

# Manitoba Humanist



*International Development Enterprises India won the Ashden Outstanding Achievement Award for their continuing work with treadle pumps for irrigation.*

Published by and for the Humanist Association of Manitoba

*“We are beyond belief”*



[www.mb.humanists.ca](http://www.mb.humanists.ca)

## ***IDE Canada – Providing a Hand Up, Not a Hand Out***

*“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”*

There are many international aid agencies that provide food, water, medicine, etc., to those in need all over the world. They offer an essential service, but this type of aid is normally short-term in nature.

To bring about long-term improvements, International Development Enterprises has a different philosophy, which is, essentially, treating small farmers as customers and entrepreneurs.

At our May meeting, Stuart Taylor, the Executive Director of International Development Enterprises Canada, shared his organization’s philosophy with us and gave us a detailed presentation on their results.

*IDE Canada’s motto is “making markets work for the poor”*

IDE’s mission is to help poor rural households increase their income. By working together with farmers, and letting them decide what works for them or doesn’t, IDE then decides where to



*Take time to stop and smell the lilacs!*

focus their efforts. IDE provides advice, research & development, creates networks, and helps create efficiencies.

IDE researches technologies and develops solutions which are practical, low-cost, local and sustainable. They get local industry involved in providing the materials and making the product, and then selling it to the farmers. So, everyone wins. Local industry gets a boost, the farmers increase their income so they have more money to spend, which all helps develop the local economy.

Just a couple of examples of IDE products are treadle pump irrigation systems and affordable drip irrigation technologies. The drip irrigation kits promoted by IDE cost almost 80% less than conventional drip kits.

From IDE's website:

*19 Million people have significantly increased their income, lifting themselves permanently out of poverty with IDE's help.*

*\$1.01 Billion is the total amount of income IDE's customers and their associated enterprises have earned since their founding.*

## **ATHEIST FILM FESTIVAL A FIRST FOR WINNIPEG!**

This August will see Winnipeg's first-ever atheist film festival, when the Mashfest Film Festival happens at the Park Theatre on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

Our own Jeff Olsson has spearheaded this drive, with the help of some dedicated committee members. HAM helped this event get off the ground last year with a financial donation.

The film festival's main event will be a screening of Julia Sweeney's film, "Letting Go of God". More information and details will be forthcoming closer to the date, but in the meantime – mark your calendar!

## **ATHEISTS ARE WRONG...!**

The telegraph.co.uk published a story recently explaining how the Church of England synod (the synod is the governing body of the church) has declared that being a Christian and believing in Science are not in conflict. They say Atheists are Wrong. They say it is possible to believe in a Christian God and in evolution.

Well of course it is possible to believe in the Christian God and in science, but is that what really happens in practice? The answer is, "it depends".

That is why Atheists claim there is an obvious conflict. In social studies that have looked at this effect, religious fervency seems to have an inverse correlation with scientific literacy. It is also true that the religious beliefs of scientists who claim to have a religion are nuanced and flexible, unlike that of the general population.

It is, in fact, religious teachers that make people choose between Christianity and science. If this were not true, there would be no Creation Museum in the United States or in Winnipeg, Canada.

In the US more than half of the population of Christians, about 60 percent, believe in creationism over science. They choose the biblical account over that given by scientists. In England the numbers of Christians who believe in evolution is much higher and Darwinian science seems to be more palatable to them.

Now back to the claims of the C of E synod. The telegraph article states:

*"Clergy and lay members of the Church said it was perfectly possible to believe in God and Darwin's theory of evolution, and said that religion can explain areas of existence that science cannot.*

*But they warned against treating the Bible as a scientific textbook, and claimed the "naivety" of some creationists can damage the standing of Christians who work in science and provide ammunition to their enemies.*

So-called “young Earth” creationists in the US believe the story of Genesis is literally true and that God made the world in six days.

Peter Capon, a lay member of Synod from Manchester diocese who tabled the Private Member’s Motion on the compatibility of science and religious belief, said that Christians believe the world exists because of the will of God whereas atheists consider this to be a “complete delusion”.

He went on: “We wish to refute the idea promoted by atheist scientists that science is on the side of the atheist in answering these sorts of questions.

“We wish to refute the perception that you have to choose between science and faith.

“We wish to refute the crude caricature of faith, as being blind and irrational, propagated by some atheist scientists.”

Dr Capon said he rejected the idea that science can answer every question, insisting that some insights into questions of existence go beyond scientific explanation.

However he conceded that Christians have sometimes been “caught” on the wrong side of arguments by doubting scientific evidence, such as the fact that the Earth is not flat and revolves around the Sun.”

And of course that is where there is a rub, especially when the large majority of Christians in any country claim that a two thousand year old text is to be considered more trustworthy, more believable than the sciences of geology, archaeology, and biology.

- Jeff Olsson

## GETTING TO KNOW: SOPHIE SHULMAN

This month we bring you another in a continuing series focusing on the members of HAM’s executive. Sophie Shulman joined HAM just a few years ago, but many know her as our tireless Membership / Outreach Committee.



**What is your favourite color?** *Peach*

**If you had one word to describe yourself, what would you choose?** *Clumsy*

**What is your middle name?** *None*

**Do you have a hero? If so, who and why.**  
*None*

**Do you have a favourite meal or dessert?**  
*Pickerel in any edible form*

**Were you named after someone?** *My great-grandmother*

**Who is your favourite author and/or book?** *It would be a small library*

**Pets. Do you have any? If so, what kind?**  
*Dogs – all my life*

**If you could travel to anywhere in the world, where would it be?** *I’d decline no destination!*

**What is one thing that really irritates you?** *My age*

**Are you a morning person or a night owl? My day starts at 5.30 am**

**What's the last thing you bought yourself, just for fun. A ticket to 'Madama Butterfly'**

**Do you like to dress up for Halloween? If so, what was your most memorable costume?**  
No.

## **FAMOUS ATHEISTS**

There are some famous individuals who we all know are non-believers. Individuals like the scientist Steven Pinker and Woody Allen, the actor/director. But here two individuals who you might not know are included among the godless.



**BILL GATES**

Gates is one of the best-known entrepreneurs of the personal computer revolution. In the later stages of his career, Gates has pursued a number of philanthropic endeavors, donating large amounts of money to various charitable organizations and scientific research programs through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, established in 2000.

Gates was profiled in a January 13, 1996 TIME magazine cover story. Here are some excerpts compiled by the Drudge Report:

*"Isn't there something special, perhaps even divine, about the human soul?" interviewer Walter Isaacson asks Gates. "His face suddenly becomes expressionless," writes Isaacson, "his squeaky voice turns toneless, and he folds his arms across his belly and vigorously rocks back*

*and forth in a mannerism that has become so mimicked at MICROSOFT that a meeting there can resemble a round table of ecstatic rabbis."*

*"I don't have any evidence on that," answers Gates. "I don't have any evidence of that."*

*He later states, "Just in terms of allocation of time resources, religion is not very efficient. There's a lot more I could be doing on a Sunday morning."*



**JODIE FOSTER**

From: The Georgia Straight, Interview with Jodie Foster by Dan McLeod, July 10-17, 1997; page 43.

Q. Where does Jodie Foster stand in the debate between science and faith?

A. I absolutely believe what Ellie believes - that there is no direct evidence, so how could you ask me to believe in God when there's absolutely no evidence that I can see? I do believe in the beauty and the awe-inspiring mystery of the science that's out there that we haven't discovered yet, that there are scientific explanations for phenomena that we call mystical because we don't know any better.

*(Ed. Note: Ellie is the name of the character Jodie Foster played in the movie Contact.)*

## **A LITTLE BIT OF HUMOR**

During the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution, one morning's executions began with three men: a rabbi, a Catholic priest, and a rationalist skeptic.

The rabbi was marched up onto the platform first. There, facing the guillotine, he was asked if he had any last words. And the rabbi cried out, "I believe in the one and only true God, and He shall save me."

The executioner then positioned the rabbi below the blade, set the block above his neck, and pulled the cord to set the terrible instrument in motion. The heavy cleaver plunged downward, searing the air. But then, abruptly, it stopped with a crack just a few inches above the would-be victim's neck. To which the rabbi said, "I told you so."

"It's a miracle!" gasped the crowd. And the executioner had to agree, letting the rabbi go.

Next in line was the priest. Asked for his final words, he declared, "I believe in Jesus Christ the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost who will rescue me in my hour of need." The executioner then positioned this man beneath the blade. And he pulled the cord. Again the blade flew downward thump! creak! ...stopping just short of its mark once more.

"Another miracle!" sighed the disappointed crowd. And the executioner for the second time had no choice but to let the condemned go free.

Now it was the skeptic's turn. "What final words have you to say?" he was asked. But the skeptic didn't hear. Staring intently at the ominous engine of death, he seemed lost. Not until the executioner poked him in the ribs and the question was asked again did he reply.

"Oh, I see your problem," the skeptic said pointing. "You've got a blockage in the gear assembly, right there!"

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Saturday, June 26, 2010**

Field Trip  
Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre  
Morden, Manitoba  
Registration is already complete – details will be sent to participants by email

### **Sunday, August 15, 2010**

Mashfest Film Festival  
Location: Park Theatre,  
Speaker/Topic: Feature Film: "Letting Go of God" by Julia Sweeney

### **Saturday, August 21, 2010**

HAM Summer Party  
Location: The Fairbanks/Guinn residence,  
Stonewall, MB

### **Saturday, September 11, 2010**

Monthly Meeting  
Location: TBA  
Speaker/Topic: TBA

### **Saturday, September 18, 2010**

Red River Valley 2010 Freethought Convention  
Red River Freethinkers  
Location: Fargo Civic Center, Fargo, ND  
Speakers: **Brian Keith Dalton**, "Mr. Deity"; **PZ Myers**, the writer of Pharyngula himself; **Dan Barker**, co-president of the Freedom of Religion Foundation; **Annie Laurie Gaylor**, co-president of the Freedom of Religion Foundation; and **August Berkshire**, local atheist heavyweight who was the first president of the Twin Cities Chapter of American Atheists.

### **Saturday, October 9, 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:**

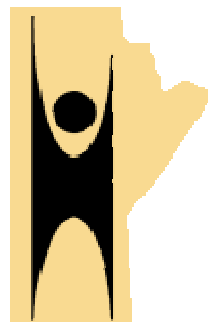
**Myrna Donald**  
**Barry Hammond**  
**Donna Harris**  
**Katie Higham**  
**Jake Peters**  
**Grant Rogerson**  
**Sophie Shulman**  
**Marlene Wallace**  
**Barrie Webster**

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[mb.humanists.ca](http://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.