



# WASHline

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## WHC Moving to Canada

The 2026 World Humanist Congress will be held in Ottawa, Canada instead of Washington, DC. [See page 7.](#)

## Chapter Reports

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## WASH Has a Vice President

We are delighted to announce that the WASH Board of Directors elected Kari Lammon as WASH's new vice president at their June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting. She has been a board member and our webmaster since earlier this year. The VP post had been vacant for several months and we are so grateful to Kari for stepping up to fill it.

Kari was raised in a Southern Baptist family but became an atheist as a teenager thanks to punk rock music and a strong need to question everything. She has lived in southeastern Virginia her whole life and is a member of the organizing committee for our SEVASH chapter. She also serves as an Assistant State Director for Virginia for American Atheists

and is a member of their Virginia Secular Advocacy Team (SAT).

Kari has worked in public schools for 20 years, so she is passionate about keeping religion out of our schools and ensuring a safe space for all children to learn. She is also a strong supporter of women's rights and the LGBTQ community. She has a background in journalism and technology, so she enjoys “behind-the-scenes” advocacy work such as research, design and communications. As the VP of WASH, she hopes to provide the leadership and support that our members need to serve their unique communities.

You can reach Kari at [kari@wash.org](mailto:kari@wash.org).

## AHA Virtual Event

Our friends at the American Humanist Association invite you to participate in this free virtual event:

### Exist Loudly. Exit Thoughtfully. A secular Deathcare Discussion

Speaker: Tee Rogers, Humanist Celebrant

**Date & Time:** Thursday, September 18, 7pm Eastern Time

**Description:** It's not something most people want to think about – the planning for logistics of what happens when we die. How does being of Atheist, Humanist, and other secular identities influence our deathcare decisions and impact the experience of deathcare? What can we plan in advance for and what are the best ways to go about doing that to prevent any surprises for loved ones? When it comes to ceremonies – what options do secular people have? Let's talk about it...

Zoom Registration: [https://americanhumanist-org.zoom.us/joining/register/SL2\\_6zhTTqahwVKQjVI9Eg](https://americanhumanist-org.zoom.us/joining/register/SL2_6zhTTqahwVKQjVI9Eg)

## Good Natured

A poem by S. A. L.

I do not believe in sin  
 I believe in evil  
 Evil is created, not made  
 Someone has to put you on the path  
 The highway to hell  
 Into the arms of evil  
 The path is not a one way road  
 You can choose to take another route  
 I do not believe in God  
 I believe in good  
 We are all born good  
 Giggling smiling babies  
 Curiously crawling about  
 Wondering wandering  
 We all wander forever  
 Godless, we do not wander alone  
 We wander side by side  
 As members of the Human Race  
 Helping when one  
 Stumbles onto the wrong path  
 Giving patience, compassion  
 We evolved empathy  
 To wade through the wilds  
 To heal the hurting  
 We did not evolve to be evil  
 We are not born evil  
 Born “sinful”  
 We are born with the light of humanity  
 Shining in our eyes.



## About WASH

The Washington Area Secular Humanists, Inc. is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in Maryland since 1989. It consists of multiple chapters which operate in Maryland, DC, and Virginia.

WASH is a chapter of the American Humanists Association and an affiliate of American Atheists.



### WASH Logo Merch

Get cool WASH logo apparel and other merchandise at our online Zazzle store. We have stuff with both WASH main and chapter logos. Check it out! [https://www.zazzle.com/store/wash\\_store](https://www.zazzle.com/store/wash_store)

## Editor's Corner

By Mike Reid

First of all, I want to apologize for this issue of *WASHline* coming out so late. I've been traveling and occupied with other things lately. Okay, that's not a very good excuse, but it's the best I can come up with right now.

Our president, Heatherly Hodges sends her regrets about being slow in responding for the past couple of months. She has been suffering from an intractable migraine since May. As if that were not enough, in June she slipped and fell hitting her head against a wall which caused a concussion and then fractured a vertebrae in her lower back when she hit the floor. I was out of town at the AHA Conference when that happened and could not help. She's recovered from the concussion and the fractured vertebra is healing well, but the horrible migraine is still there strong as ever. She is coping.

We had two important events in June. First was World Pride in DC. See page 6 for more on that. Next came the American Humanist Association (AHA) conference in Chicago. I have an article on that on page 4.

I am pleased to report that Karen Pelphery Gill has joined WASH's Board of Directors. Thanks, Karen!

This issue of *WASHline* like the previous one has a lot of stuff by me in it. This is because I have conferences to report on which took up much of the space. However, we definitely want other people to contribute articles and other related material. Submissions to *WASHline* should be about or at least closely relate to humanism, atheism, secularism, science, separation of church and state issues, or reports on events or activities that would be of interest to WASH members. You can comment on political issues that relate to secularism and church and state, but tempting as it might be, please do not directly criticize or endorse any particular politician or political party. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization WASH has to refrain from such activities. Please send submissions to [editor@wash.org](mailto:editor@wash.org).

Thanks for your interest — Mike

# American Humanist Association 2025 Conference

*By Mike Reid*

The American Humanist Association (AHA) of which WASH is a chapter held its bi-annual in-person conference AHACon2025 June 26-29th at the historic Palmer Hotel in downtown Chicago. People attended remotely as well. Like most secularist conferences, this one consisted of interesting plenary talks and breakout sessions with other allied organizations tabling in a common area.

On Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, prior to the start of the main conference, the AHA held a set of training sessions for organizers of humanist organizations titled, "Building Humanist Power: A Workshop for Chapter Leaders & Organizers." These consisted of a series of sessions lasting an hour or less.

AHA staff members Jake Via and Emily Newman led the first of these, titled "The Power of Plan in Community Building." This was unique in that attendees participated in a set of games that reminded one of childhood but were carefully designed to foster mingling and interaction between participants. It was unorthodox, but did force people to get to know one another.

The sessions that followed were more conventional training. These were titled, "Strategies for Youth Engagement," "The Ties that Bind: Models for Building and Strengthening Local Humanist Communities," "Community Days - A Member Led Program to Learn, Share, and Grow while Building Community, Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago," and "How to Herd Cats: Humanist Community Building 101 Community Organizing / Grassroots Organizing." A meeting of the AHA Board of

Directors took place that evening with conference attendees invited to observe for the latter part of the meeting.

The conference began in earnest Friday morning (June 27<sup>th</sup>). AHA Executive Director Fish Stark opened the conference with a plenary talk titled, "What Does 'Humanists Move America' Mean?" In his talk, Fish shared his vision of where the global humanist movement is going and the direction that the AHA will take.

The next plenary talk was part of the conference's "Big Idea Series" titled, "Flourishing in the Age of AI: The Next Great Humanist Mission?" presented by Dr. Narath Carlile. Dr. Carlile is a physician and humanist chaplain. He discussed how the rise and proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) will transform our society and in particular how it might affect the international humanist movement.

Several concurrent breakout sessions took place Friday afternoon. These included "Jailbreaking the Red Pilled Mind: How Humanists Can Reclaim America from Conspiracies," by YouTube host Coleman Watts in which he discussed why so many people fall down the conspiracy theory rabbit hole and what we might do about it; "The Power of Play," by Jake Via where he presented his team-building games to a wider audience; "Is Working with Religious Allies a Strategic Necessity or a Compromise of Humanist Values," by Vanessa Gomez where she explained that there are many religious people who share many humanist values and why humanists can and should work with them; "Rebooting Science Communication for the Disinfo Era," by microbiologist and AHA board member Dr. Christian Loyo who discussed the need for scientists to engage with the public and for the public to proactively engage with scientists in order to combat the sea of misinformation and outright disinformation that we now find ourselves immersed in; "On Reason's Shoulders: Reclaiming



Love and Emotion in Humanism,” by Humanist Society Chaplain and Celebrant Joseph Farkas; “How You Can Preserve Humanist History,” by John Dechant, John Hooper, and former AHA Executive Director Roy Speckhardt in which they introduced attendees to the AHA’s vast archives of humanist history housed at the Meadville Lombard Theological School, a Unitarian-Universalist seminary, in Chicago; “The World Is on Fire. What the Hell Do We Do About It?,” by AHA staff member Rachel Deitch where she discussed the current situation in the USA where church and state separation, science, and reason itself are under attack in a way not seen in modern history and how humanist and secularists can fight back; and finally, “What Does Activism, Social Justice, and Allyship Look Like in a Humanist Community Especially During Turbulent Times,” by Cynthia McDonald.

Friday evening finished with a banquet and an awards ceremony. The banquet was enjoyable and well attended. The AHA presented awards to Elizabeth Hegwood, Hemant Mehta, and Nebraska State Senator Megan Hunt.

Saturday was the busiest day of the conference. The day began with a mainstage presentation titled “Swipe Left, Swipe Right: The Future of Mating and Marriage – A Humanist’s Perspective,” by psychologist and author Dr. Darrel Ray; followed by “Hope or Havoc: The Future of AI and Human Freedom,” by Krysta Jackson and David Tamayo; and finally “The Secular Case for Reparations” by Cynthia McDonald. The afternoon consisted of breakout sessions. These included “From Representation to Power: How Humanists Can Build a Political Movement,” by Ryan Brounberger, Wil Jeudy, Sarah Levin, Karina Quintanilla, and Steph Vigil; another presentation of “The Power of Play” by Jake Via; “What Does a Good Death Look Like?” by Emily Newman; and finally “Building Communities of Belonging,” by Evan Clark, Audrey Kingstrom, and Jake Via.

There was another banquet followed by an awards ceremony Saturday evening. The AHA awarded the Chapter of the Year award to Humanists Minnesota, the LGBTQ+ Humanist Award to Nadine Smith, and the Lifetime Achievement Award to Fred Edwards. Fred has held many positions in the secular community in his decades of activism and has been a frequent speaker at WASH events. We were delighted to see this award go to a long-time friend and WASH member. It’s hard to imagine anyone more deserving of this award than he. Congratulations, Fred!

The conference resumed for its final day on Sunday. The morning consisted of three mainstage presentations: “Going Viral: How Young People are Thinking About Humanism and Skepticism,” presented by a panel of young activists including AHA interns; this was followed by “The Future of Civic Power: How Humanists Can Reimagine Democracy,” by Sharon Welch; “The Role of Resilience and Hope in Living a Meaningful Life,” by AHA President Candace Gorham; and lastly Candace Gorham and AHA Executive Director Fish Stark closed out the conference with some final thoughts. A humanist celebrant training session took place in the afternoon for those who registered for it.

Although smaller than past, pre-COVID AHA conferences, I think that AHACON2025 was a success. Nowadays, the AHA typically holds in-person conferences every other year and a virtual-only conference in the intervening years. They have not yet announced their plans for 2026. We will report on it when they do.

*Mike Reid is the editor of WASHline and a former president of WASH.*



L-R: Samantha McGuire, Mike Reid, Emily Newman

## World Pride in DC



On the weekend of June 7-8<sup>th</sup> WASH joined our national affiliates the American Humanist Association (AHA) and American Atheists (AA) to celebrate World Pride and Capital Pride in DC. World Pride is an annual international celebration of LGBTQ+ rights, acceptance, and culture that takes place in different cities around the world in partnership with local organizations. This year, the annual Capital Pride organizers in Washington, DC co-hosted World Pride.

Our cherished separation of church and state and LGBTQ+ rights are now under assault in this country to a degree that we have not experienced in decades. Events such as World/Capital Pride are more important than ever as vehicles to push back against these threats.

**Emily Newman**, program manager for the AHA (and WASH DC-AHA chapter coordinator); **Samantha McGuire**, Director of Grassroots Organizing & Advocacy for American Atheists (and former WASH President); and **Mike Reid**, WASH member (and former WASH President) jointly staffed a booth at the event.

We had a great time handing out literature for all three of our organizations and telling attendees about ourselves and the secularist and humanist movements.

In spite of rainy weather, the event was a great success and well attended. Emily, Sam, and Mike were pleased with the large number of people who came to our booth and expressed interest in our organization and their goals. AHA and AA both offered free one year memberships to anyone attending who wished to join.

## World Humanist Congress Is Moving to Canada

Humanists International is an international humanist organization composed of member organizations and individuals from around the world. American Atheists and the American Humanist Association are among the institutional members in the United States.

Each year, Humanists International partners with a national or local member organization and holds the World Humanist Congress in a city somewhere in the world. Humanists and secularists from around the world attend. Humanists International had planned to partner with American Atheists and hold the 2026 World Humanist Congress (WHC2026) in Washington, DC in August of next year. American Atheists, was planning to hold their annual conference jointly with the WHC2026. Sadly, in spite of the events having been long in the planning, circumstances have forced a change in those plans.

American Atheists and Humanists International have concluded that they could not safely hold the World Humanist Congress in the United States given current the political situation. International attendees, especially those from the Global South of which there are many, feared that they might not be able to obtain visas to travel to the U.S.A. or that they might face a hostile or even potentially dangerous situation upon arrival.

WASH, as American Atheists' DC area affiliate, would likely have participated in the event in a significant way and some of us were very much looking forward to it.

Humanists International is instead partnering with Humanist Canada and will hold WHC2026 in Ottawa, Canada. Many international attendees see Canada as a safer and more welcoming country right now.

WHC2026 will take place at the Delta Hotels Ottawa City Centre, August 7-9, 2026.

### American Atheists Secular Advocacy Teams

Are you interested in defending church state separation? American Atheists has organized Secular Advocacy Teams (SAT) in multiple states to monitor legislation at the state or local level which could affect this and potentially lobby for or against it.

If interested, Maryland residents can contact Mike Reid at [mike.reid@atheists.org](mailto:mike.reid@atheists.org).

Virginia residents can contact Aiden Barnes at [abarnes@atheists.org](mailto:abarnes@atheists.org)





## Chapter Reports

### Baltimore Secular Humanists (BSH)

We have meetings a various times and places around Baltimore, Baltimore County, and Harford County. Watch the meetup site for the latest events: <https://www.meetup.com/bsh-wash/>

There are also several other non-WASH meetup groups in the Baltimore area, including Human Values Network Meetup (<https://www.meetup.com/the-human-values-network-hvn/>) and Baltimore Atheists, that hold monthly discussion groups. BSH also posts notices of university lectures that are held in person or on Zoom. These are posted with about a week's notice.

We have posted events that are sponsored by Profs & Pints ( <https://www.meetup.com/profs-and-pints-baltimore/> ) with lectures from university professors. They charge an admission fee. Some of their past lectures can be found online: <https://www.profsandpints.com/online-talks>

Elliott Martin "Secular Rarity" is a secular advocate and community builder. Using the name Secular Rarity online, he has spent years speaking out in support of secular people and working with various online and in-person groups to promote and grow their communities. He has worked with Recovering from Religion and Atheist Republic, is a current host on The Atheist Experience and many more. He is the Founder and President of Secular Rising US.

Gary Parker is a Middle Tennessee business owner and longtime member of the Southern Baptist Church. After spending most of his life as a devout believer, Gary stepped away from belief and got right into having discussions with believers to both understand their viewpoints and to normalize non-belief. Gary's ability to strike up welcoming and engaging conversations with total strangers, his constant strive towards excellence and general supportive nature, and his dedication to building community for secular people are just a few of the strong points he brings to this space.

Please RSVP to [clayde@wash.org](mailto:clayde@wash.org) for the link to this event.



MDC events are posted at <https://www.meetup.com/wash-202/>

### Maryland-DC Chapter (MDC)

Join us for a special talk:

## Secular Rising

Connecting nonbelievers and allies.  
Featuring  
Gary Parker and Secular Rarity  
Sunday, August 24, 2025 at  
8:00 PM on Zoom  
Washington Area Secular Humanists

**Gary Parker**

**Secular Rarity**

### DC Atheists, Humanists & Agnostics (DC-AHA)

DC-Atheists, Humanists, and Agnostics group (DC-AHA) meets at Madhatter (1319 Connecticut Ave NW, DuPont Circle) for happy hour the first Wednesday 6-8pm of the month.

<https://www.meetup.com/DC-Atheists-Humanists-Agnostics/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/823463147714903>



## DC Region Atheists (DCRA)

We host a Secular Zoom Community meeting on the second Thursday of each month at 7pm. We nourish our connections with like-minded secular people and discuss a broad range of topics on religion, science and secularism. Please RSVP for a monthly meeting at:

<https://www.meetup.com/dc-atheists>

## Frederick Secular Humanists (FRESH)

FRESH meets twice monthly in Frederick, MD. Our regular meetings are held on either the third or fourth Sunday of each month (based upon library availability) at the C. Burr Artz Public Library at 110 E. Patrick St., Frederick, MD 21701. Occasionally, if that venue is not available, we will meet at the Urbana Regional Library at 9020 Amelung St., Frederick, MD 21704.

Additionally, we meet for an informal social hour at the Brewer's Alley restaurant at 124 N. Market St., Frederick, MD 21701. Our events are announced on our Meetup Page.

For more information, please visit our webpage at <http://wash.org/fresh>

For event details please visit our Meetup Page: <https://www.meetup.com/fresh-wash/>

All are welcome to attend our events, but an RSVP on Meetup is appreciated.

## Shenandoah Area Secular Humanists (SASH)

SASH meets by Zoom on the second Sunday of each month and holds a bookclub meeting on the last Sunday of each month.

In August, we read and discussed Rachel Maddow's *Prequel: An American Fight Against Fascism*. In September, we will read and discuss Neil DeGrasse Tyson's *Starry Messenger*. If any WASH members want to join our discussions, they are certainly welcome. Contact us, and we will put you on our distribution list: [sash@wash.org](mailto:sash@wash.org).

## Southeast Virginia Atheists, Skeptics & Humanists (SEVASH)

Our first Free Little Humanist Library is finally complete, as we have resolved the ongoing issues with the signage mounted on each side, featuring our chapter name and detailing the library's purpose. We plan to deploy/reveal the library at our next Heathen Hangout event at Elation Brewing in Norfolk. [sevash@wash.org](mailto:sevash@wash.org)

## WASH Contact Information

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**Frederick, MD 21705**

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### WASH Volunteers

Heatherly Hodges, *President*

Kari Lomanno, *Vice President*

Bill Creasy, *Secretary*

Matt DeGrave, *Treasurer*

Mike Reid, *WASHline Editor*

# Chapter Contact Information

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## 2. Baltimore Secular Humanists (BSH)

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[wash.org/bsh](http://wash.org/bsh)

## 3. Charlottesville Atheists and Secular Humanists (CASH)

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## 4. DC American Humanists (DC-AHA)

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## 5. DC Region Atheists (DCRA)

Washington, DC and Montgomery County, MD

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## 6. Frederick Secular Humanists (FRESH)

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## 12. Southeastern Virginia Atheists, Skeptics & Humanists (SEVASH)

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## 13. Secular Humanists of Roanoke (SHOR)

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## 14. Southern Maryland Secular Humanists (SMASH)

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