THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

AHA Chapter

April 2005

CSH Affiliate

Humanist Evangelism?

To accommodate our speaker's travel arrangements our 16th anniversary meeting will be held on **Monday, April 11**, at 7:30 p.m.

We take great pleasure in presenting as our Sixteenth Anniversary speaker Ross Hamilton Henry, Humanist minister and outgoing president and current program director of the Asimov Humanists of Montgomery County (Houston TX). Ross is a board member of the Humanist Institute who graduated from the Institute in the class of 2000 with David Schafer as his mentor and June Schafer as a classmate. He is a member of the Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Church, where he often speaks from the pulpit, the HUUmanists (UU Humanists), and the Northwoods Zen Mind Buddhist Sangha, a nontheistic meditation group. Ross advocates Humanist participation in local interfaith organizations, and has spoken before non-UU churches, school groups, and various other organizations in the Houston area. He represents the Asimov Humanists in "Faiths Together," an interfaith group in the Houston Woodlands. Like Rabbi Sherwin Wine, he says that what this nation needs is at least 50 Humanist evangelists preaching the gospel of Humanism.

We'll start with refreshments and conversation at 7:30 p.m. and turn the evening over to Ross at 8:00 p.m. Join us on Monday, April 11 at 7:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden and bring a friend!

Calendar of Events

APRIL, 2005		
Mon., 11	Anniversary meeting, USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden **(Note Date!)**	**7:30 p.m.**
	Coffee and conversation	**7:30 p.m.**
	Main program: Ross Hamilton Henry. *Humanist Evangelism*	**8:00 p.m.**
Sat., 16	Humanist Conversations: End of life issues, *Whose life is it?*	**2:30 p.m.**
Sun., 17	Board meeting, USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden	**2:30 p.m.**
Wed., 27	Dinner at *Lisboa*, 19 Lafayette St., Waterbury. (203) 754-0789	**7:00 p.m.**
MAY, 2005		
Sat., 7	Humanist Conversations: Topic TBD	**2:30 p.m.**
Mon., 9	Dinner at Pasta Fair, 262 Boston Post Road, Orange. RSVP at humanism.meetup.com	**7:00 p.m.**
Sat., 14	Book discussion at the USNH library: Bernard Lewis's *The Crisis of Islam*	**3:30 p.m.**
Mon., 16	Monthly meeting, USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden	**7:30 p.m.**
	Coffee and conversation	**7:30 p.m.**
	Main program: Doug Peary: *Richard Dawkins, Humanist Hero.*	**8:00 p.m.**
Sun., 22	Board meeting, USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden	**2:30 p.m.**
Wed., 25	Dinner at *Lisboa*, 19 Lafayette St., Waterbury. (203) 754-0789	**7:00 p.m.**
WWW.CTHUMANIST.ORG		

Whose Life Is It?

The answer to this question is part of the foundation upon which to consider a number of the most vexing issues in our nation today: limits on medical intervention, assisted suicide, and capital punishment. A Night Line discussion by four experts from law, medicine and politics will be the springboard for our conversation on April 16th.

The Schiavo case has recently dominated the headlines and raised questions that deserve our most serious consideration. A family dispute was thrown into the courts by deep disagreement about fundamental issues of life. The course through the courts decided one issue after another and upheld a citizen's right to say, "Enough." For those opposing the course of this case the only morally valid action is to preserve any shred of life as long as possible.

Regardless of whether the decision to say, "Enough," is one's own or whether the duty falls to another, it involves consideration of the individual's definition of what is a truly human life. This discussion will consider some of the practical issues involved. What is treatment and what is support? Does a person have a right to refuse treatment? What should happen when a person cannot make his/her own decision? What does happen? Does a person have a right to choose the time for the end of her/his life?

Join us in the library at 2:30 p.m. on April 16 at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. Refreshments will be provided.

E-mail List

To join, send an e-mail addressed to **majordomo@cthumanist.org** with **subscribe announce** in the body of the message.

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Editor	Carol J. Stone (203) 264-8546 editor@cthumanist.org
Production:	Richard Siddall (203) 264-2182 webmaster@cthumanist.org

Dinners

Please plan to join us Wednesday, April 27, at 7:00 p.m. when we will again enjoy another authentic Portugese meal at Lisboa Restaurante, 19 Lafayette Street in Waterbury.

Also, join us for an Italian dinner at Pasta Fair, 62 Boston Post Road, Orange, on Monday, May 9 at 7:00 p.m.

We would appreciate the effort if you would RSVP for these events via humanism.meetup.com. You can also email editor@cthumanist.org.

May 14 Book Discussion

Join us in the library at 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden on Saturday, May 14 at 3:30 p.m. when we will discuss Bernard Lewis's "The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror."

Copies of the book are available through most Connecticut libraries, and can be ordered through the link on the HAC web site.

From Amazon.com:

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, many Americans yearned to understand why Muslim extremists felt such passionate animosity toward the Western world, particularly the United States. Since that historic attack there have been many books and discussions about this very question, but few of them offer such a readable and relevant response as this excellent offering by renowned historian Bernard Lewis (What Went Wrong?). For modern Westerners, Islam is an especially foreign religion and culture to understand. For instance, Westerners typically dismiss things as unimportant when using the expression "that's history." But for those raised in Muslim households, history-even ancient history-is just as important (if not more important) as the present. And to better understand the hostilities rooted in this history-one could start with recognizing the long-standing resentment the Islamic community harbors from having its homelands torn apart and re-packaged into random political states by occupying Europeans (Westerners). Or stretch back in time to the brutality of the Crusades. Or go straight to the U.S. political meddling in the region throughout the latter 20th century.

This is not a pity fest for Muslims. Lewis even-handedly explores the sources of Islamic antagonism toward the West while also explaining how a supposedly peace-worshipping religion could be so distorted by violent extremism. He notes that the American way of life-especially that of fulfillment through material gain and sexual freedom-is a direct threat to Islamic values (which is why night clubs-places where men and women publicly touch one another-are targets of bombings). But it is basic Western democracy that especially threatens Islamic extremists, notes Lewis, because within its own community more and more Muslims are coming to value the freedom that political democracy allows. For anyone wanting an intelligent and accessible primer on the Islamic-Western conflict, this is an excellent place to begin. *Gail Hudson*

From the back cover: About the Author

Bernard Lewis is the Cleveland E. Dodge Professor of Near Eastern Studies Emeritus at Princeton University and the author of The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years, a National Book Critics Circle Award finalist [and] other books. Lewis is internationally recognized as one of our era's greatest historians of the Middle East. His books have been translated into more than twenty languages, including Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Indonesian. He lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

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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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