



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

June 2009



CSH Affiliate

Mark Twain, Humanist Hero

Join us Monday, June 15, at 7:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden when the Humanist Association of Connecticut's vice-President, Douglas Peary, will return with the latest in his series, "Humanist Heroes." His subject will be Mark Twain.

Mark Twain was born Samuel Langhorne Clemens in Missouri in 1835. His family and uncle had slaves. He began working at a newspaper at a young age when his father died. His life was a strong mixture of joy and sadness. He became a newspaper man and riverboat worker. He encouraged his brother to work on riverboats and his brother was killed when his riverboat exploded. Clemens took the name Mark Twain when he was working in the gold fields in California and writing stories.

Twain met his wife and had a son and three daughters; all but one daughter predeceased him. His remaining daughter's only child, a daughter, died without children, so Twain has no descendants.

He became a close friend of a Congregational Minister in Hartford, Connecticut who was more concerned with social issues than theology. Twain came to despise Christianity and wrote against it extensively but cared deeply about people and believed in the Deistic God of early American leaders. He understood the slave era mentality and hated slavery. He was misunderstood and made to appear to support slavery because he used the language of uneducated slaves. His writing is considered the first great American literature.

He became wealthy but only for a time. He went bankrupt with the help of a friend, Henry Rogers, from Standard oil, who helped him protect his family.

Calendar of Events

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT. RSVP for dinners at humanism.meetup.com.

JUNE, 2009

Sat., 6	Humanist Conversations: Medical Insurance	2:30 p.m.
Sat., 13	Memorial Service for Walter Wells	11:00 a.m.
Mon., 15	Monthly meeting	7:30 p.m.
	Main program: Doug Peary — "Mark Twain, Humanist Hero."	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.

JULY, 2009

Mon., 6	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 11	Humanist Conversations: TBA	2:30 p.m.
Sat., 18	Picnic and book discussion: at the Lyon's home in Cornwall, CT	12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.
Mon., 20	Monthly meeting	7:30 p.m.
	Main program: TBA	8:00 p.m.
Sun., 26	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Wed., 29	Hartford-Area social dinner at Szechuan Tokyo, 1245 New Britain Ave., West Hartford, CT 06110. (860) 561-0180 for directions	7:00 p.m.

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He still paid all of his debts

Twain introduced his friend Rogers to Helen Keller and her teacher Anne, and Rogers paid for Keller's college education at Princeton. Twain introduced Rogers to author Ida Tarbell, who had written about Lincoln's ancestors. Tarbell interviewed Rogers and wrote about Standard oil. The resulting book was one of the influences which led to a government investigation which caused the breakup of Standard oil as a conglomerate.

Twain wrote, "...the swindle of life and the treachery of a God that can create disease and misery and crime—create things that men would be condemned for creating—that men would be ashamed to create." "There is no other life; Life itself is only a vision and a dream for nothing

exists but space and you. If there was an all-powerful God, he would have made all good, and no bad."

Join us on Monday, June 15 at 7:30 p.m. for coffee and conversation, followed by brief announcements and Doug's talk at 8:00 p.m. Bring a friend!

Conversations: Medical Insurance

Join us on Saturday, June 6, at 700 Hartford Turnpike at 2:30 p.m., when we will view and discuss two recent PBS *Frontline* episodes focusing on healthcare, "Sick Around America" and "Sick Around the World."

Refreshments will be served.

www.cthumanist.org

E-mail List

To join, send an e-mail addressed to hac-announce-request@cthumanist.org with the subject **subscribe**.

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Walter Wells

A memorial service for Walter Wells will be held at USNH on Saturday, June 13, at 11:00 am. Walter died April 9 in Cambridge, MA, at the age of 92. Chair of our Program Committee for ten years, Walter was an inspiration, especially regarding Italian opera. We will be hosting the reception immediately following the service, and June will welcome food and assistance with the reception. If you can help, call her at 203-281-6232.

Picnic June 20 — Middlebury

Join us for our annual picnic on Saturday, June 20th from noon to 4 p.m., rain or shine, at the lovely home of Dr. Bob and Ms. Joan Rafford at 57 Clearview Knoll Road in Middlebury. (203) 758-9798.

Bring a chair (if sunny) and something to share! The Raffords will provide hot dogs (regular and vegetarian), soft drinks and beer.

Directions from the New Haven area: Take Rt. 8 north to I-84 and go west to Exit 17. From the exit go straight ahead (west) on Rt. 64 to the first stoplight...

Directions from the Stamford area: Take Rt. 7 north to I-84 and go east to Exit 17. At the exit turn left onto Rt. 63, go straight to the second stoplight, and turn left (west) onto Rt. 64...

Directions from Hartford or Torrington: Take Rt. 8 or 91 south to I-84 and go west to Exit 17. From the exit go straight ahead (west) on Rt. 64 to the first stoplight...

...From the junction of Rt. 64 with Rt. 63: Head west on Rt. 64 less than one mile, passing through one more stoplight. If you pass a gas station you have gone too far. On the right, look for Tzezos Law Firm sign. At that sign, turn right onto Clearview Knoll Road and drive to the top of the hill. Number 57 is the last house on the left.

BBQ'd Books: July 18

Join us for a pot luck/barbecue/book discussion on Saturday, July 18, from noon until 4 p.m., at the home of Bill and Kathy Lyon in Cornwall. The book discussion will be from 1:30 until 2:30. We will revisit Carl Sagan's book, "The Varieties of Scientific

Experience: A Personal View of the Search for God." Please choose a quote from the book, no longer than one paragraph, to discuss. There are lots of copies in Connecticut's public libraries. Directions and more details will be in the next newsletter.

Bible Discussion — More on Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah

The HAC Bible Discussion Group will next meet from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 pm. on Sunday, August 9 at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. We will view a video for the first hour, and will discuss the readings (and the video) during the last two hours. As always, please do the reading and feel free to bring a friend.

For August 9 please re-read pages 506-514 and read pages 538-597 in "How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now" by James L. Kugel. Also please look through the Wikipedia entries on "Book of Proverbs," "Isaiah," and "Jeremiah." Also please look through the Proverbs, available at www.tldm.org and www.biblestudy.org. If you like, bring a joke or short humorous writing (or a proverb) that relates to the readings for this meeting.

Garden Against Hunger

The Connecticut Food Bank is running its "Plant a Row for the Hungry" campaign again this year. Gardeners can plant an extra row of vegetables to donate to Connecticut Food Bank.

For more details see their web site: <http://ctfoodbank.org/>.

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.

Name(s): _____
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Please add me to the e-mail Announce List (circle one): YES NO
Where did you hear about us? _____
Comments: _____
