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# HUMANIST Monthly

A Publication of the Capital District Humanist Society  
*Connecting the Secular Humanist Community of Upstate New York, Western Massachusetts, and Southern Vermont*

**Sunday, September 11th, 2022, 1 PM - Sonya L. Jakubec, RN,  
BHScN, MN, PhD    *Everyone Belongs Outside: A Prescription for  
Nature Across the Lifespan***

We all feel it, whether looking outside, at a beach, in a field, or on a mountain top – the place of parks and nature in the cycles of life is universally valued. In this presentation Dr. Sonya Jakubec will share discoveries and lessons learned from collaborative, community-engaged research and parks programming for people experiencing cancer, disability, dementia, palliative care, as well as for those living with grief and loss. She will highlight the background evidence promoting parks and parks prescribing as an intervention held within both “Healthy Parks-Healthy People” and “Social Prescribing” movements. Working in collaboration across health and parks sectors also points the way for important practical applications, a wealth of ideas for implementing parks and nature connections, and recommendations for health and nature innovations. Through rich research discoveries, practical examples, images and stories, Sonya will shine the light on ways to fill your own prescription for parks and nature across the lifespan; after all, everyone belongs outside!



Dr. Jakubec is a community mental health nurse and researcher based in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She studies the interconnection of supportive environments and wellbeing across the lifespan, concentrating on community and public health approaches. Her current work examines the health and wellbeing benefits of inclusion in parks for people of all abilities and ages – including palliative and grief care, as well as ecological grief. She has contributed to several textbooks, book chapters, peer reviewed journal and professional articles, media interviews and opinion pieces, as well as research snapshots and documentary films in the public domain.

**This program will take place online, via Zoom. Current paid CDHS members will receive an invite to the meeting via e-mail. ANY ONE WHO IS NOT A CURRENT PAID MEMBER of CDHS CAN ATTEND. Send an e-mail request to: [CDHS.Albany@gmail.com](mailto:CDHS.Albany@gmail.com), several days prior, or log onto our Meetup page: <https://www.meetup.com/Capital-District-Humanist-Society/>, click on Join, then on Attend, and use the RSVP function and the link will be available to you.**

Executive Council election season is here. Members should watch for your ballot in the mail. Please return your completed ballots by the end of September.



The Capital District Humanist Society provides a supportive community for exchanging ideas, heightening our knowledge of the world and ourselves, fostering moral and ethical growth, and promoting the principles of secular humanism. CDHS is a member organization for people with humanist values. Our values include commitment to free inquiry, rational thought, life-long education, democracy, social concern, and fellowship.

## Capital District Humanist Society, Inc.

Established 1986

Find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CapitalDistrictHumanistSociety>



CDHS is affiliated with:

The American Humanist Association (AHA)

Center for Inquiry (CSI)

Humanists International (HI)

The Secular Coalition for America (SCA)

## ***Recap of our August Speaker's Presentation***

### ***Magic in the Lab: Psychological Insights from Magicians***

Anthony Barnhart, Ph.D. is a cognitive scientist. Besides being the Chair of the Department of Psychological Science at Carthage College, where he regularly teaches a college course devoted to the cognitive science of magic, Tony is also a part-time professional magician. Tony starting his side gig as a magician at age 15, was a founding member of the Science of Magic Association, and frequently appears in national and international media.

Psychologists first took interest in the methods of magicians in the late 1800s and published several papers on the subject. Tony feels that this interest arose from the popularity of mesmerism (hypnosis) and spiritualism in America. The widespread paranormal beliefs lead to the creation of the foundation of the American Society for Psychical Research on 1884. Some members of this society focused on trying to understand the methods magicians used to “trick” their audiences. The behaviorist revolution in psychology in the early 1900s ended laboratory research into the methods of magicians until the 1990s.

In the last 20 years there has been renewed interest in the methods of magicians by psychologists that has produced several publications. When trying to understand why magicians are able to convince their audiences magicians have an advantage over psychologists – magicians don’t have to understand and explain why an “illusion” works, they only have to know that the audience will accept the illusion. On the other hand, psychologists have to develop an understanding of how the brains of the audience function when presented with an illusion, and the mechanisms that lead the audience to accept the illusion.

Magic is difficult to study in the lab because most magic tricks involve misdirection. The magician directs the audience away from the method by using narrative, focusing attention on something irrelevant, using motion or prediction, using humor, or complex language. These allow the magician to direct the audience to an effect. Tony’s studies in the lab have focused on exploiting our psychological and attentional limitations.

Because our perception is calibrated by experience, our systems are biased towards interpretations that are simple and likely. Our minds fill in the blanks when a portion of an object is obscured. Magicians are able to manipulate our perception by playing with what we see. Thus, they can fool us into seeing something we assume to be a whole when it is actually disconnected pieces.

Another trait that magicians use to their advantage is the inattentional blindness exhibited by most of us. This is often accomplished through manipulation of our attention by making lots of gestures that are unrelated to the key point of the illusion or by conditioning the audience with the expected motion (i.e., moving a coin from hand to hand) before the magician does something else that is the crux of the illusion.

In summary, most magicians’ illusions confound their audiences because our brains are costly to run and we are cognitive misers (some might say lazy). Thus, we latch onto the first thing that matches our prior experiences when we encounter something we haven’t seen before.

Tony’s presentation can be seen at: <https://youtu.be/xuN0G0DN3DQ>

*Recap by Don Porterfield*

## **Different Look for the Newsletter**

You might notice that the newsletter will look a little different for the next couple of issues. Our esteemed Newsletter Editor, Frank Wind, is confronting some medical issues and will be out of the publisher’s chair for at least the next two months and hopes to get back to the keyboard by November.

In the interim, Don Porterfield will try to fill in for Frank until he is able to resume his excellent work.

# Upcoming Events

## September Social, Saturday, September 24, 2022

Be sure to mark your calendars. CDHS will be given a tour of the Clover Pond Vineyard in Altamont, from 11AM to noon. Please plan to arrive by 10:45. After the tour we have tables reserved for the group to gather and have a plate of :

- NY Sharp Cheddar Cheese
- Edam Cheese
- Crackers
- Pretzels
- Castelvetro Olives
- Dried Apricots
- Season Fresh Fruit
- Candy Kraft Chocolate

Each plate generously serves 1-2 people for \$15.

Please respond to Candace Fuller at [candacef13@gmail.com](mailto:candacef13@gmail.com) by Thursday, 9/22/22, to reserve your spot. They will only accommodate a maximum of 25 people so respond early. Directions are available on their website at [cloverpondvineyard.com](http://cloverpondvineyard.com).



## The next monthly meeting .... October 9th at 1 PM ... Yellowstone Kit, The Medicine Show, and The Modern World

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the traveling medicine show was a major source of American entertainment and innovation. In this talk, we'll look at the career of one of the most well-known medicine showmen of the era, whose mere presence and talent for self-promotion exerted an outsized influence on the social and political landscape in the South. We'll also look at the influence this type of performer had on the American way of doing business.

**Bob Blaskiewicz** is Associate Professor of Critical Thinking and First-Year Studies at Stockton University, where he teaches courses on critical thinking, conspiracy theory, science and pseudoscience, science writing, and the literature of WWII combat veterans. He's the Conspiracy Guy blogger at the CSI website, a former TAM presenter and a podcaster at *Skepticality*, as well as an occasional contributor to *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine.





**CDHS is a proud supporter of Humanist International, which recently celebrated its founding on August 27, 1952.**

To mark the occasion, a new Declaration of Modern Humanism articulating the fundamental principles of humanism has been published. The revised declaration was democratically reviewed and agreed upon by the Members and Associates of Humanists International during the 2022 General Assembly.

Don Porterfield, Executive Director of CDHS commented:

“I was proud to represent CDHS, along with Frank and Dee Wind, at the 2022 General Assembly in Glasgow, Scotland in early June of 2022. We all enjoyed the chance to share time with other humanists from around the world.”

Andrew Copson, President of Humanists International, added:

“Humanist beliefs and values are as old as civilization and have a history in most societies around the world. Modern humanism is the culmination of these long traditions of reasoning about meaning and ethics, the source of inspiration for many of the world’s great thinkers, artists, and humanitarians, and is interwoven with the rise of modern science. As a global humanist movement, we seek to make all people aware of the essentials of the humanist worldview, which is encapsulated in our Declaration of Modern Humanism.”

The key points of the Declaration of Modern Humanism include:

1. Humanists strive to be ethical;
2. Humanists strive to be rational;
3. Humanists strive for fulfillment in their lives; and
4. Humanism meets the widespread demand for a source of meaning and purpose to stand as an alternative to dogmatic religion, authoritarian nationalism, tribal sectarianism, and selfish nihilism.

The full text of the Declaration of Modern Humanism can be found at:

<https://humanists.international/what-is-humanism/the-amsterdam-declaration/>

A recording is available to watch online at:

<https://youtu.be/93KpvZWL5fA>



## HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE BETTER?

1. Believe in your own bias
2. Assume good faith
3. Work from common ground
4. Find the smartest person who disagrees with you and listen
5. Identify the other side's strongest points
6. Vet your sources & manage your media
7. Drop "anti-science" from your vocabulary
8. Police your side
9. Reach across the aisle
10. Be kind

\* These communication tips are from a presentation by Tamar Haspel

### CDHS Executive Council

|                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Executive Director    | Don Porterfield |
| Secretary             | Rosina Ansaldo  |
| Treasurer             | Roland Tozer    |
| Programs, Publicity   | Fred Levine     |
| Publications          | Frank H Wind    |
| Social Activities     | Candace Fuller  |
| Membership, Telephone | Judith McCann   |
| Meetup Coordinator    | Fred Levine     |
| Caring Network        | Rosina Ansaldo  |
| Compliance            | Kevin Smith     |
| Member at Large       | Sherry Levine   |
| Member at Large       | Sandy Sussman   |

### Appointed Positions

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Hospitality       | Mira Peck      |
| Room Arrangements | Frank Robinson |

### A few words from the Executive Director:

I want to extend my appreciation to all the members for your support of CDHS over the years. As a volunteer organization we are at our best when we involve as many people as possible to keep CDHS serving our community and promoting the principles of secular humanism.

I'd also like to take a moment to solicit assistance from membership to help with some of the tasks that keep CDHS operating. Because many of the EC members have been in their roles for nearly a decade we think it is appropriate to develop a succession plan to keep CDHS functioning effectively to serve the membership. Specific areas for which the EC is seeking assistance include an associate newsletter editor and an associate membership coordinator. If any of you can help with these or other tasks or know of someone that might be interested, please contact me or any other EC member.

### The CDHS Book Group is reading *Evil Geniuses: The Unmaking of America: A Recent History* by Kurt Andersen.

The epic history of how America decided that big business gets whatever it wants.



Interested in  
joining them?  
Contact Frank  
Robinson

**C**apital District Humanist Society, Inc. PO Box 11209, Loudonville NY 12211-0209  
(518) 533-2666 E-mail us at [cdhs.albany@gmail.com](mailto:cdhs.albany@gmail.com)  
Visit us on the web at [humanistsociety.net](http://humanistsociety.net)

The Capital District Humanist Society (CDHS) is an independent, non-profit (and non-prophet), non-partisan and strictly non-religious educational and social organization for those who share humanist values: commitment to education, rational and free inquiry, democracy, social concerns and fellowship. CDHS is affiliated with the four major humanist organizations - the American Humanist Association (AHA), the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), the Secular Coalition for America (SCA) and the Humanists International (HI).

There are five types of CDHS member support: Individual, \$50/yr; Family, \$80/yr; Sustaining, \$100/yr; Patron, \$150/yr; and Lifetime Member, one contribution of \$1000 or more.

**Members** receive our publication, *The Humanist Monthly*, and vote by mail each September on the make-up of the governing Executive Council. Members are eligible for election to the Executive Council and may also serve as appointed officials. Members are welcome to attend Executive Council meetings.

The IRS recognizes CDHS as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Therefore, all donations, both cash and materials with established "fair market value", qualify as charitable contributions for income tax purposes.

**Donations** are gratefully accepted to help speed our growth. CDHS is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization under the IRS Code. Financial disclosure information and our annual report are available upon request.

**If you know** of someone who may be interested in CDHS, please pass this newsletter along or give us the name; we will send a sample copy or two with no obligation.

**We value your input.** In the best humanist tradition, CDHS has no rigid picture of itself. We ask you to join us, not follow us. What activities and services would you like CDHS to provide its members? Send us your suggestions, questions, and comments.



CDHS

PO Box 11209

Loudonville, NY 12211-0209

FIRST CLASS

Address service requested

CDHS ++ PO Box 11209, Loudonville, NY 12211-0209 ++ (518) 533-2666

<https://www.humanistsociety.net>

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**MEMBER SUPPORT FORM**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ 'Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City ++ State ++ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the Humanist Society? \_\_\_\_\_

*All this information will be included in our Directory, which is distributed to members only, unless you request otherwise by checking and signing here [ ] I do not want to be listed in the CDHS Member Directory \_\_\_\_\_*

**Levels of Member Support**

**Annual Payment**

**Date** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

[ ] Individual Membership

\$ 50

\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Family Membership

\$ 80

\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Sustaining Member

\$100

\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Patron

\$150

\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Life Member

one-time contribution of \$1000 or more

\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Additional tax-deductible donation

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***Please Make checks payable to CDHS***

[ ] Please send me additional information