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**10:00 a.m.– Noon
 Saturday
 Sept 19, 2009**

**Monthly
 Chapter Meeting**

**Nokomis Recreation
 Center
 2401 E. Minnehaha Pkwy.
 Minneapolis**

HUMANISM:

A better life for all through education, democracy, free speech, reason and science, without reliance on arbitrary dogmas, revelations and faith.

Humanists of Minnesota Chapter Meeting

***“Humane Population Reduction—the Core Issue
 That’s Being Ignored”***

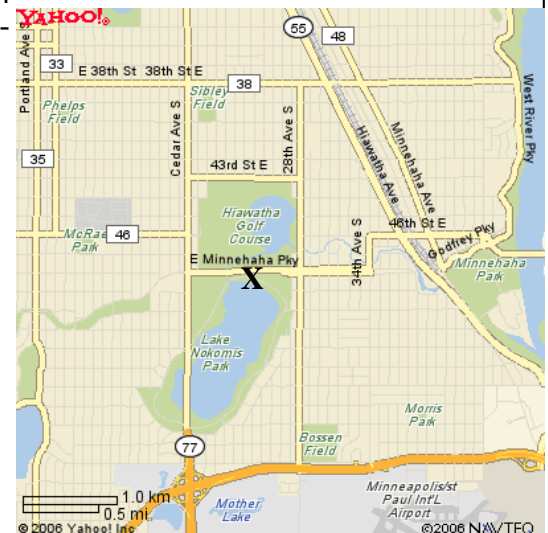
*David Paxson, President
 World Population Balance
 Saturday, September 19*

"Of all the issues we face, none is more important than population growth," says a *National Geographic* feature on population. Many world leaders understand that humanity is at a crisis point concerning the interlocking issues of population pressure, rapidly declining resources and poverty. For the past 20 years the planet's people have been consuming more resources every day than Earth is producing. Currently this overconsumption/overshoot is more than 30 percent. Obviously, this cannot continue, because many vital resources—including oil, natural gas, fresh water, arable land and topsoil, ocean fish stocks—are declining at alarming rates.



David Paxson, founder of World Population Balance, reviews the realities of this mega-issue and discusses what concerned individuals and groups can do to help stabilize and reduce both world and national population—for the benefit of EVERYONE on the planet. Join us for this highly informative and fast-paced presentation.

Chapter meeting location: Here is a map to the Nokomis Recreation Center. Easiest access is north on 77 (Cedar Ave.) from Hwy. 62.



PRESIDENT'S



C O R N E R

During the third week of August the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) held one of its biannual conferences here in Minneapolis. The convention was tasked to deal with issues of sexuality, specifically homosexuality. Homosexuality has been a big issue in a number of Christian denominations. The ELCA, one of the “more liberal” mainstream denominations, has been discussing sexuality for a number of years. This year the decision needed to be made about allowing what the religious like to call clergy who are “practicing homosexuals” —a curious term for gay couples who have sex. From a Humanist point of view, this is not a big deal for adults who are gay in a relationship.

However, we Humanists are not homophobic religious believers. I know that there are a great many religious people who are not discriminatory. What makes this interesting is that the ELCA did decide to allow gay clergy, but leaves the actual parish calls up to individual congregations.

This is really a step forward, but what really makes it interesting is the weather. Yes, the weather. Just at the time the conference was getting ready to take a vote, a tornado went through downtown Minneapolis, damaging the Minneapolis Convention Center, as well as the Central Lutheran Church. Now Humanists would not consider this anything but severe weather. Well, not the religious-right types. This tornado was not severe weather but (...wait for it ...) a message from God! John Piper of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis wrote on his blog *Desiring God*: “Conclusion: The tornado in Minneapolis was a gentle but firm warning to the ELCA and all of us: Turn from the approval of sin. Turn from the promotion of behaviors that lead to destruction. Reaffirm the great Lutheran heritage of allegiance to the truth and authority of Scripture. Turn back from distorting the grace of God into sensuality. Rejoice in the pardon of the cross of Christ and its power to transform left and right wing sinners.”

Piper is not the only one. The whole KKMS radio Saturday lineup and a number of callers also said

(President, Continued on page 4)

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E-mail us at president@humanistsofmn.org or visit our web site: www.humanistsofmn.org

Announcements

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Mondays, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Richard Dick Memorial Happy Hours, Ol' Mexico Restaurant, 1754 Lexington Ave., Roseville (just north of Larpenteur). Tables on terrace level. Call Paul Craven, (763) 788-8918.

1st and 3rd Mondays, 6:00 p.m., Freethought Toastmasters Club, Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1280 Larpenteur Ave. W., St. Paul. Call George Kane, (651) 488-8225.

1st Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-noon, Lake Superior Freethinkers monthly meeting. Radisson Hotel Duluth, Viking Room. For information contact Bill van Druten, (218) 724-4176.

2nd Sunday, 10:00 a.m.-noon, Critical Thinking Club St. Paul, Kelly Inn, Hwy. I-94. Contact George Kane, lhutt@comcast.net. (\$10 brunch, \$3 coffee/speaker only)

2nd & 4th Mondays, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Happy Hour South, Davanni's, 66th St. & Penn Ave. S., Richfield. Call Bob/Marilyn Nienkerk, (612) 866-6200.

2nd Thursday, evening, Rochester Area Freethinkers. Downtown Rochester Public Library, Meeting Room A. Contact Bill Kass, wjkhak@charter.net or (507) 259-4237.

3rd Wednesday, 11:30 a.m., Freethought Lunch, Dragon House, 3950 Central Avenue NE, Columbia Heights. Call Bill Volna, (612) 781-4273.

4th Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-noon, West Metro Critical Thinking Club, Ridge Point Apts. Bldg. meeting room, Minnetonka. Contact Mark Paquette at think-rsvp@markpaquette.com. (contributions accepted)

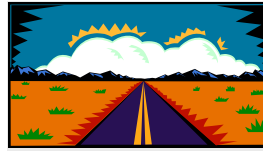
Sunday Brunch, 10:30 a.m.-noon, Q Cumbers Restaurant, 7465 France Ave S., Edina.

OTHER EVENTS

2nd Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., Board of Directors meeting. Open to all members. Contact Scott Lohman.

Thursdays, 7:00 p.m., Campus Atheists, Skeptics and Humanists (CASH) general meeting. 3rd floor Coffman Memorial Union, 300 Washington Ave. SE, Minneapolis. Contact cash@cashumn.org.

"Humanist Perspectives," a weekly program produced by the Council for Secular Humanism, airs at **8:30 p.m. Wednesdays** on MTN Channel 16.



Fall Highway Cleanup!

October 10

The Fall highway cleanup will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 10. We meet at the gas station located in the southeast corner at the intersection of Interstate 35W and Highway 23 (right turn from 35W northbound). This is the last exit on 35W going north before it joins 35E, and is about nine miles north of 35W and I-694. I will bring the trash bags and orange vests, so all you need is appropriate clothing and shoes and possibly sunscreen and insect repellent. We are usually finished by noon and most of us get together for lunch and good conversation at a nearby restaurant.

A big turnout means we finish sooner and have more chance to socialize, so I hope many of you will be able to join us. This is a great opportunity to show Humanists at work on behalf of the community. If you have questions, call me at (952) 927-4193 or email me at dbeardsley@belleplaine.k12.mn.us.

David Beardsley

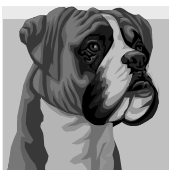
"Humanist Views," the TV interview program produced by Humanists of Minnesota, could be showing on your local cable channel! "Humanist Views" is currently showing in:

Minneapolis Channel 17 9:30 p.m. Fridays

Arden Hills	}	Channel 98
Falcon Heights		7:00 p.m. Sundays
Lauderdale		3:00 a.m. Mondays
Little Canada		11:00 a.m. Mondays
Mounds View		
New Brighton		
North Oaks		
Roseville		

St Louis Park Channel 16 TWTh 12:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 4:00 p.m.

If you would like to help distribute "Humanist Views" to your local public access cable channel, contact Scott Lohman.



Notes from *The First Amendment Watchdogs* 8/11/09

by *Bob Schmitz*

1. Americans United: Discussed various options and related obligations for becoming part of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, either as a Chapter, Associate Group or Aligned Group. We elected to apply for Aligned Group status to test the waters. If we develop a good working relationship with AU we could pursue the associate or chapter status at a later date. Marco Scavo will submit an application to become an official Aligned Group and coordinate this process. If this plan materializes it is likely our existence would become known to AU members in our area, who may wish to join the Watchdogs.

2. Twin Cities United Coalition of Reason: Discussed whether we should become affiliated with this organization, which will pay for billboards clearly questioning the existence of a God. If we remain focused solely on church-state separation issues and wish to join with people of faith in that effort, we may not want to overtly participate as a group with the United Coalition for Reason at this time. A decision was made to table this item for now.

3. Boy Scouts in the schools: George Kane shared a notice from Margaret Downey of Atheists Alliance International asking us to question school boards about their anti-discrimination policies and inform them that Boy Scouts of America is a private organization with a history of discriminating against gays, atheists and the disabled. Jeff Sella agreed to contact his school board using the "Questions for School Boards" activist kit as a way to test the waters.

4. Sign in the City of St. Paul Park: A poem on a veterans memorial monument in Veterans Park, a public park, states that "God Is Nigh" in its last line. Bob Schmitz has since recruited Tom Riddering to take some pictures of this monument which have been submitted to the Watchdogs for comment. We will contact Americans United and the Freedom From Religion Foundation, for consultation on the legal ramifications and whether any action would be feasi-

ble.

5. "In God We Trust" sign at Department of Public Safety building: Mike Haubrich reported such a sign on the wall in the Arden Hills DPS building, which he viewed when renewing his driver's license. When he inquired about the sign he was told that he would have to contact the governor's office. Marco volunteered to get a picture of the sign. Randy Quast agreed to check his DPS office in the southern suburbs to see if such a sign exists there. We need to determine if this has become a statewide practice and if so, who authorized the installation of these signs?

6. Political Action Seminar: Further discussion of preparing a training seminar for Minnesota Atheists and HofM members took place. Marco submitted a suggested outline of content and some ideas on who might address the various areas. We will continue to work on details in the coming month and hopefully can begin to shape a format.

(President, *Continued from page 2*)

the same thing. So weather apparently can be changed by God because of "the gays." If we pursue this logic, it seems that we can cause severe weather with gay people gathering. Now how God missed the Pride celebration at the end of June, I'm not sure.

Our work is cut out for us. It seems that people have made it to the 21st century still believing that invisible beings control the weather. It seems that the best approach here is to point out that it is really quite stupid to think that a god is going to use a tornado to send a message. Why God couldn't use the big screens and PowerPoint to send his message, I don't know. Apparently manipulating the weather is much easier. It's too bad that magical thinking is so tough to get rid off. ■

Are you a 'Hard-Core' Member?

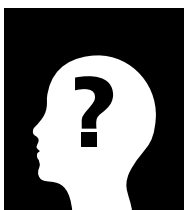
Are you a "hard-core" Humanist? Do you want more inside information than you get from this humble newsletter? Do you want to be kept informed about what is happening nationally and internationally?

Then sign up for the Humanists of Minnesota "'Hard-Core" e-mail list and receive (ir)regular updates on what is happening within the wider Humanist movement! The only requirement is that you be a paid-up member in good standing and we have your up-to-date e-mail address.

Let us know at editor@humanistsofmn.org

Is your Membership Up to Date?

If you are receiving a paper copy of this newsletter, check your address label for the expiration date on your subscription. Please renew when due, using the form on the back!



Single Payer Now!

By George Erickson

Paul Wellstone, who was widely known as the "The Conscience of the Senate," wrote that 85 percent of his time was spent fighting Republican attacks on working families. Were Paul still alive, he'd be fighting for the thousands who die or are driven into bankruptcy every year due to a lack of health coverage—and he'd be fighting insurance and pharmaceutical companies that sponsor deceitful ads like the Harry and Louise videos of the nineties that torpedoed the Clinton health program with lies and distortions.

Realizing that Harry and Louise have lost their charm, the health insurance companies, the pharmaceutical companies and the Republican party have hired Rick Scott, the guy who was part owner of the Texas Rangers with George W. Bush, to design and lead a disinformation campaign that is costing more than \$1 million per day. Rick Scott has an "interesting" past. He's the guy who started and headed the lucrative Columbia/HCA chain of for-profit hospitals that paid kickbacks to "cooperative" physicians and overbilled Medicare so egregiously that Columbia was forced to pay a record \$1.7 billion in fines. Mr. Scott was given the boot, but he also received \$10 million in severance pay and stock options worth \$300 million.

So why are these folks so afraid of a Canada/European "single payer" insurance program, a program that is far superior to our for-profit system that leaves 47 million Americans with no insurance and millions more with inadequate coverage via policies that let the insurance company, not your doctor, decide which procedures will be allowed and which will be denied?

Here's why: Health is a lucrative business. Medicare, a "single payer" system that lets you choose your MD, has low overhead costs that run around 3%. In comparison, our much-vaunted private health care system admits to spending an average of 20% of your premium dollar on what they call "operating costs."

Those who run Medicare receive modest salaries, but in 2002, Norman Payson, the CEO of Oxford Health Plans, took home \$76 million. Leonard Schaeffer, the CEO of WellPoint, received \$21 million and D. Mark Weinberg, the executive VP of WellPoint, was forced to make do with a mere \$14 mil-

lion. That's per year!

In fact, the 20 highest-paid health insurance executives in 2002 received \$237 million. Add another \$1.1 billion in stock options (for a total \$1.75 billion for just 20 people) and it becomes obvious why these "for-profit" folks have no interest in change.

They don't care that the U.S. ranks 33rd in health care—just behind Castro's Cuba. They don't care that we have a higher infant mortality rate than "single-payer" countries like Canada, the U.K., Australia, France, Germany, Japan and Sweden, and they don't care that we spend twice as much per person on health care (but live shorter lives) than citizens of those countries.

In contrast to the for-profit system, where insurance company employees are rewarded for finding loopholes in company policies that permit the denial of coverage, "single payer" systems exist to deliver health care, not deny it. Instead, we Americans are saddled with a system that works very well if you are a member of Congress or if you are wealthy enough to pay for deluxe coverage, but for most of us, that's just a dream, as evidenced by the fact that more than 60 percent of all personal bankruptcy filings involve unaffordable health care costs.

What about Big Pharma? In "single-payer" countries, identical medications cost just half of what we pay! Could our drug costs be high because there is no competition? Could it be because drug companies spend millions on ads to persuade us to get our

(Continued on page 6)

Upcoming Critical Thinking Club Meetings

West Metro Chapter. Saturday, September 26, 10:00 a.m. to noon: "Crop Circles," by Bob Schultz. Ridge Point Apts. Meeting Room, 12800 Marion Ln. W., Minnetonka. Contributions appreciated. RSVP think-rsvp@mark-paquette.com.

St. Paul Chapter. Sunday, September 13, 10:00 a.m. to noon: "Money as Debt," by George Paulos, economics "junkie." Kelly Inn, Hwy. I-94, St. Paul. Breakfast \$10, lecture only \$3. RSVP lhutt@comcast.net.

Stillwater Chapter. Monday, September 14, 7:00 p.m. Family Means Bldg., 1875 Northwestern Ave, Stillwater.

For additional information, visit CriticalThinkingClub.org.

(Continued from page 5)

MDs to prescribe this drug or that? Could it be because, in 2002, the pharmaceutical companies paid a record \$91 million to 700 lobbyists—and that was in 2002!

How, I ask, can we believe Rick Scott & Company's lies and distortions about Canadian care after learning that Canadians, when asked to name the Greatest Canadian, gave that honor not to Alexander Mackenzie, who was Canada's Lewis and Clark, or to one of their premiers, but to Tommy Douglas, the father of the Canadian Health care System?

Why aren't we ashamed that the BBC documentary Panorama revealed that a British medical team dedicated to providing care to poor people overseas ended up spending 60 percent of their time assisting poor AMERICANS, many of whom had risen at 4 a.m. and driven 100 miles to stand in line for a chance at medical care?

And what about cost? Yes, taxes go up, but premiums go down, and as mentioned earlier, more of your money goes to patient care—not to pay a for-profit company's 20 percent overhead. In addition, those who currently lack insurance will have access to inexpensive preventive care, which drastically reduces trips to very expensive emergency rooms at taxpayer expense when things get out of hand.

We spend more money on "defense" than the rest of the world combined, some of which, according to the Pentagon, is used to staff and maintain 741 active military sites abroad. That's one reason that just a 15 percent cut in military spending could pay for 100 percent of the Obama health care plan or even a single-payer system without raising taxes on anyone.

Finally, how can we be so incensed over the deaths of 9-11, but ignore the fact that 23,000 Americans die every year for lack of medical care? Why aren't we rushing to establish a system that has proven efficient, effective and even-handed in countries that have single-payer plans that broaden coverage while lowering per capita costs?

The rich don't care, and neither do many of our Senators and Representatives, especially those who are in the pocket of Rick Scott, the insurance companies and Big Pharma. Call and E mail them in support of the single-payer option. Watch how they vote—and remember it at the next election. That's what Wellstone would want you to do!

George Erickson www.tundracub.com

CASH Launches Annual 'Paint the Bridge' Fundraiser

The Campus Atheists, Skeptics and Humanists at the University of Minnesota are putting on their annual fundraiser, Paint the Bridge! Each year, student groups at the University of Minnesota get to promote their groups by painting sections of the Washington Avenue bridge (which goes over the Mississippi river and connects the East and West banks of the Twin Cities campus).

As part of Paint the Bridge, CASH will paint your favorite Freethought quote on its section of the bridge in exchange for a small donation. The money will be used to promote CASH and Freethought throughout the University of Minnesota campus, and hundreds of students will see your favorite quote each day as they walk across the Washington Avenue bridge!

Quotes are \$10 per word. Words that are three letters or less are free!

So, for example, the quote "Isn't it enough to see that a garden is beautiful without having to believe that there are fairies at the bottom of it too? - Douglas Adams" would be \$120 (The name of the person being quoted doesn't count)

As an added bonus, any donations of \$100 or more will come with a free membership to CASH! Also, any donations of \$200 or more will come with a free T-Shirt!

Send your quote and contact information to cash@umn.edu and CASH will get back to you with the price, what bonuses you qualify for and how to get the donation to them. Space is limited, so get those witty, enlightening quotes by e-mailing cash@umn.edu soon!

Cash website: cashumn.org ☐

Maple Grove Discussion Group

Saturday, September 12, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.: "'Past Lives and Reincarnation: A Critical Thinking Look" by Eric Christopher. Champps Americana, 13521 80th Circle No., Maple Grove. Breakfast \$16.50, coffee only \$5. Register at landforsale@visi.com or call Laurie at 763-420-4757.



Thoughts on Camp Quest

I played in the Freethought Band for the final program of the one-week session of Camp Quest Minnesota, which took place this summer at the Voyageurs Environmental Center (the residential camp of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America) in Minnetrista. There were 130 people—38 campers, 19 staff members, the rest parents and family members. This is the sixth year of Camp Quest Minnesota. The first year we had about 12 campers. This year we had to turn some away because the camp capacity limited us to 38.

The campers come primarily from Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota, as well as Minnesota. One girl came last year from New York and returned this summer.

You can visit the Camp Quest website at camp-quest.org. They have some very sharp Camp Quest T-shirts from this year and last year for \$10. This year's shirt includes recognition of the 150th anniversary of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in a wonderful design.

As you know, Humanists of Minnesota supports Camp Quest Minnesota, providing one half of each camper's costs through fund raising and grants.

There are five Camp Quests in the U.S. and one in Canada. The first Camp Quest of the British Humanist Association takes place this summer. The Norwegian Humanist Association is getting into the summer camps for the youth of their families.

In Norway, offering a secular alternative to the state church's confirmation was the key initiative that led to the growth of the Norwegian Humanist Association, now with over 74,000 members. The youth don't become members until after they are 15 and complete the NHA humanist confirmation and decide for themselves to join. They are not counted as members until they join. Families joined the NHA in many instances because of the humanist confirmation alternative. Coming of age/confirmation is a major cultural event in Norway. The NHA recently decided to offer more programs for children and youth, summer camp being one instance.

It may be that Camp Quest is important for providing humanist/freethought ideas and associations for our young people and for developing future leaders.

- Paul Heffron

Thanks to our Generous Members!

Below are the members who give generously to Camp Quest. The board appreciates all who donated to give our youth an opportunity to attend a Freethought camp.

Asselstine, Gordon
 Bauch, Thomas
 Chartier, Rene & Morton, Marilyn
 Conn, Janet & Debelak, Mike
 Curiskis, Juris
 Curland, Nathan
 Finney, Harlan
 Fortier, Jogn
 French, Dorothy
 Geeraerts, Louis
 Leavitt, Suzanne & Curtis
 Lindlan, John & Joanna
 Link, Otto & Jeanette
 Morgan, Barabara & John
 Rahm, William
 Rauser, Jerry
 Rohrer, Richard
 Rowen, Bruce
 Russell, Hiero & Janet
 Scribner, Gwen & Ronald
 Welter, Mark
 Wangerin, Mark

HUMANIST NEWS & VIEWS

Editor, Nathan Curland

Editorial Committee - Brad Bolin, Gwen Scribner, Matt Labo, Suzanne Perry

Photographer - Richard Trombly

Articles, letters, event notices and other writings are welcome. Send to: editor@humanistsofmn.org with the word "newsletter" in the subject line, or to P.O. Box 582997, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2997. (E-mail submissions are preferred.) All submissions must include the writer's full name, postal address, telephone number and e-mail address. All submissions become the property of this newsletter and cannot be returned. Submission deadline is the 22nd of the prior month.

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September 2009

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Your membership is vital to the growth of Humanism and the Humanist community. Married couples or domestic partners will be considered as one membership, if you so indicate. Our membership categories are:

- (B) Budget, \$20.00
- (R) Regular, \$35.00
- (S) Sustaining, \$50.00
- (P) Patron, \$100.00 or more
- (G) Gift Newsletter, \$20.00 (not counted as membership)
- (T) Trial subscription for 3 months, just ask

*Full time students at an accredited institution can receive a complimentary subscription

Please check the appropriate box, complete the information and mail with your check to Humanists of Minnesota, P.O. Box 582997, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2997.



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www.humanistsofmn.org

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Washington, DC 20009-7125
www.humanist.net

Council for Secular Humanism
PO Box 664
Amherst, NY 14226
www.secularhumanism.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone number: _____

e-mail: _____

(for special announcements, blogs etc. Keeps you in touch!)

I would like my newsletter sent via email () (in color!)

Second Member at same address: _____