

HAT Forum

Saturday, January 1, 2022, 1:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Zoom

"New Year Resolutions"

Presented by R. Dowsett

What are your resolutions for the New Year?

What types of resolutions are there?

Have you had them in the past? How successful have you been in keeping them?

If you don't make resolutions, why not?

Do you have any tips on how to keep your resolutions for successfully?

Join us for a drink and a discussion about the coming year --your hopes, dreams and desires.

HAT Chat

Wednesday, January 5, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room

HAT Forum

Saturday, January 8, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Topic - "If Not Capitalism, then What?"

Presented by Paul Kaplan

Capitalism is an economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production and their operation for profit.[1][2][3][4] Central characteristics of capitalism include capital accumulation, competitive markets, price system, private property, property rights recognition, voluntary exchange, and wage labor.[5][6] In a capitalist market economy, decision-making and investments are determined by owners of wealth, property, ability to maneuver capital or production ability in capital and financial markets—whereas prices and the distribution of goods and services are mainly determined by competition in goods and services markets.

“The free market is the greatest producer of wealth in history—it has lifted billions of people out of poverty.” Barack Obama

"I believe in markets and the benefits they can produce when they work. Markets with rules can produce enormous value....I believe in competition....Markets create wealth...Theft is not capitalism." Elizabeth Warren

When Bernie Sanders called Denmark a socialist country, the Danish prime minister responded: "Denmark is far from a socialist planned economy. Denmark is a market economy." Danish PM Lars Lokke Rasmussen

Some additional quotations about Capitalism:

- Capitalism is the astounding belief that the most wickedest of men will do the most wickedest of things for the greatest good of everyone. - John Maynard Keynes
- The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent virtue of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.- Winston Churchill
- A basic principle of modern state capitalism is that the costs and risks are socialized to the extent possible while profit is privatized. - Noam Chomsky

But if not capitalism, what? Let's discuss.

Beyond Believing

Monday, January 10, 2022, 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, January 15, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting and at The 519, Rm 301

Topic - "Misinformation and What Can We Do About It?"

Presented by Karen Lynn

Maclean's, in a newsletter on January 3, 2022, Misinformation from the U.S. is the next virus—and it's spreading fast - Macleans.ca, describes the main sources of misinformation, aka the infodemic.

Some say Bill Gates is implanting microchips in vaccine recipients. Others say COVID is caused by 5G towers. There is the claim that figures at the World Economic Forum want to reduce the world's population to 5000 million by forcing people to take vaccines that make them infertile. "Another stream of misinformation comes from the wellness

industry whose sales pitch for vitamins is connected to the anti-vax nonsense.” E.g. Joseph Mercola has put millions of dollars into the anti-vax campaigns, and the wellness myth is amplified by Gwyneth Paltrow, and the wellness industry is an entry point for QAnon.

“The specific enemy changes—Masons, Catholics, Communists, Blacks and Jews have all played the role—but the story stays the same. The enemy is “a perfect model of malice, a kind of amoral superman—sinister, ubiquitous, powerful, cruel, sensual, luxury-loving.”

“The people who recognize the plot, on the other hand, are heroes.”

It is no secret that viral fake news spreads quickly through social media.

But it’s not all new. In 1885 smallpox assaulted Montreal’s east end. Michael Bliss in his book, *Plague*, writes that vaccine phobia was reinforced by Anglophobia until, for some lower-class French Canadians, hatred of the English and hatred for the [smallpox] vaccine seemed to go together”. Eventually, “in the waning weeks of 1885 smallpox ran out of unvaccinated hosts.”

Charles Blow cites the 1932-1972 syphilis project that treated Black men as expendable showing why a disproportionate share of [Black] men are disinclined to get a COVID shot.

In Canada, areas most heavily influenced by Trump-style politics are areas with the highest rates of vaccine resistance. Examples are the populist politicians Ontario MPP Randy Hillier and Maxime Bernier, leader of the PPC.

The solution? Says Maclean’s, “To harden the body politic against misinformation, we need to encourage critical thinking, do a lot more to promote media literacy and work to maintain public trust in institutions that provide good information. Public health agencies need to be quicker and more aggressive in countering damaging false information.”

What Do You Think?

1. What can individuals do to impede the infodemic?
2. What can institutions, governments and corporations do?
3. How does this intersect with the modern decline of the fourth estate—the media, and the threat to democracy?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, January 22, 2022

11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Zoom

Topic - "What is Critical Thinking?"

Presented by - Catherine Francis

Critical thinking is included as one of the guiding principles of humanism:

Humanists affirm that individual and social problems can only be resolved by means of human reason, intelligent effort, critical thinking joined with compassion and a spirit of empathy for all living beings.

There are many and varied definitions of "critical thinking". Here is one very detailed definition/explanation:

"Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.

[<https://www.criticalthinking.org/data/pages/81/cba1e2177b01f8228765c46b55fda4845ecec6e6d3d5.png>]

It entails the examination of those structures or elements of thought implicit in all reasoning: purpose, problem, or question-at-issue; assumptions; concepts; empirical grounding; reasoning leading to conclusions; implications and consequences; objections from alternative viewpoints; and frame of reference. Critical thinking — in being responsive to variable subject matter, issues, and purposes — is incorporated in a family of interwoven modes of thinking, among them: scientific thinking, mathematical thinking, historical thinking, anthropological thinking, economic thinking, moral thinking, and philosophical thinking.

Critical thinking can be seen as having two components: 1) a set of information and belief generating and processing skills, and 2) the habit, based on intellectual commitment, of using those skills to guide behavior. It is thus to be contrasted with: 1) the mere acquisition and retention of information alone, because it involves a particular way in which information is sought and treated; 2) the mere possession of a set of skills, because it involves the continual use of them; and 3) the mere use of those skills ("as an exercise") without acceptance of their results.

Critical thinking varies according to the motivation underlying it. When grounded in selfish motives, it is often manifested in the skillful manipulation of ideas in service of one's own, or one's groups', vested interest. As such it is typically intellectually flawed, however pragmatically successful it might be. When grounded in fairmindedness and intellectual integrity, it is typically of a higher order intellectually, though subject to the charge of "idealism" by those habituated to its selfish use.

Critical thinking of any kind is never universal in any individual; everyone is subject to episodes of undisciplined or irrational thought. Its quality is therefore typically a matter of degree and dependent on, among other things, the quality and depth of experience in a given domain of thinking or with respect to a particular class of questions. No one is a critical thinker through-and-through, but only to such-and-such a degree, with such-and-such insights and blind spots, subject to such-and-such tendencies towards self-delusion. For this reason, the development of critical thinking skills and dispositions is a life-long endeavor."

<https://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766>

What does this mean in practical terms?

The key is the use and application of logical reasoning. As the above definition acknowledges, however, we are all prone to logical fallacies, to some degree. There are countless examples of logical fallacies. The website below, for example, lists and explains 146 types of (alleged) logical fallacies!

<https://utminers.utep.edu/omwilliamson/ENGL1311/fallacies.htm>

Logical fallacies, including mixing up causation and correlation, misuse of statistical evidence and confirmation bias, are found everywhere, not just in crackpot conspiracy theories but in reputable media, government decision making, even literature for teaching alleged critical thinking skills to children.

For example, at the same time students are being taught to think critically, they are being taught to accept without question "facts", theories and policies that may themselves be open to question or the product of logical fallacies. Students and professors who question such matters can be subjected to ostracism, formal censure and even expulsion.

Questions for discussion:

1. What are our own cognitive biases and logical deficits?
2. Are we open to changing our minds? If not, why not?
3. How do we sharpen our critical thinking skills and overcome our biases?
4. How do we apply critical thinking skills to what we read and hear?
5. How do we teach critical thinking skills to children?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, January 29, 2022, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "What Should the Relationship be between Atheists and Theists?"
Presented by Paul Kaplan

Even though the trend, especially in western liberal democracies, is toward increasing levels of unbelief and non-affiliation with traditional mainstream religions, Humanists, Atheists, skeptics, freethinkers and “nones” of every stripe still represent a clear minority opinion in the world, much as we may wish otherwise.

This means that we nones (many of whom are Atheists and Agnostics) need to live in the world with committed Theists. We want to be free to live our lives according to our chosen philosophy, have a say in how our societies are run and our governments function and at the same time be happy, authentic and successful in our endeavors. What is the best attitude to take to thrive in the short run and progress in the long run as Atheists in a Theist dominated world? What should the relationship between atheists and theists?

Here are some discussion questions:

- 1) Should atheists challenge the beliefs of theists?
- 2) Can atheists have good relationships with theists?
- 3) Can atheists and theists work together for social justice?
- 4) Should atheists defend the rights of theists to practice their religions?
- 5) How should atheists respond to religious claims?
- 6) Should atheists participate in religious family events?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, February 2, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, February 5, 2022, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "Is Humanity Hardwired for Violence & War?"

Presented by Glen Erikson

- Are humans programmed to be aggressive and violent?
- While I was fortunate to grow up in a place and time of general civilization and peace, history seems to say that humans have a strong tendency to go into mortal battle for a wide variety of reasons.
- Is this "call to battle" an essential part of our genetic makeup for our survival and propagation?
- At our core are we like the majority of other animals, acting out our version of survival of the fittest?
- At the individual level, are we all competing for survival for food and other resources while finding a mate to propagate our genes?
- At a macro level, why do we join groups that go to war for various causes, to battle real and perceived enemies?
- As all recorded history is filled with warfare, are we doomed to fail in our efforts to live in peace?
- Can war be reasonably justified?
- What is the role of religion in separating us into adversarial groups?
- Why has every religion developed a belief in gods to inspire and promote their group? How is religion used as a motivation or justification for conflict?
- How does the creation of heroes in myths and the arts promote conflict?
- Does conflict play a surrogate role in playing or observing aggression in sports, such as martial arts, hockey and football?
- Is the appeal of heroic depictions of battles in literature, movies and video games provide a healthy outlet — from Cyrano de Bergerac to Star War and Call of Duty?
- What part do our emotions of anger or pride play in fighting? Can we control our emotions or do emotions control us?
- Have you ever been so frustrated or angry that you want to fight with another person or join others to fight against another group?

Let's discuss. Won't you join us?

HAT Chat

Wednesday, February 9, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Speaker Series

Saturday, February 12, 2022, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Darwin Day Talk - "Designing Our World in a Climate Crisis"
Presented by Sheena Sharp

On the anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth 213 years ago, HAT is proud to present climate change activist, green architect and former leader of the Humanist Association of Toronto, Sheena Sharp as she talks with HAT about the pressing need to re-engineer our world to combat the impending climate crisis.

Over the past several years, Toronto 2030 District has embarked on a project to map the costs of getting buildings to zero operating emissions. The project uses a section of downtown Toronto comprising 300 million square feet of floor space as a testbed. This district includes most of the building types in Canada, albeit in different proportions to the country as a whole. Our group of 47 private and public sector partners looks at this issue from the point of view of the options and costs to individual building owners: we don't think it's an option to say "it's too expensive," but rather, we have embraced the goal of showing how we can pay for it.

At the forefront of solutions Sheena addresses, "the era of burning cheap natural gas in buildings must end".

Sheena Sharp has over 25 years of experience in the profession. In establishing her own firm she has focused on buildings of all types, including post occupancy studies, and rural architecture with a particular interest in energy analysis and retrofits. Her portfolio includes re-purposing existing buildings with a specialty in small offices and housing both market driven, and affordable. She is also involved in research relating to the use of concrete for energy efficient buildings. She has been active in the governance of the profession, including two terms as President of the Ontario Association of Architects. Sheena has taken the Passive House Design course.

Beyond Believing

Monday, February 14, 2022, :00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat

Wednesday, February 16, 2022, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, February 19, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "What is Freedom?"

Presented by Karen Lynn

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." Nelson Mandela

- In his seminal book, *Freedom and Civilization*, 1947, by Bronislaw Malinowski, the author discusses the complexities of the ideal of freedom. You can view the chapter descriptions here: https://books.google.ca/books?id=9io-CgAAQBAJ&pg=PR9&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.

- In his *Political Prelude*, Malinowski, understandably situates his analysis in the context

of war. Our perspective in 2022 also considers politics, although differently. On February 5, reported in the *Toronto Star*, Pierre Poilievre, in his campaign video states that if elected, Canadians will be the freest people on earth.

- "Freedom from the invisible thief of inflation, freedom to raise your kids with your values, freedom to make your own health and vaccine choices, freedom to speak without fear and freedom to worship God in your own way."

The Freedom Convoy

- Section 6 of the Charter refers to freedom of movement. By mobility rights, the section refers to the individual practice of entering and exiting Canada and moving within its boundaries.

- For those intent on their freedom by disrupting our trade routes, how many people lost freedoms because of the blockades? How many people have lost their jobs? What about the obvious relationships between the "freedom" seekers and white supremacists from the south? What are the consequences of the demand of the anti-vaxxers in the crowd to the rest of us?

Science

- Pseudo-science ignores the centuries of vaccine effectiveness. Those who rely on mis-information claim superior knowledge based on mis-information. Myths abound such as "It changes your DNA", "It causes infertility", "It causes autism." etc.

- Covid-19 and the Ontario Human Rights Code

www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/covid-19-and-ontario%E2%80%99s-human-rights-code-%E2%80%93-questions-and-answers

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the ideal line between individual rights/human rights and freedom?
2. The concept of freedom has evolved over centuries. What should freedom look like for Canada in the future?
3. How much should governments have to curtail our freedoms during the pandemic?
4. What can be done about pseudo-scientific misinformation/disinformation?

HAT Chat

Wednesday, February 23, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, February 26, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "Who is the Other and How do we Reach them?"

Presented by Karl Iglesias

"I think there's just one kind of folks. Folks." - Harper Lee, "To Kill a Mockingbird"

On the heels of last week's topic on freedom, I believe the concept of "The Other" and why there's so much prejudice between groups is a good follow up, in that many prejudices come from the strong fear that "the other" is restricting our way of life, jeopardizing our freedom

I define "the Other" as any group we prejudice against, discriminate, or feel superior to in any way along ethnic, racial, religious, political, geographical, gender, age, class, even sports teams.

One of our challenges as human beings is to constantly overcome our automatic instinct to see anything or anyone different from us as "threatening." After all, many would argue that our tribalistic instincts are evolutionary-based, serving a survival purpose, and that our "Us vs. Them" mentality is innate. But while this may be true, we've also evolved a social instinct, a sense of kindness and compassion that allows us to survive through learning and cooperation by living in groups and societies.

So what's the problem? Why do we seem to be engulfed by polarities? Progressives vs. Liberals, Liberals vs. Conservatives, Urban vs. Rural, Vegans vs. Carnivores, Whites vs. All other skin shades, Religious vs. Atheists, Haves vs. Have-nots? (Don't get me started on anti-vaxxers!)

This is especially evident in social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, which provide platforms for users to find their "tribe" and allow them to demonize any groups who look, live, and think differently than their in-group, often expressing the most hateful, sexist, homophobic, and racist opinions.

Confronted with this sad reality, many of us are tempted to entrench ourselves more deeply into our in-groups, or to insist naively that group differences are irrelevant and should not matter. Neither approach seems to work.

But I have hope that there's a way. As Nelson Mandela once said, "People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love."

We see this all around us. Think of the Olympic Games where athletes from countries that hate each other are friendly, co-habiting in the athletes village, or the Israeli-Palestinian summer camps, where teens from both sides discover the commonalities they share with their so-called "enemy."

To get back to the evolutionary instinct argument: Yes, Mother Nature may have made us primitive and ignorant and tribal and stereotypical and full of superiority biases. But it is our choice to REMAIN primitive and ignorant and tribal and stereotypical and full of superiority biases.

So how do we overcome our tribal instincts and engage respectfully with out-groups?

Questions for discussion:

- How do we stop quarreling and talk respectfully to the other?
- Can we love our in-group without necessarily hating the out-group?
- How can we stop feeling superior to and in some cases dehumanizing the other?
- Why do you accept your friends and relatives, even though they believe different things?
- Would applying the Golden Rule, Street Epistemology, and Non-Violent Communication techniques, bring us closer to the other?

Suggested viewing and reading:

- Ted Talk (18 min.) - Daryl Davis on the courage to talk and befriend the other:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORp3q1Oaezw>
- Book: "Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them" - Joshua Greene

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, March 2, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Speaker Series @ The Forum

Saturday, March 5, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

The 519, Ballroom 2nd Floor

519 Church Street Toronto, ON, M4Y 2C9 Canada

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "Epilepsy, Episodic & Invisible Disabilities"

Presented by Carter Hammett

Disabilities can come in many different forms. Most people are familiar with a "visible" disability; a neighbour down the street uses a wheelchair or a friend of a friend has a guide dog, but what about someone with a disability that's not visible? An invisible disability is just as life-affecting as a visible one, but they're not as talked about and easily understood. Carter Hammett from Epilepsy Toronto will be with us speaking about the concepts of Invisible Disabilities and Episodic Disabilities and how being aware of them can help us to reduce the stigma and barriers to employment, housing and enjoyment of public spaces that form the backbone of equitable treatment in our society.

Carter Hammett is the Employment Services Manager with Epilepsy Toronto. He holds a Bachelor of Community Studies degree along with diplomas in journalism, social work and adult education. His work has appeared in the National Post, Toronto Star and Toronto Sun, among other publications. He is the author of three books including Benchmarking: A Guide to Hiring and Managing Persons with Learning Disabilities (ALDER, 2005).

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, March 9, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, March 12, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "Offensive Language & Language Policing"

Presented by Sonja Rieder

Cursing, blasphemy, racial and ethnic slurs, hate speech...

- There has always been much concern about what constitutes appropriate language. But what does that mean and who gets to decide?
- Why do people use offensive language?
- Is it ever acceptable to use "bad words?"
- Who should be able to use them? When? Are there words that nobody should be allowed to use? Or does it depend on the situation?
- Are the rules different for men and women? for adults and children?
- What about euphemisms for taboo words?
- Should classic works of literature be altered to eliminate offensive terms?

- Should students who are learning English be taught swear words?
- If we decide to limit the language people use, how do we go about it?

Beyond Believing

Monday, March 14, 2022, 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, March 16, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, March 19, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

The 519 and Virtually on Zoom

519 Church Street Toronto, ON, M4Y 2C9 Canada

**Topic - "The Moral and Ethical Dimensions of Having Children"
Presented by Curious**

To have a child, via a conscious choice or some other means, comes together with various ethical/moral questions to be addressed. A general overview of this domain covers the following points:

Parent(s) conditions:

- What is the financial situation the child is expected to be born into? Are the parents capable of providing basic physical needs of a child?
- What is the expected quality of parenting for a child? Are the parents capable of providing a child necessary emotional and educational support?
- Should a parent have a child necessarily via a thought-process? Or is it also moral to have a child "by accident"?
- Is it still OK to have a child even though it is known that the child will be missing a family structure (in case of a divorced parents, etc.)?

The environment (country, city, society) that a child is going to be born into:

- Is it still OK to have a child even though there is a civil war going on?
- Is it still acceptable to have a child even though the quality of life is surely low?

Child's condition?

- Knowing that your child will have some kind of health issue, can someone still desire a child?

The environmental impact:

- Every child becomes a potential burden on the nature via consumption behavior. Should one nowadays take this responsibility seriously?

Special conditions: What about rights of specific adults to have children:

- Homosexual adults (via adoption and/or using a carrying mother/surrogate/donor)?
- Single adults (via adoption and/or using a carrying mother/surrogate/donor)?

Some background reading:

<https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/choosing-children-ethical-issue/>

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, March 23, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, March 26, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "The Hits & Misses of the Women's Movement"

Presented by Catherine Francis & Tanya Long

Hits:

- * Legal recognition of equality: from voting and property rights and recognition of personhood for all purposes to special protection of equality in the Canadian Charter of Rights
- * Career opportunities and financial Independence: from a society where most married women were homemakers to a society where participation in the workforce is the norm. As an example of how far we have come, women now form a significant majority of university students including a majority of law and medical school students.
- * Reproductive rights. From birth control to abortion rights to generous maternity leave policies.
- * Changing language. At the start of the second wave of feminism (late 60s-70s), the term "Ms." was a radical concept. Now it is standard. We have servers and flight attendants and police officers and fire fighters. No more "women lawyers" or "women bankers."
- * Protections against violence. We've seen decades of judicial reforms to protect victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- * From equal pay for equal work to equal pay for work of equal value. Gone are the days when an employer could pay a woman less than her male counterpart simply because she is a woman. Before the women's movement this was not only permitted but accepted as fair.

Misses:

- * Continuing sexism against women, manifesting itself most viciously in sexual assault and domestic violence, even increasing perhaps because of backlash against women's growing power, e.g. Incel, Montreal Massacre.
- * Tech industry still not welcoming to women.
- * Very few women CEOs.
- * Continuing significant wage gap between men and women doing comparable jobs (76.8 cents on the dollar on average - worse for Indigenous, racialized, newcomers, living with disability).
- * Women still bear brunt of domestic chores and childcare even if they work full time.
- * Complete failure to separate women from tyranny of concern re appearance - huge diet industry, explosion of wedding industry (Shedding for the Wedding combines these).
- * Women not fairly represented in politics. In 2010 Canada ranked 50th in the world in terms of participation by women in politics.

What do you think of our list? Would you delete some, add some? Why is this an important topic from a Humanist perspective? Let's discuss.

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, March 30, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Speaker Series @ The Forum

Saturday, April 2, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "Introduction to Advance Care Planning"

Presented by Denyse Burns

It's never too early to start thinking about your health care options, to articulate your wants and needs for a time when you are not able to speak for yourself. If something unexpected were to happen tomorrow, what care would you want to receive – or not receive? These decisions are challenging and this session will let you know how to start creating an Advance Care Plan.

This session empowers people and their caregivers by helping them plan for serious injury, illness and end-of-life. In the 30-minute presentation viewers will learn:

- the what, why and when of Advance Care Planning;
- how to select a substitute decision maker; and
- the process of creating an Advance Care Plan.

Presenter Denyse Burns is the founder of Madison-Burns & Associates, a Toronto firm specializing in executive coaching, communication consulting, and End-of-Life Doula consulting. She is Vice Chair-Program Development of the Toronto GTA Chapter of DWDC.

ACP Resource Mieko Ise is a volunteer management, special event and fundraising specialist holding positions in both the charitable and corporate sectors. Throughout her career she has also served as a volunteer board member, committee member and front-line service provider with a diverse group of organizations.

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

HAT Annual General Meeting 2022
Saturday, April 9, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.
ONLINE MEETING WITH ZOOM

Today we will be using ZOOM to conduct the essential business of the HAT AGM:

- present a financial and program update and review
- elect the 2022/23 Steering Committee
- Wrap up and questions

If you cannot attend by Zoom, then please help us meet our Quorum requirements by completing and returning this Proxy Form to HATCoord@gmail.com

Here are the Minutes from the 2020 AGM for your reference.

Regards,
The 2021/22 HAT Steering Committee

Beyond Believing
Monday, April 11, 2022, 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.
Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, April 13, 2022, 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, April 16, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.
The 519 & Online via Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "The State of Transgender Rights"
Presented by Paul Kaplan & Catherine Francis

Canada has a legal framework to protect the rights of transgender people.

Summary by Catherine Francis:

- “Transgender rights are explicitly protected in the Canadian Human Rights Act as well as most provincial human rights legislation.
- “The Ontario Human Rights Code provides for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination with respect to employment, trade, services, goods, contracts and facilities.
- “The Ontario Human Rights Code was amended in 2012 to expressly include “gender identity” and “gender expression” as protected categories.
- “Although the equality provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights, which came into force in 1985 (three years after the rest of the Charter) do not list gender identity and expression, the Charter has been interpreted expansively to read in protections for personal characteristics which are analogous to those listed in the Charter, including gender identity.”

Yet, transgender people still face barriers in housing, mental and physical health, and employment due to beliefs and attitudes such as:

- Trans-denialism (gender = sex at birth)
- Binary view of gender
- Issues about pronouns
- Issues in use of public washrooms
- Issues in sports
- TERF (trans-exclusive radical feminist)

Questions:

- 1) Are Canada's current laws sufficient to protect the rights of transgender people?
- 2) What might change negative beliefs about and attitudes towards transgender people?
- 3) What sources of information are there about being transgender?
- 4) How are transgender people depicted in the media and in entertainment?
- 5) How can the barriers facing people who identify as gender nonbinary be reduced or eliminated?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, April 20, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, April 23, 2022, 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join the Zoom meeting

Topic - "We All Need Humility"

Presented by Tanya Long

Toronto Star Columnist: "I need humility." Me: "We all need humility."

Over the past few years, thanks in many ways to my involvement in the HAT forum, I have been forced to confront aspects of myself that I do not like: unconscious bias, a sense of superiority, a totally unjustified belief in my own intelligence, and difficulty in actively listening to and trying to understand people whose views differ greatly from mine. I realized that what I needed was some humility.

The word humility carries with it Christian associations that many may find off-putting. In trying to come up with a more favorable synonym, I was not impressed – abasement, diffidence, meekness, obedience – well, you get the idea. Not what I meant. So what does humility mean to me? It means a willingness to recognize that I can be wrong, that I am not the smartest person in the room, that I cannot truly listen and understand another's point of view as long as I think I am in any way better than they are. It's the opposite of arrogance, pride and a sense of self importance.

So apart from my personal journey to become a more mature person, is there any significance to this discovery? I think there is. There are at least three areas where a little more humility could help make the world a better place and even save the planet.

Unconscious bias. Misogyny; discrimination against Blacks, Indigenous, other people of colour; anti-Semitism; homophobia and transphobia; negative beliefs about poor people and the homeless. These are all based at least in part on the belief that we are somehow better. Men are stronger and smarter than women; white culture is superior to that of other races; the poor and the homeless are somehow responsible, because of their poor choices, for their own fate.

Polarization. Our society is extremely polarized. A traditional definition of politics, dating back to Aristotle, is that it is a means of resolving conflict through compromise and negotiation, with a view to reaching consensus. Well, not anymore. We are all so entrenched in our views that compromise and negotiation are rarely possible. Examples: the storming of the Capitol in the US; the freedom convoy in Canada.

And of course, climate change. We have discussed this in previous forums, that the Christian belief that man (yes man, not humankind) is responsible for the world and should take care of and look after it. But this positive idea of stewardship is not how it has been implemented. It has been used as a justification for man using the earth and its resources for our own benefit. So we pollute the rivers, lakes and oceans; cold cut old growth forests; destroy the environment with mining and smelting practices; and wipe out thousands of species of plants and animals. Currently there are 700 species at risk in Canada (Canadian Wildlife Federation). All in the interest of “progress” and material benefit. All based on that original sense of human superiority.

HAT Principle #5 is “Fallibility: Human knowledge and human ethics have changed over time and will continue to change. Without acknowledging fallibility, we risk descent into dogma.” Surely recognizing our fallibility is one source of our humility?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, April 27, 2022, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, May 4, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum -
Saturday, May 7, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.
Join the Zoom meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "Taboo Topics"
Presented by Catherine Francis

Taboo: “a social or religious custom prohibiting or forbidding discussion of a particular practice or forbidding association with a particular person, place, or thing” (Oxford Languages).

Every society has taboos, ranging from customs or norms to outlawed criminal activity. Taboos differ dramatically through time and place, and within different subgroups in the same time period and geographical area. Conduct that may have been completely accepted in Ancient Greece, for example, violates the most sacred of taboos in the modern western world, and vice versa. Conduct that may be accepted and normal within a closed religious sect in North America may be taboo outside of that sect and vice versa.

What about taboo topics? For example, there was a traditional taboo against discussing politics, religion and sex in polite company. This taboo has largely dissolved in our society. There was a taboo about asking a woman her age. Gone. In the age of the Internet, including Facebook, Linked In, Wikipedia, etc., our lives have become much more transparent. It may not be polite to ask directly, but it’s no longer a deep secret.

Does this mean there are no more taboo topics? No. The taboos have changed. Topics that were once acceptable are now off-limits. Research that was once acceptable can no longer be conducted. Anyone who conducts such research or who tries to debate these taboo topics runs the risk of being labelled (racist, islamaphobe, misogynist, homophobe, pedophile, white supremacist, conspiracy theorist, anti-vaxxer, science-denier etc., depending on the topic), ostracized, cancelled, fired or ejected. If the individual who violates the taboo has a public profile, the outcome can be catastrophic.

What are some taboo topics? Well, they are so taboo that it’s risky even to list them. But here are a few examples of risky territory:

1. Race and IQ
2. Colonialism/indigenous rights
3. Gender differences
4. Racial/cultural behavioural differences
5. Sex abuse allegations

Should there be topics which are off-limits in the forum? Should there be areas that are off-limits for scientific research? In an age where we are obsessed with “diversity”, what about diversity of thought and opinion? Have we created an “echo-chamber” where we only tolerate people whose opinions are the same as ours and shut down research and studies that may come up with conclusions that don’t match our narrative?

Beyond Believing

Monday, May 9, 2022 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, May 11, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, May 14, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "Propaganda in North America"

Presented by Michelle Edmunds

Unravelling government and industry propaganda, myths and lies

1. What lies, propaganda and myths have you unravelled during your lifetime? Some areas could be gender roles/expectations, LGBTQ2S, race, religion, poverty, immigration, health, (please add your own).
2. What triggered your need to explore another narrative or search for the truth?
3. As a person who did not grow up in Canada/US, after moving here did you see differences in propaganda or cultural discrepancies (what you heard about the west vs. the reality)? Positive/negative or both?
4. Institutional messaging is the narrative delivered by society's institutions, such as consumerism, child welfare, ministry of defense, criminal justice, human rights, finance, climate change, immigration, religion, education, culture/arts, healthcare, housing, agriculture... see the list of Canada's ministries here
5. What are the differences between institutional messaging and propaganda?

Let's discuss!

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, May 21, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

**Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103> and
519 Church Street, Rm 200**

Topic - "The Meaning of Life"

Presented by Glen Erikson

Does life have meaning or purpose?

Does your life have the purpose or meaning you want?

Here are a few starting ideas:

- A natural approach would suggest that the basic meaning of life is to survive and propagate.
- Partnership, marriage, family, community or other social relationships can be a source for engaging in a purpose.
- Existentialism, Nihilism, and Absurdism suggest that there is no meaning or purpose to life.

Do we construct meaning and purpose to make sense of what we fear or cannot understand?

Is theism anything more than adopting religious beliefs drawn from myths, sacred books, history, traditions and rituals.

Can meaning be found "within" from meditation or prayer?

If there is no meaning or purpose to life, why not just do whatever pleases us?

Could we make a difference or change the world for the better?

If there is no ultimate meaning "out there", is it all inside our head? Is what we choose to be good, bad, delicious or funny up to us alone?

42?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, May 25, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Speaker Series

Saturday, May 28, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "Why Facts Don't Change our Minds"

Presented by Melanie Trecek-King

Why do people believe strange things? And more importantly, why do they refuse to change their minds when confronted with clear evidence that they're wrong? This session will explore the answers to these questions to help you have more productive discussions.

Melanie Trecek-King is an Associate Professor of Biology at Massasoit Community College in Massachusetts. With over twenty years' experience in college and high school classrooms, she especially enjoys teaching students who don't want to be scientists when they "grow up." Several years ago, Trecek-King recognized the need for a general-education science course that focused less on facts and more on science as a way of knowing, so she created a novel course that uses pseudoscience, bad science, and science denial to engage students and teach science literacy, information literacy and critical thinking. The course, Science for Life, is now being taught at other institutions and is part of an effort to revolutionize science education. Her passion for science education led her to create Thinking Is Power to provide accessible and engaging critical thinking information to the public and to other educators interested in incorporating more critical thinking content in their courses.

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, June 1, 2022

6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

HAT Speaker Series

Saturday, June 4, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/971381033> and

The 519, 519 Church Street

Topic - "Invisible Disabilities"

Presented by Carter Hammett

Disabilities can come in many different forms. Most people are familiar with a "visible" disability; a neighbour down the street uses a wheelchair or a friend of a friend has a guide dog, but what about someone with a disability that's not visible? An invisible disability is just as life-affecting as a visible one, but they're not as talked about and

easily understood. Carter Hammett from Epilepsy Toronto will be with us speaking about the concepts of Invisible Disabilities. Taking up where he left off in his previous talk to HAT, Carter will move on from Epilepsy to talk about Learning Disabilities, ADHD and mental health concerns. By being aware of Invisible Disabilities, it is hoped we can reduce the stigma and barriers that people face in employment, housing and enjoyment of public spaces and build the backbone of a more equitable society..

Carter Hammett is the Employment Services Manager with Epilepsy Toronto. He holds a Bachelor of Community Studies degree along with diplomas in journalism, social work and adult education. His work has appeared in the National Post, Toronto Star and Toronto Sun, among other publications. He is the author of three books including *Benchmarking: A Guide to Hiring and Managing Persons with Learning Disabilities* (ALDER, 2005).

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum - "Can I Accept Multiculturalism and Reject the Religious Baggage?" by Glen Erikson

Saturday, June 11, 2022 11:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "Can I Accept Multiculturalism and Reject the Religious Baggage?"

Presented by Glen Erikson

Are culture and religion one and the same? In many ways religion seems embedded in culture. It is difficult to know which came first. Does it matter?

I'll start with a few of my personal reference points, and then ask a bunch of questions.

- How do you feel when you are asked to participate in a special event, such as a wedding, funeral, christening, bris, birthday, anniversary or other formal occasion where there is a religious component such as prayer, blessings, sanctification?

e.g.: I happened to tune in to a section of Queen Elizabeth's Jubilee Celebration that consisted of a large and elaborate church service at Saint Paul's Cathedral in London. Of course, technically, the Queen is the head of The Church of England and these elements are traditional, and for me, innocuous.

- From this weeks London (Ontario) Free Press:

Londoners are coming together Monday to remember the Afzaal family on the first anniversary of a hit-and-run crash that killed four members of the London Muslim family in a collision police allege was deliberate, the family targeted because of their faith.

One year ago, a family of five people were out for an early evening walk and were struck down by a speeding truck that swerved up onto a sidewalk to impact them. This tragedy happened just a few blocks from where we live. I note that the news writer used the phrase “because of their faith” rather than “because of their ethnicity” or “because of their culture”. The police were quick to label the tragedy as racist. Here in London, I felt encouraged by a great community outpouring of grief and support as hundreds of people left flowers and messages at the site on the street.

This brings me to a touchy subject — the wearing of conspicuous cultural and/or religious clothing and decorations. What do you think or feel deep down?

In 2019, Quebec passed Bill 21. This legislation “bans public workers in positions of “authority” from wearing religious symbols, specifically while they are on duty.” Is this new legislation progressive or regressive?

The unfortunate Afzaal family were wearing traditional clothing from their eastern origin. To me, this colourful and loose-fitting garb certainly looks comfortable for summer wear, but it also was a trigger for the perpetrator of this crime. I think that I am usually accepting of appearances that are different than what I consider “normal”. However, I am not so accepting when I see government members who are entrusted with creating good governance for me wearing obvious cultural/ religious symbols. I feel the same disgust about all religion-based parochial schools that get public taxpayer support.

In years past, I back-packed half-way around the world and back and never felt troubled by cultural differences. In the decades since, it seems conflict is alive and growing and seems to come from deep-set cultural differences. Most, if not all of what I consider to be most egregious and offensive are based in religious doctrine.

Questions

1. What does it mean to integrate and give up your historical roots?
2. Would the whole world be better off if we all integrated more?
3. Would the lessening of cultural differences lead to more peace?
4. Is our progressive liberal way (culture) better?
5. Is your own personal culture separate or devoid of religion? Can you give examples?

Beyond Believing

Monday, June 13, 2022 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, June 15, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, June 18, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "The Sources of LGBTQ+ Prejudice and Humanism's Response"

Presented by Paul Kaplan

NOTE: With this being the 3rd Saturday of the month, normally we would have an in-person option. However, with this month being June, our regular venue (The 519) is wholly devoting its space to PRIDE MONTH events. HAT will resume our in-person schedule July 16.

1. Why have LGBTQ+ people suffered so much prejudice, discrimination, and rejection?
2. What have the consequences of this been for Canada and other countries that are considered to be democratic?
3. Canada has made great strides in both legal protection for and acceptance of LGBTQ+ people. Has this progress been adequate?
4. If not, what still needs to be addressed and what measures need to be taken?
5. What progress has been made in addressing the sources of prejudice against LGBTQ+ people?
6. What role has humanism played in the progress made so far in addressing prejudice against LGBTQ+ people?
7. What role can humanism play going forward?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

HAT Forum - "What is Cultural Appropriation and Why Should We Care?" by Karen Lynn

Saturday, June 25, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic- "What is Cultural Appropriation and Why Should We Care?"

Presented by Karen Lynn

Halloween has in recent years become a hot spot for cultural appropriation. Several years ago my daughter and I were greeted by her husband, on Zoom, gleefully wearing an Indian headdress. We responded by lecturing him on what was wrong with his garb. He didn't get it. "Why not, he asked?" The marriage didn't last.

Sharing cultures in our global world, is common. Under what circumstances is it acceptable, and when is it exploitative of cultures from which it is derived? An examination of the different types of cultural appropriation practices, and their cultural consequences suggest that the objectives of humanism are sometimes breached.

At HAT, we say that "Humanism is ethical... Humanists have a duty of care to all of humanity including future generations. Humanists believe that morality is an intrinsic part of human nature based on understanding and a concern for others, needing no external sanction."

But what is cultural appropriation?

"Cultural appropriation takes place when members of a majority group adopt cultural elements of a minority group in an exploitative, disrespectful, or stereotypical way. To fully understand its consequences, though, we need to make sure we have a working definition of culture itself." Please read on for many interesting examples at [What Is Cultural Appropriation? | Britannica](#).

And...

When Cars Assume Ethnic Identities:

www.nytimes.com/2013/06/23/automobiles/when-cars-assume-ethnic-identities.html?referringSource=articleShare

Questions for discussion:

1. What is the difference between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation?
2. Is it still cultural appropriation when an oppressed group, such as an African tribe, or an Indigenous group, imitates the customs or takes names, etc. from a (usually white) wealthy society?
3. What makes it okay to borrow fashion, symbols, ways of speaking such as dialects or accents, even food styles, from another culture?
4. How do we recognize that an unauthorized imbalance of power, often resulting in damage to a ripped-off culture, has occurred as a result of cultural appropriation?
5. Is cultural appropriation really a result of the long arm of colonialism?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, July 2, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic- "Does the World Need More Canada?"

Presented by Moses Klein

Bono's line that the world needs more Canada has been widely quoted by Canadians. Are we right to take pride in that assessment, or is it a collective vanity? And what does it mean?

1. How do you understand "The world needs more Canada"?
2. In what ways can Canada be a role model for other countries?
3. Should Canada, and Canadians, play a more active role globally? And what form could this role take?
4. Are there any ways in which the world could benefit from less Canada?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, July 6, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, July 9, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic- "Sexual Assault and the Canadian Justice System"

Presented by Tanya Long

I was recently involved in discussions about two newly published books: Nothing But the Truth by Marie Henein and Run Towards the Danger by Sarah Polley. Many of us first became aware of Marie Henein when she defended Jian Ghomeshi; he was acquitted on four counts of sexual assault and one count of choking, a result that generated considerable rage. One of the essays in Sarah Polley's book concerns her encounter with Ghomeshi and the reasons she did not participate in the allegations against him. Since these discussions I have been thinking about the issue of sexual assault and how cases are handled by the Canadian justice system. I have come up with many questions and I would enjoy the opportunity to discuss them with you. I consider myself a feminist; some of my questions may suggest otherwise but keep in mind they are questions, not conclusions. Here are my questions.

For a very long time, women were not believed, or their accusations were trivialized when they made a complaint of sexual assault. Has the pendulum swung too far the other way and what are the dangers if that is the case?

Canada has a broad definition of sexual assault, including all unwanted sexual activity such as grabbing, kissing, fondling and rape. Is there a danger in having such a broad definition?

Are there problems with an organization's readiness to fire an employee based on accusations before that individual has been found guilty?

Do women ever bear any responsibility? If drunkenness is a condition that makes it impossible to give consent, does drunkenness also prevent the other party from making a rational decision about their behaviour?

Changes have been made to prevent things like a woman's sexual history from being brought into evidence by the prosecutor, or like banning the publication of the victim's name. Are there other changes that still need to be made?

What about the fact that men can also be sexually abused?

Should there be a statute of limitations on how long after the event accusations can be made and acted upon?

How is sexual assault different from a mugging?

I have no doubt you also have questions. I look forward to a lively discussion.

Beyond Believing

Monday, July 11, 2022 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, July 16, 2022

11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Today's presentation will be a Hybrid meeting with online and in-person options.

Topic- "The Value of Altered Consciousness"

Presented by Glen Erikson

Have you felt overwhelmed by events in your life?

What can you do to deal with fear, stress, sadness, hopelessness?

What have you done to cope, to get you through your bad days?

Have you imbibed mood-altering substances?

Have you engaged in therapeutic emotional/ spiritual practices?

Here are examples of some paths you can take, or may have taken. (I have tried most of them)

1. Substance Ingestion: Tobacco, caffeine, alcohol, pills (antidepressants, pain relievers, uppers & downers), Recreational drugs (marijuana, hashish, LSD, psilocybin mushrooms, peyote, cocaine, ayahuasca), addictive drugs (opioids, fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamines)
2. Learning about altering your consciousness by Reading Self Improvement books, Attending lectures, watching videos, talking to friends.
3. Doing something - Emotional / Psychological / Inner Exploration: Prayer, chanting, ecstatic dance, Meditation (Zen, Yoga, Transcendental Meditation, guided meditation countless meditations on YouTube, eg. Waking Up with Sam Harris)
4. Therapy - personal and couples counselling, cognitive behaviour therapy, Voice Dialogue, Personal Coaching, Recovery Therapy
5. Addiction Programs - AA, NA, OA
6. Bodywork- Acupuncture, Rolfing, Rebirthing Therapy, Hypnosis
7. Personal Growth Workshops (Human Potential Movement). eg. EST, Landmark, The Haven (Gabriola Island, BC), Gestalt, Esalen Institute,

“Turn on, tune in, drop out...” - Timothy Leary, 1966

“I’ve looked at life from both sides now...” - Joni Mitchell, 1966

“One pill makes you larger, and one pill makes you small...”
White Rabbit - Grace Slick, Jefferson Airplane, 1967

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, July 23, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "Abortion Rights in Canada"

Presented by Catherine Francis

Arguments Against Abortion Rights:

- Life begins at conception
- Human life is sacred
- Killing of humans is murder
- Terminating a pregnancy kills the embryo/fetus, therefore abortion is murder

- Abortion should be illegal

Questions – philosophical, moral, religious, legal

- Is an embryo a legal person?
- Is a fetus a legal person? If so at what stage of development?
- Should an embryo/fetus be accorded all the legal rights of personhood? Why?
- Is human life sacred? Why?
- Is killing a person ever justified? If so, under what circumstances?
- What about the competing rights of the pregnant woman to life, liberty and security of the person?
- What if the mother's life or health is endangered by the pregnancy?
- What about cases of rape or incest?
- What are the consequences of forcing women/girls to bear children?
- Who has the right to decide these issues?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, July 30, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "What Should the Relationship be between Autocracies and Democracies?"

Presented by Paul Kaplan

Though we might wish it differently, many of the 200+ countries in the world are run by autocracies that practice very many behaviours that people in countries like Canada may consider persecution, racism, violence and crimes against their peoples and those of neighbouring countries.

We don't generally take strong action against such countries because we believe in the sovereignty of countries to govern themselves according to their own values and cultures.

At the same time, we wish for peaceful coexistence on the face of the earth and avoidance of wars that are costly on many fronts. And with peace comes opportunities for trade and exchange in all endeavors, hopefully for the betterment of all.

Finally, in the 20th century we learned the value of a global system of diplomacy and cooperation between ALL nations to avoid conflict and resolve issues that transcend national borders.

So the question remains how is the best way to serve all these aims while still holding true to our own liberal democratic values with hopes to extend these to all the peoples of the earth?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, August 3, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Speaker Series @ The Forum

Saturday, August 6, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

The 519, 519 Church Street, Rm 200

Topic - "A Radical, Humanist Approach to Poverty"

Presented by Hemley Gonzalez

Hemley Gonzalez from Responsible Charity will speak with us live from Kolkata, India about the charity that he founded in 2008 that has a radical, Humanist approach to the seemingly intractable problem of persistent poverty in India.

Hemley will tell us how his experience of volunteering with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity organization created such a strong and visceral reaction that he was driven to find a way to break the cycle of poverty and not just be another "rice bowl program". By tackling education, family planning, health and employment all at once with a holistic approach and a 15 year commitment, Responsible Charity guarantees to each child and their family an end to poverty.

During the presentation, we will have the opportunity to listen to Hemley's inspirational story, learn about the innovative techniques they have developed to select, enroll and motivate their students, and share in the challenges of focusing on real solutions to practical problems in the face of the inertial weight of entrenched culture and religion. We may even get a tour of Responsible Charity's operations! There will be the ample opportunity for Q&A and discussion.

Please don't miss this opportunity to share in real progressive good news!

Beyond Believing

Monday, August 8, 2022 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, August 10, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, August 13, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "What would it mean if we Treated Housing as a Human Right?"

Presented by Dan Hanna

What would it mean if we treated housing as a Human Right?

Currently, in Canada and many parts of the world, access to housing, including affordable housing, is a major challenge for people lacking significant disposable wealth. In addition to the "homeless people," the lack of viable housing choices inflict various types of harm. Money spent on sub-standard, inadequate, and excessively priced housing has the effect of denying access to nutritious food, health care (access to doctors, dentists, and prescribed medicines) and education.

While access to safe affordable housing is generally accepted as a positive goal, to reach an adequate understanding of the meaning and consequences of treating "housing as a human right" there are numerous questions.

- What are the legal and moral (philosophical) arguments that support or oppose housing as a human right?
- How are "private property rights" affected by "human right to housing?"
- How would the "State" enforce "housing as a human right?"
- How does the "State" restrict private property rights?

In researching this topic, I quickly realized that I had bitten off more than I could digest. On the internet, I read many sources of information about this topic. Here are five (5) sites for reference:

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Universal Declaration of Human Rights | United Nations
2. The Right to Housing as a Human Right: The Right to Housing as a Human Right - LawNow Magazine
3. Forbes: Changing The Housing Debate Part 1: Housing Is Not A Right (forbes.com)
4. Policy Options: Canadians' rights to property need additional protection (irpp.org)
5. United Nations: OHCHR | The human right to adequate housing

I look forward to an interesting discussion.- Dan Hanna

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, August 17, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Online

HAT Forum

Saturday, August 20, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

519 Church Street, The Ballroom Toronto, ON, M4Y 2C9 Canada (map)

Topic- "Humanism: What Unites Us? What Drives Us?"

Presented by Richard Dowsett

Let's examine Humanism today and look at ourselves.

What unites us? What drives us?

What values, ideas, desires, needs, hopes, dreams are at the core of your Humanism?

Is progress one of these? How can we contribute to progress in the world?

Is justice one of these? How can we contribute to justice in the world?

American suffragette and women's rights campaigner, Alice Paul said, "It is better, as far as getting the vote is concerned I believe, to have a small, united group than an immense debating society." What implications does this quote have for Humanism?

Reference to the HAT Constitution that contains our Declaration of Principles as concept and values that unite us.

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, August 24, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, August 27, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "What Prejudices Do You Find Yourself Guilty Of?"

Presented by Tanya Long

I have struggled with weight all my life and at some points have been downright fat! I know how difficult it is to lose weight and maintain that weight loss. I get angry when I experience fat-shaming from individuals or on social media and in newspaper articles.

And yet...there are times when I am guilty of fat-shaming myself. A recent Jeopardy contestant, who did very well, was quite overweight. My reaction was, "What is he doing here?" and then, "I didn't think he would be so smart." I feel surprise when the star of a movie or TV series is overweight.

I am not proud of these reactions. They reveal to me how far I have to go to be truly accepting and not influenced by long-held and deeply ingrained stereotypes. Over the years I have struggled with other prejudices - against poorly educated people, street workers, Indigenous people and others. Realizing this, I wondered: "Do other people also have prejudices that they do not agree with and did not realize they had?"

Some questions to consider:

1. why do some prejudices persist even in progressive people who genuinely want to be accepting?
2. what is a prejudice and are they ever justified?
3. what is the source of prejudices - upbringing, media, peer pressure, other?
4. how do we become aware of our own prejudices?
5. what do we do about them when we realize what is happening?
6. what do we do when friends exhibit prejudices they may not be aware of?

7. is it important to be aware of and deal with our prejudices? Why?

I look forward to discussing this topic.

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, August 31, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum
Saturday, September 3, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.
The 519 and on Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "Reconsidering Secularism for the 21st Century"
Presented by Debbie Firestone

Having grown up as a blithely non-religious Jew in a non-Jewish neighbourhood during that period of time in the mid-20th century when Toronto, along with much of the rest of Canada, was becoming increasingly secularized, secularism for me has long been something that basically went without saying. It's perhaps because I've always taken it for granted, that I've never really questioned either my (admittedly superficial) assumptions about what it entails, or my (admittedly naïve) assumption that others see it as I do.

Of late, however, various developments, including my own conflicted feelings around Quebec's controversial Bill 21, and the resurgence of religious influence on public policy, especially in the U.S., have jolted me out of my complacency. Most recently, it was the confusion I felt upon reading this description of a talk being given in conjunction with an exhibit at the Aga Khan museum:

(Internationally renowned scholar Tariq) "Modood argues that a modern political secularism is possible, where religious groups can be included in public life and institutions, and religious and national identities are not mutually exclusive. Challenging our assumptions about the place of religion in public life, Professor Modood argues that as long as we do not impose narrow ideas of secularism on our contemporary diversity, a moderate secularism can evolve and has the potential to provide the basis of a multicultural citizenship and a common sense of belonging."

Whoa . . . Religious groups should be included in public life and institutions? 'Narrow ideas of secularism'? A 'moderate/modern political secularism'? What was one to make of this? Hmmm . . .

*Could Modood in fact be taking inappropriate liberties with the concept of secularism? Is his notion of moderate secularism a legitimate form of secularism, or rather a way of trying to get around secularism?

*Would giving political voice to all religions lead to greater inclusiveness or create greater divisiveness?

*To what extent would religious beliefs and practices be able to influence political, economic and social policies, and what impact might this have on those with other beliefs, including we atheists, agnostics and secular humanists?

*Is Modood motivated by a sincere concern for inclusivity for all beliefs, or primarily by concern for greater accommodation for Islamic practices in public?

*Are my questions valid and objective, or a manifestation of a latent Islamophobia I didn't know I harboured?

At least two issues herein merit our consideration: One is the question of how society/we view religion (i.e., Is it a matter of choice, or an inalterable attribute of a person's being, and why or why not should we place deeply held religious convictions on a higher plane than any other deeply held convictions)? Another is how we define secularism. Author Michael Smith proposes that one way to clarify what constitutes a secular society is to compare it to its opposites, i.e., a secular society is not a theocracy, nor is it an atheistic state". If there can be different versions of secularism, though, what type best supports multicultural inclusion, including of non-religious views) and thus promotes national identity?

In both HAT and OASIS meetings, it's common to hear various members define secularism as "freedom from religion" or "freedom from and freedom of religion", both very generic definitions of what is typically referred to as 'political secularism'.

In another vein, the term 'secularism' has been used for over a century to refer to what is more accurately 'secularization theory', i.e. the idea that as mankind's scientific knowledge continues to grow, thereby explaining more and more of the natural universe and the evolution of life, supernatural (religious) explanations will gradually fade into history.

As familiar as these definitions may be, myriad other forms of secularism have been defined by academics from a variety of disciplines and perspectives. In addition to political secularism, there is 'philosophical' secularism, 'socio-political' secularism, 'hard' secularism and 'soft' secularism'. A society can be a 'neutral' secular society or a

'positive' secular one, a 'negative' secular society or an 'inclusive' secular one. It would take up too much space to define them all, but I'm happy to provide links to the scholarly articles in which I encountered them.

What I will delineate are two definitions that seem to have relevance for our discussion: 'rigid' secularism and 'open' secularism, both of which are based on the interplay among four principles deemed to be foundational to any secular model: the moral equality of persons; freedom of conscience and religion; state neutrality towards religion; and the separation of church and state. From this perspective, secularism takes on a different meaning depending on the weight given to each of these four principles. A 'rigid' or strict conception of secularism accords more importance to the principle of neutrality than to freedom of conscience and religion, and relegates religious practice to the private/communal sphere. This conception of secularism is obviously less compatible with both the principle of religious accommodation, and the goal of inclusive pluralism. A more flexible or 'open' secularism, on the other hand, is based on the protection of freedom of religion, even if this requires a relaxation of the principle of neutrality. In this model, state neutrality towards religion and the separation of church and state are not seen as ends in themselves, but rather as the means for achieving the fundamental goal of religious pluralism. In open secularism, any tension or contradiction between the various elements of secularism would be resolved in favour of religious freedom and equality. Perhaps this is the moderate/modern secularism Modood is advocating for.

In digging more deeply into the topic to develop a more rigorous understanding of secularism, it seems I dug myself right down into that proverbial rabbit hole. My head is spinning, and I'm going on at too great length. Ergo, I'll limit myself to just a couple of final questions for your consideration lest this spill over onto yet another page:

*As secular humanists and/or atheists, can/do we accept secularism as a means to some other end rather than as the ultimate value?

*Does an unwillingness to accept a new form of "moderate" secularism come from a place of intolerance, i.e., from some sort of fear that those who place the ultimate importance on their religious identities rather than on "dominant ideals, values, and practices" somehow constitute a threat to "Canadian identity? Modood writes: "The problem is the dark lens of secularists. The secularist concedes that religious beliefs and sentiments might be acceptable at a personal and private level, but insists that organized religion, being founded on authority and constraint, has always posed a danger to the freedom of the self as well as to the freedom of society."? How do we counter this perception?

*Oh – and finally - what about the question of education? Would separate publicly-funded religious schools for all faiths be permitted? And is there any credence to the argument that secular schools are not simply the safe spaces for all they're purported to be, but are rather a means of preserving white, Christian/Christian cultural privilege?

HAT Chat - CANCELLED THIS WEEK!

Wednesday, September 7, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, September 10, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "Vegetarianism and Humanism: The Ethics of Eating Meat"

Presented by Catherine Francis

The following are 10 guiding principles of humanism, as found on the Humanist Association of Toronto website:

1. Humanism aims at the full development of every human being.
2. Humanists uphold the broadest application of democratic principles in all human relationships.
3. Humanists advocate the use of scientific methods, both as a guide to distinguish fact from fiction and to help develop beneficial and creative uses of science and technology.
4. Humanists affirm the dignity of every person and the right of the individual to maximum possible freedom compatible with the rights of others.
5. Humanists call for the continued improvement of society so that no one may be deprived of the basic necessities of life, and for institutions and conditions to provide every person with opportunities for developing their full potential.
6. Humanists support the development and extension of fundamental human freedoms, as expressed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and supplemented by UN International Covenants comprising the United Nations Bill of Human Rights.
7. Humanists advocate peaceful resolution of conflicts between individuals, groups, and nations.
8. The humanist ethic encourages development of the positive potentialities in human nature, and approves conduct based on a sense of responsibility to oneself and to all other persons.
9. Humanists affirm that individual and social problems can only be resolved by means of human reason, intelligent effort, critical thinking joined with compassion and a spirit of empathy for all living beings.
10. Humanists affirm that human beings are completely a part of nature, and that our survival is dependent upon a healthy planet that provides us and all other forms of life with a sustainable environment.

There is a potential contradiction built into these principles. On the one hand, humanists strongly endorse rational thought and scientific methods and embrace the fact that

humans are part of nature and depend on a healthy planet. On the other hand, most of the other principles seem to be based on the pre-Darwinian, theistic notion that humans are different in kind from all other living beings, that humans are the sole source of all morality and rights and that the world (indeed the Universe) revolves around the needs and wants of humans.

What about the rights of other animals? The theory of evolution is so well established that it is almost universally accepted by scientists and likely by close to 100% of humanists. But evolution tells us that we are all cousins. How do our ethics tell us that rights are reserved exclusively for Homo Sapiens while it is perfectly acceptable morally to engage in mass slaughter of our fellow animals, including fellow mammals?

Aside from our barbaric treatment of other animals, there are many other reasons to embrace a vegetarian (or even better, a vegan) diet. For example:

1. A heavily meat-based diet is unhealthy. The planet is facing an obesity epidemic of epic proportions and excessive meat consumption is one of the culprits. Excessive meat consumption also increases the risk of heart attacks and some forms of cancer.
2. Production of meat is bad for the environment. Cows and other ruminant animals emit methane, a potent greenhouse gas. In addition, increased beef production is responsible for significant deforestation as more and more land is cleared for pastures. The problem is worsening as the global population continues to grow and become more prosperous.
3. Meat production is expensive and inefficient. Ironically, plant based alternatives are often more expensive, but only because of the economies of scale.

For a more in-depth discussion, see the attached 2013 article from the American Humanist Association's newsletter.

<https://thehumanist.com/magazine/july-august-2013/features/on-eating-animals/>

Hopefully, this will provide some "food for thought". To get started, a few discussion questions:

1. Is meat consumption ethical? Why or why not?
2. Should other animals have "rights"? If so, where do we draw the line?
3. Why do we eat so much meat?
4. There are a number of plant based manufacturers that soared in popularity (eg Beyond Meat) then crashed. What happened?

Beyond Believing

Monday, September 12, 2022 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, September 14, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum
Saturday, September 17, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.
Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103> and
519 Church Street Toronto, ON, M4Y 2C9 Canada (map)

Topic - "BAHACON Debrief"
Presented by various

Presentations will be made by the six Hatters who attended the recent Bluewater Atheist, Humanist and Agnostic Conference (BAHACON). We will discuss the themes presented in light of HAT, the wider Humanist and secular community and our current political and social situation.

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, September 21, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Presents: Periyaricon22 - International Humanism Conference
Saturday, September 24, 2022 9:00 a.m. to Sunday, September 25,
2022 5:00 p.m.
Centennial College Event Centre
937 Progress Avenue Scarborough, ON

Periyar International and Canadian Humanist Associations (Center for Inquiry Canada, Humanist Canada & the Humanist Association of Toronto) are proud to announce Humanism and Social Justice, a two-day conference, with the goal to make all of us lead happier lives through humanism, mental freedom and helping others. We are pleased to invite you to this global conference.

Our expert speakers and interactive workshops will explore topics like Social Justice, Literature & History, Dravidian Model, Women's Rights, Health and Wealth, Rational Thinking, Dispelling astrology and Superstition, Humanism in Education, Building Communities, Social Justice to the Native People, Immigrants & the Under-privileged, and much more.

HAT Forum

Saturday, September 24, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

Topic - "The Monarchy"

Presented by Curious

According to Oxford dictionary, the definition of aristocracy is as follows: "a form of government that places strength in the hands of a small, privileged ruling class, the aristocrats.". The term comes from Greek, meaning that "the rule of the best". Monarchy can be considered as a sub-type of aristocracy, where the government is ruled by a single person, who is referred with titles like king/queen, emperor/empress, sultan, pharaoh, etc.

The most common way of application of monarchy and aristocracy does not exist anymore that much in the new world. On the other hand, the tradition of presence of a royal family is still visible in many countries. These royal families usually present a symbolic power where the decision-making mechanisms are still following democratic means. Keeping such tradition is quite expensive and therefore raises many discussions among members of the society.

Some counter arguments of keeping this tradition are:

- Since they don't have power anymore, we do not need such institutions,
- The costs are too high and this is paid by the taxes (and therefore citizens),
- The idea of aristocracy is against the idea of equality,

Some arguments for keeping this tradition are:

- A royal family brings income to the country,
- They present values such as union and solidarity of people,
- They act as very explicit examples for the society and have a positive impact on guidance towards a better state

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, September 28, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, October 1, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97138103>

AND The 519, 519 Church Street

Topic - "The Ethics of Space Exploration"

Presented by Tanya Long

Humankind have always been explorers. Driven by necessity or curiosity, we have pushed beyond our immediate boundaries, taking all risks, to find out what lies beyond. Human history is replete with stories of explorers: Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand Magellan, James Cook, Francis Drake, Roald Amundsen, Marco Polo, Jacques Cartier, Samuel de Champlain and many others, all of whom risked their lives and changed the world. Most of the planet earth has been explored and as technology has allowed, we have cast our gaze outward. This is driven by curiosity: what lies out there, are there lives on other planets or are we alone in the universe. It is also driven by need. As we seem to be on the verge of destroying our home, we need to find other places to live.

The benefits of space exploration are enormous. But is it worth it? The two recent attempts to launch Artemis 1 and 2 have been postponed because of fuel leaks. The cost of Artemis for the period 2012 - 2025 is estimated to be \$93 billion. Think of what that money, and those resources, human and otherwise, could do to solve some of the problems we are facing on earth.

There is no doubt space exploration has provided great benefits:

1. inventions that have come out of the space program include memory foam, freeze-dried food, firefighting equipment, cochlear implants, Lasik technology, artificial limbs, scratch-resistant lenses, improved radial tires and thousands more.
2. Communications satellites allow for weather forecasting, communications (radio, television and telephone transmissions can be sent live anywhere in the world), navigation, search and rescue, monitoring animal migration, health of crops, clear cutting of forests, etc., and also spying and reconnaissance - not necessarily a benefit, as witness Russian interference in the US federal election.
3. The Hubble and now the James Webb telescopes have provided mind-blowing images of outer space and may help scientists to eventually understand the origins and development of the universe.

The risks are also great. Human exploration on earth is a story of colonization, exploitation and conflict. How likely is it that space exploration will be different? The US,

Russia, India and China are all in the running. How will competition - for habitable land, mineral wealth - play out? The space program and the benefits that accrue are largely the purview of the privileged and the wealthy. Gazillionaires like Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk are already spending billions for 1/2 hour joy rides, with what result in terms of air pollution and damage to the environment. We have filled space with space junk - 3,000 dead satellites, 34,000 pieces of space junk. What potential damage exists as these pieces of junk collide?

The ethical questions related to space exploration are many. How do we ensure collaboration among the various powers? How do we ensure diversity and inclusion in our decisions regarding space? How do we prevent ourselves from recreating the same problems as we face on earth? How do we control the possibility of inflicting serious damage on whatever lifeforms may exist out there, most of which we will not recognize? We have a human-centric view that may be changing for some of us as we come to understand the complexity of animal and plant life. What about in space? Will we still do what works for humans without any thought for damage we could be doing to alien species? Let's discuss.

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, October 5, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, October 8, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "Ancestral Knowledge vs Scientific Knowledge - Common Ground?"

Presented by Victor Zurkowski

Arturo Luna, the recently appointed Minister of Sciences, Technology, and Innovation in Colombia, was interviewed by a reporter from the periodic "El País" shortly after his appointment.[1]

Excerpt from the interview, translation by Google Translate, with a few changes:

[reporter] Science recently made headlines in the national media on account of a debate between "ancestral" knowledge and the "hegemonic" scientific method. What will be the direction of the ministry in this dilemma?

[AL] That debate sparked a lot of interesting conversations. I am a person of indigenous origin who was trained in modern science and the scientific method. I am aware that a

dialogue must be established between indigenous, Afro, and peasant knowledge and modern Western science. Many solutions for the daily problems of today's society can be found in the knowledge that indigenous communities have.

[reporter] Such as?

[AL] For example, the treatment of diseases with plants or more sustainable agricultural production. In this tradition there are tools to start solving problems of public health, food, and even climate change. One has to learn to use all that knowledge. There are centuries of wisdom that society can take advantage of, but we have to give back to these communities for their teachings.

Discussion questions:

- Luna's answer seems to suggest that "ancestral" knowledge and the "hegemonic" scientific method are two sides of the same coin, are they? Are they substitutes of each other?

- Any group of humans that is alive today has accumulated centuries of wisdom (otherwise, they would not have survived). Some examples of accumulated wisdom from ancestral knowledge:

- o relationship between celestial bodies and human affairs, i.e.: astrology; Kepler made a living making horoscopes; Ronald Reagan had an astrologer

- o treatment of the "evil eye"; some treatments were already around by the 6th century BC, i.e.: this knowledge is an order of magnitude older than centenarian knowledge (at least 26 centuries!)

- o cures for digestive upset using tape and spells, or light skin tacks in the back of the patient; the ailment is called "empacho" in regions colonized by Spain (at least in the Americas, and the Philippines)

- o stress causes gastric ulcers

- o alcoholic beverages are harmless divine gifts

How much respect or importance should be given to the length of time a piece of "knowledge" has been available?

- Is the difference between "knowledge" (scientific or otherwise) and "scientific method" sufficiently understood?

- If “ancestral” knowledge is vetted and confirmed according to the scientific method, is it still “ancestral knowledge”?
- Does the scientific method transcend the patriarchy, attachment to a specific race, Western culture, colonialism?

[1] <https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2022-08-18/arturo-luna-ministro-de-ciencia-de-colombia-hay-que-establecer-un-dialogo-con-los-saberes-indigenas.html?mid=DM134608&bid=1196320147>

Beyond Believing

Monday, October 10, 2022 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, October 12, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, October 15, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/971381033> and

The 519, 519 Church Street

Topic - "Fascism in the 21st Century"

Presented by Victor Zurkowski

Borrowing from the preface of “Les Miserable”(1): “So long as there shall exist, by virtue of law and custom, decrees of damnation pronounced by society, artificially creating hells amid the civilization of earth, and adding the element of human fate to divine destiny; so long as the three great problems of the century—the degradation of man through pauperism, the corruption of woman through hunger, the crippling of children through lack of light—are unsolved; so long as social asphyxia is possible in any part of the world;—in other words, and with a still wider significance, so long as ignorance and poverty exist on earth,[...]” people will rise against oppression. For a few years after WWII, this could have been the preface to a description of uprisings wherever people were seeking “progressive” change, loosely guided by “left” ideas. We are now seeing the appearance of right-wing militant populist movements, for example:

USA

Trumpism

Canada Conservative party becoming more radical against a background populated by “the truckers”, “libertarians”, etc.

Brazil Jair Bolsonaro president

France Steady increase in support of Marie LePen party, leaving Macron with a minority government after elections in Feb 2022

Sweden a block of right-wing parties narrowly won the Sep 2022 election

Spain Support on the rise for VOX, a far-right party, the country’s third political party after the Nov 2019 elections (2); it has 4 seats out of 59 in the EU Parliament

Italy A coalition of right-wing parties won the Sep 2022 elections, led by Giorgia Meloni, leader of the “Brothers of Italy” party; the party uses elements of the Mussolini fascist party, such as an stylized tri-color flame

Poland the right-wing “Law and Justice” party is in power (3)

Hungary (5); Tucker Carlson interviewed the Hungarian prime minister in 2021, and touted Hungary as model for the US

“Regular” right-wing parties usually organize around pro-business, small government measures. The emerging far-right makes use of a populist discourse to seek mass support. Fascism has been characterized as government having the following features:

- right-wing leaning
- organization around some form of nationalism (us vs. them mentality, racism, xenophobia)
- nostalgia for a mythical better past when adherence to traditional values would have been the norm; this is used to justify severe economic and social regimentation as means to re-instate fabled standards
- suppression of dissent (suppression of opposition, book and news censorship, control of all parts of government)

Questions:

1. What is causing the emergence of governments with fascist leanings?
 - a. history has cycles, like a pendulum, and we are seeing it go in the opposite direction?
 - b. “Is the economy, stupid”?
 - c. ...?
2. Is fascism unavoidable?

3. Given the diversity of Canadian society, is fascism unavoidable in Canada?
4. There is a saying about the diet of flies that concludes the diet can't be completely wrong...What sustains a fascist regime? What is "good" in a fascist regime that makes it, under appropriate conditions, the most viable form of government?

- (1) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/135/135-h/135-h.htm>
- (2) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vox_\(political_party\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vox_(political_party))
- (3) <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/poland>
- (4) <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/hungary>
- (5) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s01ZL5TnBNY&ab_channel=FoxNews

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, October 19, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, October 22, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "A Return to Theocracy?"

Presented by Danny & Richard

As we have explored at The Forum in recent weeks, many countries have taken turns toward right-wing authoritarianism with a populist spin. What we haven't discussed is how many of those governments seem to have a strong religious element:

Rodrigo Duterte, President of The Philippines, though in a constant running battle with the Catholic Church over his draconian drug war, has staunch allies in the form of Iglesia Ni Cristo, an extreme Christian sect that is a political power in the country.

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has consistently maintained the support of Christian Evangelicals, a group that has doubled in size in the country over the past 30 years, now representing one third of the voters.

The new Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Melon's platform features her conservative Catholic Family Values as the most prominent plank laid alongside her Italy-first nationalism.

Vladimir Putin has been the first Russian leader in almost a century to embrace the role of the Russian Orthodox church in society, giving them back much of their wealth and power in 2009 in return for their support.

Viktor Orban's fourth straight election victory in Hungary came in Defence of Christian Liberty in the fight against Muslims, godless communists and "globalists".

And no one needs to be told of the rabid support of the former US President TFG by all religious stripes from Conservative Catholics, to Evangelicals, Christian Nationalists and anyone else willing to pray and pay at the Altar of Saint Donald, Defender of the Faith and a Christian America.

Questions:

Who is using who in these instances? - are disingenuous leaders, hungry for power, happy to court religious groups and roll back secularity to get support? Are they sincere in their religious motivations? Does it even matter?

Does this religious influence lead these countries on a road toward Theocracy?

Common to all such governments, the most vulnerable members of society are targeted and suffer most (racial and religious minorities, LGBTQ+ people, women). Who will speak and stand up for these people? What Canadian foreign policies can be effective against this rising tide of intolerance?

Is the diminished and diminishing strength of the Catholic church exacerbating this problem by opening a gap to be filled by more extremist religious ideologies or causing Rome to back off from criticizing government policies for fear of more loss of influence?

What are the consequences of Religion playing an increasing role in any government?

How significant to this situation is the privileged position of religion in all societies including Canadian society - the right to be intolerant and be shielded from criticism for their intolerance?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, October 26, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, October 29, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "Gender and English"
Presented by Karen Lynn

It all started in the Bible.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8 For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man.

9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

Corinthians 11: 7-9, New Testament, King James Version

Religious scholars argue about it, citing other verses in the Bible that prescribe how to treat women in gentler ways. Or maybe it started long before with the development of agriculture.

Terms such as “manageress” with female diminutive endings have fortunately gone out of vogue, and more recently “actress” has been subsumed as “actor”.

In modern times, women and men have argued that words such as “mankind”, “policeman”, “mailman”, and “foreman” should be changed to “people”, “police officer”, “mail carrier” and “supervisor”, etc.

Pronouns

The debate in favour of the use of they/them/their or theirs to substitute for he or she/him or her/his or hers, seems to have been decided. Presently, the contemporary consideration is to avoid gender discrimination that ascribes binary terminology, such as the above.

The Oxford Dictionary traces the singular “they” back to 1375 to ensure that we don’t think that it is new-fangled terminology. A brief history of singular ‘they’ | Oxford English Dictionary (oed.com)

Forbes, in 2020, published an article stating:

Asking and correctly using someone’s pronouns is a way to show respect for their gender identity. For those who don’t identify as either male or female, Shereiber says the singular “they” is catching on. The American Dialect Society named singular “they” the word of the decade 2010-2019 and, in 2019, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary amended their definition so that “they” can be used for a “single person whose gender identity is nonbinary.

Although “they” can be easily incorporated into your everyday speech, there are a slew of other gender-neutral pronouns that individuals may choose to adopt, including “zie” and “sie”. Be sure to ask others about their pronoun preference before making any assumptions. The Swedish have adopted “hen” as their gender-neutral pronoun of choice, and it’s been reported that kindergartens and preschools have been using the term to allow children “to grow up without feeling the impact of gender biases.”

“The gender-neutral ‘Mx’ is used as a title for those who do not identify as being of a particular gender, or for people who simply don’t want to be identified by gender,” according to Merriam-Webster.”

How To Use Gender-Neutral Language, And Why It’s Important To Try (forbes.com)

In June 2017, the federal government passed Bill C-16, Canada’s Gender Rights Bill. The CBC explains how the Ontario Human Rights Commission views the failure to use pronouns that a person chooses, and the reference to the Criminal Code.
www.cbc.ca/cbcdocspov/features/canadas-gender-identity-rights-bill-c-16-explained

Discussion:

1. As humanists, do we view the evolution of the language referring to men and women as described above as progress?
2. As women’s rights have evolved, what cultural shifts have occurred that have influenced the changes in our language?
3. As the understanding of the complexity of gender has been uncovered by testimonies of many individuals, and by science, what are the forms of resistance expressed by some who feel it is unnecessary?
4. Should the use of anti-discriminatory language be mandatory in schools and universities?
5. To prevent the maintenance of discriminatory language and to ensure an equitable future for all, what further changes should we make to the English language?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, November 2, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Co-Sponsored Protest Screening in Support of Leena Manimekalai

Thursday, November 3, 2022

6:15 p.m. 9:30 p.m.

Location to be determined closer to event date

For this in-person event, HAT will be joining the Toronto Metropolitan University Faculty Association (XFA), Humanist International and other free-thought and human rights groups supporting filmmaker Leena Manimekalai. During the event, Leena's films will be screened and we will hear commentary from the artist herself.

To avoid possible efforts to prevent this event from occurring, the downtown location will be announced only closer to the event date.

KAALI, a performance documentary short, depicts the Indigenous goddess Kaali taking a quintessential trip on being, belonging and becoming in the streets of downtown Toronto.

MAADATHY, AN UNFAIRY TALE, is a narrative feature about how a young girl who grew up in a "slave" caste group came to be immortalized as their local deity.

Leena Manimekalai is a leading Tamil poet and a multi award-winning, intersectional, queer, feminist filmmaker with a strong repertoire of films across all genres.

Co-Sponsors

Centre for Free Expression, TMU

Dalit Solidarity Forum

Hindus for Human Rights

Humanist Association of Toronto

Humanists International

India Civil Watch International

PEN Canada

Poetic Justice Foundation

HAT Forum

Saturday, November 5, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/971381033> and

The 519, 519 Church Street, Toronto

Topic - "Bill 21 - Quebec's Secular Law Revisited"

Presented by Catherine Francis

Quebec's controversial secular law - Bill 21 - was passed on June 16, 2019 and has remained in force since that time. Among other things, the law prohibits the wearing of religious symbols by persons in certain public offices, including teachers. As with many

laws passed in Quebec since the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into force 40 years ago, Bill 21 relies on the “notwithstanding clause” which allows the federal and provincial legislatures to exempt a law from many of the Charter protections, including religious freedom.

So, isn't Bill 21 “old hat” by now? Haven't we talked about it enough? I would say “no” for a number of reasons. The issues raised by Bill 21 are both timely and extremely important.

First, to use a clichéd expression, the wheels of justice grind slowly. Although several attacks were launched immediately on the enactment of Bill 21, they are still winding their way slowly through the court system. A brief timeline is as follows:

- July 2, 2019 motion to stay Bill 21
- July 18, 2019 stay denied
- November 26, 2019 appeal re stay heard
- December 12, 2019 appeal denied (2-1 decision)
- April 9, 2020 Supreme Court of Canada denies leave to appeal
- November 2, 2020 trial begins
- April 30, 2021 trial decision released, judge strikes down part of the law, dismisses balance of court challenges
- November 9, 2021 Quebec Court of Appeal denies motion by Montreal English School Board to stay the operation pending appeal
- The appeal is set to be heard in November 2022. The decision could be issued in days, months or years. Regardless of the outcome there will almost certainly be attempts to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. A leave application would take at least six months. The appeal and the appeal decision could take another two years.

Bottom line: the court challenges are far from over.

Second, in the meantime, the architect of Bill 21, François Legault and his party, Coalition Avenir Québec, won a resounding majority on October 3, 2022, increasing their seats to 90. The invocation of the notwithstanding clause will come up for renewal in 2024 and will almost certainly be renewed given the CAQ mandate.

Third, this issue has split the secular community. There are many vocally in favour of the law, many vocally opposed and many either on the fence or afraid to speak out. On a personal level, I have given talks and appeared on a podcast about Bill 21. This has led to actual “hate mail” accusing me of being a traitor to the cause of secularism.

Last, the recent events in Iran add an ironic twist to the debate. Many of the same people who are vocally advocating for the right of women to wear the hijab in Quebec are also vocally advocating for the right of women NOT to wear the hijab in Iran. The hijab has become a visible symbol of the oppression of women. Among the supporters of Bill 21 are ex-Muslim women from places like Iran. This adds to the timeliness of a fresh look at Bill 21.

The issue is long overdue for a robust but respectful discussion.

Questions:

1. Are you in favour of or opposed to Bill 21. Why?
2. Do you think the law is unconstitutional?
3. Is this a matter for the courts or the legislature?
4. Is the law targeted toward Muslim women or is it truly neutral?
5. Does the law advance the cause of secularism?
6. Should other provinces be considering similar legislation?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, November 9, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, November 12, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "The Threat of Biodiversity Loss"

Presented by Melanie Milanich

How are the services that biodiversity provides being impacted and what increasing costs will have to be paid?

How is the world responding to the Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity?
How should Humanists be responding?

Systems vs. Programs approach - Many of our global systems lie at the root problem of Biodiversity loss - our economic systems and food production systems being the largest two. By altering systems we get at the root causes. Programs on the other hand are

targeted emergency measures to try to bolster or restore ecosystems or species already in danger. What are the pros and cons of each approach? Can a programs approach alone be successful? Are our global systems too difficult to change?

Anxiety vs Hopelessness - Negative emotions like anxiety can be a guide to and great motivator for action on our problems large and small. We seek to reduce our anxiety by acting against its sources - negatively by looking for ways to minimize, disprove or ignore the sources and positively by acting individually or with others to address the issue causing anxiety. When our anxiety overwhelms us or the problem seems intractable, we may lapse into hopelessness.

What are some of the paths to building generalized anxiety that may lead to action without creating hopelessness? Is there another path to change?

Three key videos to understanding Biodiversity: the concept, it's importance, combating loss:

Biodiversity

5 Key Human Impacts on the Environment

Conservation & Restoration

Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta on Economics and Biodiversity

Beyond Believing

Monday, November 14, 2022 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, November 16, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, November 19, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Today's presentation will be a Hybrid meeting with online and in-person options.

Topic - "Our Brains' Thinking/Feeling Divide"

Presented by Glen Erikson

“Which side are you on?” could be one of the eternal questions of existence.

Our human brain is built with two exact matching hemispheres — so similar in appearance, but so different in functionality. In the majority of people, the brain’s left side tends to reason, evaluation, language and directing our motor skills. It enables us to put one foot in front of the other.

The equal-sized right hemisphere does little of the above, but operates in the realm of abstracts, interpretation, imagery, art, metaphors, and ideas. The left side processes data, while the right side processes emotions.

The two sides work together in a kind of yin/yang cooperation. This bi-lateral feature is what makes us human in all our confounding complexity.

As adults we might think that we are succeeding through the accumulation of knowledge and skills going on in our left, rational brain.

However many working in human psychology say that it is really the right side, the feeling side, that is ultimately in charge.

How do we achieve a good balance with this competition going on in our heads? What makes us sit at a school desk, in an office or workstation, when we would rather be outside playing, or smelling the flowers?

Is life all about adaptation and compromise?

We humans pride ourselves in our cognitive skills. We are smart, have created great tools, and can achieve so much. We are able to learn, solve puzzles and problems. But in times of crisis, are we thinking machines or reaction machines?

Can we now consider ourselves civilized or are we just doing the best we can?

What about the things we can’t understand and find fearsome and mysterious? Does this lead us to superstition and religious systems? What drives us to competitive struggle, towards aggression and even mortal combat?

Who is in charge of you — your reasoning or your emotions?

Who is running your life?

What happens when you feel you are being treated unfairly?

Do you think you have free will?

Do you feel in balance? Sometimes? Rarely?

How do you handle addictions, cravings or impulses?

Does your life have a purpose or meaning?

How do you decide what is important or what matters?

How many of your core values come from reason, or from deep-seated feelings and prejudices?

Some references:

My Stroke Of Insight - A Brain Scientist's Personal Journey by Jill Bolte Taylor, Ph.D.

A first-person account of a brain scientist who one day woke up with a exploded blood vessel in her brain.

Drawing From The Right Side Of The Brain by Betty Edwards

Everything Is F*cked - A Book About Hope by Mark Manson

Manson draws on mountains of psychological research, as well as timeless wisdom of philosophers from Plato to Tom Waits, to dissect religion, politics, money, entertainment, and the Internet. With his mix of erudition and humour, Manson challenges us to be more honest with ourselves, openly defying our definitions of faith, happiness, freedom — and even hope itself.

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, November 23, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, November 26, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "Capital Punishment and Mandatory Minimum Sentences"

Presented by Catherine Francis

The following are various statistics on capital punishment in Canada around the world.

In Canada, capital punishment was abolished for all offences except military offences on July 26, 1976. It was formally abolished for military offences such as desertion, cowardice and spying in 1999. The last executions in Canada were in 1962, two executions by hanging.

109 countries have entirely abolished capital punishment. 7 have abolished for almost all offences, 25 have abolished in practice and 54 actively carry out capital punishment.

The practice has been almost entirely abolished in Europe, and this is a criterion of membership in the European Union.

However, the majority of the world's population lives in countries with capital punishment, including China, India, Japan, Indonesia, many countries in Africa and the Middle East and of course the United States.

The United States is an anomaly in the western developed world. 24 states allow executions. 23 states have abolished them. 3 states have formal moratoriums. The majority of the US population still favours capital punishment. There have been 16 executions so far in 2022, in 5 states, 100% male. Perhaps the most shocking statistic is the age difference between the date of the offence and the execution. The average difference has been 26 years. There are future executions lined up all the way through July 2026.

Execution methods range from firing squad and decapitation, stoning, hanging, electrocution, to the most "humane" method of lethal injection adopted almost universally in the United States.

In Canada, in contrast, our Supreme Court of Canada recently held unanimously that imposing consecutive periods of parole ineligibility was "cruel and unusual punishment" and violated section 12 of the Charter of Rights:

"No crime, no matter how appalling it might be, can justify imposing a punishment that is intrinsically incompatible with human dignity, like a sentence of imprisonment for life without a realistic possibility of parole." (R. v. Bissonnette 2022 SCC 23 <<https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/2022/2022scc23/2022scc23.html>> at para 111)

The Supreme Court of Canada has struck down many mandatory minimum sentences as violating the Charter.

This contrasts greatly with the sentencing practices in some other countries, where severe sentences can be handed out for non violent crimes such as drug trafficking or fraud. For example, Bernie Madoff was sentenced to 150 years in prison, although this was meaningless given his age and he died in 2021. US basketball star Britney Griner

was recently sentenced to 9 years in a Russian penal colony for carrying a small amount of cannabis oil, which is not even a crime in Canada, let alone something that would attract a harsh sentence. Other countries still have the death penalty for white collar crime and drug offences.

Who is right and who is wrong on capital punishment and mandatory minimum sentences?

Some questions for consideration:

- What are the main goals of sentencing? Deterrence, retribution, rehabilitation?
- Are you in favour of or against capital punishment?
- If so, for what crimes?
- If not, would you feel differently if your child or another close relative were the victim?
- Should there be exceptions?
- What about potentially executing someone innocent?- Does capital punishment really deter crimes?
- If you are opposed to capital punishment in principle, how do you feel about the executions of Nazi war criminals, Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden? Did you celebrate the latter two executions?
- Do you agree with the Supreme Court of Canada's interpretation of the Charter?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, November 30, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, December 7, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Room - Online Chat

Humanist Day - "International Human Rights Day"
Saturday, December 10, 2022
Commemoration Only

Here's why December 10th could be called the most important 'humanist' holiday of the year.

It's International Human Rights Day.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

HAT Forum

Saturday, December 10, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "U.S. Election Roundup"

Presented by Paul Kaplan

Today we will be discussing the results and the implications of the recent U.S. midterm elections for the United States, for Canada and for the world situation.

Won't you join us for an interesting discussion?

Beyond Believing

Monday, December 12, 2022 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Online

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, December 14, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, December 17, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting In-person & Virtual

519 Church Street Toronto, ON, M4Y 2C9 Canada ([map](#))

Topic - "HumanLight Creative Exchange & Recommendation Roundup"

Presented by All

HAPPY HUMANLIGHT, HUMANISTS!

Today we will be devoting to artistic output - ours, our friends' and that which we admire. Each of the attendees will have 5 minutes to share with their community a song, poem, reading, photograph, painting, video, sculpture or whatever creation they desire. In this way, we hope to learn more about those in our community and share in their personal and beloved creative triumphs.

This is the chance to blow your own horn, figuratively and even literally, if horn blowing is your thing.

Join us as we celebrate creativity and shine our HumanLight!

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community
Wednesday, December 21, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

Humanist Day - "HumanLight"

Friday, December 23, 2022

Commemoration Only

HumanLight is the time to let your Humanist values shine out. Talk about Humanism. On this day of the year, make it your goal to tell one person in your life about Humanism. Have nothing but pride for this positive affirmation. Celebrate your humanist humanity!

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HumanLight>

HAT Forum

Saturday, December 24, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "Is there Anything Good about Christmas? A Holiday Discussion"

Presented by All

Today we will meet to discuss Christmas and all the other Holy-days of the year from a secular Humanist perspective. What do we take that is good and positive from our national or cultural "days of common pause"? Let's look at our own heritage and highlight those things that we love, enjoy or value about these days of ritual celebration, even though we no longer share a belief in the origins or original motives for them.

Join us for an interesting discussion, won't you?

HAT Chat - Open Check in with Our Humanist Community

Wednesday, December 28, 2022 6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Room - Online Chat

HAT Forum

Saturday, December 31, 2022 11:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/971381033>

Topic - "New Year's Resolutions"

Presented by All

Many humans recognize the completion of another orbit around the sun and mark the end of the journey and the beginning of the next on days determined by culture and tradition. In countries using the Gregorian calendar, that ending day is now: December 31.

Even though it is somewhat arbitrary, we often take its symbolism as a time to reflect on the past and prepare for the future, a future in which we look to continue those things that were positive and seek to improve those aspects we deem as negative or in need of change.

Today we will talk about our lives, our families and our societies in light of these continuances and changes, often given the name of “New Year’s Resolutions”.

Join us for a social, personal and no doubt enlightening conversation.