



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

March 2014



CSH Affiliate

Tails Of Barnum

The guest speaker for our monthly meeting on Monday, March 17 at 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, will be Arthur H. Saxon, the acclaimed author of "P. T. Barnum: The Legend and the Man," recounting his adventures and misadventures while researching the career of "The World's Greatest Showman." Drawn from a stock of well over a hundred brief, telling essays on Barnum and his manifold attractions, and illustrated with objects from the speaker's extensive private collection, the individual tails (that's right: "tails," not "tales") selected for this presentation will emphasize the showman's religion — namely, Universalism. The talk will conclude with the playing of a recording of Barnum's voice, following which the speaker will be pleased to entertain questions and comments from the audience.

Arthur H. Saxon, author of "The Life and Art of Andrew

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Calendar of Events

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

MARCH 2014

Sat., 1	Special Afternoon Meeting	2:30 p.m
	Main program: Eugene Kogan – "Nuclear Weapons and American Allies: Lessons from History"	3:00 p.m
Mon., 3	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m
Sat., 8	Book discussion: "Ishmael" by Daniel Quinn	2:00 p.m
Mon., 17	Monthly Meeting	7:30 p.m
	Main program: Arthur Saxon – "Tails of Barnum"	8:00 p.m
Sun., 23	Board meeting	2:30 p.m
Sat., 29	Book Discussion: "The Bonobo & the Atheist"	2:00 p.m

APRIL 2014

Sat., 5	Humanist Conversations: TBA	2:30 p.m
Mon., 7	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m
Mon., 21	25th Anniversary Meeting	7:30 p.m
	Main program: Bob and Joan Rafford	8:00 p.m
Sun., 27	Board meeting	2:30 p.m

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Nuclear Weapons and American Allies: Lessons from History

Our March Humanist Conversations meeting will be replaced by a special program. Eugene Kogan will give a special, Saturday afternoon talk on nuclear proliferation.

Fifty-one years ago, President John F. Kennedy said he was "haunted" by the possibility that "15 or 20 or 25 nations" may acquire nuclear weapons by 1970. "I regard that as the greatest possible danger and hazard," the President stated. So far, nuclear weapons have spread much slower than Kennedy feared, but the hard work to contain this terrible danger continues. Saudi Arabia is on record that it will get nuclear weapons if Iran goes nuclear. This talk will provide a historical overview of U.S. efforts to convince its Cold War-era allies (Taiwan, South Korea, Pakistan, and Israel) from going nuclear. It will then discuss what lessons policymakers can draw as the United States confronts the possibility of contemporary allies, such as Riyadh, considering acquiring nuclear capabilities. "History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme," Mark Twain is said to have observed. Mining history for insights on what factors motivated our allies' nuclear pursuits in the past is important for crafting a smarter policy today to prevent the spread of the most destructive weapons known to humanity.

Eugene B. Kogan is Stanton Nuclear Security Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He studies the use of pressure and reassurance in nuclear negotiations. He received his Ph.D. from Brandeis University, where he was Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Dissertation Year Fellow. His doctoral thesis examined nuclear bargaining between the United States and its allies during the Cold War.

We'll meet in the Children's Chapel at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 1 for the traditional half an hour of coffee and conversation. The main program will start promptly at 3:00 p.m.

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Please include a SASE to have material returned. Approximate circulation: 180 copies. Annual subscription price \$10.00, included in membership.

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

“Ishmael”

On March 8 at 2:00 p.m. at USNH the book group will discuss “Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit” by Daniel Quinn. This is the snow date for that discussion.

USNH Cinema March 7

Our March 7 USNH Cinema features three recent interviews by Bill Moyers of the charismatic Director of the Haydn Planetarium and host of *Cosmos: A Space-Time Odyssey*, Neil deGrasse Tyson. The segments are entitled, “The New Cosmos and the Dark Universe,” “Science and Democracy,” and “Science, God, and the Universe.” Owing to housing for homeless men in the Social Hall, we will meet in the Library. Refreshments (not potluck this time!) at 6:30 p.m., films at 7:00 p.m., followed by a far-ranging discussion.

Tails of Barnum – Continued from front page

Ducrow & The Romantic Age of the English Circus” and the award-winning “P. T. Barnum: The Legend and the Man,” as well as editor of the great showman’s letters and “The Autobiography of Mrs. Tom Thumb,” has published well over one hundred books and articles on the theatre, circus, and popular entertainments in general. The first American to be designated an honorary member of the French Club du Cirque, he holds a Ph.D. in the History of the Theatre and Dramatic Criticism from Yale University, in addition to degrees from Columbia University and the University of Pittsburgh. In the course of a long and varied career, he has taught at several institutions; served as an editor and publisher; worked as a biochemist, immunologist, and medical researcher; and participated, while a member

of the Army Medical Corps, in the early space program (see, e.g. *Air & Space/Smithsonian*, October/November 1993). In the new millennium he has written and published on his lifelong experiences as a hiker and mountaineer, besides indulging, under various pseudonyms, his earlier interests in fiction and poetry, natural history, and what some of his many admirers have characterized as high-class pornography. Among his forthcoming and possibly posthumous works will be “En Garde in the Garden” (poetry), “Evidences of Intelligence in the Human Race” (natural history), and “The Tragic Tale of Barbie.”

We will begin with our usual half-hour of refreshments and conversation at 7:30 p.m. followed by Arthur’s presentation at 8:00 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. Bring a friend!

Frans de Waal at Yale

“We were born of risen apes, not fallen angels.” ~Robert Ardrey

Professor Frans de Waal is a pioneer in our understanding of how empathy and morality evolved to come naturally to a great variety of animals, including humans. And, he argues, it is from this more accurate view of human nature that we can build a more just society. The Yale Humanist Community is sponsoring a free lecture open to the public by Frans de Waal himself on March 5, at 7:00 p.m. at SSS 114, 1 Prospect Street in New Haven. A book signing will occur *before* the event and a few copies will be available for purchase.

The book group will meet on March 29 at 2:00 p.m. at USNH to discuss his book on this topic, “The Bonobo and the Atheist.” The book is available in stores and at many public libraries.

Refreshments will be served.

MEMBERSHIP

! Adult \$35
 ! Family \$50
 ! Newsletter Only \$10
 ! Our membership year is 1/1-12/31.

! 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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