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**10:00 a.m.– Noon
 Saturday
 May 15, 2010**

**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

“Civil Liberties in the Age of Obama”

by Chuck Samuelson, Executive Director, ACLU of MN

Saturday, May 15, 2010

During the dark years of the younger Bush, civil libertarians dreamed of a new President, one who would right all the wrongs committed during the previous decade. When that new president finally came they were disenchanted because he could not meet the great expectations placed upon him. Chuck Samuelson will discuss the issues we have with the current administration both in Washington and in Minnesota and how the ACLU is currently addressing them and various thoughts about how the ACLU plans to address civil liberties violations in the future.



Charles Samuelson was born near Buffalo, New York and attended Hamburg High School. He graduated from Syracuse University with a B.A. in Medieval History and a minor in political science. He studied at Freiburg University in Germany and pursued a doctorate in Medieval History at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He moved to the Twin Cities in 1977 and has pursued a career in the non-profit sector for the past 25 years. He lives in a Twin Cities suburb with his wife and two children.

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

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The scandal in the Catholic Church that appears to be reaching all the way to the Pope is a classic case of what happens when an insular group that is not beholden to anyone but an invisible deity tries to hide it's mistakes. In this case the Church hierarchy is showing that when there are not checks and balances on power, abuses will occur. I'm also hoping that when an organization tries to repress or treat a part of being human with contempt, it will not go well. The Catholic Church has tried to control, repress and ignore human sexuality. Sexuality is a core part of being human. When you only allow people of one gender to run an organization and you tell them to treat their sexuality with contempt and to repress it, it's going to cause problems. Many of the men who

have become priests were encouraged to do so before becoming adult. A number of them are no doubt gay and in today's homophobic world, this meant for some of them that they did not have to learn to deal with their adult sexual selves. Some never matured in that area, leaving them with a repressed and damaged sense of themselves.

The Catholic Church needs to do a number of reforms. First they need to stop hiding what they've done and turn over the criminals. Second, a clean house in their hierarchy with resignations up to and including the Pope. This is an organization that no longer has a connection to the humanity of the rest of the world. Third, they need to allow priests to marry. And fourth, they need to open up their leadership structure to democratic checks and balances. This would be a start. When an organization has the same problems cropping up in multiple countries, then it is not a problem of individuals in the organization but of the organization itself. The organization in this case has been trying to blame everyone but themselves for this problem. At this point I can no longer treat any moral pronouncements from the Catholic Church with any seriousness. Katherine Kersten, columnist for the "StarTribune" recently tried to defend the church, but she really only showed that she herself cannot be trusted to know what the facts are.

The Church scandal shows us that while democratically run organizations may be messy with their own internal politicking, at least there is an account-

(President, Continued on page 5)

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Humanists of Minnesota is a nonprofit educational corporation and has been granted a 501(c)(3) tax exemption as an educational, scientific and charitable organization. Donations to Humanists of Minnesota are tax deductible. HofM is a chapter of the American Humanist Association (AHA) and an affiliate of the Alliance of Secular Humanist Societies of the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH). Address inquiries to the Humanists of Minnesota, P.O. Box 582997, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2997, or call (651) 335-3800.

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, wjkhahk@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.)

OTHER EVENTS

2nd Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., Board of Directors meeting. Open to all members. Contact Scott Lohman at scottl2605@aol.com.

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.



Spring Highway Cleanup

May 8

The spring highway cleanup will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 8. 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

The Humanist Center Lecture Series—May 23

The final program of this season's series will take place at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, May 23rd, at the First Unitarian Society.

The program will be a panel discussion on 'Humanistic Parenting'.

FUS is located at 900 Mount Curve Ave., Minneapolis.

The Humanist Center is a joint project of Humanists of Minnesota, the First Unitarian Society and The Humanist Institute.

Maple Grove Discussion Group

Saturday, May 15, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.: "Mormon Missionaries," by TBD (but it will be someone from the Church of LDS!). Champps Americana, 13521 80th Circle No., Maple Grove. Breakfast \$16.50; coffee only \$5. Register at landfor-sale@visi.com or call Laurie at (763) 420-4757.

Paul Kurtz Drafts a New Statement on Secular Humanism

By Paul Heffron



April Chapter Meeting “Religion: Salvation or Symbiosis?”

Summarized by Scott Lohman

“Our planetary community is facing serious problems that can only be solved by cooperative global action. Fresh thinking is required. Humanity needs to reconstruct human values in the light of scientific knowledge.” (from the preamble: *Neo-Humanist Statement of Secular Principles and Values: Personal, Progressive, Planetary*)

Paul Kurtz has issued a major statement, which has been signed by many prominent humanists and free-thinkers of all stripes. It’s titled “A Neo-Humanist Statement of Secular Principles and Values” and may be seen at <paulkurtz.net>. If you wish to sign on and express your agreement you can do so by sending an email to paulkurtz@aol.com. (If you wish to have a copy of the statement, I will send you one and will have copies on the literature table at the next chapter meeting. Call me at 651-483-9222.)

I expressed my agreement and signed on and wrote a note of thanks to Kurtz. What he did for Humanism made a big difference in my life. I left the ministry in 1967 and then did a PhD in American studies at the University of Minnesota while working there. For years as a non-believer I was somewhat at sea, lacking any identity or connection. In 1980, the first issue of *Free Inquiry* came to me in the mail out of the blue. The first issue was sent to people whose addresses Kurtz’s people had. They may have had mine from an order placed with Prometheus Books, which Kurtz had founded. Although I’d read people like Bertrand Russell and John Dewey, I didn’t recognize how I was part of anything related to a lifescape. I wasn’t aware of the AHA and *The Humanist* magazine. So when that first issue of *Free Inquiry* with its *Secular Humanist Declaration* arrived, it was like a revelation, if you’ll pardon the term. For the first time I saw my connection and realized what I was and what I was part of. From then on I increasingly became knowledgeable about Humanism and Freethought and an active member of the Humanist movement. Ironically, that first contact with Paul Kurtz, who’d had a bitter parting

(Humanism, Continued on page 7)

Dr. Mark Welter spoke at our April 2010 meeting on how the major religions have been put together from parts of prior belief systems. The religions don’t create as much as they borrow from what has ‘worked’ before. Welter pointed out that most history rarely goes back farther than 2000 years ago, if it does it paints a pretty sketchy summary of what went on. Most of the modern religions don’t want us knowing the deep past as we would be able to see how un-unique their central tenets are.

He noted that history needs to be taught from a bigger and broader perspective. “Text without context is pretext.” Welter pointed out the differences in religious perspectives. In pre-literate societies, people looked to rulers and religions to protect them from a variety of threats. This was the “combat myth” that many pre-historical societies operated under. The leader would protect the people in exchange for food and support.

Then, a few thousand years ago, a Persian philosopher, Zoroaster, had a new approach. He said that it was our purpose as humans to serve our fellow human beings. He said that humans have “free will”, that we can chose between good and evil. He said there were two “gods”, one good and one evil, who were balanced in power. This was the earliest appearance of a “god” who was evil as opposed to just being an adversary. It was also the start of the concept of an after life in which we will be judged

(Chapter, Continued on page 5)

Upcoming Critical Thinking Club Meetings

St. Paul Chapter. Sunday, May 9, 10:00 a.m. to noon: “*Social Media*” by Craig Mullenbach. Kelly Inn, Hwy. I-94, St. Paul. Breakfast \$10, lecture only \$3. RSVP criticalthinkingclub@gmail.com

West Metro Chapter. Saturday, May 22, 10:00 a.m. to noon: “*Libertarianism & Humanism: Are They Compatible?*,” by Nathan Curland. Ridge Point Apts. Meeting Room, 12800 Marion Ln. W., Minnetonka.

Stillwater Chapter. Monday, May 10, 7:00 p.m.: “*Are You Happy?*,” by Rod Greder. Family Means Bldg., 1875 Northwestern Ave, Stillwater.

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after death.

Welter points out that Judaism changed after the Babylonian captivity. Prior to that, there was not a thread of apocalypsm to their culture, but the Zoroastrian influence added that, which was later picked up by early Christianity.

Welter also pointed out areas how Judaism and Christianity borrowed from epics of the past. The flood story of Genesis borrows heavily from the epic of Gilgamesh. The commandments or laws were also borrowed from Hammurabi and modified for the Jewish and Christian bibles.

History is what we stand on to get to the future and Dr. Welter pointed out that there is much we don't know when history is taught in bits and pieces. We need to have a broader view of the past, not just the sections of the world we came from. ■



Scott Lohman welcomes Dr. Mark Welter to address the April chapter meeting

Compassion and Choices of Minnesota Sponsors:

Last Rites: Facing End-of-Life Choices

A Documentary and Discussion

Sunday, June 6, 2010 12:00 – 2:30 pm

*At Plymouth Congregational Church (Baltins Room)
1900 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis*

For more information visit:

<http://www.compassionandchoices.org>



Celebrate 'Day of Reason' at the State Capitol May 6th!

Humanists strongly value the separation of church and state.

So to let our government know that we do not appreciate the illegally publicly named National Day of Prayer, we celebrate the National Day of Reason by meeting inside the State Capitol at the same time some of our fellow citizens observe their NDP outside.

Every voice counts. If you can take a long lunch break, or have the free time, come join us and other freethinkers. You'll be hearing from the leadership of a number of local freethought groups including our very own Scott Lohman.

Prepare to be moved by famous speeches you may have heard before, and listen for original orations on separation and the rights of freethinkers.

In the Rotunda from noon to 1:00 PM!

(President, Continued from page 2)

ing that occurs to the people of that organization. This is currently lacking in the Catholic Church. What happens to the Church at this point is unknown, but it has a very rocky road ahead of it.

(Editor's Note: On April 13, the American Humanist Association issues a press release calling for a criminal investigation into the Catholic Church sex abuse scandal.) ■

“Convulsions in nature, disorders, prodigies, miracles, though the most opposite to the plan of a wise superintendent, impress mankind with the strongest sentiments of religion.”

***-David Hume, philosopher, economist,
and historian (1711-1776)***

From the Humanists of Minnesota Annual Banquet April 18, 2010

Recently the AHA issued a press release announcing the ruling of U.S. District Judge Crabb that the National Day of Prayer is unconstitutional. The ruling will no doubt be appealed. The Supreme Court will probably overturn it, if it goes that far. The suit was brought by the Freedom From Religion Foundation and supported by the AHA Appignani Humanist Legal Center.

David Niose, AHA president, in his talk at our banquet said we can't rely on the establishment clause as much now and we would do better basing our cases on our rights and the equal protection clause. In this case the argument would be that a call for a National Day of Prayer by the President to all US citizens discriminates against those who don't pray. It treats those who don't believe in or practice prayer as lacking in patriotism and citizenship. As Dan Barker of FFRF said, "Our challenge is taken on behalf of millions of non-religious Americans who are demeaned and excluded by annual exhortations by our president that all Americans should pray and believe in a god." (Freethought Today, April, 2010, p. 20)

Niose's idea that we need to shift our strategy and tactics was interesting. He illustrated with the "under God" addition to the pledge: He noted, as a lawyer, that we can't win that battle, or many others, relying on the establishment clause. Instead, we should rely on the equal protection clause and claim discrimination. He said we could also fight that battle in state courts, as he and others are doing in Massachusetts. There they are petitioning to discontinue recitation of the pledge in schools or to use the original pledge (which, of course, would eliminate the "under God" addition). It seems to me, in this connection, that you do get support from most people by arguing for fairness (i.e. it is not fair to the kids who come from non-believing families and get stigmatized) than by arguing that Jefferson's wall of separation doesn't allow acknowledgement of God in public schools. David's ideas on strategy and tactics followed from his assertion that we need to make our identity known and respected and then insist on our rights and place at the table. He stressed that in our public advocacy we should not try to hide the non-theistic aspect of Humanism, but that we, along with all seculars, need to be open about our disbelief, atheism, agnosticism, etc... As the Freethought Band sang at the banquet, "Good without God! It's not so odd to be Good with God!"

Paul Heffron

David Niose gives a rousing talk to engaged participants!



And the Freethought Band entertains with a specially tailored show!



Humanists of Minnesota Supports Resolution to Keep Iran Out of UN Human Rights Council

At the April Board Meeting, the HofMn Board of Directors unanimously voted to support the appeal by the International Humanist and Ethical Union to keep Iran out of the UN Human Rights Council.

In launching this appeal, IHEU President, Sonja Eggerickx, noted that "Iran has one of the worst human rights records on earth, yet has the audacity to announce its candidacy for membership of the UN Human Rights Council." Iran has a record of persecuting religious minorities, denying freedom of conscience and freedom of speech, and violently suppressing democratic voices. No other country executes as many of its young people as Iran. No other member state of the UN has called for another sovereign state to be wiped off the map (in blatant contravention of the UN Charter.)

The UN Human Rights Council was established in 2005, when then UN secretary general Kofi Annan called for the replacement of the UN Commission for Human Rights before it brought "the entire UN System into disrepute." Without action by member states, this will also happen to the UN Human Rights Council.

For more information go to the IHEU website: www.iheu.org

(Humanism, Continued from page 4)

with the AHA, led me to the AHA. I found that the University of Minnesota library had all the copies of the journal of the first Humanists of the 1920s and 30s and I read through them all, including the one that carried the first Humanist Manifesto. Then I read through all the issues of *The Humanist*, beginning in 1941 and right through to the years in the 1960s and 70s when Paul Kurtz was the editor. So, I was eager for us to found a chapter of the AHA locally, which we did in 1986 after meeting for about a year. And for me it all started with that first issue of Kurtz's new magazine with its statement signed by all those prominent people.

Paul Heffron

Humanists of Minnesota presents Special Awards at Annual Banquet

Scott Lohman, president of Humanists of Minnesota, presented a number of special awards at the Annual Banquet on April 18:

- Lifetime Achievement awards to Ron and Gwen Scribner for their many years of service (Ron and Gwen have moved to Florida and could not be present)
- Special Recognition award to Vern Young for his many years of support to the organization (see picture below)



HUMANIST NEWS & VIEWS

Editor, Nathan Curland

Editorial Committee - Brad Bolin, Dale Handeen, Mark Thoson

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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May 2010

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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
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*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.



Visit our website at:
www.humanistsofmn.org

For national or international membership write to:

American Humanist Association
1777 T Street NW
Washington, DC 20009-7125
www.humanist.net

Council for Secular Humanism
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www.secularhumanism.org

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

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

Second Member at same address: _____