



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CENTRAL CONNECTICUT

April 2001



ASHS Affiliate

APRIL

- Sat., 7 New London discussion group at the Mystic Noank Library, 40 Library Street, Mystic. Topic: "Continued: The Role of Arts in Society." 10:15 a.m.
- Fri., 13 Humanist Conversations at 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden. Chapter 1, "From Superstition," of *Panati's Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things*, by Charles Panati. 7:30 p.m.
- Mon., 16 Monthly meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike.
Coffee and conversation. 7:30 p.m.
Main program: Doug Peary's "Humanist Hero: Thomas Henry Huxley, Darwin's Bulldog" 8:00 p.m.
- Wed., 25 Dinner at MisFitz Inn, 53 Oak Tree Road, Southbury. 7:30 p.m.
- Sun., 29 Board meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike. 2:30 p.m.

MAY

- TBA Humanist Conversations at 700 Hartford Turnpike.
- Fri., 18 to Sun., 20 The 60th Annual Conference of the American Humanist Association, Sheraton Four Points Hotel LAX in Los Angeles, CA
- Mon., 21 Our 12th Anniversary meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike. Featuring Walter Wells and music by Mickey Koth's group Wild Notes.
Coffee and conversation. 7:30 p.m.
Main program. 8:00 p.m.
- Sun., 27 Board meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike. 1:30 p.m.

JUNE

- TBA Humanist Conversations at 700 Hartford Turnpike.
- Mon., 18 Monthly meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike.
Coffee and conversation. 7:30 p.m.
Main program: Dr. Robert L. Rafford, "Free Thinkers, Where Do We Go From Here?" 8:00 p.m.
- Sun., 24 Board meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike. 1:30 p.m.

<http://www.cthumanist.org>

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The deadline for each issue is three weeks prior to the monthly meeting.

The editor would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue.

Sad News

Our good friend and fellow member, Heinz Rueckner, died on March 1st. A memorial service was conducted on Thursday, March 8th, by Robert L. Rafford and held at the Hilton in Southbury. Heinz had had cancer in recent years and had endured surgery and other treatments very well. He had a wonderful will and spirit and through it all did not complain about his illness.

He had been a member of HACC for several years and attended our February HACC meeting with his constant companion, Olive Crepon, where he was observed indulging a number of hearty guffaws at the presentation by our very informative and entertaining speaker. He looked in fine health, had put on a few pounds, and enjoyed himself very much. He reportedly died at home of a heart attack. Cards and letters of condolence may be sent to Olive Crepon, 80 Juniper Ridge Drive, Waterbury, CT 06708. Contributions are to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 1004, Meriden CT 06450.

Mystic-Noank Continues Discussion in April

The next meeting of the Mystic-Noank humanist discussion group will be on April 7, 10:15 am, as usual, at the Mystic Noank Library, 40 Library St., Mystic. The library telephone number is (860) 536-7721.

The meeting will conclude the group's discussion of the place of the arts in our society and the question of public funding for the arts, be they painting, music, theater, etc.

If you need more information, please contact George or Paula Marcus at gminnoank@worldnet.att.net or (860) 572-9188.

Lecture at Yale

Stephen L. Carter, the William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Law, Yale University, will speak on the following topic: "Can Religion Tolerate Democracy (and Vice Versa)?"

This talk at Yale, which is part of the DeVane Lecture series, may be of interest to humanists.

It will be held on April 10 and April 12, 2001, at 4:00 p.m. in Battell Chapel, which is located at the corner of College and Elm Streets in New Haven.

As we look toward the future of religion in America, we can note three intersecting trends. First, the American people are, and seem likely to remain, by far the most deeply religious people in the Western world, and religious people tend to see their world in religious terms. Second, both political philosophy and elite opinion insist on the view that religious sentiment is a contaminant in politics, and in the public conversation that should characterize liberal democracy. Third, the Supreme Court, often relied upon as the referee, has more or less quit the field.

Darwin's Bulldog

Join us on Monday, April 16, to enjoy the latest in Doug Peary's series of Humanist Heroes. Thomas Henry Huxley, Humanist Hero, known as "Darwin's Bulldog", lived from 1825 to 1895. Huxley was a surgeon, scientific scholar and religious skeptic. In 1859 Darwin asked him to review *The Origin of Species*. Huxley found it so compelling about the evolution of all life that he argued against opposing scientists and theologians, earning the title "Darwin's Bulldog." By 1869, society had generally accepted the theory of evolution, primarily because of Huxley's defense of Darwin.

Huxley influenced elementary education for three quarters of a century. *Vanity Fair* magazine said of Huxley, "There is no more popular teacher who has contributed more to the awakening of the intellect." Darwin said, "If I do not pour out my admiration of (Huxley) I shall explode." Darwin said he felt infantile in intellect by

comparison to Huxley. Huxley fought for women's rights and opposed slavery. When his four year old son died, and despite his grief, Huxley stated regarding his disbelief in immortality and religion, "...if wife and child, name and fame were all lost to me as the penalty, still I will not lie...I cannot believe that the great mysteries of existence will be laid open to me on other terms (than scientific fact), like faith."

In 1869 Huxley began speaking and publishing lay sermons demonstrating his moral and intellectual philosophy, making him an influence as a moral teacher.

He taught with a view to sending science teachers to the Christians of Great Britain to convert them to the true faith of science.

Bring a friend to this Humanist Heroes presentation on Monday, April 16, at the Unitarian Society of New Haven, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden, CT. Coffee and refreshments are at 7:30 p.m. with the presentation at 8:00 p.m.

Next Humanist Conversation to Be Held on Friday the 13th

Do you do any of these?

- ♣ Say "Knock on wood"
- ♣ Flip a coin
- ♣ Cover your mouth when you yawn
- ♣ Cross your fingers

Did you know many people believe these events occurred on Friday the 13th?

- ♣ Eve tempted Adam with the apple
- ♣ Noah's ark set sail in the Great Flood
- ♣ A confusion of tongues struck at the Tower of Babel
- ♣ The Temple of Solomon toppled
- ♣ Christ died on the cross

Attend one event that definitely *will* occur this Friday the 13th in April. Join us while we discover the origins of these and other superstitious practices and beliefs. Don't let any black cats cross your path on your way to the library for Chapter 1, "From Superstition," of *Panati's Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things*, by Charles Panati (New York: Harper & Row, 1987)!

We'll meet at the Unitarian Society of New Haven (700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden) at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, April 13. We'll order pizza; coffee and tea will be provided. For more information, please contact Mickey Koth (e-mail mkoth@snet.net or phone (203) 498-8333)

Dinner Meeting in Southbury

Our next dinner meeting will be at MisFitz Inn, 53 Oak Tree Road in Southbury, on Wednesday, April 25th at 7:30 p.m.

MisFitz Inn is on a side street, just off Main Street South. Park on either side of the street, but avoid the liquor store. Visit <http://www.cthumanist.org> to view their menu. Entrees range from \$12.00 - \$19.00, with sandwiches from \$7.00.

Please RSVP to Carol Stone (e-mail editor@cthumanist.org or phone (203) 264-8546) by April 22nd so the restaurant can adjust staffing to accommodate us.

Anniversary Meeting, Monday May 21

* Our 12th Anniversary! * The One Meeting You Can't Miss! * Music - Awards - Surprises! *

MEMBERSHIP

Adult \$35
Family \$50
Newsletter Only \$10

In cases of financial hardship, the association may waive the membership fee. The membership year runs from 1/1 to 12/31. Please mail checks payable to Humanist Association of Central Connecticut to:
Humanist Association of Central Connecticut, 27 Thornton Street, Hamden, CT 06517-1321.

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