THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

AHA Chapter

December 2015

UU Humanists Local Group

Solstice Party

Join us on Monday December 21 in the Unitarian Society of New Haven (USNH) Social Hall as we once more celebrate the winter solstice. First we'll enjoy a delicious pot luck dinner at 7:30 p.m., with accompaniment by Mickey Koth's merry band of musicians and their peppy tunes. Next we'll have a short business meeting and elect our officers for 2016.

Merry-making will resume with our annual reading of the traditional poem, "The Tilt," by our late dear member Lois Woodrow, followed by folk songs, songs for fun, and a special number played by Carol Podgwaite in honor of Charlotte Moulyn, our wonderful cellist who has played for us on past solstice occasions. Charlotte recently suffered a stroke, but will be with us in spirit. Then our good friends Bill and Kathy Lyon will be coming, Kathy to lead a singalong and Bill to persuade us to get up and dance; and we always look forward to the Broadway bassoonist, Steve Boshi.

This year there will be no auction; instead, we will split our collection with the Syrian refugees. So let's all come and celebrate the joys of solstice together with our humanist friends!

Calendar of Events

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

DECEMBER 2015		
Sat., 5	**Conversations:** Movie *Interview Day* (1996)	**2:30 p.m.**
Mon., 7	**Social Dinner** at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	**7:00 p.m**
Sat., 19	Book Discussion: "An Unquenchable Thirst: a Memoir" by & with Mary Johnson	**2:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m**
Mon., 21	Annual Meeting and pot-luck dinner	**7:30 p.m**
	Annual Meeting & Elections, followed by Winter Solstice Party	**8:00 p.m**
Fri., 25	Annual dinner at the Kennedys' home in Shelton	**4:00 p.m**
JANUARY 2016		
Sat., 2	**Conversations:** Program TBA.	**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	**7:30 p.m**
	Main program: Steve & Susan Boshi in Russia	**8:00 p.m**
Sat., 23	Book Discussion: TBA	**2:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m**
Sun., 24	Board meeting	**2:30 p.m**

www.cthumanist.org

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Thanksgiving "Thank You!"

Thanks to all of you who helped make it a Happy Thanksgiving for 900 needy people in the New Haven area. (You did read that right. The number increased to 900 people by Thanksgiving.) You provided turkeys, pies, and money for necessities; you carved; you delivered dinners. What you did made a difference for others and was greatly appreciated.

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Humanist Conversations: Interview Day

Join us on Saturday, December 5, 2015 in the library at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, when Steve Boshi will introduce us to a movie from 1996.

Steve says, "Two mothers and fathers, a single mother, a single father, a middle-aged son with an elderly father, and four adolescent children applying for admission to Cambridge University.

"Sounds bizarre and complicated? Well, yes, but it all makes perfect sense in *Interview Day* from 1996 by the brilliant English playwright, Jack Rosenthal (running time 1:30). One of the great minds of English television, he will intrigue you with this work, the story is provocative on myriad levels and addresses the fragility of human existence. Join us to experience this delicate and thought-provoking work."

Refreshments will be served.

Please note that after announcing that we would be moving Humanist Conversations to the Wilson Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library, we have decided to move the meetings back to our home base of USNH for the remainder of the year.

Yale Humanist Community Events

We're pleased to share the Yale Humanist Community's two December events.

Matt Croasmun will present "Is Meaning Made or Found? Pursuing a Secular Life Worth Living" on Sunday, December 6th at 1:00 p.m. at The Grove, 760 Chapel Street, New Haven. Parking is available on the street (free on Sunday) or in nearby lots.

Once upon a time, the framework for the meaning of life was provided, pre-packaged, and not to be questioned. Not so anymore. Now making meaning is a personal project—perhaps the most important one of our lives. Join Matt Croasmun has he reflects on his experience teaching Yale undergraduates in the Life Worth Living course and asks: How can non-religious folks benefit from the visions of the good life articulated by the world's oldest traditions?

Matt Croasmun is Lecturer of Theology & Humanities at Yale University, Director of Research & Publication at the Yale Center for Faith & Culture, and Staff Pastor at the Elm City Vineyard Church. He teaches the Life Worth Living course at Yale which invites students to wrestle deeply with the visions of the good life articulated by various religious and non-religious philosophical traditions. He holds a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Yale University, a M.A.R. in Bible from the Yale Divinity School, and a B.A. in Music from Yale College.

On December 20 at 4:00 p.m. on the Upper New Haven Green, across from Phelps Gate (344 College Street, New Haven), YHC will present "Winter Solstice: Creating Light and Warmth During the Coldest, Darkest Time of the Year" with special guest Mary Johnson. The event will be moved to the Grove in the event of inclement weather.

Most of us can identify with the sentiment behind Shakespeare's words: "Winter, thy breath be rude." On the eve of the winter solstice, despite winter's ill-bred manners, join members of the YHC community for a celebration of winter's beauty and unexpected gifts—including the announcement of an exciting public art project, with details about how you can get involved. Special guest Mary Johnson will facilitate a celebration of our ability to come together to create light and warmth, as we re-commit to the well-being of the people who inhabit our city, nation, and world.

Mary Johnson is a humanist activist and author. A certified Humanist Celebrant, the *New Hampshire A-List* named her the state's top wedding officiant. Her memoir, "An Unquenchable Thirst," was named one of the year's best nonfiction books by *Kirkus Review*. A former nun, Johnson joined the Missionaries of Charity at age nineteen. During her twenty years as a sister, Johnson lived and worked with Mother Teresa for extended periods. Johnson also serves as Creative Director of Retreats for A Room of Her Own Foundation, a group that supports women writers. Johnson and her writing have appeared widely, including in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *O the Oprah Magazine*, *The Huffington Post*, *Bloomberg View*, *Religion News Service*, *The Humanist Magazine*, *National Public Radio*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, and *The Rosie Show*. Johnson is a firm believer in honesty as service.

SMART Recovery Meetings

SMART Recovery, a modern, non-theistic addiction recovery program, just celebrated its second anniversary holding meetings in the New Haven area.

The current meeting schedule can be found on the SMART Recovery international web site at http://smartrecovery.org/

The Slate - 2015 Annual Meeting

Come cast your vote Monday, December 21! We will vote on the slate of officers for 2016. Remember, only members may vote, and nominations may be made from the floor.

Proposed January — December 2016 slate of officers:

President – Carol Siddall
Vice President – June Schafer
Treasurer – Carol Podgwaite
Secretary – Richard Siddall

Committee Chairs:

Programs – David Schafer
Development – Rebecca Williams
Membership – Lisa Candido
Publications – Richard Siddall
Publicity – open
Hospitality – Randy Olear

Respectfully submitted by the Nominating Committee: Joan Rafford, June Schafer, and Gayle Walter

Book Discussion: "An Unquenchable Thirst" featuring the author, Mary Johnson!

Our book for December is "An Unquenchable Thirst: Following Mother Teresa in Search of Love, Service, and an Authentic Life" by (now) humanist Mary Johnson. Please note: Ms. Johnson will be present! As usual, we will meet at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. Probably in the library upstairs.

From the inside cover:

"At seventeen, Mary Johnson saw Mother Teresa's face on the cover of Time and experienced her calling. Eighteen months later, she entered a convent in the South Bronx to begin her religious training....Eventually, she left the church to find her own path — one that led to love and herself. Provocative, profound, and emotionally charged, 'An Unquenchable Thirst' presents a rare, privileged view of Mother Teresa and convent life. At the same time, it is a unique and magnificent memoir of self-discovery."

"Johnson presents a remarkable, elegant, spiritual memoir showcasing her journey [and] a fascinating view inside of Mother Teresa's organization." Nancy Richey, *Library Journal*

Mary Johnson was a nun for twenty years in Mother Teresa's order. She left in 1997 and is now a teacher and public speaker. She has garnered numerous awards for her writing. Her website is http://www.maryjohnson.co/.

Supplementary reading for the discussion is "The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice" by Christopher Hitchens.

Other events:

Ms. Johnson is in New Haven Solstice weekend by invitation of the Yale Humanist Community. Visit their website, http://yalehumanists.com/, for details of their 4 p.m. Solstice Celebration on December 20, or see the article on page 2 of this newsletter.

Ms. Johnson and Chris Stedman will also be attending the annual Solstice Party of the Hartford Area Humanists on the evening of the 19th. (Details will be posted at HAH's Meetup site: http://www.meetup.com/Hartford-Humanists/.)

The book is readily available in numerous libraries around the state.

As the author is attending, the discussion will begin promptly at 2 p.m.

Refreshments will be served.

Email List

To join, send an email to:
hac-anounce-request@cthumanist.org
with the subject **subscribe**.

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Officers

President	Carol Siddall (203) 264-8546 *president@cthumanist.org*
Vice-President	June Schafer
Secretary	Richard Siddall
Treasurer	Carol Podgwaite

Committee Chairs

Program	David Schafer
Membership	Halina Platt
Development	Rebecca Williams
Publications	Richard Siddall
Publicity	Deidre Kennedy
Hospitality	Randy Olear

Newsletter

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

USNH Social Cinema

On Friday, December 4, the USNH social cinema at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden will present the film, *Xmas Without China*. The optional potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. will be followed by the film at 7:15 p.m.

One family tries to have Christmas without any Chinese-made products, while another struggles with what it means to be Chinese-American.

Imagine living a month without the ubiquitous "Made In China" label on anything you purchase. Now imagine that month is December. One All-American family accepts this challenge from their Chinese immigrant neighbor, who moved to the United States as a boy and wanted to explore the material relationship between his new home and his native one. The family chooses to remove everything made in China from their home (temporarily) while not purchasing anything new with that label for an entire holiday season.

There is comedy and tragedy, but more than that as questions of family, success, and consumerism swirl around the idea of personal identity.

For more information call 203-288-1807 or email office@usnh.org

Humanist Dinner, December 25

Tom and Deidre Kennedy have kindly offered to host an early evening dinner at their home in Shelton at 4:00 p.m. Tom & Deidre will provide a meat and a vegetarian entree. If anyone would like to bring something, an appetizer or dessert would be welcome. Dress is casual. This is a chance to get out of the house on a day when most of the country is closed, and spend some time with like-minded friends. Please RSVP for an address by phone at 203-922-1548.

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MEMBERSHIP

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