



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CENTRAL CONNECTICUT

April 1999



ASHS Affiliate

“Isaac Asimov, Humanist Hero”

Presented by Doug Peary

Isaac Asimov, the famous science fiction writer, was the greatest simplifier of science who ever lived. He wrote almost 500 books. He wrote books on the Bible, and showed how science sheds light on questions about its historical accuracy. He explained the vast history of the universe in simple terms.

Asimov was born the son of Russian Jews, but his father raised him to believe there is no God, and he did not have a bar mitzvah. He was an ardent feminist, and an advocate of civil rights and planned parenthood.

Asimov said, “I am not an enemy of religion; what I am against is the attempt to place a person's belief system onto the nation or the world generally. I see a picture of the universe that is infinite. There is no way I can single-handedly save the world, but how ashamed I would be to let a day pass without making one more effort—and writing science is one of the chief ways in which I accomplish this.”

(Isaac Asimov was also president of the American Humanist Association. -ed.)

Bring a friend to this presentation by Doug Peary on Monday, April 19, at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of New Haven, 608 Whitney Avenue, New Haven.

Calendar of Events

APRIL

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| Mon., 19 | Monthly meeting at 608 Whitney Avenue.
Coffee & conversation. | 7:30 p.m.
8:00 p.m. |
| | Reverend Douglas Peary will speak on "Isaac Asimov - Humanist Hero". | |
| Sun., 25 | Board meeting at 700 Hartford Turnpike | 1:30 p.m. |
| Fri., 30 | Humanist Conversations at 700 Hartford Turnpike
Is "The Jesus Seminar" a truly scientific approach to history? | 7:30 p.m. |

MAY

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| Mon., 10 | Anniversary meeting at 700 Hartford Turnpike.
Note change of date.
Coffee & conversation | 7:30 p.m.
8:00 p.m. |
| | Jean Kotkin, Leader, New York Ethical Culture Society; Humanist Chaplain, Columbia University, etc., will speak on "The Humanist Institute". | |
| Fri., 21 | Special meeting at 608 Whitney Avenue.
Coffee & conversation. | 7:30 p.m.
8:00 p.m. |
| | Steven Novella, MD, Assistant Professor of Neurology, Yale University School of Medicine, Associate Editor of the Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine, and President, New England Skeptical Society, will speak on: "Alternative Medicine". | |
| Sun., 23 | Board meeting at 700 Hartford Turnpike | 1:30 p.m. |

JUNE

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|----------|---|------------------------|
| Mon., 21 | Monthly meeting at 608 Whitney Avenue.
Coffee & conversation. | 7:30 p.m.
8:00 p.m. |
| | Mr. Ron Loomis, Director of Education for the American Family Foundation and cult awareness educator: "Cults on Campus: The Appeal, the Danger" | |

JULY

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| TBA | Annual picnic. | TBA |
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welcome letters, articles, photographs, poetry, comic strips, news items, cartoons and other illustrations related to humanism. Material may also be submitted by e-mail to rsiddall@wtco.net. Approximate circulation: 100 copies. Subscription price \$10.00 per annum, free to members of the association.

The deadline for each issue is the 1st of the month.

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

Upcoming Events

This month's speaker at the regular meeting of the Humanist Association will be Rev. Douglas Peary, presenting the latest of his very popular "Humanist Heroes" series of talks. Doug will help us see the real Isaac Asimov on Monday, April 19. The evening will begin at 7:30 p.m. with a half-hour of coffee and conversation; Doug will speak at 8:00. **Please note that this meeting will be held at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of New Haven, 608 Whitney Avenue, New Haven.**

This meeting is one of three we're holding at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of New Haven, 608 Whitney Avenue. Another, on Friday, May 21, will feature Steven Novella's talk on "Alternative Medicine," which had to be postponed last month because of ice and snow. We sincerely apologize to a number of you who were inconvenienced by this unexpected change. Between these two talks, on Monday, May 10 here at USNH, we'll hold our official tenth anniversary meeting, with the distinguished Humanist Jean Kotkin, Leader of the Ethical Cultural Society of New York, speaking on "The Humanist Institute," the primary training school for Humanist leaders, with which she has been associated since its inception. Please make a note of these three talks now, and plan to bring friends to all of them.

-David Schafer

Humanist Conversations

What Would Jesus Do or What would Jesus Have Done, had he existed?

A current trend is in the critical study of religious texts in an attempt to determine their historical accuracy. To be more accurate, the trend is not so current; what is current is the publication of the findings of these efforts. The Jesus Seminar, a group of about 75 experts and informed nonprofessionals, has been examining the new testament since 1985. Our discussion this month will use as a starting point an article by a long-time member of the Jesus Seminar, Robert M. Price: "The Jesus Seminar: Historians or Believers?" *Free Inquiry*, Winter 1998/99, p. 9-10. (Copies of the article will be available at the

meeting. -ed.)

For a related article, see the April 1999 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, p. 79-83: "Confucius and the Scholars," by Charlotte Allen, in which the existence of Confucius is questioned.

If these investigations suggest that prophets and leading religious figures did not exist, or if they did exist, did not do or say all they have been credited with doing or saying, what does this mean for us? Come to the Humanist Conversations group, and we'll talk.

The next meeting of the Humanist Conversations group will be on Friday, April 30 at 7:30 PM at the Unitarian Society, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT

We will order out for pizza. Coffee and tea will be provided. Call Mickey Koth (203) 498-8333 for more information.

Trust Established

Douglas Peary has donated \$1,000 to the Humanist Association in memory of his wife Joyce Peary, who died in 1986, to start a trust fund to be used for paying any speaker for this organization. Joyce worked to provide for Doug while he obtained the education which made it possible for him to create his "Humanist Heroes" series. He has proposed to call the fund the "Humanist Heroes Trust Fund for Speakers", and it will provide for speakers on all issues. You may add to the fund at any time in amounts as small or large as you choose, to help this organization truly begin to grow.

Douglas has also informed us that he will add to the fund a minimum of \$25 per month into the indefinite future, in addition to any donations he makes to the regular budget. He has also given us a check for \$100 toward the regular budget. Douglas has two children in college he is supporting and providing cars for at the same time. This is not easy but is vital to Douglas because of his love for Joyce and for the Humanist movement. He has also decided to publish the presentations he has completed at the present time rather than waiting, and dedicating the book to Joyce. He is currently proofing the presentations.

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Newsletter

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