

May/June 2017  
Volume 27  
Number 5

## In this Issue

May Public Meeting 1  
President's Column 2  
Cryptogram 2  
News and Notes 3  
March Treasury Report 4  
Catholic Canon Law 5  
Review of April Public Meeting 8  
Cable Report 9  
Book Review 10  
Upcoming Events 11

## May Public Meeting Film: "A Better Life"

Join us for a showing of the film "A Better Life: An Exploration of Joy & Meaning in a World Without God".

There are no gods. Now what? If this is the only life we have, how does that affect how we live our lives, how we treat each other, and cope with death? In this fascinating documentary, join filmmaker Chris Johnson as he introduces us to people from all walks of life and backgrounds who challenge the false stereotypes of atheists as immoral and evil. Learn the various ways that many atheists have left religion behind and created a better life filled with love, compassion, hope, and wonder.

The film features interviews with A.C. Grayling, Adam Pascal, AJ Johnson, Alex Honnold, Andrew Copson, Cara Santa Maria, Dan Barker, Daniel Dennett, Donald C. Johanson, Helena Guzik, Julia Sweeney, Matt Dillahunty, Nahla Mahmoud, Patricia S. Churchland, Robert Llewellyn, Sean Carroll, and Tracie Harris. These atheists have been chosen from among the 100 that are featured in the book by the same title.

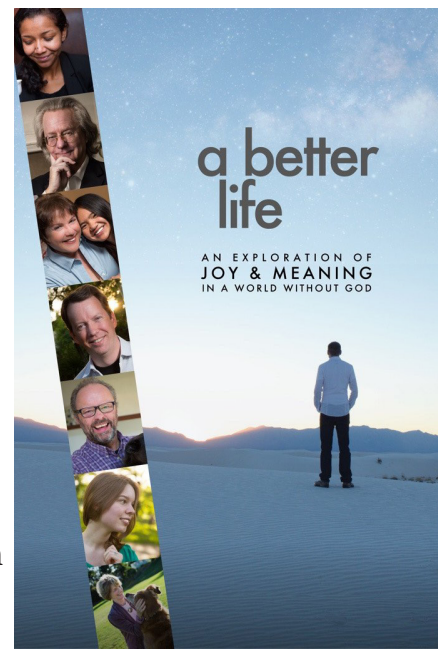
To help the filmmaker recoup his production costs, we are asking for a five-dollar, per person donation, though no one will be turned away for lack of a contribution.

For more information, to purchase the book or DVD, or to stream the film or listen to the podcast, visit <https://www.theatheistbook.com>.

### Sunday, May 21, 2017

1:00–1:15 p.m.: Social  
1:15–1:45 p.m.: Business Meeting  
(including annual elections)  
1:45–2:00 p.m.: Social  
2:00–3:30 p.m.: Speaker

4:00 p.m.: Dinner



Southdale Library  
2nd floor meeting room  
7001 York Ave. S.  
Edina, MN 55435

Q.Cumbers Restaurant  
7465 France Ave. S.  
Edina, MN 55435  
Show your Minnesota Atheists  
newsletter or a page from Atheists  
Weekly Email for a \$2 discount.



## President’s Column

[Subtitle]

*By Alyssa Ehni*

A study was recently released by two University of Kentucky researchers which indicates that 26% of the population may be atheists. This is nearly four times the number that has previously been put forth. The researchers believe the previous studies may be off as people who receive polling calls may not want to admit their non-belief to anyone, let alone to someone they do not know.

But why would an atheist remain in the closet? There are many reasons. For one, depending upon your background, the emotional fallout can be difficult to deal with. Too often we hear about worst case scenarios; people who tell religious family or friends that they no longer believe, and are disowned, shunned, or disinherited. If you insulated yourself (or were insulated by your family) within a religious community, the loss of your entire support network would be devastating. It is not unheard of for family members to decide that the apostate is now “dead to them” or for friends and family to limit their contact. Sometimes admitting you are an atheist can be an actual death sentence. “Coming out” may be even more difficult for young people, who could risk being kicked out of their parents’ house, or otherwise cutoff financially. This could mean not finishing high school

or not having the ability to pursue higher education which could limit future career options. Members of clergy who lose faith lose their careers when they tell people they no longer believe.

Most of the stories I have heard from Minnesota Atheist members did not have consequences that were this extreme. In my own experience, I cannot think of any real consequences I have experienced as a result of telling someone that I am an atheist. Although I grew up in a religious household, it was not a religiously conservative or fundamentalist environment. At worst, discussing atheism with my mother is difficult. After I first told my mom I was an atheist, we discussed why, or what that meant from time to time. Without fail, my mom would fall ill with a migraine headache for hours because she became so upset that she would not see me in heaven after we both died. We do not talk about atheism or my involvement with Minnesota Atheists anymore.

I am glad that my own experiences with talking about atheism have been fairly consequence free; these types of conversations certainly aren’t free of consequences for everyone. One reason Minnesota Atheists exists is to provide a community for atheists where we can find and support one another.

### Cryptogram

*By George Francis Kane*

Pu tvdn Otz htgdz opci fi btfi kdijl bpov! Dpei  
fjepvo j djloi ziatbps pv fn vjfi js j Bhpbb rjve.

—Httzn Jddiv



## News and Notes

### The Good Friday counter-demonstration

By George Francis Kane

One of our Meetup organizers posted a notice for the Good Friday demonstration at the Planned Parenthood office in St. Paul. This is an event organized by Planned Parenthood, not by Minnesota Atheists, but it is one that we support. We have been posting notice of this event on Meetup for years, and it is attended by many Minnesota Atheist members. It is actually a counter-demonstration against a so-called “prayer vigil” sponsored by primarily Catholic churches.

This has been a popular event, but someone posted on Meetup the following message:

*Just wondering what the heck this has to do with atheism? If people who oppose abortion are typically theists, are we to assume atheists are typically proponents of abortion? That logic seems rather tenuous, but it's the only connection I can fathom. Seriously, I actually want to know. Or is this just a pet issue of the organizers, who are leveraging this atheist group to bolster their unrelated projects? What is the basis for solidarity? You leave not a hint when you just say come join our crowd and wave a sign.*

The poster's language was unquestionably adversarial, laced with phrases like “what the heck” and the inflammatory question if “this is just a pet issue of the organizers, who are leveraging this atheist group to bolster their unrelated projects.” The organizer recognized that he was a troll, motivated only by disruption, and deleted his post.

A board member did reach out to the poster, and posted the following polite and non-confrontational response:

*This event fits right in line with Minnesota Atheists Public Policy. Read our policy on Reproductive Rights here: <http://mnatheists.org/information/public-policy-positions#IV>*

*Our positions are up for review by our dues-paying members on an annual basis. Of course not all atheists will agree with everything we have taken positions on. We hope we have made good enough arguments that most atheists would*

*agree with most of our positions, and perhaps the few items they disagree with, rather than that being a deal breaker to being involved with us, they become active with us. Becoming an active member of our community allows one to share their views and have these important discussions.*

*Thank you for being involved, and please have fun standing up for Reproductive Rights!*

The board member was quite correct to direct the troll to our public policy positions. The decision by the board to establish these policies, back in 2008, was to provide guidance to people who speak for Minnesota Atheists. Today, that includes Meetup organizers. The board decided that our public policy positions had to be validated by two criteria. The first is that they fol-

***The right of women and couples to plan their reproductive lives is the target of a broad range of continuous legal attacks by religious conservatives.***

low from the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The second is that we will take a position if the argument on a particular issue is dominated by religious dogma, and motivated by the desire to impose religious views onto the entire population.

These guidelines are always in the mind of the Public Policy Review Committee. When the board was asked a couple of years ago if our scope should be expanded to include the social justice issues of the Atheism Plus movement, it rejected the proposal.

The committee makes a point to always justify its policies within this purview. Had our troll read them, as our board member had requested, he would have found the following answer to his question:

The right of women and couples to plan their reproductive lives is the target of a broad range of continuous legal attacks by religious conservatives. Their tactics to end abortion rights include local, state, and federal legislation and excessive regulation; campaigns to stack the judiciary with opponents of abortion; and constitutional amendment. They also support legislation and FDA regulations to ban or restrict access to varieties of contraceptives. Minnesota Atheists opposes these efforts because of our principle that public policy should never be based on religious

## 4 The Minnesota Atheist

News and Notes continued from page 3

values and superstitious thinking.

After the message from the board member, our troll flaunted his true colors. He criticized Minnesota Atheists because nobody “deigned” to answer his question, although he refused to look at our public policy, to which a board member had directed him, referring to it as “scripture.” In an effort to provoke an angry response, he wildly exaggerated that “It is obvious to all and sundry that ‘planned parenthood’ and ‘right to plan reproductive lives’ are shabby euphemisms

*Every year, the Catholic Church busses large numbers of their followers to their “prayer vigil.”*

for state subsidized fetus killing.” In point of fact, polls show that Americans support the constitutional right to an abortion by better than two-to-one; and there is no government funding for abortions, whether by Planned Parenthood or anyone else. No government at any level in the United States gives Planned Parenthood a subsidy or block grant. The government just pays it through Medicaid for services rendered, at the rate that Medicaid has established and pays to all medical service providers.

Our troll took issue with the position that support for reproductive rights is “derived from any atheistic principle or tradition.” It is obvious that he has not taken the time to do any research, as our policy on abortion rights is in complete alignment with the leading atheist/secularist organizations, such as the Freedom from Religion Foundation (<https://ffrf.org/faq/state-church/item/16916-abortion-why-the-religious-right-is-wrong>), the Secular Coalition of America ([http://secular.org/files/model\\_secular\\_policy\\_guide1.pdf](http://secular.org/files/model_secular_policy_guide1.pdf)) and Americans United for Separation of Church and State (<http://au.org/issues/reproductive-health-conscience-clauses-for-religious-objectors>). The capper to his critical-thinking-free fusillade was his assertion that support for abortion rights is “satanic”!

The Good Friday counter-demonstration exists only because, every year, the Catholic Church busses large numbers of their followers to their “prayer vigil.” Their purpose is clear and explicit: they want to influence changes in law to make abortion illegal, or at least make access to

it unavailable. They want to enforce the dictates of their religious faith on all of the citizens with the force of law, to deny them the free exercise of their conscience.

Organizations that support secular government cannot let this religious siege on government go unanswered. That is why we gather each year to display our support for women’s reproductive rights, for Planned Parenthood, and in opposition to imposing religious orthodoxy on the population with the force of law. It is not necessary for members to have any position on re-productive rights. We do expect them, however, to oppose the religious takeover of government.

## March Treasury Report

*By Chris Matthews*

### Building Fund

\$250 Ajay Gupta

**\$250 Total Building Fund**

### Radio Fund

\$30 Nancy Ruhland

\$15 Mark Paquette

\$10 August Berkshire

**\$55 Total Radio Fund**

### General/Visibility Fund

\$600 Jon Strand

\$520 Ben Zvan

\$100 R Hewetson

\$40 Geraldine Jensen

\$25 Linda Frieden

\$16 PayPal Giving Fund

\$15 Donald Theis

\$10 Nancy Ruhland

**\$1,326 Total General/Visibility Fund**

**Total Income \$1,631**

**Current Building Fund \$137,139**

### Top Expenses

\$820 Radio show

\$397 Newsletter printing

\$320 Meetings, parades, booth, etc.

## Catholic Canon Law

### An excerpt from *Faith Enterprise: Making Mysteries and Miracles Vanish*

By Richard Maus

“Civil laws to which the law of the Church yields are to be observed in canon law with the same effects, insofar as they are not contrary to divine law and unless canon law provides otherwise.” CCL 22

In the view of the Catholic Church, Canon Law prevails over civil law. Sample

“The Church has the innate and proper right to coerce offending members of the Christian faithful with penal sanctions” CCL 1311

Again: The Catholic Church believes it can send a Christian to jail.

“The law can establish other expiatory penalties which deprive a member of the Christian faithful of some spiritual or temporal good and which are consistent with the supernatural purpose of the Church.” CCL 1311-2

“Although not an assent of faith, a religious submission of the intellect and will must be given to a doctrine which the Supreme Pontiff or the college of bishops declares concerning faith or morals when they exercise the authentic magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim it by definitive act; therefore, the Christian faithful are to take care to avoid those things which do not agree with it.” CCL 752

“A person must believe with divine and Catholic faith all those things contained in the word of God, written or handed on, that is, in the one deposit of faith entrusted to the Church, and at the same time proposed as divinely revealed either by the solemn magisterium of the Church or by its ordinary and universal magisterium which is manifested by the common adherence of the Christian faithful under the leadership of the sacred magisterium; therefore all are bound to avoid any doctrines whatsoever contrary to them.” CCL 750, §1

Pronouncements of this kind were certainly something that concerned certain voters in 1960 (the fact that John Kennedy was Catholic raised

worries that he would be in thrall to the pope). Times have changed, but statements in the Catholic catechism and by the pope suggest what some of the ramifications of strict adherence to this doctrine might be.

“Professional secrets—for example, those of political office holders, **soldiers**, physicians, and lawyers—or confidential information given under the seal of secrecy must be kept, save in exceptional cases where keeping the secret is bound to cause very grave harm to the one who confided it, to the one who received it **or to a third party and where the very grave harm can be avoided** [emphasis added], only by divulging the truth. Even if not confided under the seal of secrecy, private information prejudicial to another is not to be divulged without a grave and proportionate reason.” CCC 2491

The Archdiocese for the Military Services (AMS) provides the Roman Catholic Church’s pastoral and spiritual services to those serving in the United States armed forces or other federal services overseas. It oversees Catholic priests serving as military chaplains throughout the world. “In 2013 the AMS served at more than 220 U.S military installations in 29 countries.” (AMS) Does the above mean, for instance, that those chaplains have the choice of passing on political or military secrets to a third party ... like the Vatican?

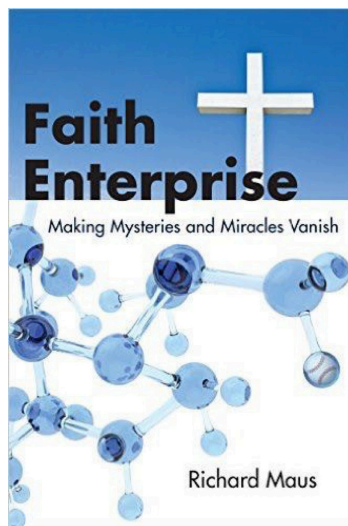
Imagine what it would be like if the Vatican collected information

from everywhere and ran everything.

Pope Benedict XVI did:

“To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: for all this, there is urgent need of a **true world political authority** [emphasis added], as my predecessor Blessed John XXIII indicated some years ago. Such an authority would need to be regulated by law, to observe consistently the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, to seek to establish the common good, and to

Continued on page 6



## 6 The Minnesota Atheist

### Catholic Canon Law continued from page 5

make a commitment to securing authentic integral human development inspired by the values of charity in truth.” Pope Benedict XVI, December 3, 2012

There are already too many examples of instances where the church regarded itself as a *true world political authority* and a law unto itself.

“Archbishop Jozef Wesolowski, former nuncio (ambassador) to the Dominican Republic, was holed up in Poland where the Vatican rejected a request from the Warsaw Prosecutor’s Office for his extradition on the grounds he was a citizen of the Vatican.” (RNS) More recently, Wesolowski reportedly has been defrocked and has lost his diplomatic immunity. “The Vatican’s former ambassador to the Dominican Republic has been charged with sexually abusing young boys in the Caribbean country and having child pornography on his computer and will stand trial next month in a Vatican court.” VATICAN CITY, AP, June 2015

“In St. Paul, Minnesota, Archbishop [Joseph] Flynn did not report any charges of clergy sex abuse to police over a thirteen-year period. The archdiocese did finally agree to a ‘child protection plan’ that requires the archdiocese report any child abuse claim to law enforcement and give law enforcement priority in any investigation.” (StarTribune, October 14, 2014)

“In a court-ordered deposition made public Thursday, the Rev. Kevin McDonough [former vicar general for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis] also said priests suspected of abusing children were not automatically reported to police, as required by law.” StarTribune, April 25, 2014

Maybe the pope should declare that all bishops and priests are diplomats and thus gain diplomatic immunity for them from US criminal laws. That worked (for a while) for one archbishop.

“In Australia, papal envoy Archbishop Paul Gallagher invoked diplomatic immunity in refusing to provide documents that could have assisted a sex abuse inquiry.” New York Times, May 23, 2014

The Lobbying Disclosure Act, passed by Congress in 1995, provides exemptions for churches or an association of churches. So, a [Catholic/Muslim/Religious] foreign state not only has total freedom to educate American children as they wish in their parochial schools and churches, with no oversight, but in addition, the foreign state can lobby our government to their benefit with-

out registering or disclosing the lobbying effort. (American citizens can’t even do that.) And they do it tax free, as a religion. (Note: It is otherwise a crime to be an unregistered agent of a foreign state.)

“Unlike Secular lobbies, religious groups that work with legislators on Capitol Hill don’t have to register with the federal government and are free from the stringent reporting requirements imposed on any group that seeks to influence legislation.” Church and State, April 2012

“In effect until 1983, Church Canons 119-120 called for criminally accused clerics to be tried before a church judge and explicitly forbade taking to civil court a cleric accused of a crime.” StarTribune, Ed Kohler, St. Paul, January 2015

“The Archdiocese in St. Louis recently excommunicated the local priest and six local St. Stan parishioners because they would not relinquish the deed to their church to the bishop. The locals had built, owned, and operated the Catholic parish church since the 1890s. The Catholic hierarchy obviously valued a church asset more than the souls of the legal owners.

The bishop in Spokane argued in the opposite direction in its bankruptcy suit, claiming even

*Imagine what it would be like if the Vatican collected information from everywhere and ran everything.*

*Pope Benedict XVI did ...*

though the diocese had the deeds, that the court cannot use them as liquid assets. The US bankruptcy judge disagreed. In the United States, civil law should prevail over canon law.

As noted earlier, times have changed . . . and so have the attitudes of the church toward civil society. Take this statement from the *Baltimore Catechism*, the de facto standard Catholic school text in the United States from 1885 to the late 1960s, for instance.

“Why must we respect and obey the lawful authority of our country? We must respect and obey the lawful authority of our country because it comes from God, the Source of all authority.”

Baltimore Catechism, 247

Mind you, Pope Pius XII had a different take on that:

“Above all, it must be clearly stated that no human authority, no state, no community of states, whatever be their religious character, can give a positive command or positive authorization to teach or to do that which would be contrary to religious truth or moral good.” Pope Pius XII, Dec. 6, 1953

What does the current catechism say about such things?

“Citizens are obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of the moral order. We must obey God rather than men.” CCC 2256

And the Catholic Church is only too happy to be the one to interpret and pass along God’s demands.

“The point is that any Catholic in public office, his first commitment has to be his faith. . . .” Bishop

Thomas Tobin, November 23, 2009

“The Roman Catholic Church actually demands that Catholic judges obey Catholic law when deciding civil legal issues.” FFRF, Andrew Seidel

Priorities: “The most tragic hunger and the most terrible anguish is not lack of food. It’s much more about the absence of God and lack of true love, the love that was revealed to us on the cross.” Cardinal Robert Sarah, May 22, 2011

By the way, God comes before civil government not just for Catholics but also for the Baptists:

“Whenever the civil government forbids the practice of things that God has commanded us to do, or tells us to do things He has commanded us not to do, then we are on solid ground in disobeying the government and rebelling against it.” Pat

Robertson, 1984

“Civil government being ordained by God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed word of God. . . . The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind.” Southern

Baptist Convention 2005

Arizona, Kansas, Louisiana, South Dakota, and Tennessee have passed laws that prohibit judges from considering *foreign laws* in their decisions. While this is typically understood to refer to Sharia law, it apparently could refer to any law from outside the US, including the Vatican City State. In Florida the proposed legislation included the words: *but not limited to, a foreign or international*

*organization claiming the status of a country, state, or nation . . .*

Under this law could a judge reject a Catholic hospital’s refusing to do an abortion based on *Catholic law*? Does religious freedom prevail over civil law?

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” Romans 13:1 In 2012, the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the church’s political arm in the state, spent over half a million dollars to try to pass an amendment to the state constitution that would have supported church dogma and prevented gay marriages. It failed. We allow a foreign faith-based state all manner of privilege, and then see it attempt to amend our constitution. Clearly all Catholic entities in the US are subject to foreign control.

Many states allow children to be exempt from vaccinations because of religious concerns.

“As of 2013, thirty-eight states and the District of Columbia still had religious exemptions for child abuse in their civil codes, and seventeen had had religious exemptions for felony crimes” Paul A.

Offit, M.D., Author of, *Bad Faith: When Religious Belief Undermines Modern Medicine*

Because of Christian influence, only the United States and Somalia

have not ratified the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Note the following reference (superscript) abbreviations:

CCC — Catechism of the Catholic Church

CCL — Catholic Canon Law

CCT — Catechism of the Council of Trent

VIS — Vatican Information Service

YOUCAT — Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church

The above is excerpted and printed with permission from Part V “Catholicism” of my recently released book, *Faith Enterprise: Making Mysteries and Miracles Vanish*. While making the case for science, *Faith Enterprise* answers the question: What is it about Christianity and Catholicism that makes atheism so attractive? Visit: [faithenterprise.info](http://faithenterprise.info)

© Copyright 2016 Richard Maus — All rights reserved

## Review of April Public Meeting Organizing the Women's March MN

By Ron Lien

There was a presentation by Alicia Donahue, part of the leadership team of the Women's March Minnesota, oversaw the engagement and street team efforts which included social media presence, engagement, merchandise, and coordination of volunteers.

It was an impressive accomplishment to organize the Women's March MN over a nine-week period (that included three national holidays), which far exceeded organizers' expectations and culminated on January 21, 2017 with 23 speakers, 13 music acts, and approximately 100,000 people in attendance! It was the largest gathering in MN and U.S. history and over 5 million marched worldwide in 637 Women's Marches.

The National Chapter of the Women's March was the inspiration and vision for the Women's March MN to provide an opportunity for all people of all backgrounds to stand together on issues of safety, economic fairness, and sexual assault; workplace, LGBTQIA, immigrant, and reproductive rights; and environmental justice. In summary, women's rights are human rights.

The National Chapter was started in Hawaii, by a grandmother who, with the help of a friend, created a Facebook Event and invited 40 friends — overnight it had gained over 10,000 RSVPs. The Women's March MN Chapter started after learning of the march in Washington D.C. Someone posted "Let's march!" on the Stand Up MN Facebook page and on November 8, 2016 the first meeting of the MN Women's March was held. Women were organized by their individual areas of strength and expertise (Logistics, Branding, Engagement). Donahue helped bring stakeholders to the table, made the march 100% accessible, and had information translated into many languages. A woman with a background in fundraising was added as the fourth leader for the over 100 volunteers. The Women's March MN with the help of Donahue, reached out to at least 274 groups, many of which felt

"defeated" after the November elections. Women's March MN did a good job in outreach to rural Minnesota. The costs associated with the one-day march was over \$50,000. No individual received any payment which counters the "Paid Protesters" claim by opposition groups/individuals.

Politicians speaking were State Rep. Peggy Flanagan of St. Louis Park, State Rep. Ilhan Omar, Minneapolis, Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges, and U.S. Congresswoman Betty McCollum. Ann Bancroft, was the most well-known, non-political speaker.

In contrast from, what many felt to be a dark moment, the day before when President Donald Trump was inaugurated to the Women's March, the feelings of love and support were ubiquitous. "It's not the end, it's the beginning."

There was a learning curve for all involved, especially as the it was apparent the preparation for the estimate of 20,000 was going to be inadequate in regards to stage size, sound system, porta potties, cell towers being overwhelmed (which made them very grateful for heeding advice and having a walkie-talkie system), and traffic being shut down in some areas.

In the question and answer session, a question was asked about donating to Women's March MN. The Women's March MN lists a goal of \$10,000 and has raised more than that. Leaders did not want to adjust this to reflect the much higher costs for the event, because with merchandise and other revenue, they felt comfortable that they would have the financial resources needed. Any excess money has been and will be used to help other related causes.

In the week after the Women's March, Presidential Executive orders regarding "sanctuary cities," the Keystone Pipeline, the boarder wall, and travel bans as well as later attacks on the ACA and defunding Community Block Grants were

strong counter punches. An audience member pointed out that the secular groups at the local level are politically weak. So, "Where do we go from here?": resistance, continued pressure, participation in the process, exercise rights as citizens, donate time and money, make connections in one's personal life, and

Continued on page 9





contact representatives; make your voice heard. Senator Al Franken received 1,000 emails a month before the march and 1,000 a day after. U.S. Congresswoman Betty McCollum went from 16 phone calls in the January before the march to over 800 in the last half of January. The ACLU, which budgets about \$4 million a year in online contributions, received \$24 million in the first week of February! U.S. Congressman Tom Emmer's email is up 3x and phone calls are up 7x. The pressure is claimed to have helped persuade Attorney Jeff Sessions to recuse himself in a case and Uber CEO, Travis Kalanick, to resign from President Trump's Economic Advisory Council.

One impactful group the Women's March MN is working with is Indivisible, a politically diverse group, which uses the more useful parts of the Tea

## Cable Report

By *Steve Petersen*

Our crew has completed training at the new studio at Saint Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN) and we recorded our first program last month. This has been an extensive process and I would like to thank our crew members: Grant Hermanson, George Kane, Brett Stembridge, Shirley Moll and Art Anderson for their patience, time and efforts in learning a whole new system. One other change will be in the locations played: with the all digital HD format, we will no longer make DVD copies and send via U.S. mail, and instead, we will be checking for access stations that can take our digital uploads. It may take us a few months to get public access stations on board.

In April we invited August Berkshire to present his Evidence For Evolution power point presentation. The SPNN studio gives us the ability to

Party playbook.

An insightful comment from the audience was that conservatives took Trump seriously, not literally and the liberals took Trump literally, not seriously.

There was only one counter protester arrested at the march after he threw a punch at a protester who tried to grab one of his signs, and sprayed a chemical irritant at those around him. Later, these charges were dropped.

One elderly woman at the Women's March MN summed it up well by saying, "I can't believe I'm still protesting for this!"

Their website (<https://www.womensmarchmn.com/>) clearly communicates that this was not a one-day, nor one-issue event. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1798874673734173/>

upload the slide presentation and present it for the viewer just as given in person. This program took an extra dedicated effort to produce. Grant Hermanson and George Kane did an exceptional job in producing this program and August put in extra hours of time in preparation. View it online on the Minnesota Atheists iTunes or YouTube channels. If you have an idea or expertise in a subject of interest to atheists, contact Steve Petersen at: [editor@mnatheists.org](mailto:editor@mnatheists.org).

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

**Podcasts:** Available via iTunes and YouTube which are made possible by Grant Hermanson. To date, our YouTube channel has had over 300,000 downloads.

### Cable schedule:

Minneapolis: Ch. 75. Monday 7:00 p.m.  
 Sponsor: Steve Petersen.

Northwest Community Television (NWCT)  
 Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Golden Valley, Maple Grove, New Hope, Osseo, Plymouth and Robbinsdale, Ch. 20. Check web page for date and times at <http://nwct.org/programming.aspx>.  
 Sponsor: Grant Hermanson.

St. Paul: Ch. 15 Wednesday 5:00 p.m.  
 Sponsor: Jim Wright.



## Book Review

### Star Map

By *Bill Lehto*

Minnesota-based, secular publisher Free-thought House has just released *Star Map: A Journey of Faith Doubt and Meaning*, by former editor of Free Inquiry, Lewis Vaughn.

*Star Map* is a touching and deeply personal philosophical memoir about a young man’s struggle with fanatical faith and his frantic search for truth and meaning. Lewis Vaughn’s journey transforms him from a young Christian fundamentalist to a disillusioned agnostic to an atheist seeker of meaning in a godless world. Along the way he stumbles on the strongest empirical argument against the reliability of faith as a source of knowledge, and sees that life does indeed have meaning without religion. In the end, he never regains the

faith he lost, but finds something better.

The book has received positive reviews by some noted individuals in the secular community, including **Dan Barker** of the Freedom from Religion Foundation, who says “this warm but powerful memoir reveals that real meaning comes from this world, not from above,” **Bart Ehrman**, author of *Misquoting Jesus*, who calls it “a superb narrative for anyone who wonders if there can be meaning after faith,” and **Michael Shermer**, author of *The Moral Arc*, who calls it “a compelling memoir of Vaughn’s courageous journey from darkness into light.”

The author, Lewis Vaughn, is a writer specializing in philosophy, ethics, critical thinking, and religion. He is the author or coauthor of over twenty books, including *The Power of Critical Thinking*, *How to Think About Weird Things: Critical Thinking for a New Age*; and *Anthology of World Religions*. He is also the former executive editor of Free Inquiry

Continued on page 11

## Minnesota Atheists Membership and Donations

### Membership Levels

- One-year student membership \$10
- One-year individual membership \$35
- Three-year individual membership \$90
- One-year household membership \$45
- Three-year household membership \$115
- One-year sustaining membership \$75
- Three-year sustaining membership \$200
- Life membership \$600

### Donation Funds

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

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

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

Donations are tax deductible. Membership fees are deductible for the amount beyond their fair market value.

Student memberships include a subscription to the PDF version of *The Minnesota Atheist* delivered by email. All other memberships include a subscription to the printed version delivered by postal mail. If you would prefer the PDF version delivered by email, please check the box and provide your email address.

Please make checks payable to:

**Minnesota Atheists.**

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

Minnesota Atheists  
PO Box 120304  
New Brighton, MN 55112

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

**Start Map** continued from page 10

magazine and the cofounder and former editor of *Philo*, a philosophy journal.

*Star Map* is the sixth book published by the Twin Cities based Freethought House. All proceeds from their first publication, *Atheist Voices of Minnesota*, continue to benefit Minnesota Atheists – nearly \$4,000 has been donated to Minnesota Atheists thus far.

*Star Map: A Journey of Faith Doubt and Meaning*, released May 2, 2017, is available from [freethoughthouse.com](http://freethoughthouse.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), [B&N.com](http://B&N.com), and other booksellers. Also available in eBook.

## Upcoming Events

**Atheist Night with the St Paul Saints** Saturday, August 12, CHS Field, 310 5th St E, St Paul MN. The only professional sports team in the country to hold an atheist night.

**FFRF National Convention** September 15–17, Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, 1 John Nolen Dr, Madison, Wisconsin. Register at <https://ffrf.org/outreach/convention/2017-national-convention>

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

**Godless Gamers** Every Sunday at 2:00 p.m. and Thursday at 6:00 p.m., Fantasy Flight Games Center, 1975 County Rd B2, Roseville.

**Atheist/Agnostic Alcoholics Anonymous** Every Sunday from 6:00–7:00 p.m. and Wednesday from 7:00–8:00 p.m., Health Recovery Center building, lower floor, 3249 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis. Based on A.A., minus beliefs in any form of a God.

**Freethought Toastmasters** Meeting 1st and 3rd Monday of every month from 6:30–8:00 p.m., Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1280 Larpenteur Ave W, St Paul. [freethought.toastmastersclubs.org](http://freethought.toastmastersclubs.org)

**Freethought Dinner Social** 2nd and 4th Monday of every month from 5:00–7:00 p.m., Davanni's, 8605 Lyndale Ave S, Bloomington.

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

**Volunteer Food Packing** 2nd Thursday of every month at 1:00 p.m., The Food Group, 8501 54th Ave N, New Hope.

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

**Minnesota Atheists Board Meeting** 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m., Amherst H Wilder Foundation, 451 Lexington Pkwy N, St Paul. All Minnesota Atheists members are welcome.

**Atheist Night at the Bar**, Northwest Suburbs 4th Monday of every month at 6:00 p.m., Big Al's Bowling & Bar, 403 Central Ave E, St Michael.

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

## Cryptogram Answer

If only God would give me some clear sign!  
Like making a large deposit in my name at a  
Swiss bank.

—Woody Allen



For more events, visit [www.meetup.com/minnesota-atheists](http://www.meetup.com/minnesota-atheists)

## 12 The Minnesota Atheist

Minnesota Atheists

### Positive Atheism in action since 1991

Minnesota Atheists is dedicated to building a positive atheist community that actively promotes secular values through educational programs, social activities, and participation in public affairs.

### Minnesota Atheist

#### Board of Directors

##### Board Email

board@mnatheists.org

##### President

Alyssa Ehni

pres@mnatheists.org

##### Associate President

Art Kallenbach

apres@mnatheists.org

##### Chair

Heather Hegi

chair@mnatheists.org

##### Associate Chair

Georgia Hancock Tsoi

achair@mnatheists.org

##### Secretary

Hertzey Hertz

sec@mnatheists.org

##### Treasurer

Chris Matthews

treas@mnatheists.org

763.428.3424

##### Directors at Large

August Berkshire

dir1@mnatheists.org

612.868.2267

Eric Jayne

dir2@mnatheists.org

Michael Sasse

dir3@mnatheists.org

#### The Minnesota Atheist Newsletter

##### Editorial Board

editor@mnatheists.org

##### Editorial Board

George Kane

nup@minn.net

651.488.8225

Heather Hegi

chair@mnatheists.org

Shirley Moll

srmoll@comcast.com

James Zimmerman

zgoatee@gmail.com

##### Editor

Milo Grika

editor@mnatheists.org

##### Chief Photographer

Richard Trombley

##### Membership and Change of Address

Steve Petersen

address@mnatheists.

org

651.484.9277

#### Minnesota Atheists Goals

Minnesota Atheists practices positive, inclusive, active, friendly, neighborhood atheism in order to provide a community for atheists, educate the public about atheism, and promote separation of state and church.

#### Minnesota Atheists Media

##### Public Relations Chair

Emily Matejcek

pr@mnatheists.org

##### AtheistsWeekly Email (AWE)

Chris Matthews

awe@mnatheists.org

##### Cable TV Chair

Steve Petersen

cable@mnatheists.org

##### Webmaster

Clint Buhs

Grant Hermanson

web@mnatheists.org

##### Podcasts Chair

Grant Hermanson

podcasts@mnatheists.  
org

#### Minnesota Atheists Affiliations

Atheist Alliance of  
America, Atheist  
Alliance

International,  
American

Atheists, The American  
Humanist Association,  
Council for Secular  
Humanism, The  
International Humanist  
and Ethical Union, and  
Secular Coalition for  
America.

#### Minnesota Atheists Membership

Regular members: 218

Life members: 43

Meetup members:  
2,400

#### Minnesota Atheists Honorary Members

Hector Avalos, PhD

Dan Barker

Gerald Erickson, PhD

Annie Laurie Gaylor

Dick Hewetson

Robert M. Price, PhD



The Minnesota Atheist — May/June 2017

Published by Minnesota Atheists

PO Box 120304

New Brighton, MN 55112

612.588.7031

info@mnatheists.org

Copyright 2017 by Minnesota Atheists.

All rights reserved.