



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

September 2006



CSH Affiliate

“Understanding the Growth of Secularism”

Join us for our monthly meeting on Monday, September 18 at 7:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden!

In the words of the Trinity College website of the recently established Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture (ISSSC), “Even as religion appears to be a growing force in world affairs, the size of the non-religious population is increasing in many countries. Between 1990 and 2001 the number of adults in the U.S. who professed no religion increased from 14 million to 29 million according to the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2001.” One-third of those professing no religion in 2001 were under 30 years old. To help us understand this truly remarkable and largely unexpected change, our September speaker will be Professor Barry Kosmin, director of ISSSC. Kosmin, a sociologist, is professor of public policy and law at Trinity, principal investigator of ARIS, and co-author of *One Nation Under God: Religion in Contemporary American Society*.

The new Institute was established in 2005 “to advance

Calendar of Events

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT

SEPTEMBER, 2006

Sat., 2	Humanist Conversations: <i>Cultures Hate Change</i>	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 4	Dinner at Pasta Fair, 262 Boston Post Road, Orange. RSVP at humanism.meetup.com . (203) 799-9601 for directions.	7:00 p.m.
Sun., 10	Book discussion: David Kertzer's <i>The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara</i>	3:30 p.m.
Mon., 18	Monthly meeting Main program: Barry Kosmin, Director, Institute for the Study of Secularism, Trinity College. <i>Understanding the Growth of Secularism</i>	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Sun., 24	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Wed., 27	Dinner at Lisboa, 19 Lafayette St., Waterbury. (203) 754-0789 for directions.	7:00 p.m.

OCTOBER, 2006

Mon., 2	Dinner at Pasta Fair, 262 Boston Post Road, Orange. RSVP at humanism.meetup.com . (203) 799-9601 for directions.	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 7	Humanist Conversations: topic TBA	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 16	Monthly meeting Main program: TBA	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Sun., 22	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Wed., 25	Dinner at Lisboa, 19 Lafayette St., Waterbury. (203) 754-0789 for directions.	7:00 p.m.

WWW.CTHUMANIST.ORG

understanding of the role of secular values and the process of secularization in contemporary society and culture.” Since then it has been conducting an ambitious tripartite program at Trinity College in Hartford,

including not only academic research and curriculum development but also public events, through which it will serve as a forum for civic education and

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debate through lectures, seminars, and conferences. It is linked to Trinity's Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life, part of the College's Program on Public Values. Establishment of this unique Institute has been made possible through the intellectual commitment and generous financial support of the Posen Family Foundation of Lucerne, Switzerland.

Barry Kosmin will explain the background and motivation for the creation of the Institute and describe a few of the important activities that have already taken place and others that are contemplated in this exciting center, virtually in our own neighborhood. We'll all want to participate in the general discussion after his talk. The meeting will open with informal refreshments and conversation at 7:30, and Barry's presentation will begin at 8:00. This promises to be a highly informative and entertaining evening, so don't miss it!

Book Group: Edgardo Mortara

Join us on Sunday, September 10, from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden to discuss *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* by historian David I. Kertzer of Brown University.

Eloquent Amazon.com reviewer Timothy R. Nichols says of the book, "Historical events are impossible to understand without learning of the human issues of the times in which they transpired. Such a study should not be a dry recounting of the facts when it can be, as Kertzer demonstrates, a living, breathing, gut-wrenching encounter with those who created that compelling history."

Cultures Hate Change

We often wonder why other people don't understand "obvious" conclusions of scientific studies. As an illustration let's look at reactions to the recent change(s) in Pluto's status as a planet. Even to this "neutral" topic there have been a lot of emotional and other non-rational responses. How much more non-rational should we expect to find people's reactions to serious matters like life and death! This discussion will focus on articles I've copied and any other materials and ideas you may bring. See you September 2, Cynthia.

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- i In cases of financial hardship, the association may waive the membership fee. Please mail checks for annual membership payable to Humanist Association of Connecticut to: Humanist Association of Connecticut, 27 Thornton Street, Hamden, CT 06517-1321.

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