



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

November 2013



CSH Affiliate

The Importance of Community

At our monthly meeting on Monday, November 18, at 7:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden, we will have a chance to be brought up to date on the efforts to establish a humanist chaplaincy at Yale by Paul Chiariello, co-founder and the current Director of Operations of the Yale Humanist Community.

We've all heard the mantras about humans being 'social animals.' But what does any of that really mean? In an increasingly individualistic society, knowledge of this fact has lingered, while most people forget about the deeper benefits and necessities of community life. The internet, increasing self-sufficiency, growing norms of self-reliance, and so on have made much of social interaction easily avoidable – even for those that aren't intending to avoid it. And with the growing irrelevancy of the Church's worldview, the institutions that nurture and provide a framework for social interaction are fading away.

Paul will discuss some personal stories as well as some of the new science behind the need for community coming out of Positive Psychology. In the second half of the talk he will outline some of the history of the new Yale Humanist Community (yalehumanists.com) as well as their plans for the future.

In addition to the Yale Humanist Community, Paul works

Calendar of Events

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

NOVEMBER

Sat., 2	Humanist Conversations: Meaning & Purpose	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 4	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Mon., 18	Monthly Meeting Main program: Paul Chiariello — "The Importance of Community"	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Sun., 24	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.

DECEMBER

Mon., 2	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 7	Humanist Conversations: TBA	2:30 p.m.
Sat., 14	Book discussion: "The Swerve" by Stephen Greenblatt	2:00 p.m.
Mon., 16	Pot-luck dinner Annual meeting and elections, followed by Solstice Party and silent auction.	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Wed., 25	Casual dinner at Tom & Deidre Kennedy's home in Shelton	4:00 p.m.

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with the Humanist Chaplaincy at Rutgers, mostly with their blog appliedsentience.com, as well as Camp Quest as the Program Director for Camp Quest New England – whose first full week of camp will be here in CT this upcoming summer! He is also the Director of the Humanist, Ethics, and Philosophy Curriculum at Camp Quest Inc. Paul has a MSc in Sociology of Education from Oxford, where he focused

his field research on ethno-religious identity and education in post-conflict Bosnia, and has also completed a year of course work in Philosophy on a Yale PhD fellowship focusing on ethics and philosophy of religion.

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

Conversations: Meaning & Purpose

Our next Humanist Conversations session will be at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 2 at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden.

It seems we often discuss questions of meaning and purpose as though answers may be found in scientific searching. The keynote address at last summer's AHA conference, "Purpose and the Universe," given by Sean Carroll, a leading contemporary physicist, provides a brilliant outline of the development of theories about the matter of our universe and puts in perspective the proper uses of this knowledge in examining the purposes of life. We'll view and discuss this 76-minute video of his presentation.

Refreshments will be served.

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USNH Cinema: Brother Outsider

The first Friday of each month, the Unitarian Society of New Haven at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden shows a topical film followed by discussion. The November 1 event will be co-sponsored by the Anti-Racism Task Force and the Adult Religious Education committee. The film selected is "Brother Outsider," the deeply moving story of the life of the great civil rights activist Bayard Rustin. It was Bayard who persuaded Dr. Martin Luther King of the necessity of the Gandhian protest style known as "Non-Violent Direct Action" at the time of the Montgomery (AL) Bus Boycotts, and who trained him in its rigorous discipline. Later, it was again Bayard who was largely responsible for organizing Dr. King's historic March on Washington—50 years ago, in August, 1963. You won't want to miss this unforgettable documentary! The film, 84 minutes in length, will be preceded at 6:30 p.m. by an optional potluck dinner, and the showing will start promptly at 7:00. A full discussion will begin immediately afterward. Bring a friend!

400 Thanksgiving Dinners

Every year June Schafer works with the Interfaith Cooperative Ministries to help provide the turkeys and pies, host sit-down meals for 100 homeless and working poor, and deliver the remaining dinners to elderly persons in their homes on Thanksgiving Day. This year ICM will provide more than 400 dinners because of the greatly increased need. Requests for food are already pouring in. If you can help with a donation of money or wish to help in person on Thanksgiving Day, please call June right away at (203) 281-6232.

Book Group: "The Swerve" by Stephen Greenblatt

The Book Group will meet at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden on Saturday, December 14 at 2:00 p.m. to discuss "The Swerve: How the World Became Modern" by Stephen Greenblatt.

One of the world's most celebrated scholars, Stephen Greenblatt has crafted both an innovative work of history and a thrilling story of discovery, in which one manuscript, plucked from a thousand years of neglect, changed the course of human thought and made possible the world as we know it.

Nearly six hundred years ago, a short, genial, cannily alert man in his late thirties took a very old manuscript off a library shelf, saw with excitement what he had discovered, and ordered that it be copied. That book was the last surviving manuscript of an ancient Roman philosophical epic, "On the Nature of Things," by Lucretius—a beautiful poem of the most dangerous ideas: that the universe functioned without the aid of gods, that religious fear was damaging to human life, and that matter was made up of very small particles in eternal motion, colliding and swerving in new directions.

The copying and translation of this ancient book, the greatest discovery of the greatest book-hunter of his age, fueled the Renaissance, inspiring artists such as Botticelli and thinkers such as Giordano Bruno; shaped the thought of Galileo and Freud, Darwin and Einstein; and had a revolutionary influence on writers such as Montaigne and Shakespeare and even Thomas Jefferson.

The book is widely available at public libraries and at online and retail bookstores. Refreshments will be served.

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