



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT



CSH Affiliate

PJ Deak in Guatemala

Please join us at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, January 19.

Father: "What should I tell the Humanists in Connecticut about Guatemala?"

13-year-old Son: "Tell them about the children and the pick-pockets in the markets ... about braces and coca-cola trucks. Tell them about Emerson."

Father: "Can I tell them about being bit by a scorpion? About bringing cigars to the Mayan Earth god? About volcanoes and a holy site at the top of a mountain? And shopping malls?"

13-year-old son: "Tell them about mothers washing clothes in the lake, and boys swimming and laughing, and kids who have to work in fields and sell things in the market. Tell them about kids who can't go to school because their families don't have enough money."

Father: "I will tell them about the center of the universe."

In the fall of 1524, the Spanish conquistadores – in their quest for gold and power – attempted to control or destroy the world of the Maya. In the 1950's the U.S. Government – in their quest for empire and wealth – manufactured a coup to protect American business interests in Central America from "Communism" and began a decades-long civil war, which left 200,000 indigenous people dead.

Yet the Maya people, their culture, and their world-view survive. And on the winter solstice

Calendar of Events

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

JANUARY 2015

Sat., 3	Conversations: I. F. Stone on the Trial of Socrates	2:30 p.m
Mon., 5	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m
Sat., 17	Book Group: "Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking has Undermined America" by Barbara Ehrenreich	2:00 p.m.
Mon., 19	Monthly Meeting Main program: The Deak Family in Guatemala.	7:30 p.m 8:00 p.m
Sat., 24	A special program featuring David Niose: "Fighting Back the Right: Reclaiming America from the Attack on Reason"	2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Sun., 25	Board meeting	2:30 p.m

FEBRUARY 2015

Mon., 2	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m
Sat., 7	Conversations: TBA	2:30 p.m
Mon., 16	Monthly Meeting Main program: Darwin Day Program	7:30 p.m 8:00 p.m
Sun., 22	Board meeting	2:30 p.m

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of 2012, the Mayan understanding of time and space entered a new age – the age of 13 Baktun – an era of hope rising. As globalization has increasingly come to the Western Highlands of Guatemala, the Deak family has had the privilege of traveling there in 2002 and again in 2014 to experience the culture and world-view of the Mayan people; and to have their sense of personal identity changed, at least a little, by their relationship to this part of the world.

Join PJ Deak in a photo-narrative illustrating the diversity and unity of our humanity. Share meaning and explore our human lives together – as one family of North Americans encounters the people and places at the center of the universe, with the sun directly overhead.

We will gather for coffee and conversation at 7:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike on Monday, January 19, with PJ's presentation starting after brief announcements at 8:00 p.m.

Conversations – I. F. Stone on the Trial of Socrates

Please join us at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 3, when we will discuss this – <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/socrates/ifstoneinterview.html> – published in the April 9, 1979, *New York Times Magazine*. Scholars have puzzled over the conviction of Socrates for 24 centuries. If his crimes were so heinous, why wasn't he tried earlier in his life? What really happened at the trial and why was he found guilty? Famous and controversial journalist I. F. Stone was also captivated by the mystery, and this is his reasoning and conclusion. Please try to at least skim the article. We will view a short Robert MacNeil interview with Stone on this topic.

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Newsletter

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Friday January 2nd USNH Social Cinema

An optional potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. will be followed by the documentary film, *Watermark* (2013), at 7:15 p.m.

From award winning filmmakers Jennifer Baichwal and Edward Burtynsky come these stories and images from around the globe about our relationship with water: how we are drawn to it, what we learn from it, how we use it, and the consequences of that use.

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David Niose: “Fighting Back the Right”

David Niose, Legal Director of the American Humanist Association, past-president of the American Humanist Association and past-president of the Secular Coalition for America, will be discussing his new book, “Fighting Back the Right: Reclaiming America from the Attack on Reason,” at USNH on January 24 at 2:00 p.m.

“Fighting Back the Right” discusses the rapidly changing political scene and demographics in America, as increasing numbers are identifying as non-religious and support for issues such as marriage equality are at an all-time high. David will discuss the emergence of a new alliance of progressive interests who are committed to fighting for rational public policy in America and reversing the damage inflicted by decades of conservative dominance. Copies of the book will be available for sale, and refreshments will be served.

Book Discussion: “Bright-Sided”

Our first book of 2015 will be Barbara Ehrenreich’s discussion of the history and effects of Americans’ relentlessly upbeat attitude, “Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking has Undermined America.”

The author traces the strange career of Americans’ sunny outlook from its origins as a marginal nineteenth-century healing technique to its enshrinement as a dominant, almost mandatory, cultural attitude. Evangelical mega-churches preach the good news that you only have to want something to get it, because God wants to “prosper” you. The medical profession prescribes positive thinking for its presumed health benefits. Academia has made room for new departments of “positive psychology” and the “science of happiness.” Nowhere, though, has bright-siding taken firmer root than within the business community, where, as Ehrenreich shows, the refusal even to consider negative outcomes—like mortgage defaults—contributed directly to the current economic crisis. (Peak oil anyone?)

Ehrenreich exposes the downside of America’s penchant for positive thinking – self-blame on the personal level and irrational optimism resulting in disaster on the national level, in the process issuing an urgent call for a new commitment to realism.

Copies of the book are readily available in area libraries. Refreshments will be served.

(Note: Copies of David Niose’s new book, “Fighting Back the Right: Reclaiming America from the Attack on Reason,” arrived too late for wide distribution before the January book discussion. The book will be the selection in February or March, and copies will be available for purchase at a discounted price at numerous upcoming HAC and HAH events.)

Thornton Street, Hamden, CT 06517-1321. Submissions and requests for permission to reprint articles should be made to this address or to editor@cthumanist.org. We welcome humanist-themed letters, articles, poetry, news items, cartoons, and illustrations.

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