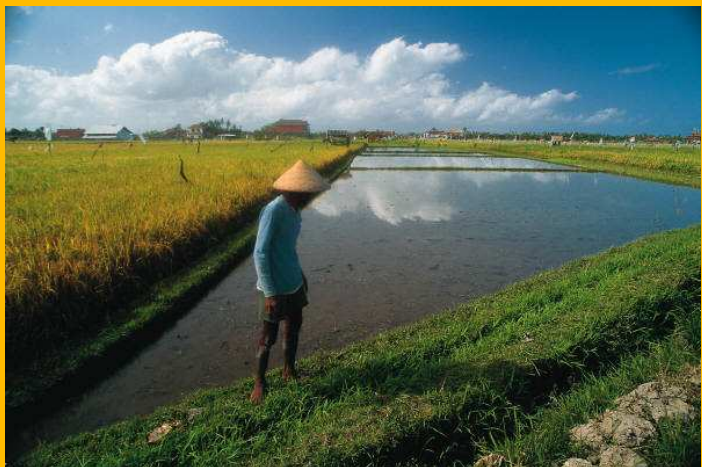


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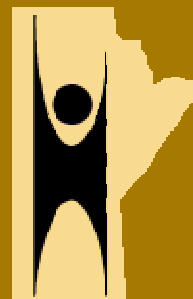


“When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization”

- Daniel Webster

Published by and for the Humanist Association of Manitoba

“We are beyond belief”



www.mb.humanists.ca

May Meeting – International Development

We're doubling up the fun for our May meeting. We're having two speakers, rather than just one.

Our first speaker is **Stuart Taylor**, whose talk is entitled "**Totally Pumped: Creating Income Opportunities for Poor Rural Households**".

Mr. Taylor is currently the Executive Director of International Development Enterprises Canada – a Winnipeg-based non-profit that raises the incomes of families living on a dollar a day through design of extremely low-cost technologies and development of markets that work for low-income customers and producers.

Our second speaker (or speakers) will be student representatives from **Engineers Without Borders**.

Here is a brief biographical statement for Stuart Taylor:

Stu holds a Master's degree in epidemiology from the University of Ottawa, where he developed a keen interest in international health. From 1998 to 2003 he worked with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank as the program analyst, with a focus on the nutritional impact of food aid and food security projects. With his family, he moved to Zambia in 2004 to serve as a volunteer with the Mennonite Central Committee. Together with his



“If evolution really works, how come mothers only have two hands?” -- Milton Berle

Happy Mother's Day!

wife – an agronomist and former Agriculture Representative with Manitoba Agriculture – he assisted a national church to develop a food security component to its HIV/AIDS programme. They returned to Canada in 2006, at which point he took on his current role with IDE. He has three young daughters and is making steady progress in his facility with crayons, glue and bedtime stories.

See page 5 for meeting details.

HAM'S APRIL MEETING –Amnesty International

INVISIBLE VICTIMS: *Widespread abuse of migrants in Mexico is 'human rights crisis'.*

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY: *Iran: Journalists under siege*

SILENCED: *Chinese women housing rights activists harassed ahead of Expo 2010 in Shanghai*

If you thought that Amnesty International only helps political prisoners, then perhaps it's time to take another look. The statements above are current headlines, as well as calls to action, from Amnesty International's website.

Our April speaker, Alison Etter from Amnesty International, gave us an overview of how the organization's focus has changed over the years.

Amnesty was started in 1961 by lawyer Peter Benenson, when he read of 2 Portuguese students who were sentenced to 7 years in prison for allegedly 'having drunk a toast to liberty'.

Benenson wrote and published an article that brought the reader's attention to those "imprisoned, tortured or executed because his opinions or religion are unacceptable to his government."

What began as a response to one incident soon became an ongoing program that is still going strong over forty years later.

*"Open your newspaper any day of the week and you will find a story from somewhere of someone being imprisoned, tortured or executed because his opinions or religion are unacceptable to his government [...]
The newspaper reader feels a sickening sense of impotence. Yet if these feelings of disgust could be united into common action, something effective could be done."
- Peter Benenson*

Amnesty International is politically impartial, and organizationally independent.

Its' core work used to be involved in releasing prisoners of conscience, ending torture, stopping the death penalty, and ending all political killings and disappearance. Now, Amnesty is also holding corporations accountable for their actions against both indigenous peoples and the environment.

One of Amnesty's main approaches is letter writing campaigns (which, in these electronic days, also includes emails). While governments and local officials can ignore local protesters and such, it becomes harder and harder for them to ignore the impact of hundreds and thousands of international letters arriving at their offices.

Check out Amnesty International's Canadian website for more information about their current initiatives, membership information, etc., at www.amnesty.ca.

There is also a web address for the local Winnipeg group. The local chapter is busy with several regular events, including a letter writing circle, a monthly meeting and a book club. (www.freewebs.com/amnestymanitoba)

GOODBYE BARRIE AND PHYLLIS



In June, long-time HAM member and former president, Barrie Webster and his wife Phyllis, are leaving Winnipeg and moving to the West Coast – Victoria, to be exact.

On April 23rd, a group of HAM members gathered at Affinity vegetarian restaurant to wish Barrie and Phyllis farewell and safe journey. Barry Hammond provided the “toast”, reminding us of all the contributions that Barrie has made to the group over the years, while Jeff Olsson provided the “roast”, and made us all laugh with a collection of zingers and jokes.



Jeff enjoying his “roast”

Barrie has brought a lot to HAM, especially ensuring that the group reaches out and engages other groups in the community, such as the Health Science Centre Spiritual Care program, Klinik and the Funeral Planning and Memorial Society of Manitoba, and other humanist organizations, such as Humanist Canada.

His activities and his humor will certainly be missed, and we thank him for all his efforts for

this organization over the years.

Barrie has supplied us with a brief history of his time with HAM. Look for it on our website!

GET INVOLVED! RUN FOR RIGHTS

On Saturday, June 5th, a coalition of local groups is having their 9th annual Run for Rights to raise money in support of Winnipeg organizations working for social justice and human rights.

Proceeds will benefit organizations such as:

- Amnesty International
- Winnipeg Haiti Solidarity Group
- Engineers Without Borders
- Local Investment Toward Employment (LITE)
- Institute for Community Peacebuilding
- And more...

You can walk, cycle, run, wheel or blade. It's a 5 or 10 KM route, from Kildonan Park to St. John's Park and back.

If you're interested in participating (a few of us from HAM will be there), check out their website at www.runforrights.org. You can download registration and pledge forms there, and bring them on the day of the event.

MY LIFE IN FRONT OF A TV

Recently, a co-worker and I were wondering where all the good TV shows have gone, considering today's line-up of reality shows, and we started reminiscing about all the good TV shows we've watched over the years.

We're not exactly 20 years old any more, so it didn't take long before we had an enormous list of shows. Everything from The Jack Benny Show to Carol Burnett, from M*A*S*H to Bonanza, and The X Files to I Dream of Jeannie. The list goes on and on and on.

When I had over a page long list of shows, and I was only in the “G's”, I went “whoa”. How many hours of my life have I spent in front of a

television set? I hate to think – it's huge. I'm not going to do the math, because I'm sure it would be literally YEARS. I like to think I've become more selective over time, but I do remember at least a few occasions in my teen years when the TV went on at Noon on Sunday, and didn't get turned off until bedtime at 10 or 11 p.m. I would just watch whatever was on – flipping channels until I found something that caught my attention.



And I'm a loyal viewer. Once I commit to a show, I hate to miss any episodes. Right now I know Criminal Minds is on Tuesdays, Thursdays belong to CSI and The Mentalist, and Sunday is Desperate Housewives. I know there are many people who can just catch an episode once in a while. Not me. I feel out of touch. Believe me, I'm one of those whose VCR (and now my PVR) has been well used.

Now, not all that time was wasted. I know that I learned a lot from my TV habit over the years. I've always enjoyed animal and science documentaries like NOVA, or Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom. That's where my knowledge and understanding of evolution and animal behaviour began, which also contributed to my agnosticism and skepticism. I also watched news shows like 60 Minutes and 20/20.

If nothing else, all of the TV shows I've watched over the years help me answer questions on Jeopardy!

This year, I've tried to minimize the hours I spend in front of our flat screen, but that still works out to be about 7 to 8 hours of shows each week. That's the equivalent of another

work day per week! No wonder I don't have enough time to get everything done.

But the realization alone has made me reconsider where I spend my time. So this past Monday night, my spouse and I went to the park instead of parking our butts on the sofa. We took the dog out to Little Mountain Park, where he ran, and we tried to follow. We learned he can be trusted off-leash in that environment, which is great. He ran until he was panting. He got to meet a few new canine friends, and we got to interact with their human companions.

I'm going to try to spend more evenings like that, instead of planted in front of that screen. And next year, I'm resolving to shrink down the list of shows even farther.

There are so many wonderful things going on in this world, that it's a shame, spending so much time watching rather than doing.

- Donna Harris

HELL EXPLAINED BY A CHEMISTRY STUDENT

The following is an actual question given on a University of Arizona chemistry mid term, and an actual answer turned in by a student.

(Ed. Note: as actual as one can expect from an email making the rounds)

The answer by one student was so 'profound' that the professor shared it with colleagues, via the Internet, which is, of course, why we now have the pleasure of enjoying it as well:

Bonus Question: Is Hell exothermic (gives off heat) or endothermic (absorbs heat)?

Most of the students wrote proofs of their beliefs using Boyle's Law (gas cools when it expands and heats when it is compressed) or some variant.

One student, however, wrote the following:

First, we need to know how the mass of Hell is

changing in time. So we need to know the rate at which souls are moving into Hell and the rate at which they are leaving, which is unlikely. I think that we can safely assume that once a soul gets to Hell, it will not leave. Therefore, no souls are leaving. As for how many souls are entering Hell, let's look at the different religions that exist in the world today.

Most of these religions state that if you are not a member of their religion, you will go to Hell. Since there is more than one of these religions and since people do not belong to more than one religion, we can project that all souls go to Hell. With birth and death rates as they are, we can expect the number of souls in Hell to increase exponentially. Now, we look at the rate of change of the volume in Hell because Boyle's Law states that in order for the temperature and pressure in Hell to stay the same, the volume of Hell has to expand proportionately as souls are added.

This gives two possibilities:

1. If Hell is expanding at a slower rate than the rate at which souls enter Hell, then the temperature and pressure in Hell will increase until all Hell breaks loose.
2. If Hell is expanding at a rate faster than the increase of souls in Hell, then the temperature and pressure will drop until Hell freezes over.

So which is it?

If we accept the postulate given to me by Teresa during my Freshman year that, 'It will be a cold day in Hell before I sleep with you,' and take into account the fact that I slept with her last night, then number two must be true, and thus I am sure that Hell is exothermic and has already frozen over. The corollary of this theory is that since Hell has frozen over, it follows that it is not accepting any more souls and is therefore, extinct..... ..leaving only Heaven, thereby proving the existence of a divine being which explains why, last night, Teresa kept shouting 'Oh my God.'

THIS STUDENT RECEIVED AN A+.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, May 8, 2010

Monthly Meeting

Location: Park West Inn, 525 Dale Blvd.,
Charleswood

Meet and Greet: 5:30 pm

Meeting / Presentation: 6:15 pm

Dinner (may be ordered from the Coffee Shop menu): 7:00 pm

Speakers/Topics: Stuart Taylor, International Development Enterprises, "Totally Pumped: Creating Income Opportunities for Poor Rural Households".

Student Representative,
Engineers Without Borders

Saturday, June 5, 2010

9th Annual Run for Rights

Location: Kildonan Park

Speaker/Topic: 8:30 a.m.

Sunday, June 6, 2010

Winnipeg Pride Festival

Location: The Forks

www.pridewinnipeg.com

June/July 2010

Summer Solstice Party & Event

Location: We are making arrangements to have a field trip out to the Fossil Discovery Center in Morden. Stay tuned for more details!

August 2010

Summer Party

Location: TBA

Saturday, September 11, 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:

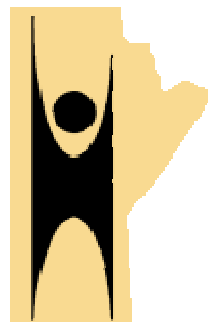
Myrna Donald
Barry Hammond
Donna Harris
Katie Higham
Jake Peters
Grant Rogerson
Sophie Shulman
Marlene Wallace
Barrie Webster

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. _____

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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.