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Number 2

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## February Public Meeting Varieties of African American Atheism

### Guest Speaker: Michael Lackey

In honor of February being Black History Month, we are pleased to feature Professor Michael Lackey, who will speak on "Varieties of African American Atheism."

Prof. Lackey will start by pointing out that there are many types of atheists. Bertrand Russell objected to belief in God on the basis of science. Karl Marx objected to belief in God on the basis of politics. Sigmund Freud objected to belief in God on the basis of psychology. Virginia Woolf objected to belief in God on the basis of feminism.

This variety in atheism also applies to the black community. Prof. Lackey will then survey some of the most prominent African American atheists: Nella Larsen, J. Saunders Redding, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, Lorraine Hansberry, and Alice Walker, just to name a notable few.

Michael Lackey is a Distinguished McKnight University Professor at the University of Minnesota, Morris. He is the author of *African American Atheists and Political Liberation: A Study of the Sociocultural Dynamics of Faith* (2007).

Our business meeting, which happens just before this, will feature our annual election of the Minnesota Board of Directors.

### Sunday, February 18, 2018

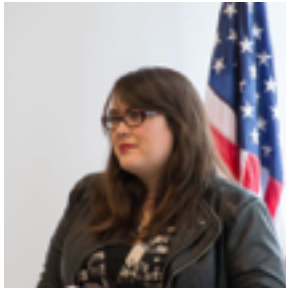
1:00–1:15 p.m.: Social  
1:15–1:45 p.m.: Business Meeting  
and Board Elections  
1:45–2:00 p.m.: Break  
2:00–3:30 p.m.: Program

4:00 p.m.: Dinner



Rondo Community Library  
461 Dale St N  
St Paul, MN 55104  
(Free underground parking. Enter  
off University Ave.)

Dinner details will be announced at  
the meeting.



## President’s Column Iconic Resolution

*By Alyssa Ehni*

For the first time in seven years, Minnesota Atheists will not be sponsoring a Saint Paul Saints game.

In meeting with the Saints general management this year, it was clear that the Saints preferred we not sponsor a game. The reasons given included the response from their fans and players. The Saints did offer a different arrangement, for a lesser fee, that would have allowed us to table, have another food drive for our non-profit partner, The Food Group, an antic, and the ceremonial first pitch. After much contemplation and discussion, the board decided to forgo sponsorship

or the tabling arrangement. There were many factors taken into consideration with the board’s decision not to partner with the Saints this year.

1. Membership Feedback. Our membership expressed a lot of disappointment with last couple games. The tone of the event seemed to change once the Saints moved into their new stadium. We were less visible as an organization with fewer mentions or visibility on the big screens. In 2016, the S in Saints was not covered in most places throughout the stadium as it was before. The number of players wearing our customized jersey decreased year to year. In 2016, when considering whether or not to sponsor a game in 2017, the board determined we would give the

Continued on page 7

## Cryptogram

*By George Francis Kane*

Yhp, qr oygleqyx ol oii koy zj myhpy lh zj pnhyx,  
 ql wjjdw lh dj lh zj byweomozig kjnloqy leol ql  
 phbiu zj pnhyx lh domj oyg wjylqjyl zjqyx wbrrijn  
 jljnyoiig rhn oyg hrrjy kj peoljajn.

Oylhyg Rijp, “Xhu, Rnjjuhd oyu Qddhnloiqlg,” oy  
 jwwog qy “Lej Snjwbdslqhy hr Olejqwd.”



## News & Notes

### Policy Change Spells Disaster

By *George Francis Kane*

The Trump administration welcomed in the new year by issuing a new revision of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide. This update reverses the prohibition against providing funding to restore churches damaged in natural disasters. The previous edition of the policy guide had stated that applications for aid were ineligible "on the basis of the religious character or primarily religious use of the facility." This issue became prominent after 2017's hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Jose and Maria caused \$200 billion damage, but FEMA's reversal severely undermines the separation of church and state. This is not a sexy issue like marriage equality, and involves few dollars because it only covers repairs from natural disasters, but it has far-reaching implications.

The policy change is based upon last June's Supreme Court decision in the case *Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer*, in which Missouri, because of its constitutional prohibition against paying any taxpayer money to religious institutions, denied the church school a grant under a state program to pay for paving a playground with a substance made from shredded tires. The Supreme Court ruled that this denial of funding was an express discrimination against the religious status of the school, in violation of the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment. There have been occasions on which exceptions to policy have been made, such as the Bush Administration granting \$550,000 in 2002 to the Seattle Hebrew Academy to repair earthquake damage. While Bush refused to change the policy, FEMA under his guidance managed to provide funding for many churches. FEMA is currently being sued by three churches in Texas and two synagogues in Florida for disaster relief. Legislation is already pending in both the Senate and House to require FEMA to grant disaster relief to churches on an equal basis with other applicants.

So what is wrong with the new policy? It will sound plausible to many that denying disaster

relief to churches simply because they are religious, rather than granting them equal access to FEMA funds with everyone else, is not religious neutrality, but discrimination against religion. To see the problems, we should start with a reading of Justice Sonya Sotomayor in the Trinity Lutheran case.

The separation of church and state prohibits government to fund churches:

If this separation means anything, it means that the government cannot, or at the very least need not, tax its citizens and turn that money over to houses of worship. The Court today blinds itself to the outcome this history requires and leads us instead to a place where separation of church and state is a constitutional slogan, not a constitutional commitment.

Even a playground is an express part of the church's mission:

The Church seeks state funds to improve the Learning Center's facilities, which, by the Church's own avowed description, are used to assist the spiritual growth of the children of its members and to spread the Church's faith to the children of nonmembers. The Church's playground surface—like a Sunday School room's wall or the sanctuary pews—are integrated with and integral to its religious mission. The conclusion that the funding the Church seeks would impermissibly advance religion is inescapable.

The court's ruling would require the government to violate church-state separation:

The Court today profoundly changes that relationship by holding, for the first time, that the Constitution requires the government to provide public funds directly to a church. Its decision slights both our precedents and our history, and its reasoning weakens this country's longstanding commitment to a separation of church and state beneficial to both.

The court's ruling is not impartial among religions:

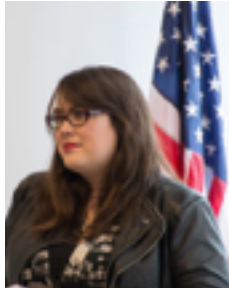
And it favors certain religious groups, those with a belief system that allows them to compete for public dollars and those well-organized and well-funded enough to do so successfully.

The revision of FEMA's policies represents an existential erosion of the separation of church and state. It must be fought in every branch of government.

## Nominee Statements Board of Directors

### Alyssa Ehni President

Atheism is nothing more than lacking a belief in any deity. I, however, am not just a dictionary atheist as atheism informs my worldview. As an atheist, I know this is the only life we get and no one is coming to “rescue” us. Promoting the separation of state and church and building community are two things I value. I am honored to be nominated to continue to serve as President of Minnesota Atheists and look forward to working towards modernizing aspects of our organization this year.



### Stephanie Zvan Associate President

I’ve been off the board of Minnesota Atheists for a few years. In that time, I’ve been working to forge and strengthen relationships with several national organizations in the secular movement. This year, I want to leverage some of those relationships to help MNA meet its local goals.



I’m already working with the Center for Inquiry to explore ways to push Minnesota to finally allow marriage officiants from atheist and secular humanist groups who don’t identify as religious. I’m talking with Secular Woman (where I’m also a board member) about the possibility of bringing the Secular Women Work conference back to Minnesota in partnership with MNA. I’m excited to work on other partnerships that can help us do more without consuming all our resources.

### Heather Hegi Chair

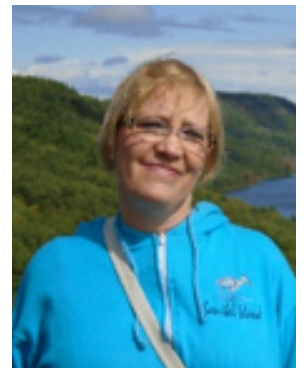
Last year, my non-practicing Christian step-brother asked me an honest question, “If atheism is to basically deny religion, why so much time spent by atheists avidly posting pro atheist stuff?” I gave him a thorough response starting with breaking misconceptions people have about atheists; atheists are regularly vilified while good Christians are put on a pedestal. This makes it very hard for anyone who is atheist to make it in politics to represent the people because religion and prayer is bound to come up. Then I dived into the harm that religious thinking does, it hazes ones judgment on all sorts of issues; global warming, LGBT rights, and abortion to name a few. When one views this world to be a stepping stone to eternal life rather than the one and only life we have, the seriousness of our reality is degraded.



I am a passionate atheist who wants to have our voices heard. I take being on the board seriously and aim to do what I can for the cause. I am proud to serve as Chair and look forward to being of service this coming year.

### Georgia Hancock Tsoi Associate Chair

This will be my 5th year to serve on the board and 3rd year as Associate Chair. I am a longtime member of Minnesota Atheist. I share Minnesota Atheists’ goals of educating the public about atheism and promoting the separation of church and state and I feel it is important to keep this as our primary goal. I am an open atheist in my community and career and encourage others to be open and to educate their friends and family about atheism. I have continued my role of librarian for Minnesota Atheists, am on the Public Policy Committee, and have started the Well-Being



Continued on page 5

**Nominees** continued from page 4  
Committee. I look forward to more opportunities to learn and grow with the Minnesota Atheists board and members this year.

## Chris Matthews

### Treasurer

I am a life member of Minnesota Atheists and have served on the board as treasurer since 2011. I enjoy working with numbers and computers. I am proud to help provide the infrastructure that the organization needs to pursue goals that we collectively find worthwhile. I personally value positive atheism and the promotion of separation of religion and government. I appreciate the opportunity to continue serving as treasurer.

## Hertzey Hertz

### Secretary

Five years ago I found myself looking for an atheist social circle. I had read lots of blogs and even started to listen to a couple of podcasts. But I missed having events to go to on a regular basis. I found, through Meetup, the Minnesota Atheists, and specifically the Newbie Night and Godless Gamers. Through these events, I found many friends and events to occupy my extroverted self. As I enjoyed the events, I became curious about the leadership and started to attend board meetings as a general member. It did not take long for me to become a Director at Large. I have also taken some extra roles planning the Solstice Dinner of 2016 and taking over of the radio show. I now find myself excitedly accepting the nomination for Secretary for a second term. I am very excited to see how I can continue help our community grow and flourish. Thank you!



## Kamrin Duncan

### Director at Large

In 2015 I moved to Minnesota for grad school without knowing anyone in the area. I had been surrounded by religion growing up, in school, and my social circle even though I had (secretly)

identified as an atheist for over 5 years. I was yearning for a social group that did not involve a church. I attended my first Minnesota Atheist event at Family Place for the Cook and Dine event and I loved the people and sense of community it brought. It was such a relief to be surrounded by critical, yet thoughtful, intelligent, and kind individuals who shared similar thoughts and ideas about atheism. Minnesota Atheists has made me feel more comfortable and confident with identifying as an atheist while providing a wonderful community of free-thinkers. It is a privilege to serve as a member of the board with Minnesota Atheists.



## August Berkshire

### Director at Large

When I began in the atheist movement in 1984, the focus was on pure atheism and separation of state and church. In regard to the first, we have been very successful. If you're on Facebook, like I am, you'll see what polls about the nation reflect: there are lots of young atheists. Regarding separation of state and church, we can claim some success, like the legalization of same-sex marriage.

Defeating god-belief is less urgent today than in the past. What's more important are issues like the environment, economics, education, housing, health care, and social justice. In other words, issues addressed by secular humanism. I believe this is the future of atheism, and I think the success of humanist groups demonstrates this. I think the atheist movement has taken the brunt of the battle to make humanism more possible. Why shouldn't we share in the success of our labors? The question is no longer, "Can we be good without God?" it's How do we be good without God?



## Art Kallenbach

### Director at Large

## January Meeting Review

Marissa Alexa McCool

By *Hertzey Hertz*

This month's speaker was Marissa Alexa McCool. A writer, a podcaster and an activist in multiple communities. Her speech was a reminder to me. They are things I feel we should do more. One is to hear truths from those who live them, another is to hear these same truths to help us grow and that we need to remember that no leaders are infallible.

She started the talk with a great jab about the title of the Facebook event: Listen to Marissa. Noting it looked like a directive or command. While it was not, everyone was entranced by her passion and wit. She combined an informative speech regarding activism with performance art, giving emotion to the context. She spoke about how she discovered herself and the attacks that came because of this, both religious and non-religious, conservative and liberal. I had seen the video of her public coming out, but to hear the backstory was eye opening. She spoke about how her alma mater, the progressive Penn State, still struggled with the bathroom policies and how no amount of IDs or people's word would convince the security guard of her gender. She spoke about how much she wanted to do and say for those who could not, for any reason. How she walked through Salt Lake City during Pride and still had 20 slurs hurled at her. How she uses as much of her platform as she is able to assist those in need. I could go on, but there is a word limit. To hear these truths from the one who lived them is to humanize them. It gives us the connection we need.



*We've had some [non-religious leaders] try and publish a misogynist paper and while trying to state it was for skepticism, it also defended its topic.*

Now that we have heard the truths we need to know what to do with them. We need to accept them and work with them to help us grow. This is both on a community and personal level. How we

treat one another is so important. I think humans are generally empathic or at least sympathetic. Extra attention needs to be paid when listening to others share their truths. We can try to understand why things affected them, and how we can make sure not to do those actions. While some of those actions are obvious, some are not. For example, comedians have used the idea of someone being trans as a joke, something many of us have may not have considered until now. But now we have that knowledge, we have grown and can use it to say something when it comes up. There are people who are willfully ignorant of these issues or will use them instead of actually helping. To grow we need to do better than that. Even taking the smallest steps of making sure you're using the correct pronouns and the correct name (otherwise known as treating a person with respect) can be a great start. Moving forward, help others learn, correct them when needed, point out when something is demeaning to a group of people. Help others grow.

Marissa also pointed out some things I would classify as uncomfortable truths. Noting that the non-religious leaders are just as fallible as the religious leaders are. Just in the last year or so we've had some try and publish a misogynist paper and while trying to state it was for skepticism, it also defended its topic. We've had numerous leaders defending a known child predator and rapist. There are those who will follow these leaders no matter what, some will agree wholeheartedly as it is echoing their own belief. We need to take a hard look at these leaders and ask if they deserve the mantle.

I will state that everyone has flaws, no one is perfect. But when your flaw is defending someone guilty of one of the most heinous crimes, it has gone too far. Marissa reminds us that we need to be critical of our leaders, especially if they are not going to support all of the members of our community.

Marissa brought up how some of the leaders in the atheist community handled the Pulse Massacre, when in 2016 over 50 people were gunned down at a gay nightclub. They did not handle it well, there were no words of comfort or support. Instead of listening and growing they ignored or worse. I fully believe there are many leaders

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**Saints** continued from page 2

sponsorship one more shot. After the 2017 game, you, our members, seem less pleased than before.

2. The lack of enthusiasm from the Saints. The Saints are a business and at the end of the day, they are listening to the opinions expressed by their fans. The Saints did not communicate local fan concerns to us. Their former general manager spoke at a monthly meeting a couple years ago and indicated that most of the hate mail they received about this event came from people outside of Minnesota. I understand the desire not to alienate their fan base; I am also disappointed that atheists don't seem to be considered amongst their fan base. I want to be clear that we are not aware of any specific fan feedback. For what it is worth, our specific contacts have expressed their disappointment with the situation.
3. Lack of visibility. The tabling arrangement does not offer the same level of visibility on a local or national level. The games we sponsored were the only atheist night at a professional sports game in the United States, which brought national attention to atheists and our organization.
4. Other uses for the funds. We sponsored a Saints' game in each of the last six years. Taking on a new visibility project may help reach a different section of the public. It could also be reinvigorating for the organization. If you have any solid ideas, and want to help carry it out, let us know at [board@mnatheists.org](mailto:board@mnatheists.org).

Not partnering with the Saints this year doesn't mean that we can't consider it again in the future. The first couple of years, where the Saints were enthusiastically involved in themed antics and making our presence known, were truly nights of unbelievable fun. The Saints have agreed to set aside a block of tickets for a game this Summer so we can still tailgate and watch the game as a group, which has always been the best part.

## Treasury Report October and November

*By Chris Matthews*

### Radio Fund

\$250	George Kane
\$25	James Barri
\$20	August Berkshire
\$135	cash donations, 5th Sunday fundraiser
<b>\$430</b>	<b>Total Radio Fund</b>

### General/Visibility Fund

\$200	Thomas Bauch
\$100	Peter Dodge
\$100	George Kane
\$100	Keith Thorkelson
\$50	Linda Frieden
\$50	Robin Thomas
\$30	Steve Petersen
\$30	Rajiv Vaidyanathan
\$25	Kenyon Barnette
\$25	Vicky Hagens
\$25	Jeff Koeppen
\$25	Shirley Moll
\$25	Michael Toft
\$25	Tim Traynor
\$25	Adam Zielie
\$20	Robert Gaida
\$20	Theodore Haland
\$10	Jake Foster
\$10	David Monson
\$29	cash / anonymous
<b>\$924</b>	<b>Total General/Visibility Fund</b>

**Total Income**                      **\$1,354**

**Current Building Fund**   **\$138,302**

### Top Expenses

\$1,025    Radio Show

**January Meeting** continued from page 6 in the atheist community who are amazing, but they seem to be the lesser known. I think we need to start looking at the current leaders with the same skepticism that they look at others with.

In conclusion, Marissa gave an amazing talk. She told us her truth so that we could learn and grow. So, we can recognize these problems and work to conquer them.

## Why Does My Friend Have Such Crazy Beliefs?

### The Allure of the MBS

By *Tim Berry*

Why does my friend absolutely believe something that's obviously crazy sounding? Maybe they're caught in the trap of a monolithic belief system or MBS.

In this opinion piece, I'm calling an MBS any community that requires a purity of beliefs to belong. You must accept all of the system's beliefs to be accepted as a member by the MBS's other members. There is no picking and choosing of beliefs, one must believe it all or get out of the group.

People who feel powerless and insecure in their lives may be more attracted to an MBS, but we are all vulnerable. You may remain free to your own opinions for beliefs outside the community the MBS is based around. However, if you are heavily invested in one, you are probably invested in other MBSs.

*Our confirmation bias that the belief system is correct being fueled by our need to belong is just too powerful.*

Examples of MBSs as I have defined them can range all the way from some diets to alternative medicine. Some religious organizations and sometimes political parties can become monolithic in their beliefs. I invite you to look around and see how many MBSs you can identify.

The most dangerous feature of the MBSs as I have defined them is the possible inability for the believer to realize they are trapped in them. Your intelligence or logic skills may not be enough to protect you from unrealized confirmation biases that keep you trapped.

Another defining feature of demanding purity of belief is the system's members' inability to evolve the MBS to accept new information counter to any of their beliefs. If a member does try, they're out, and they are too emotionally invested in belonging. The result is the system may wind up with beliefs that are obviously wrong and crazy sounding to anyone outside that particular MBS.

Several years ago, I got into the Paleo Diet. Some of my friends were raving about it so I did a little research and it made some sense. Now we have a community, my friends and the people writing all those Paleo Diet books. We have a monolithic logic system, the Paleo Diet. I was in an MBS.

Was I becoming trapped in an MBS? Well, after a couple of weeks I quit the diet and moved on. If I had kept with it though I would have become more invested in Paleo and it would have become harder to quit.

If the Paleo diet makes me healthier this MBS might be a good thing. The danger is what if Paleo had turned out to prove dangerous to your health? Would I have accepted the evidence and quit? My experience says I would have invested so much emotionally in Paleo I might not have. I would have been trapped by my confirmation bias in an MBS.

As atheists, most of us have probably tried to argue a friend or loved one out of ideas like creationism that sound crazy even to mainline Christians. The seductive sense of belonging encouraged by modern mega churches can make palatable obviously wrong ideas about science and how the world works. I believe this can only be explained by the members becoming trapped in an MBS.

In my experience, once trapped we cannot get out of these traps by the application of logical thinking, our confirmation bias that the belief system is correct being fueled by our need to belong is just too powerful. If we are trapped inside the monolithic system, our logic will always be distorted by our biases.

One way we possibly can get out may be to realize that being accepted by the others inside the MBS is no longer as necessary to us. Having friends with diverse opinions gives us the freedom to avoid at least the worst logic systems built upon a monolithic community. Diversity of friends might also provide feedback that we might not be believing rationally about something.

Most of us however like to hang out with those most like us. This can provide a breeding ground for monolithic belief systems to flourish. Has anyone told you lately that what you just said sounds crazy? Maybe it is.



## Ten Years of Atheists Talk Radio

By *Steve Petersen*

On Sunday, January 13, 2008 Minnesota Atheists broadcasted our first Atheists Talk radio program. The program format was news, a Monument of Science and an interview. Crew was August Berkshire, George Kane, Cynthia Egli, Bruce Honnigford and Kristine Harley. The Monument of Science was done by PZ Meyers, and the interview was with Richard Dawkins.

The genesis of the program was a suggestion by August Berkshire for Minnesota Atheists to get the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) radio podcast on local radio. The FFRF program was offered for free to broadcast stations around the country but no local station would use the feed. KTNFam950 said they would air the program if a timeslot was purchased. The cost was about \$10,000 per year for an hour on Sunday mornings. Dan Barker of FFRF suggested to August Berkshire that Minnesota Atheists do their own program. Thus, Atheists Talk radio program and podcast was begun. Now 437 programs later, we have ten years of programs and more to come.

A mainstay of the program has been the time and effort from all volunteer staff and crew. The number of Minnesota Atheists members and supporters is long and includes a broad-based, cross-section of atheists' activists. Interviews have been with authors and activists local, national and international. Famous or not, all have been of an interest to our atheist listeners and supporters. Sponsors have come and gone — our first sponsor was [evolvefish.com](http://evolvefish.com). The Humanists of Minnesota were sponsors for most of the 10 years and the longest sponsor has been Q.Cumbers Restaurant in Edina, MN who still maintains their support, plus our individual donors who have donated their own funds to keep this program on the airwaves and in podcast.

Some people that should also be mentioned are Mike Haubrich, Stephanie Zvan, Lynn Fellman, Grant Steves, Georgia Hancock Tsoi, Carl Hancock, Greg Laden, Brianne Bilyeu, Laura Hutt, Mahad Muhammad, and David Pacheco.

Our current crew is lead by Hertzey Hertz and Maddy Love with additional support from Dan

Hansen and Scott Lohman who continue to keep the program relevant and fresh.

A review of some of the guests over the past ten years are: David Niose, Nick Fish, Dale McGowan, Amanda Knief, Tom Flynn, Heina Dadabhoy, Annie Laurie Gaylor, Eugenie Scott, John Loftus, Robert M. Price, Ellen Johnson, Massimo Pigliucci, Greta Christine, Ira Flatow, Rebecca Watson, Donald Prothero, Misha Angrist, Baba Brinkman, David Silverman, Sarah Morehead, Shawn Otto, Roy Speckhardt, Anthony B. Pinn, Callie Wright, Neal DeGrasse Tyson and so many more. These are just the most known and recognizable. We also tell individual atheists' stories of how they cope with the invasion of religion into their work, family and politics.

Each program from 001 to current can still be listened to via podcast on our web page [mnatheists.org](http://mnatheists.org) podcast archives.

The lists of participants and guests are not complete, but they reflect those most involved over the ten years. Thanks also goes to each board member who has served and to each donor who may have given one dollar or a thousand dollars; each person is greatly appreciated as this is an all-around team of atheists' effort of board members, volunteers guests and donors.

## Atheists Talk Radio Show

Podcasts can be listened to at [www.mnatheists.org](http://www.mnatheists.org) (scroll down to the podcast link), <https://www.patreon.com/AtheistTalk>. You can catch our show live, every Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. Central on AM 950 KTNF or online at <http://www.am950radio.com/listen-live/> and <https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/a-minnesota-transatheist/atheist-talk>. Contact us during the show with questions or comments at (952) 946-6205 or contact us anytime via [radio@mnatheists.org](mailto:radio@mnatheists.org) or tweet us anytime at [@atheiststalk](https://twitter.com/atheiststalk)

Sponsors of the program are: Q.Cumbers restaurant in Edina, MN, American Atheists and the members and donors of Minnesota Atheists. To support the program, go the MNA web page [www.mnatheists.org](http://www.mnatheists.org) donation/radio, [giveMN/minnesootatheists](http://giveMN/minnesootatheists), <https://www.patreon.com/AtheistTalk> or by mail to our PO Box. All donations are tax deductible.

## 10 The Minnesota Atheist

Radio continued from page 9

### Recent Programs

*Episode #437, January 14, 2018*

“Seventh Day Adventist History”

Dan, who was raised in the Seventh Day Adventist faith, gives us a history of the faith, shares some of its major tenants, and some of the major historical figures who were Seventh Day Adventists.

*Episode #436 January 7, 2018*

Stephanie Zvan, Scott Lohman, August Berkshire, & Mike Haubrich join Hertzey Hertz to talk all things Atheist Talk as they share 10 years worth of stories.

*Episode #435 Full Quranic*

Deborah McTaggart returns to discuss her new podcast “Full Quranic”, where she reads and discusses the Quran.

*Episode #434 December 24th 2017*

Callie Wright from “The Gaytheist Manifesto” & Marissa Alexa McCool from the “Inciting Inci-

dent” podcast join us to discuss all things Christmas, from Starbucks to Music, and how the war on Christmas is progressing.

*Episode #433 December 17th*

Hertzey Hertz and Dan Hansen chat with Matthew and Erik from the Odd Atheists Friends podcast, a podcast about a former fundie CWM and a former fundie Trans Man, talking about religion, politics and current events.

### Cryptogram Answer

Now, if anything at all can be known to be wrong, it seems to me to be unshakably certain that it would be wrong to make any sentient being suffer eternally for any offence whatever.

Antony Flew, “God, Freedom and Immortality,” an essay in “The Presumption of Atheism.”

## Minnesota Atheists Membership and Donations

### Membership Levels

- 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

### Donation Funds

General Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Building Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Radio Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Just email newsletter    Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Required for student memberships and email subscriptions)

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.

Please make checks payable to:

**Minnesota Atheists.**

Students, please enclose a copy of your fee statement or school identification.

Minnesota Atheists  
PO Box 120304  
New Brighton, MN 55112

## Upcoming Events

**Martin Olav Sabo Symposium: Are the “Nones” Done with Civic Engagement?** Wednesday, February 28, 6:00-8:00 PM, Hagfors Center, Augsburg University, 2211 Riverside Ave, Minneapolis.

**Dakota County Library Series: Religion, Faith and Beliefs in our Communities, Topic: Atheism** Thursday, March 8, 6:00-8:00 PM, Wentworth Library, 199 East Wentworth Ave, West St Paul.

**Dakota County Library Series: Inter-belief Dialogue: Atheist, Baha’i and Unitarian Universalist** Thursday, March 29, 6:00-8:00 PM, Robert Trail Library, 14395 S Robert Trail, Rosemount.

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

**Atheist/Agnostic Alcoholics Anonymous** Every Sunday from 6:00-7:00 PM and Wednesday from 7:00-8:00 PM, 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 6:30-8:00 PM, Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1280 Larpenteur Ave W, St Paul. [freethought.toastmastersclubs.org](http://freethought.toastmastersclubs.org).

**Godless Gamers** Every Thursday at 6:00 PM, Fantasy Flight Games Center, 1975 County Rd B2, Roseville.

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

**Freethinking Females** 2nd Monday of every month at 7:00 PM, Claddagh Irish Pub, 7890 Main St N, Maple Grove, and 4th Monday of every month at 7:30 PM, 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 1:00 PM, The Food Group, 8501 54th Ave N, New Hope.

**Blasphemer’s Brunch** 2nd Saturday of every month at 10:30 AM, Pizza Lucé, 800 W 66th St, Richfield.

**Minnesota Atheists Board Meeting** 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 PM, 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](http://www.meetup.com/minnesota-atheists)



## 12 The Minnesota Atheist

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.

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#### Minnesota Atheists Affiliations

Atheist Alliance of America

Atheist Alliance International

American Atheists

The American Humanist Association

Council for Secular Humanism

The International Humanist and Ethical Union

Secular Coalition for America

Secular Coalition for America

#### Minnesota Atheists Membership

Regular members: 218

Life members: 43

Meetup members: 2,400

#### Minnesota Atheists Honorary Members

Hector Avalos, PhD

Dan Barker

Gerald Erickson, PhD

Annie Laurie Gaylor

Dick Hewetson

Robert M. Price, PhD

#### 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.



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