



THE NEWSLETTER OF  
**The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION**  
 of CONNECTICUT



AHA Chapter

April 2017

UU Humanists Local Group

## *The American Circus: R.I.P.*

Join us on Monday, April 17, in the Unitarian Society of New Haven (USNH) Social Hall when our 28th Anniversary Meeting will feature an illustrated lecture, inspired by the recent announcement of the forthcoming demise of the great Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, by Arthur H. Saxon, author of *P. T. Barnum: The Legend and the Man*, *The Life and Art of Andrew Ducrow* & *The Romantic Age of the English Circus*; *Enter Foot and Horse: A History of Hippodrama in England and France*; and numerous other works dealing with the history of the circus and its figures.

Arthur Saxon, who holds a Ph.D. in the History of the Theatre and Dramatic Criticism from Yale University, and who is a Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, has been a spectator and occasional reviewer at circuses for nearly eighty years. In addition to touching on his long involvement with that entertainment, he will discuss a number of the circus's more famous artists and owners; the so-called "Nouveau Cirque" and its best-known example, Le Cirque du Soleil; Yale's own sometimes embarrassed association with the "big top," besides boldly addressing the contentious

## *Calendar of Events*

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

### APRIL 2017

Sat., 1	Explorations: A Face in the Crowd	1:30 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>Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon</i> by Daniel Dennett	2:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m
Mon., 17	Anniversary Meeting (Pot Luck) Main program: Arthur Saxon — "Circus RIP"	7:00 p.m 7:30 p.m
Sat., 22	March for Science (Hartford: noon, New Haven, 1:00 p.m.)	
Sun., 23	Connecticut Food Bank's Walk Against Hunger, Lighthouse Point Park	1:00 p.m (registration)
Sun., 30	Board meeting	2:00 p.m

### MAY 2017

Mon., 1	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m
Sat., 6	Explorations: The Hermitage	2:30 p.m
Mon., 15	Monthly Meeting Main program: TBA	7:00 p.m 7:30 p.m
Sat., 20	Book Discussion: <i>Confessions of a Secular Jesus Follower</i> by Tom Krattenmaker	2:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m
Sun., 21	Board meeting	2:00 p.m

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

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topic of the influence on circuses and zoos of such animal-rights organizations as PETA and the Humane Society. The speaker may have a few copies of his ancient works for sale, and will also exhibit several choice items from his personal collection that will

delight both the ladies and the gentlemen.

We'll start with a pot luck dinner at 7:00 p.m. (Please bring a dish to share if you can.) The main program will follow some brief announcements after 7:30 p.m. Cake will be provided!

## *Explorations: The Hermitage*

Founded by a Russian Czar in the eighteenth century, this art museum in St Petersburg, Russia, is one of the world's greatest art institutions, with a collection of over three million works. While the buildings and the art are not of Russian origin, the totality of the ensemble is, indeed, Russian. Created by the Czarist Royalty and the Soviet Commissars who overthrew them in the early twentieth century, this institution ties its great art to the colorful and often tragic history of the country. Join us for an illuminating view of this magnificent cultural institution.

Join us at our traditional start time of 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 6, at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden.

Refreshments will be served.

## *Secular Advocacy Day, March 13*

Connecticut's first Secular Advocacy Day on March 13 was a great success, with 26 members of Connecticut's secular community meeting with legislators in the State Capitol to discuss matters and legislation that are important to our community.

We hope to have many more. Thank you to all who attended!

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Published monthly by the Humanist Association of Connecticut, 27 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](mailto:editor@cthumanist.org). We welcome humanist-themed letters, articles, poetry, news items, cartoons, and illustrations.

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: Daniel Dennett's "Breaking the Spell"

Our book for April is *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* by philosopher and cognitive scientist, Daniel Dennett. The discussion will take place Saturday, April 15, at 2:00 p.m. in the library of the Unitarian Society of New Haven at 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden.

Refreshments will be served.

Please save the date - May 20 - for our next discussion when author and Yale Humanist Community member Tom Krattenmaker will join us to discuss his book *Confessions of a Secular Jesus Follower: Finding Answers in Jesus for Those Who Don't Believe*.

From Amazon: For all the thousands of books that have been written about religion, few until this one have attempted to examine it scientifically: to ask why—and how—it has shaped so many lives so strongly. Is religion a product of blind evolutionary instinct or rational choice? Is it truly the best way to live a moral life? Ranging through biology, history, and psychology, Daniel C. Dennett charts religion's evolution from "wild" folk belief to "domesticated" dogma. Not an antireligious screed but an unblinking look beneath the veil of orthodoxy, *Breaking the Spell* will be read and debated by believers and skeptics alike.

## Walk Against Hunger: April 23

The Connecticut Food Bank's Walk Against Hunger is back. This year the walk will be held in New Haven's Lighthouse Point Park on Sunday, April 23, with registration starting at 1:00 p.m. Join or donate to the HAC team via our web site at <http://cthumanist.org/walk>, or via the link for the walk on our Meetup site. You can also give a check payable to Connecticut Food Bank to any HAC board member.

## USNH Program: Refugee Children

The Unitarian Society of New Haven will hold a presentation on "Serving the Needs of Refugee & Undocumented Children in Connecticut" on Sunday April 23, at 12:00 noon at Unitarian Society of New Haven, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden. The speaker will be Edwin Colon, Esq., MSW, of the Center for Children's Advocacy. Attendees will learn about how the Center for Children's Advocacy in Connecticut helps immigrant & refugee children get the support they need to be safe from violence, learn English and succeed in school in Connecticut.

## USNH Social Cinema: Burning Bridges

The traditionally optional potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. will be followed by the film *Burning Bridges* at 7:15 p.m. in the USNH Social Hall at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden on Saturday, April 29. A documentary about a community moving through grief and anger to healing – the story of the arson of Mood's Bridge - a historic covered bridge in Bucks County, Pennsylvania - and the restorative conference held in its wake. The International Institute for Restorative Practices facilitated this emotional conference, which brought together the six young men who burned down the bridge with their families and members of the community.

<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>		Name(s): _____
! Adult . . . . . \$35		Address: _____
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! Newsletter Only . . . . . \$10		Telephone: _____
! Our membership year is 1/1-12/31.		E-Mail Address: _____
! 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.		Please add me to the e-mail Announce List (circle one): YES NO
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		Where did you hear about us? _____
		Comments: _____