



THE NEWSLETTER OF
The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION
 of CONNECTICUT



AHA Chapter

October 2016

UU Humanists Local Group

Stoicism and Epicureanism: Ancient Philosophies That Are Relevant Today

For our October meeting, at 7:00 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden, our guest speakers will be our member David Schafer and Dan Blinn of Hartford Area Humanists.

Stoicism and Epicureanism are two of the main philosophical schools that dominated the Hellenistic period, usually defined as the years from the death of Alexander the Great (323 BCE) to the rise of the Roman Empire at the Battle of Actium (31 BCE). Although the formal schools did not survive the rise of Christianity, many of the ideas of the ancient teachers can be found in the writings of philosophers throughout the centuries.

Both philosophies have been the subject of increased interest in recent years. Steven Greenblatt's book, "The Swerve," credits the 15th Century discovery of Lucretius's poem, "On the Nature of Things," with reintroducing Epicurean ideas and sparking the modern age. Epicurean concepts are major components of many Humanist philosophers.

Stoic principles were fundamental in the development of rational emotive behavior therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy. In more recent years, philosophers have imagined how

Calendar of Events

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

OCTOBER 2016

Sat., 1	Explorations: The Century of the Self, III/IV	2:00 p.m
Mon., 3	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m
Sat., 15	Book Discussion: <i>The Age of Reason: Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology</i> by Thomas Paine	2:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m
Mon., 17	Monthly Meeting Main program: Stoicism & Epicurianism	7:00 p.m 7:30 p.m
Sun., 23	Board meeting	2:00 p.m

NOVEMBER 2016

Sat., 5	Explorations: Guy Fawkes & the Gunpowder Plot	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: <i>The Temptation of Saint Anthony</i> by Gustave Flaubert	2:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m
Mon., 21	Monthly Meeting Main program: SMART Recovery	7:00 p.m 7:30 p.m
Sun., 27	Board meeting	2:00 p.m

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Stoicism might have evolved if it had survived to be influenced by modern science, and they have joined with psychotherapists and other academics to create a modern Stoicism movement.

David Schafer is a co-founder and current program chair of the Humanist Association of Connecticut, and was president of the Unitarian Universalist Humanists for seven years (2003-2010).

Dan Blinn is a consumer rights attorney and a graduate of Class

19 of the Humanist Institute. He is the founding ex-president of Hartford Area Humanists and one of the founding chairs of the Connecticut Coalition of Reason. He began a regular Stoic practice in 2015.

We'll start with our customary half an hour of coffee and conversation at 7:00 p.m. and learn about these ancient philosophies and their modern relevance after some brief announcements at 7:30 p.m.

Humanist Explorations: Guy Fawkes Day

"Remember, remember the Fifth of November: gunpowder, treason, and plot." Join us at the traditional time of 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 5 at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, for an exploration of this British holiday. The British

still celebrate the failure of the Gunpowder Plot following the arrest of the Catholic extremist Guy Fawkes (who has recently been rehabilitated by graphic novelist Alan Moore and turned into a symbol of justified revolt against tyrannical governments).

George Washington is credited with suppressing the celebration of Guy Fawkes Day in the colonies during the War of Independence to promote unity between Protestants and Catholics.

Refreshments will be served.

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To join, send an email to:
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Please include a SASE to have material returned. Approximate circulation: 180 copies. Annual subscription price \$10.00, included in membership.

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

Book Discussion: "The Age of Reason"

In October we will discuss *The Age of Reason: Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology* by Thomas Paine on Saturday, October 15, 2016 at 2 p.m. in the library of the Unitarian Society of New Haven at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden.

This much-referenced but now seldom-read book is readily available in numerous libraries around the state.

>From Wikipedia:

[English and American political activist Thomas Paine's book] is an influential work...[which] follows in the tradition of eighteenth-century British deism, and challenges institutionalized religion and the legitimacy of the Bible. Originally distributed as unbound pamphlets, it was published in three parts in 1794, 1795, and 1807. It was a best-seller in the United States, where it caused a short-lived deistic revival. British audiences, however, fearing increased political radicalism as a result of the French Revolution, received it with more hostility. The Age of Reason presents common deistic arguments; for example, it highlights what Paine saw as corruption of the Christian Church and criticizes its efforts to acquire political power. Paine advocates reason in the place of revelation, leading him to reject miracles and to view the Bible as "an ordinary piece of literature rather than as a divinely inspired text." It promotes natural religion and argues for the existence of a creator-God.

Supplementary reading for the discussion is *Thomas Paine's Rights of Man* by Christopher Hitchens.

Please bring your recommendations for our 2017 reading list! Refreshments will be served.

USNH Social Cinema

Social Cinema in the Social Hall at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden on Friday, October 21. The optional potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. will be followed by the documentary film *Merchants of Doubt* at 7:15 p.m.

In *Variety*, Justin Chang called the film "An intelligent, solidly argued and almost too-polished takedown of America's spin factory — that network of professional fabricators, obfuscators and pseudo-scientists who have lately attempted to muddle the scientific debate around global warming — this is a movie so intrigued by its designated villains that it almost conveys a perverse form of admiration, and the fascination proves contagious."

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

Patient's Right to Know - Can You Help?

Did you know that hospitals of a religious persuasion withhold care without notifying the patient that he or she could get that care somewhere else? The Patient's Right to Know Act is in need of champions. Would you be willing to make a phone call to your legislator on this issue? Do you know someone (or are you that unfortunate someone) who has been denied an ordinarily-offered treatment due to your local hospital's adherence to a religious philosophy? This isn't a just women's issue - if a lifesaving treatment would render a man infertile, it wouldn't be offered either. If you're willing to help, please contact Sue at jazzjunkysue@yahoo.com or visit at <http://hffcsue.wixsite.com/patient> and fill in the form at the bottom.

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