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# Manitoba Humanist

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President: Barrie  
Webster

We're on the  
Web!

See us at:

[mb.humanists.ca](http://mb.humanists.ca)

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## Upcoming events

Humanist Association of Manitoba

### Summer Party Saturday, August 25, 2007

Location: Barrie and Phyllis Webster's home  
71 Wildwood Park – Section E

Starting at 3:00 p.m.  
Ending around 8:00 p.m.

This is a potluck event: bring salads and desserts

**See page 2 for more details...**

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Humanist Association of Manitoba

### Monthly Meeting Saturday, September 15, 2007

Viscount Gort Hotel 1670 Portage Ave. at Route 90

Meet and Greet 5:30  
Dinner (may be ordered from coffee shop menu) 6:30  
Meeting 7:30

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Asad Khan, "Muslims in the West"**

Another Interesting Meeting!  
**Everyone is welcome**

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## Summer Party Details

**Directions:**

Wildwood Park is located on the east side of Pembina Highway, south of the Jubilee underpass.

From Pembina, take Point Road east to Oakenwald. Turn left (north) on Oakenwald. Wildwood Park E. is on the right hand side.

**Details:**

Our hosts will be providing barbecued chicken breasts for the main course. Please bring salads or desserts and a

beverage of your choice. Please also bring lawnchairs.

If you are vegetarian, please advise Barrie so that arrangements can be made for a vegetarian main course for you.

**Contact Info:**

The Websters' phone number is 475-1266 in case you have any questions, or if you get lost on the way.

See you there!

## How I Spent My Summer Vacation

After reading yet another issue of the Faith page in the Winnipeg Free Press – where I read about a program for Muslim youth that involved a whopping 14 students – I felt I had to say something.

My letter to the editor of the Faith Page was direct and impassioned, basically pointing out that since somewhere around 19 per cent of the population is somehow non-religious, a large number of individuals who cannot relate to Faith are excluded.

I was hoping that the FP would have a reporter write a story on humanism or atheism. I was certainly NOT expecting the editor to reply, saying “well, you sound like a good writer, why don't you submit something?”

I nearly fell off my chair.

Once I recovered, I decided to take on the challenge.

Generally, I avoid confrontation. Especially in regards to religion, I've always been one to just nod and smile politely.

I started writing, but it took me weeks and weeks. It was difficult because the topic

was so important to me. My goal was to present humanism in a positive light, while not alienating religious believers (and, hopefully, sneaking in a reference to HAM).

Finally, the article was finished.

I emailed my 800 words, half expecting it to be deleted, unread, after languishing in some Inbox for a couple of months.

I really didn't expect to see it printed the very next Sunday morning. As I flipped pages, I came across the “Life Without Faith” headline, saw my name, and immediately dropped the paper.

I believe all the color drained out of my face, and I distinctly remember experiencing a definite “out of body” moment.

I couldn't look at it. I had to have my spouse look over the page to confirm that they'd printed the article.

The response was swift. Members of HAM emailed their approval and appreciation; individuals wrote to the Free Press – both in support and to declare that I was an idiot

who didn't understand faith. More importantly, several individuals expressed interest in our organization. The most touching message I received was from a woman who said that my article gave her a sense of peace. In her words: “You expressed exactly how I have been feeling all these years. Thank you so much”.

I even got a phone call from a family friend who recognized me from the article. At first, I thought she would disapprove, but to my surprise, she was completely supportive and proud.

Those were indeed heady days for this life-long atheist. It's now a couple of months later, and the furor has died down. However, I hope that the momentum will not be lost.

Through the efforts of HAM members, our group has been invited to contribute commentaries to the new “Faith” website started by the FP (at [www.wfpfaith.com](http://www.wfpfaith.com)). So, going forward, we will have additional opportunities to express our opinions, and have our voices heard.