



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

# The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

May 2009



CSH Affiliate

## *Peking Man: Anatomy of an Unsolved Mystery*

Join us Monday, May 18, at 7:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden when we'll welcome back Central Connecticut State University anthropology professor Ken Feder with another in his series of fascinating talks, many based on his book *Frauds, Myths and Mysteries*.

The tale of the discovery, excavation, and sadly, the disappearance of the Peking Man fossils is one filled with serendipity (both good and bad) intrigue, war, torture, and sex. Well, okay, not sex (that we know of). When discovered and excavated in the 1920s and 1930s, the fossils found in a cave some 40 miles outside of Beijing reflected the most substantial accumulation of human ancestors ever found at a single site, representing more than forty individuals and about a dozen nearly complete crania. Housed for years at the Peking Union Medical College, the specimens fell victim to a combination of stupendously bad luck, tragedy, and human stupidity. All of the precious Peking Man fossils disappeared in the 1940s and none have been seen since.

Were the fossils destroyed? Probably. Were they irretrievably lost, never to be seen again? Likely. Then again, might they be ensconced in a packing crate in a warehouse in China or a royal palace in Japan? Even more interestingly, are they currently hidden in an attic or basement here in the United States?

## *Convention Season*

If you're not going to the American Humanist Association's annual convention in Phoenix, Arizona, on June 5-7, 2009, you may be interested in attending the Bertrand Russell Society's annual meeting at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Connecticut the same weekend. <http://users.drew.edu/~jlenz/brs.html>

## *Calendar of Events*

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT. RSVP for dinners at [humanism.meetup.com](http://humanism.meetup.com).

### MAY, 2009

Sat., 2	<b>Humanist Conversations:</b> Our Self-Selection of Information Sources with Repercussions	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 4	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 9	<b>Book discussion:</b> <i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i> by Mitch Albom	3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Mon., 18	Monthly meeting <b>Main program:</b> Ken Feder, Ph.D. — <i>Peking Man: Anatomy of an Unsolved Mystery</i>	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Sun., 24	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Thu., 28	Hartford-Area social dinner at the Bombay Olive, 450 S. Main St., West Hartford, CT 06110. (860) 561-3000 for directions	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 30	<b>Bible Discussion:</b> David the King, Solomon, after Solomon	3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### JUNE, 2009

Mon., 1	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 6	<b>Humanist Conversations:</b> TBD	2:30 p.m.
Sat., 13	Memorial Service for Walter Wells	11:00 a.m.
Mon., 15	Monthly meeting <b>Main program:</b> TBA	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Sat., 20	Picnic at the Raffords' home in Middlebury	12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.
Sun., 21	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Wed., 24	Hartford-Area social dinner at Szechuan Tokyo, 1245 New Britain Ave., West Hartford, CT 06110. (860) 561-0180 for directions	7:00 p.m.

[WWW.CTHUMANIST.ORG](http://WWW.CTHUMANIST.ORG)

Maybe you have them. It actually is possible.

Archaeologist Ken Feder will tell the fascinating on-going tale of the as yet fruitless search for the missing fossils of Peking Man on Monday, May 18. Join us 7:30 p.m. for coffee and conversation, followed by brief announcements and Ken's talk at 8:00 p.m. Bring a friend!

## *Conversations: The Big Sort*

Join us on Saturday, May 2, at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike at 2:30 p.m.

In May, 2008, journalist Bill Bishop wrote a book with Robert G. Cushing called, "The Big Sort." (See [www.thebigsort.com](http://www.thebigsort.com)) In the last thirty years, America has sorted itself into like-minded "tribes." What are the consequences of this? We will watch and discuss a video that introduces the concept and process that led to the book.

Refreshments will be served.

[www.cthumanist.org](http://www.cthumanist.org)

**E-mail List**

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**Walk Against Hunger**

It's almost time for this year's Connecticut Food Bank "Walk Against Hunger" on Sunday, May 3, at East Rock Park in New Haven. If you'd like to join the HAC team as a walker or sponsor one of our walkers, sign up at any HAC meeting or contact Richard Siddall at [webmaster@cthumanist.org](mailto:webmaster@cthumanist.org). Registration starts at 1:00 p.m. with the walk at 2:00 p.m.

**"Tuesdays with Morrie" on 5/9**

The next book we will read is "Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, a Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson" by Mitch Albom (Note: This is the book by Mitch Albom, not the play of the same title by Jeffrey Hatcher and Mitch Albom, although you may want to read the play as well as the book.) We will meet to discuss "Tuesdays with Morrie" on Saturday, May 9, from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. As always, feel free to invite a friend or two.

For those who like to listen to books, "Tuesdays with Morrie" is also available as an audiobook, narrated by the author.

Quotes from the book:

"So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half asleep, even when they are busy doing things they think are important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things. The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning."

"A casual stroll through the lunatic asylum shows that faith does not prove anything."

"In truth, there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross."

**Bible Discussion — David the King, Solomon, after Solomon**

The next meeting of the HAC Bible Discussion Group will be held from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 30 at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. As always, please do the reading and feel free to bring a friend.

Reading for May 30:

A. In "How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now" by James L. Kugel, read the following:

- Chapter 27. David the King, pages 474-492
- Chapter 28. Solomon's Wisdom, pages 493-518
- Chapter 29. North and South, pages 519-537

B. Look through the following:

- The Wikipedia entry on "Books of Samuel" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books\\_of\\_Samuel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel)).
- The Wikipedia entry on "David" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David>).
- The Wikipedia entry on "Solomon" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon>).
- The Wikipedia entry on "Rehoboam" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rehoboam>).
- The Wikipedia entry on "Elijah" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah>).
- The New World Encyclopedia entry on "Elijah" (<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Elijah>).

C. Bring in a joke (optional)

- If you like, bring in a joke or short humorous writing that relates to the readings for this meeting.

As always, please do the reading and feel free to bring a friend.

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