

The Minnesota Atheist

Minnesota Atheists Established 1991 Positive Atheism in Action

Special Edition

April 2007

Transcendental Temptation: A term coined by Paul Kurtz to refer to the temptation to look to the consolations of magic and religion rather than take responsibility for one's life and face reality. — *Dictionary of Atheism, Skepticism, & Humanism*, Bill Cooke, ed.

Sunday, April 15 – MNA meeting and dinner...

Hemant Mehta: "I Sold My Soul on eBay"

In January 2006, Hemant Mehta, an atheist and chair of the board of directors of the Secular Student Alliance (SSA), decided to auction his time on eBay to attend the church or place of worship of the winner's choosing, at the rate of \$10 per hour (to be donated to SSA). The winning bid of \$504 came from Jim Henderson, an ex-minister from Seattle, Washington.



Hemant Mehta

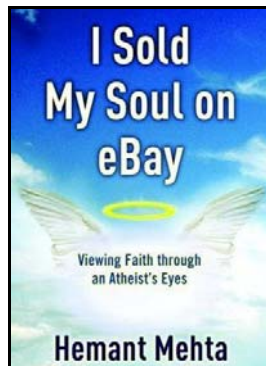
Henderson specializes in visiting churches and giving them advice on how they can improve. He thought, What better critic is there than an atheist? Henderson asked Mehta to visit nine churches in Illi-

nois (totaling less than the 50 hours due) and give an honest impression of his experiences.

In the meantime, Mehta became an instant celebrity. His story appeared on the front pages of *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and the *Seattle Times*. He was also featured in many Christian magazines.

Mehta's experiences are detailed in his forthcoming book *I Sold My Soul on eBay: Viewing Faith through an Atheist's Eyes*, for which he visited several more churches in different states, including the New Life Church led by Pastor Ted Haggard. The book will be in stores April 17, but available when he speaks to our group two days before that! (Our price will be \$15,

(Continued on page 2)



Meeting: 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Roseville Public Library

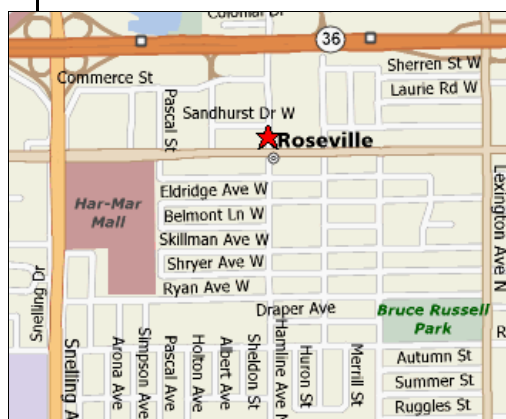
2180 Hamline Ave. N.
(Hamline Ave. & Co. Rd. B)
Roseville, MN 55113

1:00 - 1:30 p.m. - Social time.
1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - Presentation.
2:30 - 2:50 p.m. - Book sales & signing.
2:50 - 3:30 p.m. - Business meeting.

Dinner: 4:00 p.m.

Panda Garden Buffet

1706 Lexington Ave. N.
(Lexington Ave. & Larpenteur Ave.)
Roseville, MN 55113



Upcoming events

Thur., Apr. 12, 7:45 pm – “Do Organized Religions Suppress Women’s Rights? A Panel Presentation on Women, Faith and Society” co-sponsored by CASH and featuring atheist panelists. Molecular Cellular Biology building, room 3-120, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis (see cashumn.org).

Sun., Apr. 15, 1:00-3:30 p.m. – Hemant Mehta speaks about his book *I Sold My Soul on eBay* at our MN Atheists meeting (see left).

Thur., Apr. 26, 6:00-8:00 p.m. – Volleyball with members of CASH (see page 2).

Sun., Apr. 29, 8:00-11:00 a.m. – 5th Sunday MN Atheists Building Fundraising Breakfast (see page 3).

Thur., May 3, noon-1:30 p.m. – MN Atheists National Day of Reason celebration at the MN State Capitol rotunda (see page 3).

Sun., May 6 – MN Atheists will participate in the parade and booth for **May Day** in Minneapolis (see page 2).

Sun., May 20, 1:00-3:30 p.m. – Dale McGowan and others speak about their contributions to the new book *Parenting Beyond Belief: On Raising Ethical, Caring Kids Without Religion* at our MN Atheists meeting.

May 6 – May Day Parade and Booth

Please join us in marching in the **Minneapolis May Day** parade **Sunday, May 6, at 1 p.m.** The parade begins at Cedar Field (18th Ave. S. & 25th St.) and goes to Powderhorn Park (15th Ave. S. & 34th St.) (see map).

We always get a lot of applause as we march and have fun handing out our “Get Out of Hell Free” cards. We could also use a couple volunteers to staff our booth in Powderhorn Park during the march.

For the parade, meet us at Cedar Field at 1 p.m. We’ll be carrying a large blue “Minnesota Atheists” banner. We’ll be toward the back of the line in the “Free Speech” section. Don’t forget to wear your Minnesota Atheists t-shirt if you have one!

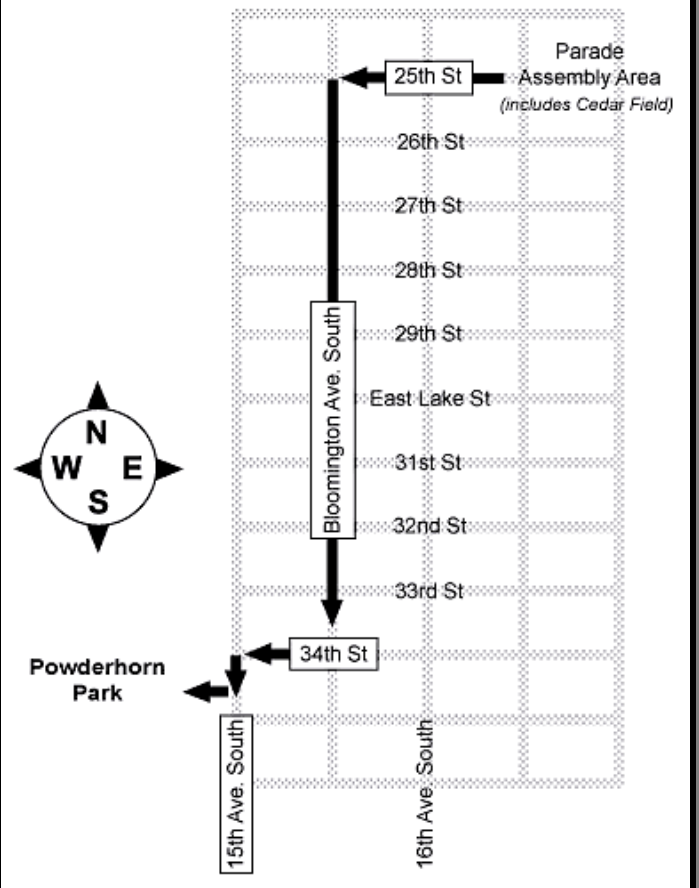
For more information, please contact Steve Petersen at (651) 484-9277 or chair@mnatheists.org.

Hemant Mehta (Continued from page 1)

which includes sales tax.)

Hemant Mehta’s website is Friendly Atheist (<http://friendlyatheist.com>) and he gave a rousing speech on that topic and his eBay experience at the last Atheist Alliance International convention. Come to our meeting if you would like to hear from the future of atheism!

After our meeting, those who wish may join us for dinner at the Panda Garden Buffet.



April 26 – Volleyball and Dinner with CASH

The Campus Atheists and Secular Humanists (CASH) at the University of Minnesota have invited members and friends of Minnesota Atheists to join them in a sand volleyball party, April 26, 6:00-8:00 p.m., to celebrate the end of a great year of co-sponsored events. (Frisbees are also welcome.)

The event will take place in four outdoor courts next to Cooke Hall, 1900 University Ave. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455. (For a map, go to: <http://www1.umn.edu/twincities/maps/CookeH/index.html>)

Parking is available at the Washington Ave. Ramp, the Church St. Ramp, or the 4th St. Ramp. There are no changing facilities at the court.

A social dinner will take place at a nearby restaurant afterwards. If you’re not feeling very athletic, just meet us at the courts at 8:00 p.m. for dinner.

MNA Spring Garage Sale

Doing some spring cleaning? We’re starting to collect items for our annual Minnesota Atheists Spring Garage Sale. The following are just some of the things we’re looking for: furniture, tools, working electronics, kitchen items, knick knacks, clean blankets & sheets, rugs, yard equipment, lawn mowers & snow blowers, running autos & motorcycles, antiques, never used presents, collections, and new & used books. Furniture is especially welcome.

You can bring items to Minnesota Atheists meetings, drop them off at Ron Julien’s house (3635 N. 4th St., Minneapolis), or contact Ron (julien_ron@yahoo.com or 612-789-4071) and he may be able to pick them up.

No date has been set for the sale as yet. We’ll keep you posted. Thanks in advance for any help you can give us!

May 3 - "National Day of Reason" at MN State Capitol

Members of Minnesota Atheists will gather to celebrate the "National Day of Reason" in the **Rotunda** at the **Minnesota State Capitol on Thursday, May 3, 2007, noon-1:30 p.m.**

The event will feature short presentations on separation of religion and government. A podium will be set up, our banner will be hung over it, and seating will be available for an audience. Like last year, we expect many legislators to take notice of our event.

"National Day of Reason" celebrations were begun several years ago by secularists in America to counter the

government-endorsed "National Day of Prayer," which is held on the first Thursday in May. While religion has proven to be a divisive force in society, it is hoped that all humanity can endorse the use of reason.

During his term in office, former Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura made headlines by refusing to issue an official state proclamation on behalf of the "National Day of Prayer," due to concerns for separation of state and church.

This marks the second time the "National Day of Reason" has been

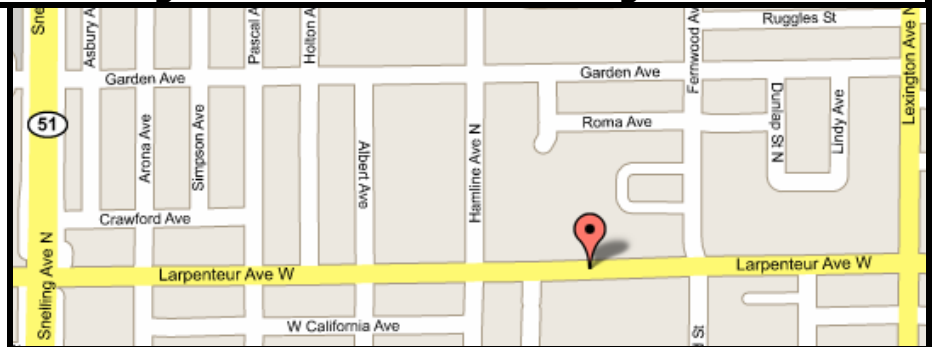
publicly celebrated in Minnesota, both times by Minnesota Atheists. So, while religious people gather *outside* the Minnesota State Capitol to celebrate the "National Day of Prayer," Minnesota Atheists will be *inside* celebrating the "National Day of Reason."

The Minnesota State Capitol is located at 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155. We hope as many members as possible will show up to hear our program. If you would like to participate by reading 3-5 minutes of material, please contact Matthew Richardson at (612) 522-5078.

April 29 - 5th Sunday Breakfast - Only \$6.66!

On Sunday, April 29, 8:00-11:00 a.m., we will hold a 5th Sunday Building Fundraising Breakfast. The last two we held were huge successes and we're looking forward to doing it again. As usual, it's all you can eat for only \$6.66! There will be pancakes, omelets, sausages, toast, milk, juice, coffee, and many other tasty things to eat.

The event will take place in the Party Room at the Larpenteur Estates apartment complex, 1276 Larpenteur Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55113. (Park directly in back and follow the walkway



between the two buildings to the Party Room.)

George Kane at pres@mnatheists.org or (651) 488-8225.

For more information, contact

CHECK THE WAYS YOU WANT TO HELP ATHEISM GROW

Minnesota Atheists has IRS 501(c)(3) status. All contributions are tax deductible.

JOIN OR RENEW MEMBERSHIP

- \$35 - Individual membership
- \$45 - Household membership
- \$75 - Sustaining Fund membership
- \$20 - Student (by e-mail) (send copy of fee statement or high school ID)
- \$600 - Life Membership

All memberships include newsletter

- \$25 - Newsletter subscription only

DONATE TO SPECIAL FUNDS

- \$_____ General Expense / Outreach Fund
- \$_____ Building Fund

I authorize Minnesota Atheists to bill my credit card each month (minimum \$10/month) for one year or until my card expires, whichever comes first. Bank name: _____

Payment by: check (enclosed) for \$_____ payable to Minnesota Atheists (Checks preferred if less than \$25)

Credit card Visa MasterCard _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature _____ Name _____ Phone () _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Mail to: Minnesota Atheists, P.O. Box 6261, Minneapolis MN 55406-0261

**Freethought Summer Picnics
Columbia Park, north Minneapolis
Sundays, noon to 3 p.m.
June 10, July 15, August 19**

"I have absolutely no problem with anyone believing differently than I believe, as long as they don't impose their religion on me or my government."

**– Lori Lipman Brown, director and lobbyist for the Secular Coalition for America,
"Atheists challenge the religious right" by Jane Lampman,
The Christian Science Monitor, January 4, 2007, p.13, 16.**

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