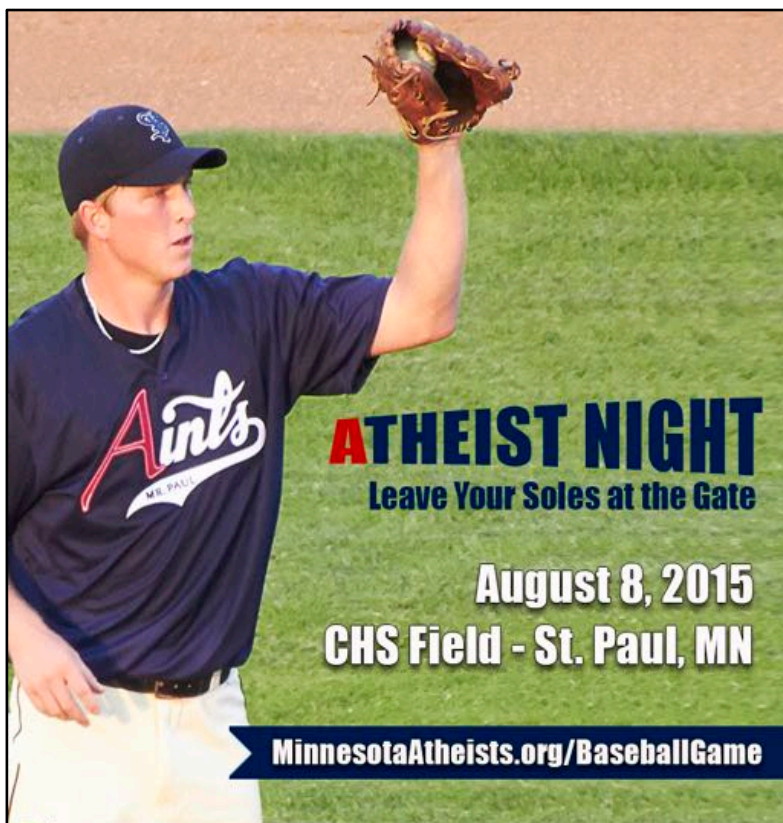


July/August 2015
Volume 25
Number 7

The Minnesota Atheist

Leave Your Soles at the Gate: A Shoe Drive
Presented by Minnesota Atheists and Foundation Beyond Belief



St. Paul Saints are secularized to the MR. PAUL AINTS!



Bring your gently used shoes to the game for donation to **Soles4Souls** – a secular nonprofit that will distribute the shoes to those in need.

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Tickets Now Available!

\$10 – General Admission + St. Paul Saints hat
\$20 – Infield (Infidel) Reserved + St. Paul Saints hat

Tickets: SaintsGroups.com
Password: soles

President's Column –

By Eric Jayne

The only professional baseball team in the world that offers “Atheist Night” has evidently been blessed by the baseball gods because not only are the St. Paul Saints leading their division but they have the best record in the entire American Association league! Their home games have been consistently selling out and their brand new downtown stadium, which just opened this year, has gained a national reputation as one of the finest ball parks in the country.

Come with me and experience the secular glory at heavenly CHS Field on August 8 for an *unbelievably* fun night with the St. Paul Saints as the Minnesota Atheists and Foundation Beyond Belief take over the beloved minor league team.

We are re-branding the players’ jerseys to something more secular. Instead of St. Paul, it’s “Mr. Paul” and instead of Saints, it’s Aints. The “S” will be covered on Saints signs throughout the new stadium, and we’ll have a resource table, hosted by Minnesota Atheists volunteers, to welcome fans as they walk through the gate. There will also be a large bin at the gate to collect “soles” for the shoe drive we are organizing with Soles4Souls (a 501c3 secular nonprofit).

Last year’s game was a dramatic contest against Kansas City in which the Saints (“Aints”) came from behind to tie it up in the bottom of the 9th inning. Then, with one out and two runners on base in the bottom of the 11th inning, Saints (“Aints”) slugger Angelo Songco hit a walk-off single for the win which was the first for the Mr. Paul Aints (they lost to Amarillo in 2012 and Sioux City in 2013).

Of course, the actual game accounts for only a small portion of the overall experience. Most of what makes a baseball game with this particular team a fun experience is what happens elsewhere in the stadium during game play and on the field between innings. We will be working with the Saints team again this year to present entertaining atheist-themed antics, and this year it will be easier to see and hear what’s going on because, unlike Midway Stadium (where the team used to play), CHS Field offers seats and bleachers that are better positioned and closer to the field, a state of the art high-definition scoreboard, and a crystal clear sound system.

I think the pregame tailgating party is one of the best parts to this entire experience. Even though we don’t have a designated space like we had at the Midway Stadium parking lot, a couple people have volunteered to arrive early and park their cars right next to each other at a nearby parking ramp that the city of St. Paul approved for Saints games tailgating. We’ll start the tailgating party at 4pm, and you’ll want to bring your own chair if you want to sit. The Saints tailgating lot is located at the corner of the newly created Lafayette St. and Prince St., just off Kellogg Blvd.

Tickets are available through our ticket portal at SaintsGroups.com (password “soles”). General admission in the outfield is \$10 and the Infield—or *Infidel*—Reserved seats are \$20. Both tickets come with a free St. Paul Saints hat and the Minnesota Atheists receive a small profit from those ticket sales.

The player-worn jerseys will be autographed and up for live auction during the game. Auction bidding will close at the 7th inning. The net profits from the player-worn jerseys will go to Minnesota Atheists and the Family Place shelter which serves local families without permanent housing, and where Minnesota Atheists volunteers prepare meals once per month. You can order your own customized jersey (name and up to 2-digit number) for \$69. You can also purchase Mr. Paul Aints t-shirts and hats anytime, but the personalized jerseys need to be ordered by July 17. These orders can be placed at MinnesotaAtheists.org/store or by sending a check or money order to P.O. Box 120304, New Brighton, MN 55112.

The Minnesota Atheists organization is an all-volunteer run 501(c)3 nonprofit (non-prophet) and member of the Beyond Belief Network whose mission states that *“There’s no supernatural power to make this world a better place. It’s up to us.”* We rely on paid membership and donations to operate all of our efforts including this baseball game, our weekly radio show on KTNF AM 950, public outreach, web hosting fees, and so much more. If you’re not a paid member, please consider becoming one. And if you are a member, please consider serving on our board of directors and/or becoming involved in one of our many committees.



News and Notes

By George Kane

On May 27, Taslima Nasrin furtively left the safe house in New Delhi where she has lived for eight years, and took a flight to the United States. Her hasty departure from India, funded and orchestrated by the Center for Inquiry, was an escape from death threats by Islamist groups. Nasrin, a humanist, feminist and human rights activist, is an associate editor and frequent contributor for CFI's magazine *Free Inquiry*. She has traveled to the United States several times in the past, to speak at conferences held by CFI, American Atheists and the Freedom from Religion Foundation.

Nasrin was forced to flee her native Bangladesh in 1994 after her novel *Lajja (Shame)* was banned. In it, she called for changes to the Quran, leading to Muslim groups issuing death threats against her. She lived in Europe for ten years, then returned to more familiar environs. She took up residence at a secret location in Kolkata, capital of West Bengal, India, where her native language was spoken. In 2007, after violent demonstrations in the streets of Kolkata demanding her expulsion from the country, and a Muslim cleric in the city announced a bounty on her head, Indian authorities moved her to the safe house in New Delhi where she had lived until last week.

CFI jumped to action when they learned that that a hit squad of the *al Qaeda*-related Bangladeshi terrorist group *Ansarullah Bangla* was plotting to cross over to India to kill her. She has been the object of death threats for two decades, but the concern has magnified since three atheist bloggers were murdered on the streets of Bangladesh this year.

This represents an escalation of a campaign of assassinations of atheists in Bangladesh that has been going on for years. In 2013 a list of more than 80 people identified as atheists was published in the newspaper *Amar Desh (My Country)*, including the real names and addresses of bloggers writing under pen names. The paper reportedly waged a hate campaign against atheists, alleging that they were plotting to destroy mosques and

that their ultimate objective was to eliminate Islam.

Later in 2013 two people on the list were brutally murdered. The government at first pledged to bring the assassins to justice, but the political unpopularity of supporting atheists brought the investigations to a halt. Instead, several atheist bloggers were jailed for "offending religious sensibilities," while Muslim demonstrators were free to shout loudly and often that nonbelievers should be executed.

As is often the case, the roots of religious violence are political; religion is just the politician's tool to inflame the masses. The *jihad* against atheists dates back to the time of formation of Bangladesh. The currently ruling, nominally secular *Awami* League party sought to try local collaborators of the 1971 genocide that marked the violent birth of the nation. The accused are aging leaders from the largest Islamist party, the *Jamaat-e-Islami*. In the years since independence, military dictators have rehabilitated them for political gain. Some have even served as government ministers for the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which ruled between 2001 and 2006. The powerful positions of the accused caused many to fear that they would escape justice.

The supporters of the planned trials included prominent atheists, who were politically vocal and visible in large demonstrations. There was widespread hope that executing the war criminals could bring religious violence to an end.

The response to these protests was swift and vengeful. The BNP is ideologically wedded to the inviolability of the country's Islamic identity. Opponents of the protests ran a campaign spearheaded in *Amar Desh* characterizing all of the supporters of war crime trials as atheists.

CFI has established a Freethought Emergency Fund to help Taslima Nasrin and other atheist writers who have received death threats and asked for assistance. You can donate to this fund at <https://secure.centerforinquiry.net/freethought-rescue>. The Freedom from Religion Foundation has given Nasrin a \$20,000 grant from its Atheists in Foxholes Support Fund.

George Kane **Cryptogram**

Xm xpyat xpnx xpl cgdlc mu xpl gayhlcql sydd cga xm re nqqyqxnajl
nao zlao xpl dnsq mu anxgcl umc rl yq xpl plyipx mu nccminajl. Xpnx
yrbdylq xpnx lhlcemal ldql yq ol-qlldljxlo, gaunhmclo ze Imo, nao xpnx
Y nr qbljynd, nzmhl yx ndd.

Ona Znctlc, Dmqyai Unyxp ya Unyxp: Ucmr Bclnjplc xm Nxplyqx

Join us for the Family Friendly Freethought Picnics!

This year they will be at:

The Wabun Picnic Area, Shelter B (Minnehaha Park)
4655 46th Ave S
Minneapolis, MN

We will be in a modern picnic shelter with children's tables, sufficient electric outlets, and in close proximity to bathrooms. Also in close proximity are a wading pool, a playground, and Disc Golf.

The picnic is a potluck so bring a dish if you can and enjoy the variety of dishes that people bring. Be sure to bring your own beverages. Plates and utensils will be available, but to reduce waste, feel free to bring your own.

Rain or shine, the picnics will take place the following dates featuring the following sponsors:

- **Sunday, July 19th at Noon - Humanists of Minnesota**
- **Sunday, August 16th at Noon - Minnesota Atheists**
-

The shelter is reserved from 9am – 3pm for all three dates.

This facility is friendly to multiple methods of transportation:

Car – Free Parking Lots

Light Rail – just a mile from the Hiawatha Ave & E 46th St Blue Line Station

Nice Ride – half a mile from the bike rental station

Bus – served by busses 23, 46, 74, & 84 (stops in close proximity) and buses 7, 9, 46, 74, & 84 (stops near Minnehaha Ave & E 46th St)





Secular Women Work

Minneapolis, August 21 - 23, 2015

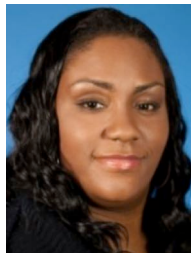
Humphrey School of Public Affairs - 301 19th Ave S, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Our full slate of speakers includes:



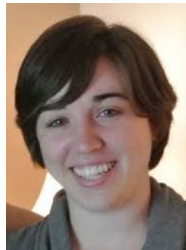
Desiree Schell

is a union organizer who is passionate about effective activism. Here, she tells us how she ended up an activist, why measuring our results is so important, and what topics she'd like to see activists tackle.



Mandisa Thomas

is the president and founder of Black Nonbelievers, Inc. She also has a new project called New Turn which provides help for ex-convicts, at-risk juveniles and individuals who are at a general education and economic disadvantage by developing critical thinking and practical instruction and skills, as well as maximize entrepreneurial capability."



Lauren Lane

is founder and on-going organizer of Skepticon, the Midwest's largest Skeptic Conference. Here's a little bit about how Lauren got started and what she's looking forward to at Secular Women Work.

Registration is now open for the Secular Women Work conference!

Registration: \$125

Student rate: \$35

Register at: MinnesotaAtheists.org/store

Online registration ends on July 20th.

If you already got tickets through the January-February Kickstarter, you're good to go (there's no physical ticket). Thank you for being a part of making the conference happen!

More detailed information on page 6.



If you missed getting tickets for the summer conference, you still have a chance to attend. Tickets for the three-day conference are available in the Minnesota Atheists online store (<http://mnatheists.org/store>).

With the Secular Women Work Conference, August 21–23 in the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota Atheists is shaking things up from our usual conference format. We've teamed up with Campus Atheists, Skeptics, and Humanists and Secular Woman to bring you a conference by activists and for activists.

The Secular Women Work conference will be heavy on skill-building and problem-solving workshops, with panels and speakers covering specialist topics. All workshop leaders, panelists, and speakers are seasoned activists themselves.

During our February Kickstarter for the conference, we announced speakers Mandisa Thomas, founder of Black Nonbelievers, Inc.; Desiree Schell, union organizer and host of *Science for the People*; and Lauren Lane, co-founder of Skepticon. We are excited to announce the following additional speakers:

- Debbie Goddard, Director of Outreach for Center for Inquiry and Director of African Americans for Humanism
- Amy Monsky, Executive Director of Atheist Alliance of America
- Heather Hegi, past Board Chair and current Secretary of Minnesota Atheists
- Monette Richards, President of the Center for Inquiry, Northeast Ohio and director of Secular Woman
- Stephanie Montgomery, Vice President of Secular Avenue
- Miri Mogilevsky, co-founder of Help Without Heaven

That's just a sample, and we're confirming more speakers and workshop leaders as we go to press. Keep an eye on the conference website at <http://secularwomenwork.org/> for more updates.



While you're there, check out what we'll be talking about at the conference. We'll have talks, panels, and workshops on such topics as:

- The current challenges facing the secular movement
- Activism for newbies
- Assertive communication
- Avoiding burnout
- Lobbying
- Getting the most out of your social media
- Managing volunteers
- Fundraising
- Making sure your activism is effective
- Reproductive justice activism beyond clinic escorting
- Building inclusive communities

And plenty more.

This is the biggest, most ambitious conference Minnesota Atheists has put on. Don't miss out. Buy your tickets today!

Walking the Tightrope

by PZ Myers, reprinted from <http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/> with permission.

Sarah Haider gives a really good talk. Here she is talking about “Islam and the Necessity of Liberal Critique” ...and I agree so much with what she says. (See the video at <https://youtu.be/OpIC24YuoJk>)

She really pins down a current problem: that even those of us who think Christianity and Islam are bad ideas have difficulty treating them with equal antipathy. On the left, we hold back on our criticisms of Islam, for reasons. And she does a fine job of articulating those reasons.

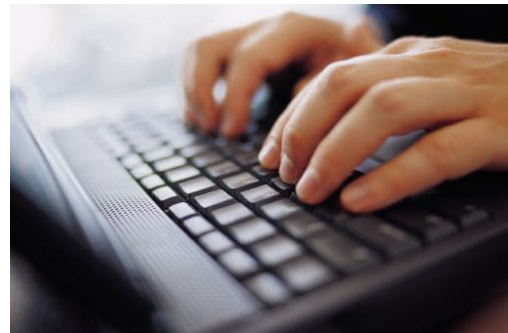
One important point is the “difficulty of separating criticism of an idea from hatred towards the people holding it.” It’s quite clear in my head that, as she says, the “primary victims of Islamism are Muslims”, and that to help Muslims, we ought to be helping them break free of a patriarchal and intolerant religion, but at the same time that feels damned patronizing. She also mentions Western guilt at the legacy of colonialism — that we feel we have no right to criticize brown people, and that’s true. But as she also points out, the Enlightenment is not the possession of the West, and that there have been a great many liberalizers and reformers within Islam who have been working (often for too short a time before they are murdered) with the Muslim world, and we ought to be supporting them.

Another concern she mentions, and this is one that worries me a lot, is the “fear that the truth will empower the worst of us.” While we aspire to oppose the idea of Islam while supporting the humanity of Muslims, there are among us people who are literally opponents of the right of Muslims to even exist. I do not want to be confused with Pamela Geller or the gun fondlers holding a “freedom of speech” rally while holding guns. We are polarized: one side wants to give people autonomy and respect their choices, even their bad ones, while the other wants to nuke Iran. It makes it even more difficult to point to the evils of the Qu’ran when doing so is cheered by militarists and anti-immigrant forces that want to use the wickedness of religion selectively, to oppress non-Christians.

It also doesn’t help that there are people on the left, our allies, who are so concerned with defending the rights of Muslims (which I support!) that they overlook the crimes provoked by Islam, to the point that, for instance, supporting Charlie Hebdo is regarded as evidence of Islamophobia. That’s nonsense. I can condemn the murders of cartoonists, and the fact that I do not add any kind of qualifying “but” does not make me Pam Geller’s fellow traveler. It means that I reject any and all excuses for violent intolerance.

But, as Haider asks, “can we not stand against all oppressions, stand for equal rights while simultaneously working against bigoted narratives within religion?” I think we can. It’s just hard and requires walking a narrow tightrope. It does mean, of necessity, that us white Western opponents of Islamic idiocy do need to add careful qualifiers when speaking about Islam that are not necessary when discussing Catholicism or Protestantism.

That’s OK. There is an unavoidable asymmetry in our relationship to the various world religions. It should not prevent us from making that liberal critique of religions outside our shores.



If you would like to respond to something you saw in *The Minnesota Atheist*, please send it to:

editor@mnatheists.org

We value your thoughts. Thank you.

Cryptogram Answer

To think that the ruler of the universe will run to my assistance and bend the laws of nature for me is the height of arrogance. That implies that everyone else is de-selected, unfavored by God, and that I am special, above it all.

Dan Barker, *Losing Faith in Faith: From Preacher to Atheist*

Treasury Report

April - May

Baseball Game Fund

Jack Caravela	\$25
Total Baseball Game Fund	\$25

Total Income:	\$1,183
Current Building Fund Total	\$134,105

Radio Fund

George Kane	\$200
Nancy Ruhland	\$100
Mike Haubrich	\$60
Mark Paquette	\$30
James Barri	\$25
Francis Leckie	\$25
Steve Petersen	\$25
Richard Taylor	\$20
Janice Scofield	\$15
Total Radio Fund	\$500

Top Expenses

Radio Show	\$1,025
Newsletter Printing	\$873
T-Shirts	\$526

General/Visibility Fund

Caroline Brunner	\$200
Kenneth Holmbeck	\$110
Lee Salisbury	\$100
Peter Dodge	\$100
Michelle Tjernagel	\$60
Todd Fogelberg	\$25
Justine Hartz	\$23
anonymous	\$20
Tom Stavros	\$15
Joel Bartos	\$5
Total General/Visibility Fund	\$658



ATHEIST NIGHT

Presented by Minnesota Atheists & Foundation Beyond Belief

Leave Your Soles at the Gate

August 8, 2015

CHS Field - St. Paul, MN

Bring your gently used shoes to the game
for donation to those in need

Tickets & Info:
MinnesotaAtheists.org/BaseballGame



Secretary's Report – May

By Heather Hegi

- A motion was made and approved to spend \$80 to register for the Twin Cities Book Festival.
- Camp Quest is in need of female counselors. We agreed to advertise this volunteer opportunity on our facebook page and group.
- A motion was made and approved that we pay the invoice up to \$300 for the previously ordered Aints T-Shirts.
- A motion was made and approved that we spend up to \$900 for Aints Jerseys for the players only. (costs to be recouped with the auctioning of the jerseys)
- A motion was made and approved to buy 50 more Aints T-Shirts contingent on the Saints Store being willing to sell them at the game.

Complete meeting minutes are available to dues paying members by contacting Heather at sec@mnatheists.org

Call for September Articles

We welcome contributions from all readers of *The Minnesota Atheist*. While we cannot guarantee that your submission will be accepted for publication, we will carefully consider anything that is related to atheism. We would especially like to receive contributions which provide profiles of individual atheists and which report atheist-related events in the wider community.

Because we are a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, we cannot print articles that support or oppose a specific candidate, but we can print articles that support or oppose specific causes. Article length should ideally be 500-1000 words and no more than 2000 words.

Please send submissions to the editor, Jenny Nolan at editor@mnatheists.org by 11:59pm on August 22. All submissions may be edited for style and length.

We look forward to receiving your submissions. Without contributions from readers like you, *The Minnesota Atheist* would be needlessly constrained in its breadth and depth.

2015 Pride Celebration

By Heather Hegi

Pride festivities were celebrated by Minnesota Atheists over the weekend of June 27-28. At our booth at the pride festival we informed and answered questions about Minnesota Atheists to those who stopped by. We collected many names of those who wanted to be on our email list and/or receive a free sample of our newsletter. We also collected signatures from the non-religious and as well as the religious who supported our cause to have wedding celebrants without having to falsely call ourselves a religion.

We marched in the Pride Parade on Sunday. About 30 atheists showed up to march with us. As always, we gave out many hugs and displayed positive atheism in action with boards featuring sayings such as "Smile, there is no hell" or "You look just like an atheist". More pictures on page 12.



Cable Report

By Steve Petersen

For our June taping Grant Steves was interviewed by Jack Caravela for two programs: 1) Religion Beyond Christianity and 2) Using Science to Study Religion. Both programs are already in our cable play system and should be on our YouTube Channel and Itunes soon.

If you would like to see if a program could be shown in your area, or you have a program idea, please contact Steve Petersen at address@mnatheists.org

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

Podcasts: MinnesotaAtheists.org. Available via Itunes and YouTube which are made possible by Grant Hermanson. To date, our channel has had over 134,000 downloads.



Grant Steves and Jack Caravela

Cable Schedule

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

Bloomington: Ch. 16. Sunday 11:00 p.m. Sponsors: David and Joanne Beardsley

Minneapolis: Ch. 75. Monday 7:00 p.m. Sponsor: Steve Petersen

Northwest Community Television (NWCT) Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Golden Valley, Maple Grove, New Hope, Osseo, Plymouth and Robbinsdale, Ch. 20. Check web page for date and times: nwct.org/programming.aspx Sponsor: Grant Hermanson

Rochester: Ch. 10. Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 7:30 p.m. Sponsor: Jim Salutz

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

St. Cloud: Ch. 12. Thursday 8:30 to 9:00 p.m. Sponsor: Tom Stavros

St. Paul: Ch. 15. Wednesdays 5:00 p.m. Sponsor: Jim Wright

Stillwater: Ch., 16. Tuesday 7:00 p.m.; Wednesday 9:00 a.m. Sponsor: Lee Salisbury

White Bear Lake, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Mahtomedi, Maplewood, North St. Paul, Oakdale, Vadnais Heights: Ch. 15. Saturday 8:00 p.m. Sponsor: Michael Seliga

Fortney Road: Love Death and Deception in a Christian Cult, by Jeff C. Stevenson

By Mike Haubrich

I came to be a Fundamentalist Christian in the 1970s. I had been raised a Catholic, so what I mean is that I became a Jesus Freak of sorts in the 1970s and the reason had to do more with music than any sort of spiritual hunger not satisfied by the sacraments. I wanted to learn how to play the bass guitar and the only opportunity that I had was through joining the only live performance musical group in Hallock, Minnesota during that time. Some teens are seduced into religion because of a boy or a girl they want to spend time with. I was seduced by my desire to alter the low E, A, D and G strings of my Fender MusicMaster Bass.

I joined the Good News Generation Singers, a Christian Folk group, because they didn't have a bass player. They needed a bass player. I taught myself to play while keeping the volume real low until I had gained confidence to turn it up. Along the way, I started praying with the group and finally found Jesus at a Lundstrom's Family gospel concert in Grand Forks, North Dakota. I started listening to Christian Rock. For the most part, it wasn't very good music, but being a Jesus Freak I had to put my old ways behind me. I discovered that there were some exceptional Christian rockers; Larry Norman, Randy Stonehill, Love Song, and Resurrection Band were among my favorites. But I wish I had known the music of the All Saved Freak Band.

The best musician among the All Saved Freak Band was Glenn Schwarz who had been with The James Gang in Cleveland and with PG&E in Los Angeles. Just as they were getting big, Glenn left PG&E in order to join a commune in Ohio, led by the charismatic preacher man, Larry Hill.

Fortney Road: Love, Death and Deception in a Christian Cult, is the tale of the commune and church founded and ruled over by the preacher man, Larry Hill and his sergeant-at-arms, Diane Sullivan.

When I finished the book I decided to check out the music of the All Saved Freak Band. I found videos available on YouTube. The music is extraordinary. They had a unique sound, not only to Christian rock, but indeed unique to rock music as a whole. The band combined cello and violin, with piano, drums bass and the originality of Schwartz's guitar style. If we could only ignore the hellish life that the band members were subjected to at Fortney Road, we could enjoy it a bit more.

Jeff Stevenson has spent seven years interviewing and researching the Church of the Risen Christ, the commune ruled by a charismatic preacher. Larry Hill used corporal physical punishment on adults and

children who lived there. His goal was to break their spirits and his rule was to beat children until they stopped crying. He preached the subjugation of women, and women were never allowed to look up. Some of the children were sexually abused. He justified it by preaching that the physical pain is nothing compared to the eternal soul being punished in Hell for eternity, and so the bullwhip was actually better for them than allowing them to continue in sin.

The story is told from the perspective of individuals, survivors of the Church and Hill's ruthless control of their lives. I found it surprising that most of the survivors remain Christian and consider Hill to be a false prophet. They have all suffered greatly from their experiences and say that the only people who can understand their story are those who lived through it. I found myself close to tears as I read some of the passages of abuse and control, but also tears of joy when people escaped.

For readers who remember Kent State, who remember setting your turntable stylus down on a Christian rock record in the 1970s and who remember being led in your bible studies through films and stories of cults that terrified you of the false prophets, this book will evoke some flashbacks of being an impressionable Christian youth. The 1970s were more than discotheques and coke spoons and leisure suits. The Jesus Movement was a short period when Christian Hippies inhabited a visible portion of the landscape, but there were at the same time hidden horrors of brainwash and abuse.

I highly recommend this book, published by Freethought House.



Minnesota Atheists at Minneapolis Pride 2015



Remembering Bob Nienkerk

By August Berkshire

August Berkshire wrote and read this tribute at the memorial for Robert Nienkerk on June 29, 2015.

Nature just provided us with a brief rainstorm, so we would all have something that Bob would have appreciated: nice clean cars!

In early 1984, Madalyn Murray O’Hair and Jon Murray came to the Twin Cities, on their second or third attempt to try to form a chapter of American Atheists here. This time it worked, and a bunch of us, including Bob & Marilyn Nienkerk, started the Twin Cities Chapter of American Atheists, which became Minnesota Atheists seven years later.

But it turns out that a year and a half earlier, in the Fall of 1982, that Bob and Marilyn, along with Otto and Mary Kral, had started a nonreligious social group they called the Friends Free of Theism. They gathered on the solstices and the equinoxes for a meal, sometimes at a restaurant, and sometimes at the Kral farm in Hudson, Wisconsin. This group continued meeting for about ten years. And it’s a tribute to the success and good will that the group engendered that years later the St. Cloud freethought group also called itself the Friends Free of Theism.

So when the Twin Cities Chapter of American Atheists started here in 1984, it found a ready-made community with the Friends Free of Theism. Because of this, the Twin Cities Chapter got a boost that propelled us into winning both the 1984 and 1985 American Atheists “Chapter of the Year” awards.

Since Bob was obviously talented, enthusiastic, and was not afraid to say he was an atheist, I naturally asked him if he wanted to run to be an officer in the Twin Cities Chapter. He said No; that he felt the group was in the good hands of younger people. That trust meant a lot to me, since I was only 24 at the time.



Nienkerk, Robert Henry Born at home Dec. 18, 1927, in Woodstock, Pipestone County, Minn., died June 20, 2015, at Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, Minn., at age 87.

More details can be found at www.startribune.com

(Photo courtesy of www.startribune.com)

Apart from Bob, I have never met someone with a more ferocious sense of doing what’s right, combined with a big heart that inspired that activism.

Bob will be missed by many people. And while no one can ever replace him, Marilyn, we’d like you to know that the freethought community is here to support you in whatever way we can.



Radio Report

By Mike Haubrich

Atheists Talk radio and podcast is a communications service of Minnesota Atheists. Our volunteer producers, hosts, interviewers, and contributors are committed to presenting topics of interest to atheists and humanists. Topics include, but are not limited to, general atheism and humanism, separation of church and state, science, religion, gender, race, culture, and the arts.



"A Skeptical Approach to Guns," Art Kallenbach on Atheists Talk #315, May 31, 2015

Handgun control is an emotional subject, and trying to have a debate on the issue based on facts and without name-calling is extremely difficult. Perhaps skeptics can manage it! Art Kallenbach and Mike Haubrich went a few rounds in this show.

"International Community Building," Kevin Jagoe on Atheists Talk #316, June 7, 2015

Education, community building and leadership development are areas of interest to many of us involved in the secular, freethought and atheist movements. Kevin Jagoe is a Humanist Celebrant, a member of the LGBTQ Humanist Council, an instructor for the Humanist Institute and a Youth Director for the First Unitarian Society. Kevin has also recently begun Seminary to become a Unitarian Universalist minister.

"Science Debate in 2016!" Sheril Kirshenbaum on Atheists Talk #317, June 14, 2015

We don't need our presidential candidates to be scientists, although many of us wouldn't complain too much if it were so. We do need them to have an understanding of how important science must be in forming public policy and informing our leadership in resolving vital issues. ScienceDebate is a drive started by several scientists and science communicators in an attempt to hold at least one debate focusing on science in 2008's presidential cycle. The demand is growing for a debate in the 2016 cycle, with more than 43000 signers. Sheril Kirshenbaum is the Executive Director of Science Debate and spoke to Greg Laden about progress being made and prospects for finally putting science on the table as a topic for discussion in the election.

Minnesota Atheists is the producer of the radio program, and the director is Mike Haubrich with hosts Mike Haubrich, Brianne Bilyeu, Scott Lohman, David Pacheco, Mahad Muhamad and Stephanie Zvan. Both Stephanie and Brianne upload podcasts to our web site. The radio program is broadcast live every Sunday from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. from AM950 KTNF studios in Eden Prairie, MN. Live streaming is available on our web page. www.mnatheists.org. Original music was composed, played and recorded by Brent Michael Davids. The cost to us is \$5,320.00 every six months. Your donations will be appreciated. They can be sent to our post office box or posted online at <http://minnesotatheists.org/join-and-donate/radio-fund>. Thanks to Brianne Bilyeu the program has a presence on social media: an Atheists Talk Facebook page and an account at [Twitter.com/atheists_talk](https://twitter.com/atheists_talk). All past programs can be accessed via MNA web page <http://mnatheists.org/news-and-media/podcast> or on iTunes. If you are interested in helping on the radio program, please send a message to radio@mnatheists.org

AM 950 KTNF

Upcoming Events

Skydiving! Saturday, July 18 at 1:00pm, Westside Skydivers, 3234 230th Street, Winsted. Cost \$200, group number #3496, RSVP ASAP at westsideskydivers.com

Freethought Potluck Picnic Sunday at noon, July 19 and August 16, The Wabun Picnic Area, Shelter B (Minnehaha Park), 4655 46th Ave S, Minneapolis. Family friendly. Come rain or shine!

Atheist Night with the Mr. Paul Aints - Leave Your Soles at the Gate Saturday, August 8, CHS Field, 310 5th St E, St Paul. \$10 General Admission, \$20 Infield Reserved, purchase at SaintsGroups.com password: soles

Secular Women Work Conference Friday-Sunday, August 21-23, Humphrey Conference Center, 301 19th Ave S, Minneapolis. Register at mnatheists.org before July 20th, \$125

Godless Gamers Every Sunday at 2:00pm and Thursday at 6:00pm, Fantasy Flight Games Center, 1975 County Rd B2, Roseville

Atheist/Agnostic Alcoholics Anonymous Every Sunday from 6-7pm and Wednesday from 7-8pm, Health Recovery Center building, lower floor, 3249 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis. Based on A.A. minus beliefs in any form of a God.

Freethought Toastmasters Meeting 1st and 3rd Monday of every month at 6:30pm, Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1280 Larpenteur Ave W, Saint Paul. freethought.toastmastersclubs.org

Volunteer Food Packing 2nd Thursday of every month at 1:00pm, The Food Group, 8501 54th Ave N, New Hope

Blasphemer's Brunch 2nd Saturday of every month at 10:30am, Pizza Lucé, 800 W 66th St, Richfield

Shooting Pool with the Infidels 2nd Saturday of every month at 7:00pm, Dunham's Bar and Grill, 173 Lothenbach Ave, West St Paul

Minnesota Atheists Board Meeting 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm, Amherst H Wilder Foundation, 451 Lexington Pkwy N, St Paul. All Minnesota Atheists members are welcome.

Freethinking Females 4th Monday of every month at 7:30pm, Chatterbox Pub, 800 Cleveland Ave S, St. Paul. Shattering the myth that Atheist groups are male dominated with a female's only event.

Bowling for Deities Last Saturday of every month at Noon, Memory Lanes, 2520 26th Ave South, Minneapolis For more events, visit www.meetup.com/minnesota-atheists



There's always time to make a difference.

Join Minnesota Atheists, renew your membership, or make a donation today.

Minnesota Atheists Membership and Donations

- One-year student membership \$10
- One-year individual membership \$35
- Three-year individual membership \$90
- One-year household membership \$45
- Three-year household membership \$115
- One-year sustaining membership \$75
- Three-year sustaining membership \$200
- Life membership \$600
- General Fund \$_____
- Building Fund \$_____
- Radio Fund \$_____

Donations are tax deductible. Membership fees are deductible for the amount beyond their fair market value.

Student memberships include a subscription to the PDF version of *The Minnesota Atheist* delivered by email. All other memberships include a subscription to the printed version delivered by postal mail. If you would prefer the PDF version delivered by email, please check the box and provide your email address.

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Minnesota Atheists, PO Box 120304, New Brighton, MN 55112. Please make checks payable to Minnesota Atheists. Students, please enclose a copy of your fee statement or school identification.

Minnesota Atheists

Positive atheism in actionsm since 1991

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.

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Minnesota Atheists Goals

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.

Minnesota Atheists Affiliations

Minnesota Atheists is affiliated with the Atheist Alliance of America, Atheist Alliance International, American Atheists, The American Humanist Association, the Council for Secular Humanism, The International Humanist and Ethical Union, and the Secular Coalition for America.

Minnesota Atheists Membership

Regular members: 204
Life members: 40
Meetup members: 1792

Minnesota Atheists Honorary Members

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Gerald Erickson, PhD
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Dick Hewetson
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