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Web!

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Upcoming events

Humanist Association of Manitoba

Monthly Meeting Saturday, September 15, 2007

Viscount Gort Hotel 1670 Portage Ave. at Route 90

Meet and Greet 5:30 p.m.

Dinner (may be ordered from coffee shop menu) 6:00 p.m.

Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Discussion Topic: "Muslims in the West"

Guest Speaker: Dr. Asad Khan

Dr. Khan is the president
of the Islamic Education Foundation of Manitoba

Everyone is welcome

Next Monthly Meeting October 13, 2007

Viscount Gort Hotel 1670 Portage Ave. at Route 90

Guest Speaker: Prof. Arthur Schafer

Director, The Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics,
University of Manitoba

HAC Annual General Meeting

The Humanist Association of Canada (HAC) will be holding its Annual General Meeting and banquet on **Saturday, October 6th, 2007**, at the Ramada Inn & Suites, Milton, Ontario.

As part of this general meeting, HAC will be determining its' governance model and direction.

At the awards ceremony and banquet following the meeting, June Callwood will receive the Humanist of the Year award.

June Callwood was a celebrated journalist, philanthropist and social activist, as well as a long-time humanist. She passed away earlier this year, so the directors from Casey House will accept the award on June's behalf.

Casey House was the first of over 50 humanitarian organizations that June founded and is also her most recognized. Casey House is a world-renowned hospice for people with HIV/AIDS.

The Humanist Association of Canada will be donating \$5000 to Casey House in support of their admirable efforts at this much-needed hospice - the first of its kind in the world.

If you are interested in attending this AGM, you can find more information at their web site, www.humanists.ca. The deadline for pre-registrations and payments is September 22, 2007.

Membership News

HAM Executive Meeting: The HAM Executive Committee recently had a lively and productive meeting.

Many new ideas were generated, among them a discussion regarding other options for regular HAM activities. Some possibilities that were mentioned included:

- Sunday lunches/brunches
- Bowling evenings
- Book club
- Bike rides or group walks
- Movie Nights
- Pasta Supper (in honor of the Flying Spaghetti Monster)

Do you have any other

ideas for consideration?

We encourage all members to submit their ideas for other activities or events that they would enjoy participating in. Your Executive Committee would love to hear from you.

HAM Goes Global (so to speak): It just so happened that on the same evening that the HAM executive were holding their meeting, one of our newest members was in town.

A meeting was arranged, and we were introduced to Kerem Usenmez, who has a good reason for not promising to attend every meeting – he lives in Thompson!

Kerem is a geological engineer who originally hails from Turkey. He and his wife moved to northern Manitoba just last year.

He was very happy to find us, as he'd been looking for a group like ours for some time, but was disappointed that there was none in Thompson.

We were all pleased to meet Kerem, and learn a little more about his background and his life in Turkey. We certainly hope that he and his wife will be able to attend at least an occasional meeting in the future.

Welcome to HAM!

New Webmaster Found

If you visited the HAM website over the summer, you may have noticed that not much had been updated. That's because our previous webmaster – Stefan Bourrier – headed West early this summer. Stefan is now in Victoria, BC, preparing to launch a new phase of his life as a full-time student.

We miss Stefan already, and we wish him all the best on the West Coast.

In his place, Grant Rogerson has been asked to take over the webmaster duties for HAM. Grant has just completed the Internet Systems Specialist Diploma course at the University of Winnipeg's Division of Continuing Education, so he's well equipped to take on the challenge.

In the near future, you should notice some

positive changes and additions to the site, so don't forget to stop by and check it out.



Grant Rogerson, our new webmaster, hard at work

Call for Volunteers

HAM's Outreach committee has worked hard to connect with the community at large, and to spread the word about our existence.

Several times a year, HAM volunteers man tables at various events and venues, such as the universities and colleges.

The Outreach Committee is inviting your assistance.

They could always use an extra person or two to engage passers-by, and answer any questions they might have about humanism.

If you can spare just a few hours, especially during weekdays, please consider volunteering at one or more of these events.

For more information, you

can contact:

Heather McConnell
email: the_vet_girl
(at)hotmail dot com
or

Sophie Shulman
email: sbshulman(at)shaw
dot ca
phone: 489-8622

“Our loyalties are to the species and the planet. We speak for Earth. Our obligation to survive is owed not just to ourselves but also to that Cosmos, ancient and vast, from which we spring.”

- Carl Sagan

Book Corner – New Additions to the HAM Library

The following books have been added to the HAM library:

- **Parenting Beyond Belief: On Raising Ethical, Caring Kids without Religion**, by Dale McGowan
- **Letter to A Christian Nation**, by Sam Harris

- **The Quotable Atheist** – Ammunition for Nonbelievers, Political Junkies, Gadflies, and Those Generally Hell-Bound, by Jack Huberman
- **In Defense of Atheism**, by Michel Onfray
- **God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything**, by Christopher Hitchens.

These books will be available for members to borrow at the September meeting. Or, you can always contact the Librarian directly to make arrangements.

Book Review

The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East

Reviewed by Sophie Shulman

'**The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East**' by [Sandy Tolan](#) Publisher: St Martins Press, 2006

A CREDIBLE THOUGHT-PROVOKING BOOK, WORTH YOUR TIME

A group of friends discussed this book and these are our conclusions.

The book is a good example of well-researched, well written and well meaning – sometimes eye-opening – intelligent journalism.

Mr. Tolan made a special effort to sound 'evenhanded' in his reflections on the recent history of Jews versus Arabs in the Middle East. He completely achieved it in describing the lay people. All his characters – the Arabs and the Jews – appear equally believable and comprehensible. It is easy to follow their motives and thoughts, to feel 'in their shoes', even for the Arabic terrorist (and the main character Bashir) who allegedly blows up a supermarket. They all appear very much human, all attract sympathy and understanding, and there is no trace of demonizing either side. This is undoubtedly the author's big success.

There is, however, a glaring omission elsewhere, where Mr. Tolan's evenhandedness fails him. It is the way he depicts the governments of the countries involved in the conflict. The numerous and very real blunders of the

Israeli government are fully exposed and documented (events such as expulsions of the Arabic villagers from their houses and taking of the land, etc). Unfortunately, practically nothing is said about the governments of the Arabic countries – the neighbors who jammed the Palestinians in the refugee camps, depriving them of a future, of hope, of home for the generations to come. In doing so, creating masses of pauperized people: desperate, unskilled, deprived of dignity and, therefore, valuing nothing. They are ready to do anything, eager to blow up schools, markets and themselves.

And it is at the very time when the small Jewish State with no oil wealth has been taking in hundreds of thousands of refugees, all made welcome, all given some home, some jobs, hope...Not a word about it. Not a word about the rampant anti-Semitic propaganda, satanizing Israel and Jews, sweeping the Arabic countries, escalating daily. The author is mute regarding any analysis of the Six-Day war. Why did the war of 1967 happen in the first place? Was it not because the Arabic neighbors had refused (and still do!) to recognize the right of Israel to exist? In other words, was it not for the concept 'land for peace', as a frantic Israel's response to become legitimized? Unfortunately, the radical theocratic and autocratic regimes that hid behind and ruthlessly used the conflict

for their own interests, failed to attract the author's attention.

Mr. Tolan witnessed in his book that political prisoners (like Bashir), while in an Israeli prison, play chess, read classics, and listen to Chopin(!). Again, not a word about the incomparably inhuman conditions in the political prisons in the Arabic countries.

There is an attempt at symbolism in the book: the house built by and taken away from the Khairi family, and which is later given to the Eshkenazi family, is a symbol of the land, and ends up as an open house for both Arabic and Jewish children. And a lemon tree planted by the Khairi, that grew, gave fruits, then died in its turn, is followed by a young sapling of a new lemon tree which was planted in the same spot. This time the tree was planted by Dalia Eshkenazi, and is a symbol of the changing roots with the change of time. The tree is a fine example of poetical and affirmative symbolism. Despite all the regretful omissions that weaken the value and reduce the evenhandedness of Mr. Tolan's account, what is said in the book is presented as a well done narrative. It is thought-provoking and informative, and very much worth reading.

"I devoutly believe that Man's inhumanity to man will continue as long as man loves God more than he loves his fellow man."

- Joseph Lewis,
from **An Atheist Manifesto**