



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

# The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

February 2006



CSH Affiliate

## *Darwin After a Century and a Half*

Join us on Monday, February 20, at 7:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike when Dr. David Schafer will show us Darwin's ideas thriving in today's modern scientific laboratory.

You will hear many thoughtful people say that no other human being in history has had a more profound effect on human thought than Charles Darwin. His penetrating, inquiring mind, his extensive travels to exotic and relatively unspoiled parts of the world, and his uniquely observant and systematic methods enabled him to draw earth-shattering conclusions about the very nature of living beings, and also humans in particular, that had previously escaped everyone else until his time. After a century and a half, the revolutionary consequences of his innovative ideas have not been fully understood, let alone translated into productive actions by human societies.

But Darwin's *The Voyage of the Beagle* was published in 1845; his monumental *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859, and his last major work, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, appeared in 1872.

During those same years the sciences of cellular and molecular biology, which much later would enable scientists to interpret Darwin's sophisticated observations in molecular terms, were in their infancy, with Woehler's chemical synthesis of the very first "vital" substance, urea, in 1828; Schleiden and Schwann's proposal that all complex living things were composed of cells, in 1838-39; and Gregor Mendel's early discoveries of genetics, published in 1866.

Today, we may imagine that Darwin, the Father of Evolution, would hardly recognize what we

## *Calendar of Events*

### FEBRUARY, 2006

Sat., 4	Humanist Conversations: <i>American Anti-Intellectualism, Republicans and Science</i>	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 13	Dinner at Pasta Fair, 262 Boston Post Road, Orange. RSVP at <a href="http://humanism.meetup.com">humanism.meetup.com</a> . (203) 799-9601 for directions.	7:00 p.m.
Mon., 20	Monthly meeting, USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden	7:30 p.m.
	Coffee and conversation	7:30 p.m.
	Main program: <i>Darwin After a Century and a Half</i> , presented by Dr. David Schafer.	8:00 p.m.
Wed., 22	Dinner at Lisboa, 19 Lafayette St., Waterbury. (203) 754-0789 for directions.	7:00 p.m.
Sun., 26	Board meeting, USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden	2:30 p.m.

### MARCH, 2006

Sat., 4	Humanist Conversations: TBA.	2:30 p.m.
Sun., 12	Book discussion, USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden: <i>Blood and Oil</i> by Michael T. Klare	3:30 p.m.
Mon., 13	Dinner at Pasta Fair, 262 Boston Post Road, Orange. RSVP at <a href="http://humanism.meetup.com">humanism.meetup.com</a> . (203) 799-9601 for directions.	7:00 p.m.
Mon., 20	Monthly meeting, USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden	7:30 p.m.
	Coffee and conversation	7:30 p.m.
	Main program: <i>David Hume, Humanist Hero</i> , presented by Doug Peary.	8:00 p.m.
Wed., 22	Dinner at Lisboa, 19 Lafayette St., Waterbury. (203) 754-0789 for directions.	7:00 p.m.
Sun., 26	Board meeting, USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden	2:30 p.m.

**WWW.CTHUMANIST.ORG**

now understand as the molecular biochemistry and biophysics of evolution, and might even be hard put to comprehend many of its more esoteric features.

We will examine Darwin's legacy as it exists in modern scientific laboratories, using the most recent books, journal articles, and video clips to illustrate its amazing variety and power.

Join us on Monday, February 20, at 7:30 p.m. for conversation and refreshments, followed at 8:00 p.m. by Dr. Schafer's enlightening presentation. Come and bring a friend!

## *Posters*

We are now including a poster for the monthly meeting with newsletters. Please take this poster to your local library, supermarket, or even coffee shop and ask them to post it!

## *Renewal Time*

Thank you to everyone who has already renewed their memberships! If you're one of the few who haven't, why not bring your check to the next meeting?

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

**E-mail List**

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

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Please include a SASE to have material returned. We welcome letters, articles, photographs, poetry, comic strips, news items, cartoons and other illustrations related to humanism. Approximate circulation: 120 copies. Annual subscription price \$10.00, included in membership.

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

**MS Walk**

If you are interested in taking part in the MS Walk in April, please contact Richard Siddall, [president@cthumanist.org](mailto:president@cthumanist.org).

**American Anti-Intellectualism, Republicans, and Science**

The idea that Americans are (and have always been) anti-intellectual is profoundly important, and can also be terrifying. American anti-intellectualism is intimately related to the notion that everyone is equal in a democracy. Currently the Republican party is working rather successfully to exploit this trait in the American collective personality.

Chris Mooney, who became a leader in the Campus Freethought Alliance (Humanist) group we started at Yale in the late 1990s, has evolved from a writer for *Yale Daily News* since his graduation in 1999 to become a consistently provocative and informative journalist for a variety of outstanding print and online publications. His book *The Republican War on Science* is today a highly acclaimed study of how the Bush administration and the rest of the Republican Right have been enforcing an ignorant and arrogant program of anti-science policies to the potentially extreme detriment not only of the American republic but of the future of the entire world.

We'll have a short video clip of Chris telling about his book, and will discuss what he has to say about such topics as global warming and therapeutic cloning. See his blog at [scienceblogs.com/intersection](http://scienceblogs.com/intersection) for a collection of some of his relevant writing, which we'll discuss at Humanist Conversations, this Saturday, February 4, at 2:30 p.m. As usual, refreshments will be served.

**Book Group: Blood and Oil**

At the next book discussion meeting we will discuss *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum* by Michael T. Klare. There are quite a few copies of this book in Connecticut public libraries as well as in book stores and at Amazon.com. We will meet Sunday, March 12 at 3:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden.

Review from Amazon.com:

"Compelling and insightful...U.S. dependence on oil is not something that can be dealt with 'down the road,' Klare posits. He offers thoughtful solutions that, while expensive, are essential to escape compromising the principles of American policy. This powerful book forecasts that if we do not change the paradigm, the flow of blood will continue unabated while a dwindling supply of oil will threaten powerful and weak nations alike."

—H.C. Stackpole, Lieutenant General, USMC (ret.)

You can read a CNN interview with Michael T. Klare at <http://www.energybulletin.net/5823.html>. In addition, you can listen to an audio NPR interview with him by following this link: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=3908026>

Michael T. Klare is director of the Five College Program in Peace and World Security Studies at Hampshire College in Amherst. Defense analyst for *The Nation* and National Public Radio, he is the author of *Resource Wars*, *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws*, and *Low Intensity Warfare*. He lives in Northampton, Massachusetts.

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