

# THE HAT NEWSLETTER

The Bimonthly Periodical of the HUMANIST ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO

*Promoting Humanism and the Separation of Church and State*

## Announcements

### Memberships

Membership application for 2010 is usually the last page of this newsletter. Please inform us if you want a tax receipt.

### Emails

Please inform us if your email changes:  
**HatWebAdmin@gmail.com**

### UPCOMING GUEST SPEAKERS

Location: OISE, 252 Bloor St. West  
Saturdays 1:30 – 3:00 p.m., Rm TBA

**Speaker: LAURIE KINGSTON**

**Topic: SURVIVING BREAST CANCER**

**Date:** Saturday, February 13, 2010, 1:30 p.m.

Laurie Kingston will be speaking about surviving breast cancer, and reading from her book, **Not Done Yet.**

### HUMANIST FILM DAYS

Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 3 p.m.

Film: **Chocolat**

In a small, conservative French town, a newly-opened chocolate shop provokes the ire of the local church. The ensuing conflict between the adherents to a stodgy religious morality, and the adherents to worldly pleasures, represented by the upstart chocolaterie, symbolizes a larger conflict between two approaches to life.

Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 3 p.m.

Film: **Water**

Deepa Mehta's critically acclaimed film about a young widow in India puts the spotlight on the shameful treatment of widows in that country.

*Note* Out of respect for people with allergies and chemical sensitivities, we request that participants in HAT events avoid using scented products such as perfumes, etc.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

*Note* Almost all HAT events are held at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE), 252 Bloor St. W., with rooms **TBA**. Please **check in the OISE lobby for a room number change on the day of the event, and/or go to our website for details, unlikely cancellations, and so on.**

**Humanist Discussion Forums** - One of our most popular programs. Each Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 1 p.m., we meet in an informal way to discuss various topics of particular interest to free-thinkers. You don't have to be a member to attend. If you are looking for a lively group with whom to discuss ideas and make new friends, you are most welcome to show up. Check the website for weekly details on topics to be discussed. As well, after the discussion, group members often go out for a bite to eat. Room TBA or check in OISE lobby.

### Humanist Film Days

The third Sunday of each month at 3 p.m., at the Centre for Inquiry (C.F.I.), 216 Beverly St.

### Monthly Book Club

The first Sunday of each month from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. On January 10<sup>th</sup>, we'll discuss **Beyond the Crazy House - Changing the Future of Madness** by author Pat Capponi. June Callwood wrote of this work that the author "has written a gripping, unflinching account of mental illness from the point of view of the mentally ill". The author herself suggests "the needs of members of the psychiatric community are not so different, really, from anyone else's needs - a home, a job, a friend". The resulting book is a captivating and powerful portrait of mental illness, the people who live with this condition, and a system in desperate need of reform.

### Monthly Speakers

See opposite column for information about this monthly event. Alternatively, check our website for the January and February speakers when information becomes available.

# The HAT Newsletter

Vol. 17: No 1

January/February 2010

PUBLISHER HAT Steering Committee

EDITOR Cornelia Laven

The HAT newsletter is published bi-monthly. Copy deadline is mid-month or two weeks prior to publication.

The Editor welcomes your contributions. Submissions should be signed, fairly succinct, your own work (or quoted material on which you comment), relatively current, and not opposed to the spirit of humanism. The Editor's preference, and that is all it is, is that submissions be emailed as attached Word documents or simply copied into the email itself. The Editor reserves the right to select materials and to edit these for style, length and content.

The aim is *never* to rewrite your meaning, but to ensure clarity and balanced, ethical reporting practice. Space is limited, so we cannot guarantee publication. All opinions are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Editor, Staff, Steering Committee or HAT. All initialed material is the work of the Editor.

**Copy Deadline:**  
**February 15, 2010**

## Send Submissions and Advertising to:

### **HAT Editor**

Humanist Association of Toronto  
Box 44512, 2376 Eglinton Avenue East  
Toronto, Ontario M1K 2P3

**Or by email to the Editor:**  
**lleahcc@gmail.com**

HATNewsletter@gmail.com  
HAT phone line: (416) 966 -1361

email: HatCoord@gmail.com  
web: <http://www.humanist.toronto.on.ca>

## **NOTES FROM THE EDITOR**

*Tempus fugit. Looking at the year past, I'm reminded of the saying: "The more things change the more things stay the same".*

*The Canadian economy continues to be in limbo, reflecting global uncertainty. The environmental conference in Copenhagen seems anti-climactic, as much remains unresolved. Afghanistan detainees, it is alleged, have been handed over to their countrymen to be tortured. In short, critical issues pursue us into the new year.*

*Aside from griping to our friends, what can we readily do? A national website, allowing folk to express their opinions online might be part of a solution towards a more participatory democracy. Imagine a Canadian site were one could select a few key issues and respond 'yea' or 'nay' to the strategies ((perhaps laid out in multiple choice format) we would like to see implemented. How feasible is this? Well,*

*McGuinty gave in to the demands of youthful bloggers who objected to proposed changes in Ontario driver law...*

*What kind of site would this be? An interesting, easy-to-access website with an address that could become a household word. A site that conveys folks' views on critical issues and sends a clear message to our elected representatives.*

C.L.

## **ADVERTISING RATES**

**Classified:** (1 insertion) 25¢ per word, min. 10 words – max. 60 words.

**Display:** (6 insertions) \$25 dollars per column inch. Full column is 3½" wide by 10" long.

*\*Please note that the above prices are half-price for members.*

Please submit camera-ready artwork or layout and copy to the HAT Editor.

Make cheques payable to the:  
Humanist Association of Toronto

Note Editor can, at any time and for any reason, refuse to accept an ad that is not compatible with the general principles of secular humanism.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

The HAT Steering Committee meets monthly to conduct the business of the association. Since HAT is a member-driven organization, your presence and participation are essential. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings.

Coordinator..... Jody Perrin  
Membership Secretary..... Mary Beaty  
Librarian..... Cecilia Rayo  
Treasurer..... Robin Russell  
Recording Secretary..... Gail McCabe  
Spokesperson..... Don Cullen  
Newsletter Editor..... Cornelia Laven  
Program Coordinator..... Tanya Long  
Web Administrator..... Mary Beaty  
External Representative..... Vacant  
Public Relations Officer..... Vacant  
Member at Large..... Maria Kochan  
Member at Large..... Ernie Hajto  
Member at Large..... Vacant

## Noteworthy motions of the most recent steering committee meetings

Please note that this time there were no significant motions passed.

## *Personalized* HUMANIST CEREMONIES

- ◆ Are you or one of your relatives planning a wedding?
- ◆ Will you soon be organizing the funeral of a friend or relative or pre-planning your own?
- ◆ Would you like to have a naming ceremony for your new baby or grandchild? Or a coming-of-age ceremony for a young adult?

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We are licensed humanist officiants who collaborate with you to create meaningful life passage ceremonies that fit with your values, beliefs and traditions. We are also creating brand new traditions that fit with a secular humanist worldview.

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## *Humanist Officiants* *At your Service...*

Kathryn Cook  
416-483-1370

**[kicook@sympatico.ca](mailto:kicook@sympatico.ca)**

Martin Frith  
416-362-1141

**[martinfrith@sympatico.ca](mailto:martinfrith@sympatico.ca)**

Ken Goldberg  
416-654-5790

**[kennethgoldberg@rogers.com](mailto:kennethgoldberg@rogers.com)**

Gail McCabe  
416-736-2100 x22237

**[mccabe@yorku.ca](mailto:mccabe@yorku.ca)**

Mary Beaty  
416-461-1772

**[marybeaty@gmail.com](mailto:marybeaty@gmail.com)**



## INVICTUS, INVICTUS

A member gave me a copy of the poem **Invictus**, by John Henley, to include in our newsletter. I felt obliged to add a few lines to his submission. My response to the poem is arbitrary, foregoing the more traditional review of an author and his work.

*Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.*

The author confronts death with courage. Today, lines such as 'I am the captain of my soul' may sound overblown. The poem's surface is uncomplicated - one does not have to delve into the form in order to gain an initial understanding of the poem. Its directness may also be the work's limitation, however. **Invictus** appears almost 'black-and-white' in its conviction. The poem lacks the subtlety of colours that abound in Yeats (admittedly one of my favourite poets!). Still, the greatest black-and-white photographs would be much diminished were they colourized by a well-intentioned dauber. Henley's poem is his final statement about mortality, a highly personal one. It may inspire or vex while it provokes us to think and feel.

The anti-government bomber, Timothy McVeigh, read **Invictus**, to a captive audience, moments before his execution. McVeigh is proof that, without heart and common sense, a rational analysis of private and public concerns can result in monstrous actions. A work of art does not always rise above the worst of man's obsessions, ideologies or delusions. At best, art reminds us of who we *are*, suggests who we may *become*, and permits us see *past* our cast-iron constructs of the world.

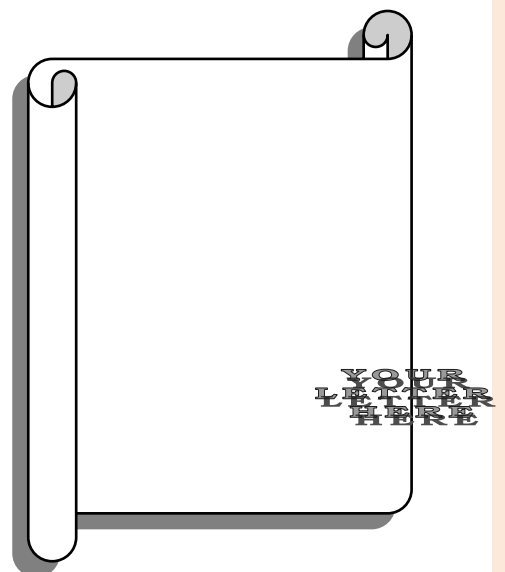
How one responds to any creative or intellectual work is highly personal. The dispute involving Martin Heidegger, the renowned German philosopher, is a case-in point. Ostensibly, Heidegger was a Nazi sympathizer and some folk maintain this fascist viewpoint can be found throughout all his writings. Therefore said writ, it follows, should be tossed into history's dumpster. This argument reminded me of reading Tolstoy's **War and Peace** when I was a teenager. Some sections seemed inordinately long, but I was moved by the characters and impressed by the novel's scope. A year later, to my delight, I found one of Tolstoy's works on my parents' bookshelf. It was a slim volume about marriage. To my dismay, it turned out to be a dull and unsympathetic sermon on women. Would it have made a difference, I wonder, if I had read this how-to on wedded bliss before **War and Peace**? By hindsight, I think very little...

I trust this wee ramble raises a few questions, evokes an idea or two or, as in my case, leads to further exploration of Henley's poetry.

Cornelia Laven

Note: I glanced at six or seven quotes by Heidegger. Though I only sampled a little of what he wrote, I found what I read disquieting.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR





## Membership Application 2010

Humanist Association of Toronto

[www.humanist.toronto.on.ca](http://www.humanist.toronto.on.ca)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ New Member: ☐ Renewal Member: ☐

If new member: What influenced you? \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please print. If this is a "Household" Membership, please include all member names (use next line if necessary).

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: we will only use your contact information for HAT-related communication.*

**Please circle the appropriate amount(s)**

Membership	HAT membership
Individual	\$30
Student/Limited Resources	\$10
Household	\$40
Limited Income Household	\$15
Life Member	\$200
Donation	

You may enjoy subscribe to Humanist Perspectives magazine.  
For more information, go to <http://www.humanistperspectives.org>.

**Total \$**

Please make your cheque payable to: **Humanist Association of Toronto** and mail to:

Box 44512, 2376 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario M1K 2P3

*We issue charitable tax receipts for both fees and donations.*

- Do you wish to be listed in our public membership directory? Yes ☐ No ☐  
*If no box is checked above we enter your name and contact information into our directory.*
- May we exchange your name and address with like-minded organizations? Yes ☐ No ☐
- The current bi-monthly newsletter, as well as back issues, is available from the website at <http://www.humanist.toronto.on.ca/news.html>.
- Do you also require a copy of the newsletter by regular mail? Yes ☐ No ☐

***We welcome your membership and hope to see you at  
our meetings and events!***