

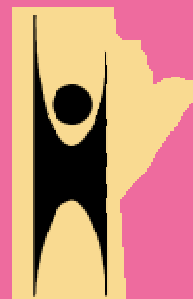
Manitoba Humanist



*Marilou McPhedran,
Principal of Global
College*

Published by and for the
Humanist Association of
Manitoba

*“We are beyond
belief”*



www.mb.humanists.ca

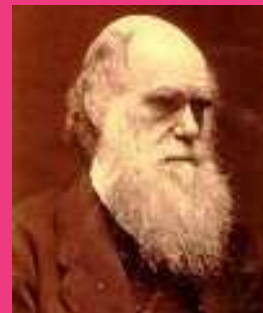
We Focus on Human Rights for February

*Topic: “When Rites Are
Wrong”*

The Humanist Association of Manitoba is pleased to have **Marilou McPhedran** as our speaker at our February meeting.

Marilou McPhedran was appointed principal of Global College in June 2007, having resigned as the Chief Commissioner of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to return to the University of Winnipeg. Born and raised in Neepawa, Manitoba, called to the Bar of Ontario, Marilou was made a Member of the Order of Canada in 1985 in recognition of her co-leadership in the successful campaign for

stronger equality protections in the Canadian constitution. She co-founded several internationally recognized non-profit systemic change organizations, such as LEAF – the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund, which has conducted constitutional equality test cases and interventions for 24 years; METRAC – the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children; and the “always open” Gerstein Crisis Centre for homeless discharged psychiatric patients. She is a pioneer in research and advocacy to counter human rights violations through systemic reform – in law, medicine, education, (*Cont’d*)



*Happy Birthday
Charles Darwin!
February 12th*

government. She founded the International Women's Rights Project, located at the University of Victoria Centre for Global Studies – based on two of her intergenerational models: “evidence based advocacy” and “lived rights”.

As chief executive officer of a federal center of excellence, she directed staff and programs including a cyber research network; she has chaired two public inquiries into the sexual abuse of patients; and she has co-investigated and co-authored social justice research, including: the ten country pilot study to assess impact of the UN *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW).

As principal of Global College, which has just launched its new degree program in Human Rights and Global Studies, Marilou manages the Global Citizenship Program with high school affiliates, lectures and conducts research on international human rights, guides students in experiential learning and is leading a campaign to build the Global Learning Commons.

See page five for February meeting details.

HAM'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On January 9, 2010, the Humanist Association of Manitoba held its Annual General Meeting at the Club Regent Casino Hotel. The meeting opened with a “Cec Muldrew moment” in honor of past members Cec Muldrew and Dennis Ousey.

Reports from various members of the executive were delivered, including Membership, Financial and Website. The Library and Newsletter reports were deferred until March 2010. Overall, the organization had another good year. While expenses were greater this past year, the organization continues to grow in terms of memberships.

Individual donations were also still a bit smaller than in the past. HAM now encourages members to make an occasional donation to cover expenses, rather than passing the hat at every meeting. Just a reminder, that members also now receive a charitable tax receipt for their donations.

While the President & Vice President positions were not up for election this year, as they are two year terms, other positions on the Executive were voted upon.

The result of the election of executives is as follows:

President: Jeff Olsson
Vice President: Neil Schipper
Treasurer: Helen Friesen
Secretary: Heather McDonell

Members at Large with Specific Portfolios:

Webmaster: Grant Rogerson
Newsletter & Library: Donna Harris
Outreach: Sophie Shulman

Members at Large:

Alain Beaudry
Myrna Donald
Barry Hammond
Jake Peters
Scott Shabaga
Barrie Webster

PZ MYERS V.S. THE CREATIONISTS



Our January meeting was awesome because PZ rocked the house! I still cannot believe that well over 200 people voluntarily ventured out in the cold to spend their Saturday night at a lecture... by a Biology Professor!

But we all know PZ isn't your average Professor of Biology. His topic was “The War Between Science and Religion”, and his talk covered

much of the head-shaking, outrageous behavior by many individuals who believe that the Earth is only 6,000 years old. Or, by another name, YECs, Young Earth Creationists.

We'd like to believe that Canadians are more accepting of the theory of evolution – but that may not be the case. According to a Canadian Press – Decima Research poll from 2007, 26 per cent of Canadians believe “that God created human beings pretty much in their present form within the last 10,000 years or so.” Wow.

It was our great fortune that Scott Carnegie of MediaCircus.TV volunteered to videotape PZ's talk for us. So if you weren't able to make it out on January 9th, or if you'd just like to re-live the evening over and over, please check out our website at www.mb.humanists.ca. The DVD order form is there. Simply print it out and forward it to us with your payment.

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM PRUITT



I never knew William Pruitt. I had only seen his name on the HAM membership list. But I was informed at the January meeting that he had passed away on December 7th, at the age of 87.

From what I've been reading, he was quite an interesting man. I'm especially disappointed that I never got to meet him. He was a professor and a man of science, and, more importantly, a man of principles and an environmentalist, before that term was even coined.

His family kindly published a vivid and inclusive portrait of his life as part of his obituary. I've used their words to share one small story from

his career and life with you, that shows the depth of his character as he stood up to the U.S. government:

Near the beginning of his career, he was hired as a field biologist at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. In the late 1950s, the United States Atomic Energy Commission initiated a plan, codenamed Project Chariot, to detonate up to six nuclear explosions along the northwest coast of Alaska to create a new deep water harbour for future mineral extraction. Dr. Pruitt, along with botanist Dr. Leslie Viereck and geographer Dr. Don Foote, all specialists in their respective fields, were tapped for their expertise for the project. However, their research quickly revealed that “unprecedented and irreversible damage” would result from such nuclear explosions. Here Dr. Pruitt was to display the fearlessness that lay under the surface of his gentle demeanor. Despite an overwhelming pressure to rubberstamp the flawed scheme, he and his two colleagues stood up to the university and the government of Alaska and the US.

“The whole situation climaxed in February 1962 when my final report was censored by the head of the biology department at the University of Alaska,” Dr. Pruitt said in a paper he wrote about the topic several years ago. “A number of scientific conclusions were modified severely or completely eliminated. Moreover, those of us in the biology faculty who had publicly protested the false statements had our contracts “not renewed’.” In his book, The Firecracker Boys (St. Martin's Press), author and oral historian Dr. Dan O'Neill writes that Project Chariot was “stopped by the first successful protest against the American nuclear establishment, started by the Eskimos at Point Hope, University of Alaska biologists, and an old bush pilot or two” and finally reaching the Senate and White House. “The networking done by the Chariot protestors laid the foundations for the environmental movement of the 1960s and 70s,” he observes. Three decades later, on May 7, 1993, Dr. Pruitt and Dr. Viereck were personally honoured with special citations by the Alaska State Legislature for their – as Dr. Viereck put it – “allegiance to truth and personal integrity.”

“Gentlemen, you were right, and we, the people of Alaska, owe you a debt of gratitude for

holding strong to your principles. The members of the Eighteenth Alaska State Legislature humbly thank you,” says the citation.

Even though his stand lost him his job at the University of Alaska, Dr. Pruitt went on to spend many years here at the University of Manitoba, where he made many valuable contributions to our community.

DONATIONS TO HAITI

The earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12th has caused massive devastation for the inhabitants of that poor island.

The tragedy has also led to an outpouring of support from all over the world. There are many worthwhile agencies who are accepting donations for Haiti relief. One of the newer ones has been set up by the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science.

Non-Believers Giving Aid (<http://givingaid.richarddawkins.net/>) is an attempt to quell the myth that atheists aren't charitable as believers, but it also makes sure that 100% of your donation is given to the secular charities they are supporting (International Red Cross & Doctors Without Borders). Richard Dawkins will personally cover any fees associated with making a donation, so you know that your full contribution will go straight to the people who need it most.

If you'd prefer donating to a more established organization, here are some charities that need your donations:

Doctors Without Borders
(www.doctorswithoutborders.org)

Oxfam (www.oxfamamerica.org)

Yele Haiti (www.yele.org)

The Red Cross – Canada (www.redcross.ca)

The **Charity Navigator** (www.charitynavigator.org) has tips for deciding who to give your money to, and efficiency ratings for charities. Make sure you read this!!

And lastly, the **Foundation Beyond Belief** (www.foundationbeyondbelief.org) tells you which charities to avoid (ones that focus more on proselytizing than on helping), and which ones are more secular.

Thanks to Lindsay from Struck by Enlightening! (struckbyenlightning.wordpress.com)

WE WIN, WE WIN – WE HAVE (BARELY) HIGHER IQs

The CBC recently ran another live “Test The Nation” event, measuring IQ from viewers across the country, and specifically with six in-studio teams. The teams this time included Twins, Politicians, Contact Sport Athletes, Nerds and, most interestingly, Believers and Atheists.

I'm quietly gleeful to report that the Atheists beat the Believers, even though the Atheists' team didn't win the event. There really wasn't a large difference, though, with the average IQ for the Believers at 108, and 111 for the Atheists.

Here are the results from the viewers across Canada:

Religious Choice	Total Respondents	Average Score (out of 50)	Average IQ
Religious	6182	31.21	111.48
Agnostic	3955	33.4	115.37
Atheist	3584	33.41	114.26
Other	4544	30.62	109.87

The winning in-studio team? The Nerds!



THE 'DEVIL' WRITES PAT ROBERTSON A LETTER

By Frank James of NPR's news blog:

The Minneapolis Star-Tribune published a letter from Satan to evangelist Pat Robertson, responding to his comment that Haiti's persistent troubles, including the earthquake, are due to a pact the nation made with Mephistopheles.

Actually, it wasn't Satan who wrote the letter but Lilly Coyle of Minneapolis writing in the persona of the hellish one. I think she got it down pretty well. What say you?

*Dear Pat Robertson,
I know that you know that all press is good press, so I appreciate the shout-out. And you make God look like a big mean bully who kicks people when they are down, so I'm all over that action.*

But when you say that Haiti has made a pact with me, it is totally humiliating. I may be evil incarnate, but I'm no welcher. The way you put it, making a deal with me leaves folks desperate and impoverished.

Sure, in the afterlife, but when I strike bargains with people, they first get something here on earth -- glamour, beauty, talent, wealth, fame, glory, a golden fiddle. Those Haitians have nothing, and I mean nothing. And that was before the earthquake. Haven't you seen "Crossroads"? Or "Damn Yankees"?

If I had a thing going with Haiti, there'd be lots of banks, skyscrapers, SUVs, exclusive night clubs, Botox -- that kind of thing. An 80 percent poverty rate is so not my style. Nothing against it -- I'm just saying: Not how I roll.

You're doing great work, Pat, and I don't want to clip your wings -- just, come on, you're making me look bad. And not the good kind of bad. Keep blaming God. That's working. But leave me out of it, please. Or we may need to renegotiate your own contract.

Best, Satan
LILY COYLE, MINNEAPOLIS

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 12, 2010

Darwin Day &
Sexual & Reproductive Health Awareness Day

February 13, 2010

Monthly Meeting
Location: Park West Inn, 525 Dale Boulevard,
Charleswood

Time: Meet and Greet: 5:30 p.m.
Speaker: 6:15 p.m.
Dinner: 7:15 p.m.
(ordered from the Dining Room menu)

Speaker: **Marilou McPhedron**, Principal,
Global College

Topic: **"When Rites Are Wrong"**

February 20, 2010

Bullshit Party @ The Olssons
77 Edmonton Street, 7:00 pm

March 13, 2010

Monthly Meeting
Location: TBA
Speaker: Leanne Boyd
Topic: The Roots of Empathy project

April 10, 2010

Monthly Meeting
Location: TBA
Speaker/Topic: TBA

Executive:

Jeff Olsson, President
Neil Schipper, Vice President
Helen Friesen, Treasurer
Heather McDonell, Secretary

Members at Large:

Alain Beaudry
Myrna Donald
Barry Hammond
Donna Harris
Jake Peters
Grant Rogerson
Scott Shabaga
Sophie Shulman
Barrie Webster

Newsletter Editor:
Donna L. Harris
ham_librarian@yahoo.ca

We're on the Web!

See us at:

mb.humanists.ca



Yes, I would like to BECOME A MEMBER of the Humanist Association of Manitoba

New Member Renewal

Membership Category:

- Individual Membership \$25.00
- Individual Limited Income \$10.00
- Household Membership* \$45.00
- Household Limited Income \$15.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone#: _____ Cell #: _____

Email address: _____

*Household Memberships: Please give the names of all additional Humanists in your household 18 years or over:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

DONATION (Tax receipts issued for all donations of \$10 or more)

I would like to make a donation to HAM of:

- \$10 \$20 \$30 \$50 \$100
- Other: _____

PAYMENT: Cheque Money Order
 Visa Mastercard Amex

Please complete the following if paying by credit card:

Account No. _____

Expiry Date: ____/____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

Please make cheque or money order payable to:
Humanist Association of Manitoba and mail to:
*Humanist Association of Manitoba, 7 Pinehurst Lane,
Mitchell, MB, R5G 2J3.*

Or bring your form and the fees to any HAM meeting and give it to Helen Friesen, or any member of the executive.