



# HUMANISTS OF MINNESOTA HUMANIST NEWS & VIEWS

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September 2015

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 President's Column
- 3 New Location for Chapter Meeting!
- 4 Announcements  
Discussion Groups  
Cable Program
- 5 Historian's Column
- 6 Book Review
- 7 Happy Hour!

**Saturday  
September 19th, 2015**

## **Monthly Chapter Meeting**

**First Unitarian Society  
900 Mt. Curve Drive  
Minneapolis**

**Doors open at 10:00 a.m.  
Program 10:20 a.m.-noon**

## **HUMANISM:**

*A better life for all through  
education, democracy, free  
speech, reason, and science,  
without reliance on arbitrary  
dogmas, revelations, and  
faith.*

## ***Humanists of Minnesota Chapter Meeting***

***“Mental Illness; Make it O.K.”  
with Sue Abderholden, Executive Director, NAMI***

***Saturday, September 19th, 2015***

Do you think we've all outgrown our susceptibility to mental illness? Guess again. People of all ages have diagnoses of mental illness. In fact, one in four people will be diagnosed with mental illness during their lifetime. That means that nearly all of us have either had a mental illness, or know somebody who has. These include several types of depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, schizo-affective disorder, anxiety disorder, borderline personality, obsessive-compulsive disorder, eating disorders, and more.

Our inaugural guest speaker of the program year is Sue Abderholden, Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota (NAMI), the go-to person on mental illness issues in our state. Please join us for another engaging year of rational, social and ethical inquiry as our monthly chapter meetings resume on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at our new location at First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis (see details on page 3). As is customary, our meeting will be followed by a catered buffet lunch at noon (\$10/person).

Some of our own Humanist friends have family members who struggle very hard with these mental illnesses or have health challenges of their own. Perhaps you'll hear from them also at our September chapter meeting, because we're determined to "Make It O.K." to talk about, to have, and to get treatment for mental illness. In other words, let's stuff the stigma and be real.

MakeltOK.org is a statewide media program to fight the stigma attached to these diseases. It is a collaboration between Regions Hospital, NAMI, and other community organizations. Twin Cities Public Television has recently shown a series of programs on MakeltOK. Go to their website and watch some of them featuring people who experience these brain diseases: <http://video.tpt.org/search/?q=Make+it+ok>. So, why shouldn't it be O.K.? If nobody has done anything wrong, having to carry that burden of shame makes it so much harder for mentally ill people. Sue will help uncover some of our unconscious biases, help us clean up our language, and teach us how to talk easily with someone who is ill.

Don't miss this stimulating and helpful program.

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Chapter meeting location: For detailed instructions on how to get to the First Unitarian Society, Minneapolis, go to page 3.**

## PRESIDENT'S

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The “nones” are still rising. Most of us, I suspect, are now aware of the 2014 General Social Survey indicating that 21 percent of the general population is unaffiliated with any religious tradition. While only 8 percent within this cohort actually identify as atheists (3%) or agnostics (5%), these small but steady increases from the highly publicized 2012 Pew research findings reveal the continuing growing trend toward the secularization of our country.

For some people, the secularization of our society is enough. In fact, for many freethought activists, secularization defines the focus of the non-religious life. Efforts to get religion out of the public sphere and the government abound among national freethought, atheist and secular humanist groups. That’s all well and good, but for humanists in particular, such efforts do not go far enough to foster humanism or to make the world a better place. Those who choose to identify with the humanist life stance are more often motivated by what they stand *for* rather than what they stand *against*.

Even among younger, more diverse atheist, skeptic and freethought women, their ethical commitments are shaping the evolving secular movement. The recent Secular Women Work conference hosted by MN Atheists and Campus Atheists, Skeptics and Humanists in mid-August at the University of MN is a case in point. The conference opened with Debbie Goddard, a national spokesperson from Center for Inquiry and African Americans for Humanism. She is one such woman who is leading the charge for a more robust secular movement that champions humanist values and goals.

Now, locally, a number of freethinkers are working together to further hone the “humanist” face of the movement. For the past six months, representatives from several of the freethought groups here in the Twin Cities have been meeting to explore a multi-organizational collaboration for promoting our humanist values and demonstrating our rational evidence-based approach to civic engagement. We want to leverage our shared naturalist and ethical worldviews for greater visibility in the region and to greater effect in promoting the common good. To date, the groups that have been participating include our own Humanists of Minnesota, Minnesota Atheists, Black Freethinkers of Minnesota, First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis and Or Emet Congregation for Humanistic Judaism.

The goal of this newly formed Coalition of Reason and Values (COR Values) is to bring together freethought groups locally for social justice initiatives. Our efforts for the coming year will focus on educational disparities in our region. We are in the process of identifying some projects in which members of our organizations can participate jointly. We also envision putting together a Darwin Day event next February to raise awareness of our groups as well as to encourage and demonstrate scientific thinking in the broader community.

Faith-based organizations often have greater influence in society than their numbers suggest because they are so organized. They frequently join together in coalitions—sometimes even to do good in humanistic fashion. But most importantly they have strength in numbers and thus get more attention for their “faith-based” approach. Our freethought community is growing in numbers—albeit with our sundry nuances toward non-belief and non-affiliation, however that must not stop us from working together in common cause to do the work that must be done to make a better world and to demonstrate the virtue of an evidence-based approach.

The importance of working together in coalition with one another to address real-world problems should not be underestimated. We can retain the individual subcultures and foci of our various groups while leveraging our shared naturalist, rational, evidence-based, humanist approach to engaging in the larger community. Our commitments to a good life for all in this world in the here and now should be reason enough for us to be “at the table” with any and all who are engaged in the social and political issues of our time. What are we waiting for? Ω

**Maple Grove Discussion Group:**

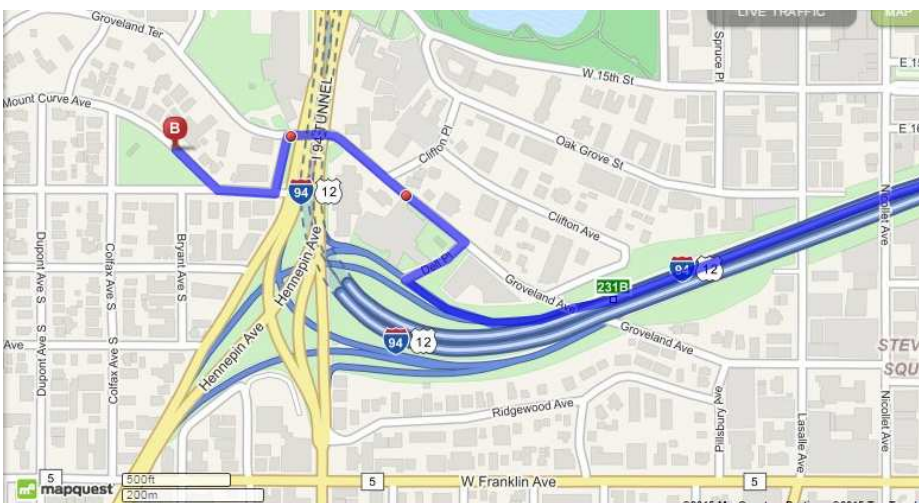
*Saturday, September 12th, 10:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.: “How does Ayurveda (ancient medicine from India) Compare to Western Medicine?” with Dr. Vanashree Gadam. Maple Grove Community Center, 12951 Weaver Lake Rd, room 133, Maple Grove 55311, \$5 donation. Register at [landforsale@visi.com](mailto:landforsale@visi.com) or call Laurie at (763) 420-6350.*

(Chapter, Continued from page 1)

Sue Abderholden received her BA from Macalester College and her MPH from the University of Minnesota. Currently the Executive Director of the NAMI Minnesota, Sue has also worked for PACER Center, ARC and former U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone. Ω



This map depicts the easiest way to get across the Lyndale/Hennepin--freeway convergence when coming from the east on I-94. Off Exit 231B (Lyndale/Hennepin Aves.), take a hard right on Dell Ave. and a left on to Groveland Terrace (going around Henn. Ave. Methodist Church); go straight through the entire intersection and take an immediate left onto the frontage road for one block to Douglas Ave.; keep right for Mt. Curve Ave. Street parking is available close to the building and around the park.



If you are coming from the north on I-94, you will have to take the Lyndale Street exit and then, after you pass the Walker, make a right on Douglas Ave, and then a right on Mt. Curve Ave.

If you are coming from the west (I-394), get off at Dunwoody, then make a right onto Lyndale, then a right on Douglas and a right on Mt. Curve Ave.

### ***Humanist of MN Chapter Meetings to be held at First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis***

***900 Mount Curve Ave., Mpls.  
Lower Assembly Hall***

***By Audrey Kingstrom***

Over the summer the Board explored a variety of venue options for our monthly chapter meetings in an effort to find a meeting space that would better suit our needs. Thank you to all our members who offered suggestions. We followed up on each one of them with a visit and assessment. We saw some very promising sites, weighed carefully the advantages and drawbacks of each, and in the end chose First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis (FUS) just one block south of the Walker Art Center.

Nowhere else were we able to find a space so well-suited for our needs at a competitive price. FUS offered us the use of their large social hall downstairs for a fraction of their rental fees for outside groups because they support our humanist goals. We will be paying \$150/meeting (as opposed to the customary \$400 FUS typically charges outside groups); we had been paying \$140/meeting at Field School.

Throughout the 80's and the 90's, Humanists of Minnesota periodically held its chapter meetings at FUS. In addition, over the years Humanists of Minnesota, FUS, the Humanist Institute--and even occasionally Minnesota Atheists--have undertaken some joint programming at this location. While the Board decision regarding our chapter meeting venue was based on the merits and drawbacks of the actual physical space and requirements of each facility we visited, FUS--as a leader in congregational humanism--is a particularly welcoming space and place for secular humanists, freethinkers, and atheists. Ω



# Announcements

## DISCUSSION GROUPS ETC.

**2nd Friday 5:00 p.m., Humanist Happy Hour St. Paul,** Green Mill Restaurant & Bar, 57 Hamline Ave S.

**4th Friday 5:00 p.m., Humanist Happy Hour Minneapolis,** Republic at Calhoun Square, 3001 Hennepin Ave S.

**5th Friday (when there is one!) 5:00 p.m., Humanist Happy Hour South Metro, Rascal's,** 7721 147th St. W, Apple Valley.

**2nd Saturday 10:30 a.m., Blasphemers' Brunch,** Pizza Luce, 800 W 66th Street, Richfield

**2nd Sunday 2:00 p.m., Sunday Assembly.** First Unitarian Society. 900 Mt. Curve Avenue, Minneapolis.

**1st Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-noon, Lake Superior Freethinkers monthly meeting.** Radisson Hotel Duluth, Viking Room. For information contact Bill van Druten, (218) 724-4176.

**1st Sunday, 10:00 a.m., Central Minnesota Freethinkers, St. Cloud Coffee Social.** Check their website for details: [cmfreethinkers.org](http://cmfreethinkers.org) or contact them at [info@cmfreethinkers.org](mailto:info@cmfreethinkers.org)

**Mondays, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Atheists for Human Rights Happy Hour,** Ol' Mexico Restaurant, 1754 Lexington Ave., Roseville (just north of Larpenteur). Tables on terrace level. Call Paul Craven, (763) 788-8918.

**1st and 3rd Mondays, 6:30 p.m., Freethought Toastmasters Club,** Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1276 Larpenteur Ave. W., St. Paul. Contact George Kane, [nup@minn.net](mailto:nup@minn.net) or (651) 488-8225.

**2nd & 4th Mondays, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Freethought Dinner Social,** Davanni's, 8605 Lyndale Ave So, Bloomington. Call Marilyn Nienkerk, (612) 866-6200.

**1st Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.—1:00p.m., Freethought Lunch,** Old Country Buffet, County Road B2 between Fairview and Snelling. Call Marilyn Nienkerk, (612) 866-6200.

**3rd Wednesday, 11:30 a.m., Freethought Lunch,** Dragon House, 3950 Central Avenue NE, Columbia Heights. Call Bill Volna, (612) 781-1420.

**2nd Thursday, evening, Rochester Area Freethinkers (RAFT),** Downtown Rochester Public Library, Meeting Room A. Contact Jim Salutz, [jsalutz@aol.com](mailto:jsalutz@aol.com) or (507) 280-8012.

## OTHER EVENTS

**2nd Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., Humanists of Minnesota** Board of Directors meeting. Open to all members. Contact Audrey Kingstrom at [akingstrom@comcast.net](mailto:akingstrom@comcast.net).

**Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.** (during school year), *Campus Atheists, Skeptics and Humanists (CASH)* general meeting. 3rd floor Coffman Memorial Union, 300 Washington Ave. SE, Minneapolis. Contact [cash@cashumn.org](mailto:cash@cashumn.org).

Check out our Meetup events at <http://www.meetup.com/humanism-166>

## New Series:

### *Death and Dying: Facing our Mortality*

Join us for a new series hosted by Humanists of Minnesota beginning Saturday, Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> 10:30am at Rondo Library in St. Paul. Through facilitated discussion led by Audrey Kingstrom and Dale Handeen, both Humanist Celebrants, we will reflect on our mortality, examine end-of-life issues from medical care, to disposition of the body, to memorial services and ethical wills, and get more prepared for our inevitable ends and/or those of our loved ones.

We will meet the first Saturday of every month throughout the 2015-16 program year. More details to follow on Meet-up and in next month's newsletter. Contact Audrey if you have any questions now— [akingstrom@comcast.net](mailto:akingstrom@comcast.net).

### *Upcoming Critical Thinking Club Meetings*

*St. Paul Chapter. Sunday, September 6th, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.: "Thinking Critically About America's Place in the World," by Bob Kaufman, Minnesota Futurists. Best Western Plus Capitol Ridge, Hwy. I-94, St. Paul. Breakfast \$12, lecture and coffee only \$3. RSVP [criticalthinking-club@gmail.com](mailto:criticalthinking-club@gmail.com)*

*West Metro Chapter. Saturday, September 26th, 10:00 a.m. to noon: "The World's Overpopulation," by David Paxson, President & Founder, World Population Balance. Ridge Point Apts. Meeting Room, 12800 Marion Lane W., Minnetonka.*

*Stillwater Chapter. Monday, September 14th, 7:00 p.m.: "Omission is the Greatest Form of Lie" by Dick Taylor. Family Means Bldg., 1875 Northwestern Ave, Stillwater.*

"Humanist Views," our weekly Cable program, airs at **6:30 p.m. Mondays** on MTN Channel 75.





*Freethought History:*

## ***Humanitarianism: A Harbinger of Humanism***

*Paul Heffron, Chapter Historian*

“Humanist” is sometimes associated or confused with “humanitarian” and “humane.” Bernie Schatz, our first secretary-treasurer who handled communications, was fed up with phone callers asking for the humane society. He did a new outgoing message which began, “This is the Humanist Association, not the Humane Society!” I once mentioned to my dad that I was a humanist. He answered, “So am I.” I was initially taken aback but soon realized that he meant humanitarian. Humane and humanitarian are not the same as humanist, but

ethically speaking they’re close. This essay is about humanitarianism and how it has paved the way for humanism.

Morality was once God-centered. There was no agreement on what exactly God wanted and all too often what was said to be God’s will seemed inhumane, so a basis for morality was sought in natural law. Nature or human nature was thought to reveal what was right, however this didn’t work either. There was no agreement on morality derived from nature or human nature. Eventually, morality was based on the human capacity for sympathy or fellow-feeling, a sense of humanity that had to be cultivated and reinforced. That made for humanitarianism, assisting those in need, a new standard for human goodness.

Alexis de Toqueville in his *Democracy in America* noted that Americans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were much more apt to come to the aid of fellow Americans in distress on a humanitarian basis than Europeans. Of course this was limited to their ‘own people’ and generally excluded African Americans and Native Americans. It would take time for the humanitarian way to include all Americans. Eventually, universal human rights were endorsed for all without any mention of God or natural law.

An American historian, James Turner, in his book *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Johns Hopkins, 1985) traced the growth of the humanitarian ideal, beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as one of the trends that undermined belief in God. God was made to conform to the humanitarian standard. Turner maintained that the defenders of God strangled him to death by making him measure up to ideas of human goodness. Freethinkers criticized the inhumanity of God and had an impact, but it was the mainstream humanitarian believers who helped to make belief in the God of revelation obsolete and thereby unbelief viable.

We can view the spread of humanitarianism, even among believers, as a harbinger of humanism, making God irrelevant to human well-being. Ω

## ***Humanists to Participate in 2015 NAMI Walk !***

Join the Humanists of Minnesota team for the NAMI Fundraising Walk on September 26th at Minnehaha Park in Minneapolis and help raise money for the [Minnesota chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness](#). Or, if you can't walk but want to support the effort, you can donate to one of our team members to reach our goal of \$1000 for NAMI. Donate on-line or bring a check to the September

chapter meeting.

This annual 5k walk is to promote awareness of mental illness and support NAMI's education and advocacy work. As an organization, NAMI commits to:

- Treat every person who contacts NAMI Minnesota with dignity, empathy and respect, recognizing that he or she is a person first, not a diagnosis
- Recognize the biological nature of mental illnesses and work to dispel stigma
- Provide accurate information, tools, guidance and hope so that people can advocate for themselves and their families

To register, donate or get more information, go to our Meet-up page:

<http://www.meetup.com/humanism-166/events/223957331/>

Ω

## Book Review:

*Galapagos Regained*

By James Morrow

(St. Martin's Press, New York, 2014)

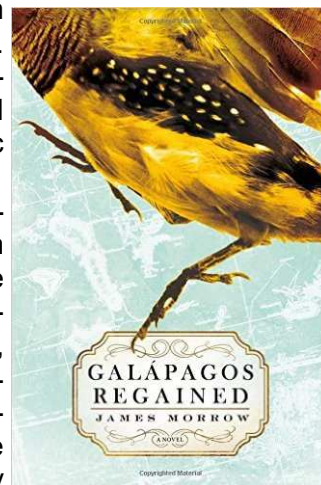
Reviewed by Nathan Curland

I haven't read too much fiction lately, but couldn't help myself after reading Tom Flynn's review in Free Inquiry a couple of months ago and after seeing who wrote it. James Morrow is a proficient, award winning author best known in freethought circles for *The Godhead Trilogy*, of which the first book, *Towing Jehovah*, received special attention due to its outrageous premise (God exists, he dies and his gigantic body falls into the ocean. Now what?)

*Galapagos Regained* is his latest contribution and I found it (all 473 pages) absorbing, compelling, and (very!) entertaining. It is a Victorian adventure tale set in the time of Darwin, but imbued with philosophical issues encompassing the entire tapestry of thought surrounding the question of whether God exists or not, but dripping with satire and wit at every turn. We follow the adventures of Chloe Bathurst, an unemployed young actress who is hired to attend Charles Darwin's private menagerie (?) and then appropriates her employer's unpublished manuscript to embark on a journey to prove the non-existence of the deity and thereby win the 10,000 pound prize of the (fictional) Great God Contest sponsored by the Percy Bysshe Shelley Society. This journey takes her across the Atlantic, South America and to the Galapagos and back. She survives shipwreck, jungle, rebellion, captivity, and even Mormonism (of a peculiar stripe)!

Morrow spent six years to research the period and write this marvelous tale. All the great characters of the time make their cameo appearances: Charles Lyell, 'Soapy Sam' Wilberforce, Alfred Wallace Russell, Thomas Huxley, Joseph Hooker, etc. Through the use of the ploy of *Deus ex machine* Morrow even brings Gregor Mendel, Rosalind Franklin and others from the time's future into the cast of characters. In addition there are countless references to philosophers of period: Schopenhauer, Marx, Kant, etc., as evolution, theology, and the science of the time are explored by the motley crew that accompanies Chloe.

Will our heroine be successful in her quest? Will she find happiness among the slew of potential lovers she meets along the way? Will she marry? To find out, get this imaginative volume, relax and enjoy! Ω



***“The brain is a product of evolution. Human behavior—like the deepest capacities for emotional response which drive and guide it— is the circuitous technique by which human genetic material has been and will be kept intact.”***

***Edward O. Wilson, On Human Nature (2004)***

## HUMANIST NEWS & VIEWS

**Editor,** Nathan Curland

**Editorial Committee** - Brad Bolin, Dale Handeen, Mark Thoson

Articles, letters, event notices and other writings are welcome. Send to: [editor@humanistsofmn.org](mailto:editor@humanistsofmn.org) with the word "newsletter" in the subject line, or to P.O. Box 582997, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2997. (E-mail submissions are preferred.) All submissions must include the writer's full name, postal address, telephone number and e-mail address. All submissions become the property of this newsletter and cannot be returned. Submission deadline is the 22nd of the prior month.

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## *Humanist Happy Hours!*

Join the fun at the Humanist Happy Hours! Check out the groups on Page 4.



## Humanists of Minnesota

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Paul Heffron

### Cable Program Staff -

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September 2015

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Your membership is vital to the growth of Humanism and the Humanist community. Our membership categories are:  
(For categories at RH and above, married couples or domestic partners will be considered as one membership, if you so indicate.)

- ☐ (B) Budget, \$25.00
- ☐ (RI) Regular Individual, \$40.00
- ☐ (RH) Regular Household, \$60.00
- ☐ (S) Sustaining, \$100.00
- ☐ (P) Patron, \$250.00
- ☐ (BN) Benefactor, \$500.00
- ☐ (L) Life Membership, \$1000.00
- ☐ (T) Trial subscription for 3 months, just ask

\*Full time students at an accredited institution can receive a complimentary subscription

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For national or international membership write to:

American Humanist Association  
1777 T Street NW  
Washington, DC 20009-7125  
[www.americanhumanist.org](http://www.americanhumanist.org)

Council for Secular Humanism  
PO Box 664  
Amherst, NY 14226  
[www.secularhumanism.org](http://www.secularhumanism.org)

Please check the appropriate box, complete the information and mail with your check to Humanists of Minnesota, P.O. Box 582997, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2997.

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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(for special announcements, blogs etc. Keeps you in touch!)

I would like my newsletter sent via email ( ☐ ) (in color!)

Second Member at same address (for RH and above):

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[www.humanistsofmn.org](http://www.humanistsofmn.org)

