

THE MINNESOTA ATHEIST

Public Meeting Sunday May 22, 2016

Overpopulation with Karen Shragg



Our world is overpopulated. This fact lies outside of the typical activist’s perspective and does not fit into society’s dominant anthropocentric worldview. When it comes to our use of natural resources, we are taught to consider issues related to consumption such as energy efficiency and recycling. However, the number of people - and how fast that number is growing - is a more important factor. More people mean more consumption of resources, more services that are needed, more waste is generated, and more world conflict as resources diminish.

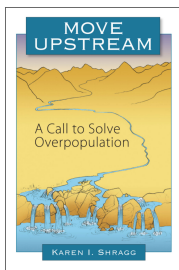
Working on downstream issues, such as saving the environment, feeding the hungry, and ending homelessness, is noble but ineffective and inefficient without also working to solve the primary cause of these and other important issues. Overpopulation isn’t some arbitrary number, and it isn’t related to how much open space we have to expand into, it is the inability of vital natural resources to continue to supply civilization at current and rising rates of consumption. There is debate on how many people the world can sustain because it depends on the type of lifestyle; some say as few as 100 million, others say as many as 3 billion. At any rate, it is billions below our current 7.3 billion.

Since this book’s publication, Karen has found the reaction from the atheist population much more open and supportive. Atheists are open to the idea that humans have the power to destroy the planet. When someone subscribes to religion, the mindset is often that someone else is in charge and earth is just a temporary holding tank before your true destination of heaven.

While overpopulation isn’t directly related to atheism, it is a discussion to be had in

the mindset of freethought. In fact, the publisher of this book is Freethought House, which was born from Minnesota Atheists and the publishing of our book *Atheist Voices of Minnesota*. They publish books that promote a secular perspective. In this book you will find a chapter specifically related to religion’s part in overpopulation which is titled “Religion on Trial.”

Join us at the Maplewood Library on May 22 for an intriguing and important talk by Karen I. Shragg as she helps us learn how to solve overpopulation. Karen will also be available to sign copies of her book *Move Upstream: A Call to Solve Overpopulation* which will be available at the event and online at FreethoughtHouse.com.



Sunday, May 22, 2016
Maplewood Public Library
3025 Southlawn Dr, Maplewood MN

1:30pm - Doors Open
2:00pm - Featured Speaker
4:00pm - Dinner at Olive Garden
1749 Beam Ave, Maplewood MN

Inside this issue:

President's Column 2

News and Notes 3

Meeting Review 4

Cable Report 5

Secretary Report 6

Blogpost 10

President's Column

By Alyssa Ehni

Recently, I've been thinking about the harmful effects that religion can have on its members, especially fundamentalist sects that dominate every aspect of a practitioner's life. Perhaps more importantly, I've been thinking about what role the secular community can and does play in helping people leave domineering and controlling religious organizations. I don't have many answers, but still think the questions are worth asking.

This topic has been on my mind as earlier this month, my partner and I hosted a couch surfer who was in recovery from religion. For those of you who are unfamiliar, couch surfing is a community of people who either host travelers or stay with locals, so travelers more authentically connect with local culture. Our guest had a very interesting story. He grew up in a fundamentalist household with a father who was a pastor at their mega church in the northeast. Our guest followed suit and went to seminary and became a pastor himself. Eventually he left. We met him on his way out to California where he had accepted a job with a non-profit, helping others to recover from harmful religion.

Through our conversations, I learned that in leaving this type of religion, you have to start from nothing. Often times, if your education was religious in nature, it may no longer have value when trying to find employment. People who leave may not know how to find a job or a place to live. Even ordering a drink at a bar can be foreign.

So what does the secular community do to help people who leave harmful religious organizations?

Minnesota Atheists provides a community in the metro area for non-believers, whether they've left religion or were raised in secular households. In my personal experience, it's been wonderful getting to know others in the secular community and building rewarding and important relationships. I would imagine knowing that there are communities of non-believers could be helpful for someone contemplating leaving their religious community. Knowing you are not alone in your lack of faith and finding others who share these thoughts has impacted many in our organization.

But what about people's basic needs, like a job or a place to live? Are there resources out there for people who leave religion? Are they easy to find? I would imagine that there are existing programs aimed at broader communities to help people reestablish their lives that apostates could use.

What about help for the mental and emotional issues people experience as their world views change? I've often heard fundamentalist religion described in the same manner as an abusive partner. It is controlling, dictates with whom and how you can spend your time, tells you that you are inherently flawed, all while claiming to love you and to want what is best for you. How easy is it for someone to find a mental health professional who can effectively help them deal with trauma that religion can cause?

While I am confident that these types of resources exist, how can we find them and do our best to let people know the resources exist? And what else can we do?

Don't miss your chance to cheer on the ~~S~~aints at CHS Field!

\$11 = GA Ticket + Saints Hat

\$21 = Infield Reserved Ticket + Saints Hat

Purchase tickets online at saintsgroups.com

Password: 2016atheists

Saturday, July 16 @ 7:05pm



vs.



Fargo Moorhead RedHawks

News and Notes

By George Francis Kane

In 2001, President George W. Bush issued an executive order to create the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to increase “charitable choice,” federally funding church-provided social services. Critics noted that the Bush administration rigged the plan to fund the social service programs of Evangelical Christian denominations, and defund other religions and denominations.

Since this program was based only on an executive order, Barack Obama could have simply repealed it. Obama disappointed the secular community instead merely reorganizing it into the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. At least he tried to be more inclusive than accepting only Evangelical Christian voices, appointing to the Advisory Council many liberal theologians including Rev. Barry Lynn, the executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Under Bush, one of the core principles of the office announced by the Department of Health and Human Services was that “(t)he religious character of faith-based providers is protected by allowing them to retain control over the definition, development, practice, and expression of their religious beliefs. Neither federal nor state government can require a religious provider to alter its form of internal governance or remove religious art, icons, scripture or other symbols in order to be a program participant.”

The Advisory Council took more seriously the separation of church and state and the protection of recipients of services from proselytizing by federally funded programs. At the end of March the Obama administration published final regulations that define the relationship between government and faith-based social-service providers. Based upon recommendations from the Advisory Council a year ago, the new regulations will provide religious liberty protections. All beneficiaries must be notified in writing that they cannot be discriminated against based on religion, cannot be required to attend or participate in any privately funded religious activities that are offered separate from this federally funded program, and may request an alternative provider, if the beneficiary objects to the religious character of the organization. In addition, the

organization must separate in time or location any privately funded explicitly religious activities from activities supported by direct federal financial assistance.

Of course it would be better if the government did not fund church-based programs at all. Instead the regulations, which apply to nine federal agencies, require that all decisions about federal financial assistance be based solely on merit, without regard to an organization's religious affiliation.

Any beneficiary may report violations of these protections to the federal agency administering the program. I plan to withhold judgment until we learn how consistently the regulations are enforced and how effective they are in protecting the religious liberties of the recipients of public services.

Trump was Right

Trump was right, when he concluded that, from the premise that abortion is murder, the mother's decision to abort must be treated as a criminal act. The problem is that anti-abortion activists have learned that this conclusion makes the “pro-life” position politically untenable. George H. W. Bush had, in a presidential debate, made precisely the same political stumble as Trump. To avoid criminalizing the woman's choice, anti-abortion proponents deny her moral agency. This makes as much sense as asserting that a person who hires a hit man for a contract killing has committed no crime. They instead assert that that all women who choose to have abortions are “victims.”

Of course the whole point of the pro-choice movement is to give women the legal right to determine when to terminate their pregnancy, and to give them control over their reproductive life. The anti-abortion activists assert that women are too traumatized by rape, incest or abandonment; too confused by the hormonal surges of pregnancy; and too controlled by men who threaten them. Of course this portrayal of women who choose abortion is pure paternalism, affording women no more moral agency than a small child. Trump followed the logic of the anti-abortion argument to its unavoidable conclusion, and at the same time exposed the hypocrisy of the anti-abortion movement.

Cryptogram By George Francis Kane

Pxjpvnb: Px Xnu Ogls, gxn udg vgnt xgi znbpnyn
 px idn Kdlptipex Inbpcpgx; px Kgxtiexipxgfbn,
 gxn udg vgnt.

-Ewzlgtn Zpnlkn, Idn Vnypb't Vpkipgxelo.

April Public Meeting Review

By Dan Harrison

Dr. P. Z. Myers, acclaimed secularist, internet celebrity, and professor of biology packed the room at the April monthly meeting of Minnesota Atheists. The focus of his talk was a subject popular among this crowd: evolution.

More specifically, P. Z. elucidated how popular misunderstandings of the concepts of evolution have influenced not only pseudo-science and rhetoric, but even endeavors that are intended to be scientific. This meant he had to first provide some education about the core ideas of evolution.

The key points of his in-depth explanation included: natural selection and evolution are not the same thing, but rather, the former is but one cause of the latter; that multiple forces drive evolutionary change, not just adaptation; most genetic change is not selected upon at all, and is simply random drift; and that many details are key to understanding how the theory works in practice.

As a powerful example, he explained (with a bit of clever math) how biologists, using evolution as a framework, predicted how many genes humans have as early as the 1930s – long before the Human Genome Project was conceived. According to an estimation of the genetic mutation rate, humans cannot have more than 30,000 genes. Otherwise, the observed mutation rate would be killing off our children faster than we could replace them. (The current understanding is 20-25,000 genes.)

Once the science lesson was over, and the audience was suitably impressed, it was time for the entertainment: illustrating humorous examples of ignorance in his usual deadpan style.

His first target was "cultural Marxism," a derogatory appellation devised to justify a new form of scientific racism. According to this notion, there is a dastardly plot afoot: "enfeeble" the population, encouraging lack of "discretion" in "mating partners" via the sexual revolution as a mechanism to spread "bad" traits. This will allow a small cabal of Jewish Communists to take over the world... somehow.

P. Z. treated this theory with all the weight it deserves. But thanks to the previous discussion, the actual flaw in reasoning was apparent: the assumption that "bad traits" (i.e., things that the cabal can select for, somehow) are supposedly spread by certain minority groups. On the contrary, every reputable scientific source agrees that the largest component of individual genetic variation in the past 100,000 years has been genetic drift.

Dr. Myers' second example was of a field that in principle was scientifically valid, but in practice had "embarrassing" issues, in the words of one of its critics: evolutionary psychology. Go to any official source, P. Z. pointed out, and they will spell out their error up front: the assumption that every behavior observable in people today is adaptive. They presume that adaptation is the only mechanism by which a trait could spread throughout the population.

Based on this bad assumption, they have a very low bar for what constitutes support for a hypothetical adaptive basis for a trait. Rather than going around the world and

finding universal human behaviors, they simply run localized tests on college students at their universities and call it "good enough." Combine this with the unhealthy amount of time spent on the subject of "female mate selection", and you have a field that is far better at seeking headlines than actual knowledge about the brain.

Dr. Myers' third and final example was the ENCODE project, an attempt to understand the human genome using the power of Bioinformatics. The issue, once again, was not the premise; rather, the implementation. Most of the work is being done by technicians, who have not been trained in the foundational ideas of evolution.

As a result the group makes bold claims that any biologist would recognize as incorrect or misleading. For example, they estimate over 80% of DNA is functional, which would give humans far more functional genes than that 1930s limit. They do this by defining "function" in a way useless to biologists. They then claim (with good-looking charts and everything) that there is a correlation between the length of an organism's DNA, its "superiority," with humans near the top. Too bad they didn't sequence the DNA of onions, P. Z. pointed out dryly, because one variety has ten times the DNA of humans. Are they really superior to us?

P. Z. concluded with a simple summary describing all of these mistakes: "Evolution is more rigorous and complex than most people assume. It is not a collection of adaptationist stories." The subsequent question and answer period was wider ranging than the talk, but was all high quality – just what one would expect at an atheist meeting.

In conclusion, everyone was educated and entertained by the experience. While it would do them well, the groups he singled out are not expected by this author to benefit from this summary of his talk, and correct the error of their ways. It is their loss.



P.Z. Myers

Cable Report By Steve Petersen



This month George Kane interviewed Nancy Bradshaw about domestic abuse and religion. Nancy has worked with domestic abuse victims for over 15 years. A resource used for the program was the book titled *Religion and Men's Violence Against Women*, published by Springer and edited by Andy J. Johnson.

Resources for those in abusive relationships are:

The Refuge 651-257-2890

Minnesota Day One Crisis Hotline 1-866-223-1111

Tubman 612-825-0000

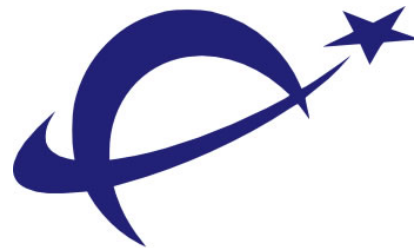
We are actively looking for people to host and produce programming. If you have ideas on programming or interest in hosting please get involved. Contact Steve Petersen at address@mnaatheists.org.

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

Podcasts: Programs are available on the MinnesotaAtheists.org website. Access via iTunes and YouTube has been made possible by Grant Hermanson. To date, our channel has had over 261,000 downloads.



Nancy Bradshaw



Cable Schedule

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: <http://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.

Secretary's Report - April

By Tim Berry

- A motion was made and approved to get 300 Aints shirts unless they give a price break for more with a maximum \$4,500.
- A motion was made and approved of \$1,000 for one billboard or \$1,500 for two billboards.
- A motion was made and approved to renew our affiliation with the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU).



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

Dues Assistance Fund

By Steve Petersen

Becoming a member of Minnesota Atheists is a way to support the organization’s mission of “building a positive atheist community that actively promotes secular values through educational programs, social activities, and participation in public affairs.” Achieving that mission requires the active participation of as many atheists as we can reach, and empowering them to be involved in running the organization.

Almost every function – Meetup social events, educational meetings and other activities we sponsor – is open to all who want to attend. Running for the board and voting for board members, however, are restricted to dues-paying members only. Even though dues are only \$35 a year, regrettably there are some in our community who cannot afford to join. To assist people of limited means, some of our members have proposed creating a fund to cover memberships of those who cannot afford the dues.

Requests for assistance with dues will be strictly confidential, although we would like a brief explanation of why applicants are not able to afford the membership. We will encourage sponsored members to get as involved in the organization as they reasonably can.

A request can be sent in writing to Minnesota Atheists, POB 120304, New Brighton, MN 55112 or membership@mnatheists.org. Please include your name, address and email, and note whether you would like the paper or email delivery of the newsletter. Students, please include a copy of your school ID.

If you are a member and are willing to donate funds to this project, please contact Art Kallenbach or Steve Petersen in person or at membership@mnatheists.org.

Cryptogram Answer

Infidel: In New York, one who does not believe in the Christian religion; in Constantinople, one who does.

-Ambrose Bierce, The Devil’s Dictionary.

Freethought Toastmasters Open House

Do you feel nervous speaking in front of a group? Would you like to become more comfortable sharing your thoughts and ideas? Learn how to practice your communication and leadership skills in a supportive, freethinking environment.

Freethought Toastmasters is hosting an open house on Monday, June 6. The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Come as early as 6:00 p.m. for social time, food, and beverages. All are welcome.

Location: Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1276 Larpenteur Avenue West, Saint Paul.

Date: Monday, June 6th.

Time: 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Questions? Contact Marissa Kocaman, president-6913@toastmastersclubs.org or 612-356-2820.

Call for June 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 11:59 p.m. on May 22. All submissions may be edited for style and length.

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

2016 Minnesota Atheists Board



August Berkshire, Eric Jayne, Tim Berry, Georgia Hancock Tsoi, Heather Hegi, Alyssa Ehni, Art Kallenbach, Chris Matthews, and Hertzey Hertz

My Atheism. My Experience. My Story.

Jeffrey Smith shared what he calls, "The short story of one of my true life experiences that has led to me being an atheist." on the Minnesota Atheist's Facebook page early last month. I asked for permission to print it here with hope that this could launch an atheist story series.

If you would like to share your experience/s that led to your Atheism, please send them to editor@mnatheists.org.

-Jenny Nolan, Editor

When I was in grade school back in the early 70s, I had a good friend I went exploring with on a hot summer day, in the woods around the Minnesota River. When we got to the river, which seemed so peaceful and serene, we started wading in, I just a little ahead of him. About waist deep in, suddenly the sand beneath my feet gave way, and my friend reached out to help me. But the powerful current of the river snatched us, and we both clung to each other as we were swept down and pulled to its middle. Panic ensued and we began pushing down on each other to keep our heads above water for air. It quickly became a death struggle, so I pushed and kicked to free myself from my friend, and somehow swam to shore. I was fortunate and believe my recent swimming lessons at the Howard Johnson's (remember that?) helped me to avoid drowning. My friend wasn't so lucky and they found his drowned body a couple days later a mile or two downriver.

My friend came from a very religious family and I, well, I was well on my way (as a 5th grader!) to becoming an atheist as I had begun to resist my mom's efforts to force me to go to church and bible school; and a recent movie on Darwin and the Galapagos Islands my father had brought me to, as well as my favorite TV show from several years earlier, Star Trek, had set me on a path to science and the belief in searching for scientific truth.

Why did my religious friend drown, and yet I survived? My belief was that it is absolute proof we live in an indifferent universe and the power, skills, and knowledge of each individual is what separates the weak from those that will survive, not faith and prayers in a God who will not be there for you when you need him!

-Jeffrey Smith



In the News

Atheist student Nazimuddin Samad killed in Bangladesh

Excerpted from a press release by the International Humanist Ethical Union

A Masters student, **Nazimuddin Samad** (28), has been killed in Old Dhaka, earlier tonight by suspected Islamist militants chanting “Allahu Akbar” as they hacked him to death.

According to local news reports, Nazimuddin, was attacked around 8:30pm Bangladesh time (6 April 2016), while walking home after classes with a companion. Three men intercepted them on a motorbike, hacked at Nazimuddin with a machete, then shot him while he lay on the ground. The whereabouts of Nazimuddin’s companion are currently unknown, and despite the area being described as crowded, the attackers all fled the scene.

Nazimuddin was from Bianibazar, Sylhet, a law student and activist of Gonojagoron Moncho’s Sylhet wing.



Nazimuddin Samad, from his Facebook page

Nazimuddin’s writing

Tributes and alarmed messages are flooding in on Nazimuddin’s personal Facebook page, where he regularly posted atheist and feminist criticism of Islam. He was critical both of the Islamist political parties, and against the failings of the current government. Shortly before he was killed, he wrote a post implying that the ruling Awami League party would fall if it did not make swift changes, writing (in Bengali): “The situation of the country, deterioration of law and order in the country, speak that maybe you cannot stay long in power.”

In earlier posts, Nazimuddin responded to a cleric’s violent speech against women which referenced the Quran, contrasting the speech with the claim that “Islam is the highest

honor given to women!” He asked for justice for a girl known as Tonu, who had been raped and killed in the military area of ‘Cantoment’, Comilla.

Nazimuddin recently criticised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s support for madrasa (Islamic schools), which are increasingly associated with Islamist radicalism and militancy in the country. Nazimuddin had also shared posts from Washiqur Rahman Babu who was killed last year in a similar attack, carried out by two madrasa students who claimed they were acting on orders from someone associated with their Islamic schools.

In another post, he proposed a satirical strategy to overcome the aggressive push toward Islamism in the country, writing: “Please let’s have Sharia Law for just five years in Bangladesh. Rule the country with Medina Law. I guarantee you, after this 5 years, no Muslim of Bangladesh will ask for Islamic law! The loss and damage we will have after five years, it will take 1400 years to restore us to a modern country.”

Nurul Amin, assistant commissioner of Sutrapur division police, is reported as saying that the assailants must have kept an eye on Nazim’s activities ahead of the attack, and were aware of his route home. “We are investigating the case sincerely to know the motive of the murder,” he said.

Reaction

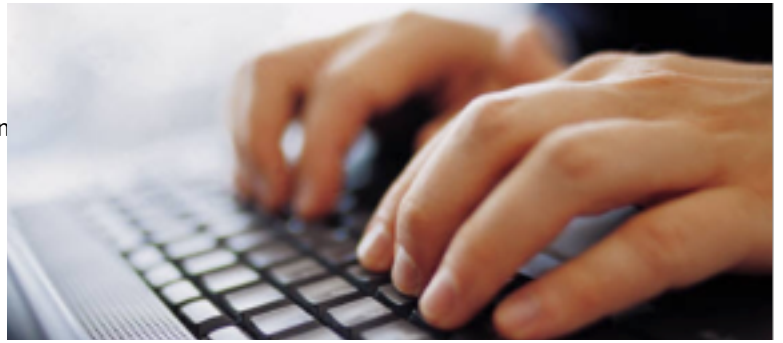
A post on the Bangla secular blogging platform Mukto-Mona (“Free Mind”) has responded to tonight’s attack saying, “Even though nobody has claimed responsibility for this murder, the modus operandi was very similar to all the killings carried out by the extremist Islamist militants in Bangladesh.”

In 2015, four bloggers variously identifying as humanist, atheist and freethinkers, as well as one publisher of secular books, were killed by groups of men in machete attacks. These men in their writings and orations had all defended freedom of expression and belief, and criticized radical Islamism or particular religious ideas (which they variously regarded as prejudiced or socially detrimental). While this kind of writing and activism, especially where it contains humanistic, atheist or secularist criticism of Islamism, appears to most likely to attract the hit squads.

Despite several arrests, no one has been found guilty of last year’s murders. Officials including senior members of the governing party have repeatedly blamed secular activists for “hurting religious sentiments”, which is a crime in the country under the ICT Act.

Featured Blogpost

by Niki M in <http://the-orbit.net/seriously/2016/03/31/no-one-asked/>
Reprinted with permission



No One's Ever Asked Me These

I adore watching and reading people I like and respect answer the unending questions Christians like to ask Atheists. They're always so well-written and lovely and researched. The current round (<http://todaychristian.net/10-questions-every-atheist/>) has been answered by the likes of Kaveh Mousavi, (<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/marginoferr/2016/03/30/kavehs-answers-to-ten-questions-for-every-atheist/>) who links to others who have answered them.

MY TURN!

First of all, it's adorable that they insist that these are questions that we can't answer honestly. Because honest apparently means "to my satisfaction" and since these same Christians never will be satisfied by Atheists in general, we'll never be honest. Or something.

1. How Did You Become an Atheist?

When God shot my ma and pa in an alley outside of that movie theater...oh wait, that's how I became Batman.

The Bible doesn't make sense, and I figured that out by reading it front to back and front to back again when I was a youngin'. I mean, come on, two of *every* animal on a big f*ck-off boat? The world being created in six days? Bats are birds? Feeding a cr*pton of people on a single meal of fish and bread? The Revelation sounds more like one f*cked up fever dream than any so-called "prophecy".

Combine that with feigning participation in church (I had no choice, I was a kid), and it was pretty plain to me that this had to be some kind of joke. Okay, that was when I became an Asshole Atheist. I've mellowed out a great deal as I got older.

2. What happens when we die?

We stop breathing and start rotting. Next.

3. What if you're wrong? And there is a Heaven? And there is a HELL!

If there was a Heaven and a HELL!, guess my goose is cooked. But a God that couldn't provide adequate proof to

convince a 12-year-old of His existence and throw her a** in HELL! isn't worth hedging my bets for.

4. Without God, where do you get your morality from?

My hair dryer. Wait, no. Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure – "Thou Shalt be Excellent to Each Other". With Niki's corollary "Unless they're an a**hole, or a bigot. Then game on."

5. If there is no God, can we do what we want? Are we free to murder and rape? While good deeds are unrewarded?

Sure! Why just the other day, I threw a grenade into my neighbor's backyard because their kids were too loud. Then I walked an old lady across the street, and shoved her back into traffic when she didn't thank me for my very good deed. I can do whatever I want and there are no laws, police, common sense, or sense of empathy to stop me!

OH WAIT!

6. If there is no god, how does your life have any meaning?

As long as there are a**holes and bigots to mock and get pissed at, my life will always have meaning.

7. Where did the universe come from?

shrugs Do I look like a scientist? Is your Google broken?

8. What about miracles? What all the people who claim to have a connection with Jesus? What about those who claim to have seen saints or angels?

PCP.

Hey, it works for excusing vampire attacks.

9. What's your view of Dawkins, Hitchens and Harris?

A**hole, a**hole, and a**hole.

10. If there is no God, then why does every society have a religion?

PCP?

Hey, it works for miracles.

Upcoming Events

June Freethought Picnic Sunday, June 12th at noon, Columbia Park Picnic Area, 800 Columbia Pkwy, Minneapolis. Potluck picnic sponsored by Camp Quest.

Atheist Night with the Mr Paul Aints Saturday, July 16 at 7:00pm, CHS Field, 310 5th St E, St Paul MN. Atheist sponsored St Paul Saints minor league baseball game. Purchase tickets at SaintsGroups.com, password: 2016atheists

Atheists Talk Community Brunch 1st Sunday of every month at 10:30am, Q. Cumbers, 7465 France Ave S, Edina

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 6:00-7:00pm and Wednesday from 7:00-8:00pm, 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 from 6:30-8:00pm, Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1280 Larpenteur Ave W, St Paul. freethought.toastmastersclubs.org

Freethought Dinner Social 2nd and 4th Monday of every month from 5:00-7:00pm, Davanni's, 8605 Lyndale Ave S, Bloomington

Freethinking Females 2nd Wednesday of every month at 7:00pm, Claddagh Irish Pub, 7890 Main St N, Maple Grove, and 4th Monday of every month at 7:30pm, Sweeney's Saloon, 96 North Dale Street, St. Paul (Note, two different locations). Shattering the myth that Atheist groups are male dominated with a female's only event.

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

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.

Bowling for Deities Last Saturday of every month at Noon, Memory Lanes, 2520 26th Ave S, Minneapolis

For more events, visit www.meetup.com/minnesota-atheists



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.

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.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email (required for student memberships and email subscriptions): _____

Minnesota Atheists

Positive Atheism in action 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.

Minnesota Atheist Board of Directors

Board Email
board@mnaatheists.org

President
Alyssa Ehni
pres@mnaatheists.org

Associate President
Art Kallenbach
apres@mnaatheists.org

Chair
Heather Hegi
chair@mnaatheists.org

Associate Chair
Georgia Hancock Tsoi
achair@mnaatheists.org

Secretary
Tim Berry
sec@mnaatheists.org

Treasurer
Chris Matthews
treas@mnaatheists.org
763.428.3424

Directors-at-Large
August Berkshire
dir1@mnaatheists.org
612.868.2267

Eric Jayne
dir2@mnaatheists.org

Hertz Hertz
dir3@mnaatheists.org

The Minnesota Atheist Newsletter

Editorial Board
editor@mnaatheists.org

Editorial Board
George Kane
nup@minn.net
651.488.8225

Heather Hegi
chair@mnaatheists.org

Shirley Moll
srmoll@comcast.com

James Zimmerman
zgoatee@gmail.com

Editor
Jenny Nolan
editor@mnaatheists.org

Chief Photographer
Richard Trombley

Membership and Change of Address
Steve Petersen
address@mnaatheists.org
651.484.9277

Minnesota Atheists Media

Public Relations Chair
Emily Matejcek
pr@mnaatheists.org

Atheists Weekly Email (AWE)
Chris Matthews
awe@mnaatheists.org

Cable TV Chair
Steve Petersen
cable@mnaatheists.org

Webmaster
Clint Buhs
Grant Hermanson
web@mnaatheists.org

Podcasts Chair
Grant Hermanson
podcasts@mnaatheists.org

Minnesota Atheists Goals
Minnesota Atheists practices positive, inclusive, active, friendly, neighborhood atheism in order to provide a community for atheists, educated 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: 225
Life members: 42
Meetup members: 2,200

Minnesota Atheists Honorary Members

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



The Minnesota Atheist May 2016
Published by Minnesota Atheists
PO Box 120304
New Brighton, MN 55112
612.588.7031
info@mnaatheists.org
Copyright 2016 by Minnesota Atheists.
All rights reserved.