

The Minnesota Atheist

Who Says? Why Atheists Should Care about the Progressive Religious Voice for Reproductive Justice



This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Supreme Court’s landmark Roe v. Wade ruling. Reverend Kelli Clement will be speaking at the upcoming Minnesota Atheists’ monthly meeting to discuss the importance and subsequent impact of this ruling.

Rev. Clement is the Executive Director of the Minnesota Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. A Unitarian Universalist, she is a graduate of United Theological Seminary where she was the coordinator of Seminarians for Choice, and is a part of the national speakers bureau of the Reproductive Health Technologies Project. Kelli lives with husband Mike in south Minneapolis.

If You Go...

When

Sunday, January 20, 2013

Where

Roseville Library
2180 Hamline Avenue
Roseville 55113

Schedule

1:00-1:15 Social Time
1:15-1:45 Business Meeting
1:45-2:00 Break
2:00-3:30 Clement Presentation
4:00- Dinner at Panda Garden



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**MINNESOTA ATHEISTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

board@mnatheists.org

President: August Berkshire
pres@mnatheists.org
612-338-4548

Associate President: Eric Jayne
apres@mnatheists.org

Chair: Heather Hegi
chair@mnatheists.org

Associate Chair: Robin Raianiemi
achair@mnatheists.org
612-872-0574

Treasurer: Chris Matthews
treas@mnatheists.org
763-476-3989

Secretary: Jill Carlson
sec@mnatheists.org

Director-at-Large: Caroline
Brunner, dir1@mnatheists.org

Director-at-Large: George Kane
dir2@mnatheists.org
651-488-8225

Director-at-Large: Steve
Petersen, dir3@mnatheists.org
651-484-9277

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Published by Minnesota Atheists,
P.O. Box 120304
New Brighton, MN 55112
612-588-7031, info@mnatheists.org
www.MinnesotaAtheists.org

Editorial Board, editor@mnatheists.org

James Zimmerman, editor
zgoatee@gmail.com

Chief Photographer: Richard Trombley

Membership/change of address: Steve
Petersen, address@mnatheists.org,
651-484-9277

Public Relations: Emily Matejcek,
pr@mnatheists.org

Atheists Weekly Email (AWE): George
Kane, awe@mnatheists.com

Cable: Steve Petersen,
cable@mnatheists.org, 651-484-9277

Webmaster: Grant Hermanson
web@mnatheists.org

Podcasts: Grant Hermanson,
podcast@mnatheists.org

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**Minnesota Atheists
practices positive,
inclusive, active, friendly
neighborhood atheism in
order to:**

- Provide a community for
atheists;
- Educate the public about
atheism; and
- Promote separation of state
and church.

MNA Meetup members: 1,329

Life memberships: 30

Honorary Members

- Hector Avalos, PhD
- Dan Barker
- Gerald Erickson, PhD
- Annie Laurie Gaylor
- Dick Hewetson
- Robert M. Price, PhD

Minnesota Atheists Mission Statement

Minnesota Atheists is dedicated to building a positive atheist community that actively promotes secular values through educational programs, social activities, and participation in public affairs.

President's Column

Atheism Plus Humanism



August Berkshire

When we began as the Twin Cities Chapter of American Atheists in 1984, and when we became Minnesota Atheists in 1991, we chose the word “Atheists” for three reasons. First, it is an accurate description of who we are. Second, we did not want to choose a more euphemistic word, such as “freethinker” because, in defining it, we would eventually have to admit we were atheists. We felt it was far better to start off with the truth than to hide behind another word. And finally, we chose “Atheists” because it was inclusive. For example, you could belong to any political party and still be an atheist.

As atheists, we expose the weaknesses of pro-god arguments. As part of this, we reject “supernatural” “revelation,” since it has been shown to be a failure, and accept the scientific method as the best means that humans have yet devised to understand reality. We reject “revealed” ethics in favor of naturalistic ethics based on empathy and consequences.

We also support separation of state and church. Although it is possible to be an atheist and not mind theocracy, the idea that “religion is good for society even though I personally don’t need it” seems a bit hypocritical. Moreover, history has shown that the best way to preserve the rights of both theists and atheists is to have separation of state and church.

We oppose instances where government is commandeered to promote a purely religious agenda, such as government-led or -endorsed prayer in public schools, creationism in public school science classrooms, and religious monuments on government property.

We also examine things such as civil same-sex marriage and find there are no valid secular arguments against it, only spurious religious arguments, so we have become champions of equal rights for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and

transsexuals. The same holds true for doctor-assisted, euthanasia (with appropriate safeguards that the decision is rational and voluntary).

From there we have decided to make what I consider to be the one exception to atheism and separation of state and church by supporting the pro-choice position on abortion. Other state-church separation groups, such as the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and the Secular Coalition for America (SCA), recognize that abortion is not strictly a state-church issue and have not taken a stance on it – even though there is no more staunch a feminist in the world than FFRF co-president Annie Laurie Gaylor. The reason we have taken a pro-choice position is that we think the secular pro-choice arguments outweigh the secular (and religious) anti-choice arguments. Moreover, opposition to a woman’s right to choose is almost entirely religious.

Our motto has always been “Positive Atheism in Action,” and by this we mean that we do not simply critique god-ideas but we derive a secular morality from our atheism and use it to try to make the world a better place. In this we are no different than secular humanists or the newly coined term “Atheism Plus.” But it’s not always easy deciding what the secular ethical position should be.

Recently, two of our members approached us with the suggestion that we examine the pro-vegetarian position at one of our monthly meetings. This is not a state-church issue, but, personally, I can see a connection to science, health, the environment, and secular morality – things most of us are very much interested in. Other members of our board disagree that this

Associate President's Column continued on page 6.

Join the Board

by Heather Hegi

Board Nominations are this January at the monthly public business meeting, with elections following in February. If you have any interest in helping guide Minnesota Atheists in its future endeavors and growth, please consider joining the board of Minnesota Atheists. Now is the time to ask someone to nominate you, or make sure you are qualified for next year's elections by paying dues.

There are nine board positions: President, Vice President, Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and three at-Large positions. We hope to gain interest in the at-Large positions, since that's the only position for which we are unsure if we will have any nominations. However, all of the positions are up for re-election; having choices is a good thing.



Victory Declared in War on Christmas!

Christmas continues to become more diluted and secularized. Consider the following:

August Berkshire

- Jewish and Muslim holidays have retained their religious meaning precisely because their followers have *not* tried to foist them on the rest of the public.

- People are becoming more aware of the pagan origins of Christmas.

- The percentage of Americans who are Christian continues to decline. With the increase in atheists and Muslims, polite Americans do their best not to alienate others with sectarian words like "Christmas".

- Competing celebrations are becoming more visible, such as Chanukah, Kwanzaa, and Solstice parties.

- Retail stores, which are now the drivers of this holiday, are more likely to wish people "Happy Holidays" than "Merry Christmas".

- Many stores, restaurants, and movie theaters are open on December 25th. The day is just like any other day.

- While we get presents from Santa Claus and from our parents, relatives, and friends, has anyone ever opened a present that had a label from "God" or "Jesus"?

- Upbeat secular holiday songs like "Jingle Bells" and "Winter Wonderland" are more popular than somber religious songs like "Silent Night" and "Away in a Manger".

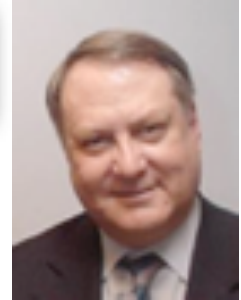
- Parties at our places of employment never occur on December 25th and are more likely to be called "Holiday" parties than "Christmas" parties.

- With divorce and remarriage being more common, different parties on different days are also more common.

- And finally, even conservative FOX TV had a *Holiday* party in 2012, not a *Christmas* party.

The War on Christmas is over, and the secular and multicultural forces have won.

News and Notes



George Kane

A sad result of November's election was the loss by Congressman Peter Stark, a Democrat from the southern region of the San Francisco Bay Area, ending a 40-year stint. As every avid secularist in America knew, Stark was Congress' only professed non-believer in a supernatural god. That role will now be filled by Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, who is also an out-of-the-closet bisexual. In Wisconsin, Tammy Baldwin won election to the Senate, defeating former Governor Tommy Thompson. Baldwin, an open lesbian, is one of several freshman legislators who refuse to state their religious affiliation.

On the whole, it was an encouraging election for atheists. Every major atheist organization, including Minnesota Atheists, strongly supports legal recognition of same-sex marriage, as the only arguments against it are based on religious beliefs, and the campaigns against it are heavily funded by churches. Until this November, same-sex marriage has been defeated in more than 30 straight elections, but the tide has now dramatically shifted. Voters in Washington, Maryland, and Maine approved same-sex marriage, while here in Minnesota the constitutional amendment to define marriage as existing only between a man and a woman was defeated. A constitutional amendment on the Florida ballot would have struck down that state's Blaine Law, and permitted direct taxpayer funding to churches. It was also defeated.

Evangelical Christians have admitted that the election was a disaster for them, and some worry that they will become marginalized. Nevertheless, liberal pundits have been too hasty to characterize the religiously unaffiliated as a permanent Democratic constituency. The category "religiously unaffiliated" has political identity only in that it excludes Evangelical Christians. It is otherwise meaningless because the political interests of atheists have nothing in common with those of self-described "spiritual God-believers" who are lumped into the category with them.

Organized atheists are Establishment Clause absolutists. We are united in our demand for separation of church and state. Those who consider themselves spiritual, but just don't count themselves as members of any particular denomination, have no such commitment. To their credit, they are not influenced by the religious

arguments against homosexuality, abortion, and contraception; on these issues we are on the same side. But opposition to government-sponsored prayer, to Ten Commandments plaques at city halls and courthouses, to creches in public parks, to "In God We Trust" on our money, and to children in public schools being asked to recite the Pledge of Allegiance including the phrase "under God" comes only from atheists. We will not count many unaffiliated spiritual God-believers who take an interest in these issues. The danger for committed secularists is that the campaign strategists will regard us as a homogeneous group and count our votes as "locked up" because of campaign support for gay and reproductive rights. Atheists must stake out a distinct political identity.

While churches are free to speak out on any issues that concern them, they may not engage in electoral campaigns or endorse candidates for office. This restriction is a condition of their tax exemption, because donations to churches are tax exempt, while donations to political campaigns are not.

Enforcement of tax law is the responsibility of the Internal Revenue Service, but for the past three years, they have not acted on complaints of partisan political activity by churches. In 2009, a federal court in Minnesota ruled that an IRS reorganization putting responsibility for authorizing tax audits of churches into the hands of low-ranking officials violated its own rules. This should be trivial to correct, but the IRS has been paralyzed by it. This intransigence has encouraged political activism by the clergy.

Since then, the conservative Alliance Defending Freedom has been encouraging clergy to endorse candidates in their sermons, in the hope of overturning the tax restriction on political campaigning in a court case. In October, the Alliance staged "Pulpit Freedom Sunday." They enlisted more than 1500 pastors who endorsed candidates from the pulpit and then sent a record of their statement to the IRS, hoping their challenge would eventually end up in court.

Solstice Celebration



Ninety-five people attended the 13th annual winter solstice celebration held by Minnesota Atheists and the Humanists of Minnesota on December 16th. For the first time, the event was held at Jimmy's Event Center in Vadnais Heights. After a banquet dinner, the Freethought Band led off the entertainment, joined by singer Tracie Hodgdon. George Kane and Laura Hutt presented a comic dialogue as George Burns and Gracie Allen (pictured on the front cover). The headline performer was Dan Barker, co-president of the Freedom from Religion Foundation, who presented several of his songs.



President's Column (continued)

is an appropriate subject for one of our main monthly meetings and believe it should instead be the focus of a Meetup.

What about human-made global warming? While we can accept it as a scientific fact, to what extent should we spend money on reducing greenhouse gasses vs. spending money adapting to a warmer climate?

Gun control? Legalizing and regulating currently illegal drugs? Legalizing prostitution? Genetically modified food? Nuclear energy? Voter Photo ID? While I think all of these subjects would make thought-provoking Meetups, should Minnesota Atheists take official positions on any of them?

As a 501(c)3 tax-exempt, nonprofit organization, we are prohibited from supporting or opposing political candidates – though there are some we would certainly oppose if we could, due to their heavily pro-theocracy positions. Neither do we support or oppose any political parties. We have members who call themselves Democrats, Republicans, Independents, Greens, Libertarians, Socialists, and Communists. There is even a new National Atheist Party, and we take no position on that either. All we ask is that

whichever political party you support, please do what you can to get them to recognize the equal citizenship of all Americans and to support separation of state and church.

Ultimately, Minnesota Atheists belongs to its members, not to the president, not to the board. We'd like to hear from you as to what issues you think we should discuss at one of our monthly meetings and what issues you think rise to the level that we as an organization should officially support or oppose them.

To review the current Minnesota Atheists policy positions, go to mnatheists.org/information/public-policy-positions. To respond to this column, please contact a Board member (see page 2). Or, send a letter to the editor to James Zimmerman at editor@mnatheists.org, or mail to Minnesota Atheists, PO Box 120304, New Brighton, MN 55112. Or, speak up at one of our business meeting that precede our regular monthly meetings (contact our chair Heather Hegi at chair@mnatheists.org if you'd like an official spot on the agenda). Or, attend one of our monthly Board meetings on the third Wednesday of the month (all members are always welcome).

Freethought Band on CD and Internet

Jerry Rauser, leader of the Freethought Band, has put together a video using music from the band's CD and pictures from the follies, picnics, banquets, and Camp Quest MN. You can view the video at YouTube by entering "Freethought Band" or by going straight to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOz1QCO_GNw.

The video shows how music functions in our community and what it can do for atheist and humanist organizations.

The Freethought Band CD has been distributed without charge to members of Minnesota Atheists. You can visit the band's website at FreethoughtBand.org to hear some of the songs, see pictures, and request the CD if you have not yet received one.

The band recorded and mixed the CD and distributed it without charge to musicians, leaders, and music lovers in freethought organizations throughout the country and in Canada as part of a project of promoting the creation of freethought music and its use in the activities and programs of atheist and humanist communities. Jerry is creating a forthcoming website (FreethoughtMusic.com) to create a network of freethought musicians, composers, and leaders and to make additional resources available.

FREETHOUGHT CRYPTOGRAM

BY GEORGE KANE

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(Answer on page 12.)

Report from the Christmas Battlefield

By Eric Jayne

A couple battles that took place during last year's War on Christmas happened in St. Paul. The first one came the Saturday after Thanksgiving at the Family Place shelter. Fourteen atheists cooked up sloppy joes, beans, and homemade cookies for about 25 shelter guests. In addition to the kitchen cooking and cleaning, we also sanitized toys in the children's play area, cleaned some of the common areas, and wiped down additional dining tables and chairs. This was immediately followed up with social time and drinks at a nearby spot in Lowertown.

The second battle happened ten days before Christmas at the Green Mill restaurant where a group of 20 atheists, armed with gifts, tape, stickers, and markers convened to wrap up requested gift items for the Children's Hospital of Minnesota.

The designated gift table at the restaurant was piled high with dolls, Matchbox cars, Play-Doh, makeup kits,



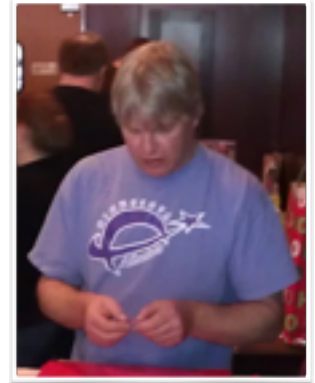
Legos, board games, books, and many other items. Before the wrapping began we joined together for a godless feast ordered from the Green Mill menu.

After lunch we got right to work and bagged up about \$500 worth of brand new toys, games, and books. Each bag was tagged with festive ribbon and a greeting from the Minnesota Atheists. The tags depicted the

Minnesota Atheists logo with the message "Happy Holidays from Your Friends at Minnesota Atheists".

The packages were then delivered by Jack Caravela and me the following





Monday (17 December) to Children's Hospital in St. Paul. The staff person at the hospital was excited to receive the gifts and told us that they will immediately start to distribute them. We will likely have a similar response if the War on Christmas continues next holiday season.



Atheists Talk: November / December Radio Report

A *theists Talk* is produced by Minnesota Atheists and directed by Carl Hancock with producers and hosts Carl Hancock, Brianne Bilyue, Scott Lohman, Greg Laden, David Pacheco, and Stephanie Zvan. Both Stephanie and Brianne upload the podcasts to the web site. The radio program is live every Sunday morning from 9:00 to 10:00 at AM950 KTNF. Live streaming can be done through our web page www.mnatheists.org. To donate just send to our PO box or online at <http://minnesotatheists.org/join-and-donate/radio-fund>. Every donation is greatly appreciated

All past programs can be accessed via MNA web page <http://minnesotatheists.org/news-and-media/podcast>. If you are interested in helping with the radio program please send a note to radio@mnatheists.org.

Recent shows included:

Campus Atheists Skeptics and Humanists, #191, October 28th.

Campus Atheists, Skeptics and Humanists – more often known as CASH to its members – is an active student group at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and an affiliate of the Secular Student Alliance. Current CASH board members Bryan Carver and Joshua Brose visited the studio to discuss their experiences with CASH and atheist activism at the University of Minnesota. Brianne Bilyue was producer, host, and interviewer.

Top American Science Questions, #192, November 4th.

For this episode, Shawn Lawrence Otto joined us to compare the candidates' answers to important science questions. Carl Hancock produced the show, Stephanie Zvan hosted and Carl Hancock and Scott Lohman conducted the interview.

Atheist Universe David Mills, #193, November 11th.

In 2006, when David Mills published *Atheist Universe*, there weren't many books like it available. Atheist books were science books and philosophy books. *Atheist Universe*,

by Steve Petersen

conversely, answers ethical issues such as: What is the meaning of life without God? It's a spellbinding inquiry that ultimately arrives at a controversial and well-documented conclusion.

For this show, Mills joined us to talk about his book and the impact it has had. Carl Hancock produced the show. Scott Lohman hosted and David Pacheco conducted the interview.

Regenesis, #194, November 18th.

Authors George Church and Ed Regis discussed their new book, *Regenesis: How Synthetic Biology Will Recreate Nature and Ourselves*. They talked about what we may expect from this future in which we have DNA sequencing and the kind of power this affords. Carl Hancock produced the show. Brianne Bilyue hosted and Carl Hancock and Greg Laden conducted the interview.

Campaign for Free Expression, #195, December 2nd.

Here in the U.S., there are places where being openly atheist can cost you your job or bring on harassment by your neighbors. In extreme cases, you may face violence from individuals, or government representatives may abuse their power to make your life difficult. You may have to push the government to give you all the protections it promises.

That's here, where we have the First Amendment to back us up.

Michael De Dora, Director of the Center for Inquiry's Office of Public Policy and their UN Representative, is fighting hard against laws like these, as well as to bring science and secularism to U.S. policy and law-making. For this show, he discussed his work. Stephanie Zvan produced and hosted the show and conducted the interview.

Imaginary Friend, #196, December 9th.

Perhaps no character in literary history has gone as quickly from cherished hero to reviled villain as Franklin Whitestone of Douglas Whaley's novel, *Imaginary Friend*.

If you have ever suffered social rejection or for your non-belief, *Imaginary Friend* will haunt

Radio Report (continued)



you. Franklin's detractors spout familiar religious criticisms of atheism, but Whaley's characters are complex; they have minds and flaws of their own, and don't always respond in the way we wish they would. The story is thrilling, heartbreaking, at times infuriating, and always hard to set down. Douglas Whaley joined us this morning to discuss his book. Carl Hancock produced the show and conducted the interview. Brianne Bilyue hosted.

Dan Barker, #197, December 16th.

Our guest this week was Dan Barker, co-President of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The nonprofit Freedom From Religion Foundation works to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism, and to promote the constitutional principle of separation between church and state. The Foundation is the nation's largest association of freethinkers (atheists, agnostics and skeptics) with over 18,000 members.

Since 1978, the Foundation has acted on countless violations of the separation of state and church, and has taken and won many significant complaints and important lawsuits to end state/church entanglements.

Dan is also an author, atheist spokesperson, and musician. Steve Petersen produced the show. Stephanie Zvan hosted and August Berkshire conducted the interview.

Atheists Talk Holiday Special, #198, December 23rd.

For this show, we talked about what we do, as atheists, when everyone else is celebrating Christmas or Ramadan or Yule or making a big deal out of Hannukah for the sake of the children or going out for Chinese food and a movie.

Questions discussed included: Do you keep the old traditions minus the churchy bits? Do you still go to church for some reason? Does Santa visit? Do you do a big family meal? Do the people you spend the holidays with know you're atheist? Do you decorate? If you do, what kinds of symbols do you include? What new traditions have you carved for yourself? What movies define this time of year for you? How do you really feel about Christmas music? What's the most unholy holiday you've ever had? Stephanie Zvan produced, hosted, and conducted the interviews for this show.



ATHEISTS' RESPONSE TO SANDY HOOK

Even though the world didn't come to an end last year, 2012 concluded with a horrible tragedy in Connecticut that deeply disturbed people all around the world. I was so personally distraught from following the events through news reports that I had to reach for my tissues while trying to concentrate with work.

The appeals to God and calls for prayer immediately spread through social and mainstream media. The shooter and his actions were described as "evil" while the young victims were claimed to now be "angels" in heaven. Not only are these descriptions inaccurate, but they severely hinder progress to solutions.

While I completely understand and appreciate why those who have been directly affected by tragedy would latch on to a belief that promises a reunion in the afterlife, it is irresponsible for the media and rest of us to embrace. Folding hands during telepathic communication to an imaginary force might be a great coping mechanism for grieving individuals but it does nothing to reduce further violent acts and that is precisely what the rest of us need to focus on. Atheists, more than any other group, should be able to understand this idea. We know that nothing matters more than events which happen in the material, corporeal world and we also understand—again, more than any other group—that only we the living can reduce violence and other threats to our well-being.

Painful as it may be, we should struggle and accept the fact that twenty young elementary school children (some as young as six years old) were violently killed in a senseless mass shooting. We need to struggle with the reality that they are forever dead. They are not in heaven, they are not with loved ones or Jesus, and they will never be

held in the arms of their parents again. It seems to me that if we acknowledge these very sad, but very true, facts as a society then we increase our collective incentive to address the harmful elements that plague our one and only life.

Instead of assuring each other that the slain children are in "a better place" to make ourselves feel better we should think about ways to solve problems and be open to different ideas through respectful and reasonable dialogue. Wouldn't it be refreshing if our friends and policymakers invited us to think with them about solutions instead of inviting us to pray about them? I truly cannot think of a better way to individually and collectively cope than through thinking and doing.

Since the discussion about gun violence has become politically charged I will not share my own ideas in this non-partisan article, but whatever the solution might be to bring about a reduction to gun violence it will not come from prostrating or reassuring each other of an afterlife. It will not come from attributing blame to supernatural evil or secularizing schools. It will not come from candle lit prayer vigils or rationalizing beliefs in a benevolent, omnipotent god. It will not come from invoking any dogma, religious or secular. It will come only from thinking, discussing, understanding, and doing.



Eric Jayne

Question with boldness even the existence of a God, because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear.

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to his nephew Peter Carr from Paris, August 10, 1787

Book Review: *Damned Good Company*

by James Zimmerman

In *Damned Good Company*, part-time historian and religion student Luis Granados takes readers across continents and centuries to find fascinating tales of fellow humans who bucked the religious trends of their day.

Each of the copiously annotated twenty chapters in the book is set up as a rebel-versus-religious case. There are the more famous examples – such as Clarence Darrow vs. William Jennings Bryan and Thomas Paine vs. Talleyrand – but there are also many less well-known stories here. In some chapter, Granados pits the rebel not against another human, but a group of humans (“Voltaire vs. the Jesuits”) and sometimes the rebel is even at odds with a non-human (such as Chapter 16, “Caroline vs. Smallpox”). And in at least one chapter, the opposing sides aren’t really in opposition at all; Granados begins Chapter 17, “Nehru vs. Gandhi,” by admitting, “Most of the conflicts in this book are between people who loathed one another...Not so with Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohandas Gandhi. Not only did they struggle together for a common goal, but they had a deep bond of affection” (page 297).

But that’s okay for this book; a book, Granados states in his introduction, that’s “about people, not about God” (1). He thus aspires, instead, to tell readers stories of people who stood up and defied those who used their religious beliefs to justify their policies and actions. Not all the rebels are atheists, of course, they are just people who understood reason and logic were better means for living or governing than faith in a deity.

Notable, memorable stories include those of Queen Caroline, who turned down the

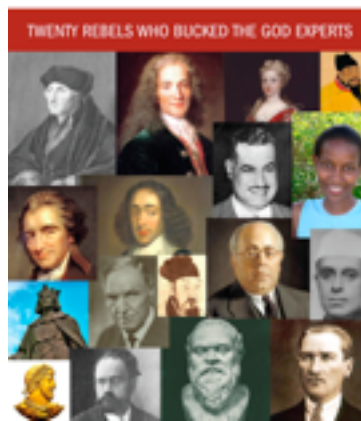
opportunity to become Empress of Austria because it came with the caveat of converting to Catholicism and then went on to defy the Vatican when she inoculated her family against smallpox. This led to widespread acceptance of vaccination in protestant Europe. Of equal interest is a chapters on Gamal Nasser, who struggled to bring Egypt from the backwards theocracy it was to more modern, enlightened sensibilities. His efforts are juxtaposed with his contemporary, David Ben-Guiron, who was leveraging sympathy for the Holocaust to carve out a Jewish theology by unleashing “a campaign of sabotage and murder, in cooperation with Jewish bomb squads” (321). The only chapter that doesn’t seem to fit is the final one, in which Granados relates the highlights of Ayaan Hirsi Ali’s life with those of President Obama’s. The connection between these two, unlike all the other pairings in the book, is a tenuous stretch.

Each chapter concludes with a gray box containing a question designed to provoke more thinking about the story just concluded. The boxes direct readers to the website discuss.humanistpress.com/categories/damned-good-company. A quick review of the site shows the questions have been pasted word-for-word onto the page (including the wording inviting people to visit the site!) and, as of this writing, there are no responses to any question.

Regardless, Granados writes a sweeping book filled with appealing tales of charismatic characters who fought for reason. I suggest you buy a copy and take a look for yourself.

DAMNED GOOD COMPANY

LUIS GRANADOS



Damned Good Company
by Luis Granados, 382 pages
Humanist Press, ©2012

November and December Atheists Talk Television Show Report

by Steve Petersen

In November, we recorded one program, "The War on Science." In this program, Stephanie Zvan interviewed Greg Laden about the historical begins of the war on science and how this continues today. Laden starts with Darwin's time and evolution, the theory that



caused many religious people to fight science and the theory of Evolution because their creation myth was not compatible and so the war began and continues today.

We recorded two programs in December. During part one, guest Rohit Ravindran discussed his background and the points in his life that brought him to atheism. He then explained how, from a philosophical standpoint, the logic that led him to atheism also led him to veganism. Rohit detailed the violence inherent in factory farms and shared a video of covertly recorded footage from inside one such factory. James Zimmerman hosted.

In part two, Rohit Ravindran continued his discussion of eating conscientiously. He explained the ethics involved in deciding what to, and what not to, eat. Host James Zimmerman aired several common objections to vegetarianism, and Rohit explained the common responses. He also explained the benefits of a non-meat diet from environmental and health perspectives. Rohit shared his favorite books on the topic, and noted a couple local vegan groups to help viewers learn more.

If you have an interest in being on a program or would like to sponsor the program on your local cable access station please

contact Steve Petersen at 651-484-9277 or spetersen175@comcast.net.

Cable Crew: George Kane, Brett Stembridge, Shirley Moll, Steve Petersen, Wendy Steinberg, Grant Hermanson, and Art Anderson.

Podcasts: MinnesotaAtheists.org. Available via iTunes and YouTube. Made possible by Grant Hermanson.

Television Schedule:

Burnsville/Eagan Community Television: Channel 14. Check their web site www.bect.tv for day and times. Sponsor: Kevin Hardisty.



Bloomington: Channel 16. Sunday 11:00 pm. Sponsors: David and Joanne Beardsley.

Minneapolis: Channel 17. Saturday 8:30 pm. Sponsor: Steve Petersen.

Rochester: Channel 10. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 7:30 pm. Sponsor: Jim Salutz.

Roseville, Shoreview, Arden Hills, North Oaks, Little Canada, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Moundsview/New Brighton: Channel 14. Wednesday 10:30 pm. Sponsor: Shirley Moll.

St. Cloud: Channel 12. Thursday 8:30 to 9:00 pm. Sponsor Tom Stavros.

St. Paul: Channel 15. Wednesday 5:00 pm. Sponsor: Jim Wright.

Stillwater: Channel 16. Tuesday 7:00 pm. and Wednesday 9:00 a.m. Sponsor: Lee Salisbury.

White Bear Lake, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Mahtomedi, Maplewood, North St. Paul, Oakdale, Vadnais Heights: Channel 15. Saturday 7:30 pm. Sponsor: Michael Seliga.

Minnesota Atheists

www.mnatheists.org

P.O. Box 120304, New Brighton, MN 55112

CHECK THE WAYS YOU WANT TO HELP ATHEISM GROW

Minnesota Atheists has IRS 501(c)(3) status. All contributions are tax-deductible.

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_____ \$90 - 3 years for Individual

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Check (enclosed) for \$ _____, payable to **Minnesota Atheists**.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

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\$ _____ General Expense/Outreach Fund

\$ _____ Building Fund

\$ _____ Radio Program

Other than students, please let us know if you wish to receive your newsletter by e-mail or regular mail. If you prefer e-mail, please add your e-mail address: _____

Things to Do, Places to Go: A Calendar for Atheists

In addition to these regularly scheduled events, there are many more events every month. Please subscribe to Atheist Weekly e-mail on our web site, mnatheists.org, and join our Meetup group.

Sundays, 9:00am-10:00am *Atheists Talk* Radio. AM 950 KTNF in the Twin Cities or stream live at <http://www.am950ktnf.com>. Contact us during the show with questions or comments at (952) 946-6205 or radio@mnatheists.org.

Sundays, 6:00pm-7:00pm Atheist/Agnostic Alcoholics Anonymous. Men's Center, 3249 Hennepin Avenue South Suite # 55, Minneapolis Meet in the basement. Open to all genders.

2nd Sundays, 1:00pm Minnesota Atheists Little Canada Book Club, Caribou Coffee 3354 Rice St, Little Canada, MN 55126

3rd Sundays, September through May, 1:00pm-4:00pm. Minnesota Atheists Public Meeting. Various libraries. Business meeting, educational program and dinner afterwards at a nearby restaurant.

5th Sundays, 5:00pm (July, September, December). Flying Spaghetti Monster Dinner. Old Spaghetti Factory, 233 Park Ave., Minneapolis. Get together for drinks and pasta.

1st & 3rd Mondays 6:00pm Freethought Toastmasters. Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1276 Larpenteur Ave. W, St. Paul 55113. George Kane, dir2@mnatheists.org.

2nd and 4th Mondays, 5:00pm-7:00pm Freethought Dinner Social. Davanni's, 8605 Lyndale Avenue South, Bloomington, MN. For more information call Bob or Marilyn Neinker at 612-866-6200.

1st Tuesdays, 11:30am-1:00pm Freethought Lunch. Old Country Buffet, County Road B2 between Fairview and Snelling. Bob or Marilyn Nienkirk at 612-866-6200.

4th Tuesdays, 7:00pm Maple Grove Book Club. Byerly's Meeting Room - 12880 Elm Creek Blvd N Maple Grove, MN 55369

Every other Tuesday, 7:00pm Secular Bible Study. Various locations. See the Meetup page <http://www.meetup.com/Secular-Bible-Study/>.

1st Wednesdays, 7:00pm Minnesota Atheists Burnsville Book Club. Davanni's, 14639 County Road 11, Burnsville MN 55337. Meet in the Party Room.

3rd Wednesdays, 11:30am-2pm Lunch at Dragon House Restaurant. Dragon House Restaurant 3970 Central Avenue Columbia Heights. Private room reserved. Bill Volna 612-781-1420

3rd Wednesdays, 6:30pm Minnesota Atheists Monthly Board Meeting. Party Room, 1276 Larpenteur Avenue, St. Paul, 55113. Open to all members. George Kane, dir2@mnatheists.org.

1st Thursdays, 6:00pm-9:00pm *Atheists Talk* television show. MTN Studio A, 125 SE Main Street, Minneapolis. Steve Petersen at 651-484-9277.

To sign up for the Atheists' Weekly Email (AWE), send a request to awe@mnatheists.org.

To sign up for Minnesota Atheists Meetups, visit atheists.meetup.com/493.



To learn who rules over you, simply find out
who you are not allowed to criticize.

-Voltaire

**Check us out on the radio!
AM 950 KTFN**