

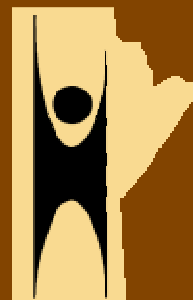
Manitoba Humanist



Changing
Fall colours

Published by and for the
Humanist Association of
Manitoba

*“We are beyond
belief”*



www.mb.humanists.ca

WE'RE ROASTING SOME FOOD MYTHS!

Have you been getting overwhelmed when grocery shopping? Do you dare buy anything that doesn't have probiotics, prebiotics, antioxidants or some other sort of added vitamin, mineral or nutrient?

When you investigate, have you ever found that the recommended daily allowance of some nutrient is actually 20 times more than what's actually in the food?, leaving you wondering what was the point?

Wonder no more! We'll find out the truth from an expert, our September speaker.

The idea of a “super food”, a cure-all miracle food, or an amazing-revolutionize-your-life diet have been around for a very long time. With the

advent of digital media and instant access to information, these types of products have grown in number and popularity and they are more widely available than ever.

Many countries like Canada are facing ever-rising rates of chronic diseases, so it is a very compelling notion that a simple addition of a food or behaviour to one's life could save one from years of complications. But is this really the case?

Laura Creek Newman (pictured right) is a Registered Dietician who will be talking about some basic principles behind the science of nutrition and discussing if and how some of these most popular claims and products can affect one's health and well being. *(Cont'd....)*



Laura Creek Newman, our
September speaker

Join us at the Canad Inn Polo Park on September 10th for some straight talk about super foods and other food myths.

The meeting is free and open to the public. All of the details are on page 5.

LAST CHANCE FOR RAFFLE TICKETS!

At our September meeting we'll be holding our "Get Real" raffle, so come early to buy your tickets.

For only \$2, you could win:

- \$150 in gift certificates to McNally Robinson
- a Kobo e-reader,
- an Xbox360 with Kinect

Plus, you'll be supporting HAM and defraying the cost of our Red River Ex booth.



Win a Kobo E-Reader!



Or all of these books!

MASH FILM FEST A SMASH!!

The MASH Film Festival put on a great show!

The organizers started the evening a great short clip: a variety of shout outs to Winnipeg from several special attendees at the recent Amazing Meeting (held by the James Randi Educational Foundation in Las Vegas). We were saluted by well-known skeptics such as Phil Plait, Steve Novella, Rebecca Watson, Brian Dunning, Michael Shermer and the man himself, James Randi.

The evening just got better from there. We enjoyed a few laughs courtesy of Sarah Silverman, Steve Martin and Tim Minchin, more thoughtful moments from Jeremy Rifkin and Sam Harris, and of course, our own Jeff Olsson and Myrna Donald as hosts, "cooking" up all of these tasty treats.

One of the highlights, though, was the debut of "the Non Believers Beliefs", a series of interviews created by Scott Carnegie and Gem Newman.

Here are just a few of the clips:

- Thinking Atheist - Nothing more to talk about Mr. Deity – The Evil
- Jeremy Rifkin – The Empathic Civilization
- Ed Currant – What if God Disappeared
- Richard Dawkins (below) – Reads His Hate Mail

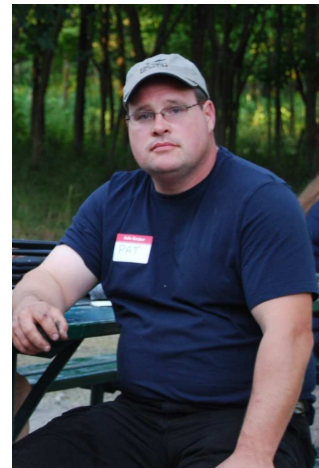


The "Non Believers Beliefs" is already up on the HAM website. If you weren't able to be there in person, a list of the full festival content, plus links where possible, will be up shortly.

Many thanks to the organizers for a super job. Can't wait until next year's Fest!

OUR SUMMER PARTY WAS DIVINE

Well, my prayers to those 317 separate deities must have worked – because we had an absolutely gorgeous day for our summer party.



Grill master Pat Morrow

Picnic site #3 at Assiniboine Park was hopping with over 30 attendees, many of them new faces! The group enjoyed lots of good conversation, the lovely weather, visits from the local inhabitants (squirrels, rabbits and deer!), and, of course, much tasty summertime food.

Thanks go out to everyone who contributed something, and special thanks to Pat Morrow, who “volunteered” for the job of grill master.



For those new people, we sincerely hope we'll be seeing you again soon at our Fall series of meetings.

YOU'RE A WHAT?

I have been an “out” atheist for some years now and I always get a kick out of the reaction of some people when they first figure that fact out. I think it's the faces. I've received the raised eyebrow, the two raised eyebrows and of course the deer in the headlights look.

This has usually been followed by one of three questions: "You're a what"? "So you believe in nothing"? or "What do you believe in then?"

Let me tell you, my non-belief does make for an interesting family dynamic. I have a brother-in-law who is a retired arch deacon in the Anglican Church. My wife's sister's family are born again Christians and my nephew has finished his studies at Providence Collage .Yes, he now has all the credentials to be the pastoral leader of a church and still can't come up with a coherent definition of heaven, hell or god, for that matter.

We have had our disagreements on many points religious. I will say to preserve the family harmony, we agree to disagree. This is not to say I won't defend my position from the inane, illogical and the downright silliness of dogmatic belief. I've done this so many times, in some respects my answers have become routine. In all honesty I don't think there has been a new argument for the existence of god in five hundred years.

Some time ago at a family gathering my mother-in-law asked me what the red A meant on my t-shirt. I explained that it stood for atheist. She exclaimed, "You're a What?" (double raised eyebrows included), "you're not an atheist, you're just a non-believer".

My mother-in-law's anglican beliefs aside, I have concluded that some people are just uncomfortable with the word atheist. Even my brother, a lifelong atheist, isn't a fan of the atheist label. As he put it "it's just so negative". He would be right. How often do you describe someone by what they don't believe, or as Sam Harris said "you meet philatelists every day, in fact most people are philatelists, we just don't call them that. (Philately is the collection and study of stamps. An philatelist would be someone who doesn't study or collect stamps). However, defining someone by what he or she is not seems to work for atheism. For hundreds of years, various religions have taught that atheists were bad, evil or in league with the devil. The bible has a few lines for atheists like myself; such as psalm (14:1):

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good."

I've had this passage quoted at me many times, almost always by religious fundamentalists. I don't know why they use it, every part of that verse is demonstrably false!

Then there are the so called rational arguments, such as "Stalin and Mao were atheists – look what that got us". Therefore atheism is bad.

I'm not corrupt, bad or evil. Atheism can make some people uncomfortable, I understand that. What I don't understand is why. Is it fear for my immortal soul they think I have? Maybe it's the fear that atheists may have come to the right conclusion? Or could it be that they take offence when someone says they don't believe that their lifelong cherished religious beliefs are true?

For those wrestling with the question Does god exist, they may find the question unsettling.

They may think atheism is really empty, after all it's just the non-belief in gods....or is it?

I look at it this way. If you want to talk about what I don't believe, then I'm an atheist. If you want to talk about what I do believe in, I'm a humanist.

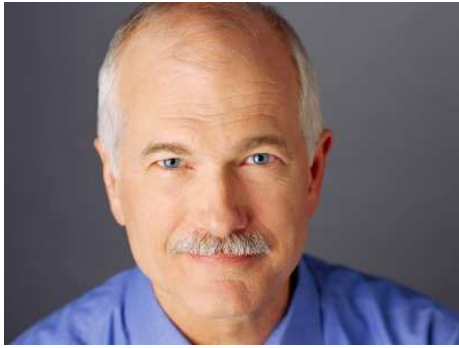
I leave you with the words of Lemuel K. Washburn, written over a hundred years ago from his book *Is The Bible Worth Reading* (1911).

What is called atheism is not a light, flippant assertion, but a calm, thoughtful conclusion. It is a conviction which human experience and human reflection have generated. Atheism is not the irresponsible opinion of moral debauchery; it is the outcome of an intelligent consideration of nature and life. The atheist has been honest with himself and with the world. He has made a careful survey of the universe, as far as he is able, and has canvassed the facts of life which have come within the range of his observation, and he has candidly declared the result of his study and freely related the reasons for his conclusions.

Atheism is the universe as science finds it and as interpreted by human understanding. It is an attempt to state the simple truth, to give a fair likeness of things, to photograph facts. Atheism is denial of nothing true, of nothing good, of nothing that can be proved. We see no good reason for abusing the atheist. His opinions don't make him a bad citizen or a bad man. He is as moral as his Christian neighbor, and is as ready to help a fellow-being.

In countries where atheism is a crime, hypocrisy is more honored than integrity.

- Pat Morrow



INSPIRING WORDS FROM JACK LAYTON

I just considered the ending of Jack Layton's last open letter to all Canadians so moving that it deserves repeating. – DH

My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world.

INSPIRING WORDS – PART TWO

An old Cherokee told his grandson, "My son, there is a battle between two wolves inside us all.

One is Evil. It is anger, jealousy, greed, resentment, inferiority, lies, & ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, humility, kindness, empathy, & truth."

The boy thought about it, and asked, "Grandfather, which wolf wins?"

The old man quietly replied, "The one you feed."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, September 10, 2011

Regular Meeting

Location: Canad Inn Polo Park, 1405 St. Matthews Avenue

Time: Meet & Greet 5:00 pm, meeting 5:30 pm

Speaker/Topic: **Laura Creek Newman**, Registered Dietician, on food myths and fallacies

Cost: Free. But individuals pay for their own food & drink

Saturday, September 17, 2011

The Winnipeg Skeptics' Skepticamp

Location: Aqua Books, 274 Garry Street

Time: 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

Speaker/Topic: Winnipeg's annual open conference celebrating science and skepticism

Website: tinyurl.com/SkeptiCampWinnipeg

Friday, September 23, 2011 through

Sunday, September 25, 2011

Red River Freethinkers Convention

Location: Ramada Suites, Fargo, North Dakota

Speakers/Topics: Michael Shermer, PZ Myers, Richard Carrier, Richard Haynes and Robert M. Price

Website: www.project42convention.org

Saturday, October 8, 2011

Regular Meeting

Location: Canad Inn Polo Park

Speaker/Topic: Agape Table

Saturday, November 12, 2011

Regular Meeting

Location: Canad Inn Polo Park

Speaker/Topic: TBA

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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

* After July 1st, just pay ½ the yearly fee for the rest of the year. After October 31st, pay full fee and get the entire next year.

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

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I would like to make a donation to HAM of:

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Please make cheque or money order payable to:
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*Humanist Association of Manitoba, 7 Pinehurst Lane,
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Or bring your form and the fees to any HAM meeting and give it to Helen Friesen, or any member of the executive.