evolution from a simpler species to a new species. They cite the lack (again, according to them) of intermediate species or ‘missing links’. This idea is widely discredited by scientists. The video appears aimed at young students of high school age. It is produced by the Plain Truth Ministries. I believe as humanists we need to know about the beliefs of others so that we may counter them.” *By Catherine Ousey*

Dennis & Catherine Ousey
will introduce the video and lead in discussion

*** TO CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDANCE PHONE or EMAIL DENNIS OUSEY
phone (204) 254-3691, email dousey@mts.net**

The cost of the ‘chef’s choice’ dinner is the same for vegetarian/vegan meals. Contact: Kelly Houston-Sorokowski, catering sales manager, Viscount Gort – phone: 775-0451, ext. 726 or 1-800-665-1122.

HAC office to close

“After considerable deliberation and discussion and with great reluctance, the Board of the Humanist Association of Canada has agreed to and approved the closing down of the association’s office in Ottawa” said Miep van Raalte, Secretary, Humanist Association of Canada. The intention is for Board members to share the work load. First Vice-President Jeffrey Perkins said, “The Board has morphed itself from being primarily a Policy Board, where policies are made and someone else has to implement them, into an Administrative Board where Board members do the work.”

The association’s telephone numbers, postal and email addresses will remain the same, and will be forwarded to specific board members for their attention. The phone will be answered Mondays through Fridays during regular office hours (10:00 am – 7:00 pm Eastern Time). Members may contact Jeffrey Perkins at 403-247-6895 or email j.perkins@shaw.ca for more information.

Humanist Association of Manitoba blog

The Humanist Association of Manitoba (HAM) maintains a blog. First of all, blogs are public, internet-based journals, organized by time, that allow a person or several people to express their thoughts and opinions on a regular basis. If a blogger has read an article on the internet that others should read, the blogger can make a comment on the article and link directly to it. This allows the blogger and readers to have access to the same materials on the internet and enter into a discussion about them. The HAM blog is also an information site where interested people can see the times and dates of HAM's meetings. The HAM blog can be found by using this URL address:
<http://mbhumanists.blogspot.com>

HAM members donate to SERC

The Viscount Gort in Winnipeg was the site of the Winter Solstice party for members and

guests of HAM on December 18, 2005. This was the third consecutive year that Lori Johnson, Executive Director of Sexuality Education Resource Centre, was invited to the party to accept the donations of HAM members.

This year’s donations were \$335.00.

New website for HAM

Webmaster Stefan Bourrier has been hard at work for some months now creating a new website for HAM. Stefan contacted the Institute for Humanist Studies and arranged to host the website with them at no cost to HAM. Consequently, the old website has been shut down. This results in a saving of \$32 monthly for HAM.

The new website address is <http://mb.humanists.ca>. Please email Stefan at webmaster@mb.humanists.ca with questions and/or comments.

Request for Darwin Day

A request to proclaim Feb. 12, 2005 "Darwin Day" along with suggested wording, was sent to the Honorable Gary Doer, Premier of the province of Manitoba by Dennis Ousey on behalf of HAM. Dennis is a member-at-large on HAM’s executive.

WHEREAS, Charles Darwin was born on February 12, 1809; and
WHEREAS, from 1831-1836, he traveled in the southern hemisphere on the "HMS Beagle," officially as the captain's companion; and
WHEREAS, his observations in natural history and on the adaptations of animals to their environments eventually led him to formulate his theory of evolution; and
WHEREAS, he hypothesized that living things change over time, or evolve, in response to the selective pressures of their environment; and
WHEREAS, the concept of evolution remains the unifying theory of biology.
THEREFORE, I, Premier Gary Doer, Premier of the province of Manitoba, do hereby proclaim Feb. 12, 2005, as Darwin Day in the Province of Manitoba.

**How to contact the
Humanist Association of Manitoba**

Barrie Webster
President
(204) 475-1266
grbw1@shaw.ca

Catherine Ousey
Secretary
(204) 254-3691
cousey@mts.net

Newsletter contributions:
Helen Friesen
(204) 326-8181
heljohn@mts.net

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

June 23 – June 26, 2005 are the dates of the **HAC CONFERENCE!** The theme is **Humanism Now**. Place: Best Western Victoria Park Suites, Gladstone and O'Connor, Ottawa. The program is expected to include speakers, plenary presentations and workshops. Some highlights include:

- Registration/welcome reception, June 23, 7:00 pm.
- Annual general meeting, June 25, 9:00 am
- Banquet, June 25, 7:00 pm
- Free time/board meeting on Sunday morning, June 26.
- 2-day officiant training, June 22 – 23.

Visiting humanist

For some years now humanists and atheists across Canada and in the U.S. have held special meetings when a visitor is in town. On November 12 John and Helen Friesen of HAM had the pleasure of joining members of the Humanist Association of Ottawa at their frugal night, which had been rescheduled to coincide with their visit. On November 27 ten members of HAM held a special meeting with **Richard Young** of Ottawa while he was in Manitoba on a business trip. Richard suggested that we come up with a distinct name for these meetings. "When you come to Ottawa, we'll have a _____ for you." 😊 Perhaps we should have a contest on what to call these meetings. :)

TV Movie on Dr. Henry Morgentaler's life set to air in January 5, 2005 on CTV

The movie on Henry Morgentaler's life was filmed in November of 2002 in Montreal. Despite the fact that Dr. Morgentaler should be considered a hero to all Canadian women, incredibly an Ipsos-Reid/CTV poll reports that 73% of women aged 18 – 34 do not know who he is.

The movie begins in 1967 and tells not only of his fight to legalize abortion, but also follows his own personal struggles in life.

Henry Morgentaler became the first president of the Humanist Association of Canada in 1968.

Workshop in February

The regular HAM meeting in February will be a workshop designed to provide members and others interested in the association and humanism in general to express their interests and concerns and to provide guidance in planning and steering the association's future. It will be held on February 12, 2005 at the Viscount Gort beginning at 2:00 pm and finishing with dinner at 6:00 pm.

It is very important that all members attend this meeting to contribute their feelings and opinions on the activities of HAM. One subject of discussion will be our regular meeting venue. Some members have indicated that the cost of attending meetings is too high. We need input from everyone to make a decision on this and other issues.

Please confirm your attendance by calling or emailing Dennis at (204) 254-3691, email dousey@mts.net.

Letter on sharia law

Following is part of a letter by Elka Enola, a member of the Humanist Association of Toronto, submitted to the *Toronto Star* after that paper published a number of letters accusing all those objecting to the use of sharia law in Canada of being unfair and holding views contrary to multiculturalism. Ms Enola strongly opposes sharia law and frequently is in the forefront of those who object to taking advantage of the Ontario Arbitration Act as a means to use sharia law in that province.

“I am offended to be called a racist when what I propose is the essence of Canadian democracy: One law for all.

I object to any religious law being used in place of an existing law. If there is a current law in Canada or Ontario, then that law should apply to all residents. One law for all. No one should be allowed to supersede an existing law with a law of their choice.

What is being proposed by the Islamic Institute of Civil Justice is not what the Catholics and Jews are doing. The IICJ wishes to make sharia compulsory for all Muslims and wishes to apply sharia to all aspects of family law, including, for example, overriding legal wills. It also wishes to prevent any form of appeal of arbitrated decisions.

The Catholic religious tribunal only deals with religious annulments and never makes use of the Ontario Arbitration Act. Conservative Jews use the Jewish tribunal only to obtain a religious divorce. They do not use it to access the Arbitration Act. Reform Jews do not require a religious divorce and so do not use the Jewish tribunal at all. Orthodox Jews, who comprise a very small portion of the Jewish community, use the Jewish tribunal to access the Arbitration Act, but for family law, the laws of Ontario are the laws that are applied.

The writers have totally misunderstood the intent of the principle of multiculturalism. It never was the intent of multiculturalism to divide our society into ghettoized communities. Multiculturalism should be a way for us to share our cultures, to reach out to each other, not to justify isolating ourselves behind separate schools and separate systems of law.”

The Humanism Chorus

(To the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic") by Pat Duffy Hutcheon

We have left the cave forever with its phantoms
and its fears,
We are blazing out a footpath through the jungle
of the years,
We can feel the fog is lifting and the way before us
clears,
As the day of humanism dawns.

Chorus

We are on the road to reason,
We are on the road to reason,
We are on the road to reason,
As the day of humanism dawns.

We have left the gods behind us in the darkness of
the cave,
Mohammed, Rama, Zeus are buried; Christ no
longer 'saves'.
We have loosed our legs from shackles; we are no
more God-enslaved,
As the day of humanism dawns.

Repeat chorus

We've discarded harmful myths and other
supernatural blights,
All imaginary spirits with their mysteries and rites,
We now place our trust in evidence; in science we
delight,
As the day of humanism dawns.

Repeat chorus

We seek universal values in the range of hills
beyond,
We have shed our tribal ties to build more all-
inclusive bonds,
We who were born of nature must to nature's
needs respond,
As the day of humanism dawns.

Repeat chorus