



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

# The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

January 2009



CSH Affiliate

## *The Humanist Code Of Ethics*

How many of us have found some topic relating to Humanism coming up in a conversation with a friend or stranger who doesn't know much about us? It may not happen very often, but what would we say if it did? About various nontheistic groups (e.g., atheists, agnostics, free-thinkers—there's actually a fairly long list) sooner or later certain standard questions are likely to arise—for example, how is it possible to be “good” without believing in a god, or how can one be “happy” without believing in a life after death (this list is also pretty long—maybe even endless). Some nontheistic groups do not have any position on this kind of question, while others do. Most Humanists have a position on many esthetic, ethical, political, economic, or other issues—but how many of the answers do we agree on? And should we agree?

Not long ago David Schafer heard Paul Gobell speak at the New Britain Unitarian Universalist Fellowship on “The Humanist Code of Ethics.” Listening to Paul's lecture, and the discussion that followed it, gave David a curious sense of déjà vu. During the early years of the Humanist Association of Connecticut, we regularly invited our own members to speak about their Humanist beliefs and how they became Humanists. This kind of program was very popular among us, as it not only helped us get to know each other a lot better but also required us to stop and think a little more about our own Humanism and its multiple dimensions. The similarity to Paul's lecture suggested that our members would enjoy hearing Paul for themselves—hence this program.

Paul Gobell is an art therapist who works with the elderly and

## *Calendar of Events*

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT. RSVP for dinners at [humanism.meetup.com](http://humanism.meetup.com).

### JANUARY, 2009

Sat., 3	Humanist Conversations: “Manufacturing Dissent”	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 5	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Fri., 9	“Trouble the Water” showing at Real Art Ways, 56 Arbor Street, West Hartford.	6:45 p.m.
Sat., 17	Bible Reading Group: Joshua, Judges, and Women in the Bible.	2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Mon., 19	Monthly meeting Main program: Paul Gobell — Humanist Ethics	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Wed., 21	Hartford-Area Dinner at Taste of India, 139 S Main St., West Hartford. (860) 561-2221.	7:00 p.m.
Sun., 25	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Thu., 29	Christopher Hitchens at the Connecticut Forum.	7:00 p.m.

### FEBRUARY, 2009

Mon., 2	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 7	Humanist Conversations: TBD	2:30 p.m.
Sat., 14	Book discussion: <i>What Evolution Is</i> by Ernst Mayr	2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Mon., 16	Monthly meeting Main program: John Pawelek — The Influence of Darwin's Evolution on My Cancer Research	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Sun., 22	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.

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the physically and emotionally disabled. His artwork has been shown in museums and fine art galleries. Paul says he is naturally a doubting Thomas, and being raised in an overly strict fundamentalist Christian household deepened his tendency to question everything. “Becoming an Atheist and a Humanist was certainly the natural outcome.”

Here's a brief abstract of Paul's talk: “Humanism is a rational system based on the recognition that moral values are naturally wired in each of us and further formed through experience. The philosophies that

comprise humanism rely upon ethics that defend reason and freedom, while rejecting dogma and the supernatural views of reality. When people reject unreasoned beliefs and endorse humanist ethics, they can see the commonality of the human condition and can begin to achieve solutions to social and cultural problems.” In this lecture Paul will look at two conflicting foundations of ethics.

Please join us on Monday, January 19, 2009, at 700 Hartford Turnpike at 7:30 p.m. for refreshments and this fascinating talk at 8:00 p.m. Bring a friend!

## *This is a Special Thank You!*

Thank you to all who have renewed your membership or joined for the first time with last month's insert!

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

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To join, send an e-mail addressed to [hac-announce-request@cthumanist.org](mailto:hac-announce-request@cthumanist.org) with the subject **subscribe**.

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**Christopher Hitchens**

Christopher Hitchens will be a panelist at The Connecticut Forum's discussion on "god" at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 29 at the Bushnell Theater in Hartford. ([www.ctforum.org](http://www.ctforum.org))

**Trouble the Water**

A group of HAC members will be attending the 7:00 p.m. showing of "Trouble the Water" at Real Art Ways, 56 Arbor Street, Hartford, on Friday, January 9th. We'll meet in the lobby at 6:45 p.m.

**Conversations**

Conversations will meet at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 3 at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. We'll watch a video entitled "Manufacturing Dissent," in which fans of Michael Moore attempt to interview him. Do they succeed? Join us to find out!

**Bible Discussion — Joshua, Judges, and Women in the Bible**

The next meeting of the HAC Bible Discussion Group will be 2:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 17 at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. The assigned reading for January 17:

A. In "How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now" by James L. Kugel, read the following:

*Chapter 22. Joshua and the Conquest of Canaan, pages 365-385*

*Chapter 23. Judges and Chiefs, pages 386-416*

B. Supplementary reading:

- The Wikipedia entry on "Joshua" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua>).
- The Wikipedia entry on "Jericho: Biblical References" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jericho#Biblical\\_references](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jericho#Biblical_references)).
- The Wikipedia entry on "Judges" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judges>).
- The Wikipedia entry on "Deborah" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deborah>).
- The Wikipedia entry on "Book of Ruth" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Ruth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ruth)).
- The Old Testament section of the Wikipedia entry on "Women in the Bible: Hebrew Bible" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women\\_in\\_the\\_Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_Bible)).
- The Introduction and articles relating to the Old Testament in the U.S. News and World Report on Women in the Bible (<http://www.usnews.com/features/news/religion/women-of-the-bible.html>).

Please do all of the reading and feel free to bring a friend!

**Next Book: "What Evolution Is"**

Join us Saturday, February 14, 2:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden, when we meet to discuss "What Evolution Is" by Ernst Mayr.

In addition to the book itself, please also read the introduction by Jared Diamond. Copies of the book are at public libraries as well as bookstores and online.

"One of the grand masters of twentieth century biology."

—Edward O. Wilson

Mayr provides as convincing a testament to Darwin's genius as

you are likely to find."

—New York Times Book Review.

Ernst Mayr was the leading evolutionary biologist of the 20th century. He was Professor Emeritus at the Zoology Department of Harvard University and for twenty-three years served as Curator at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

Ernst Mayr was born on July 5, 1904. He died on January 3, 2005 at age 100.

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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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