



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

July 2012



CSH Affiliate

Sociobiology at Sixty-Six

Our July monthly meeting features a return visit from member Gregory Shenk, who earned his Ph.D. in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut. He teaches at the Greater Hartford Academy of Mathematics and Science.

In his (in)famous attempt to forge (some would say “force”) a connection between biology and the social sciences, E. O. Wilson used Sociobiology, a term coined 30 years earlier by John Paul Scott as the title of his book about the adaptive origins of human behavior. Scott coined the term to propose an “interdisciplinary science which lies between the fields of biology (particularly ecology and physiology) and psychology and sociology.”

Some scholars have hinted that the timing of Wilson’s book can explain the hostile reception that it received. Time has healed some of the wounds that Wilson was accused of inflicting on scholarship in the social sciences and humanities, but much of the potential that the field of sociobiology proposed 66 years ago by Scott and again by Wilson 36 years ago has yet to be realized. This talk will highlight its successes along with the promises that remain to be filled.

We’ll start with half an hour of coffee and conversation at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, July 16, at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden, followed by Greg’s informative talk at after brief announcements 8:00 p.m.

Bring a friend, and plan on having a great time!

Book for Sale

We will have copies of David Niose’s book, *Nonbeliever Nation*, for sale at most events in July.

Calendar of Events

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

JULY

Mon., 2	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 7	Humanist Conversations: “Political Divisions”	2:30 p.m.
Fri., 13	Movie of <i>The Cider House Rules</i> starring Michael Caine and Tobey McGuire	6:30 p.m. potluck 7:00 p.m. movie
Sat., 14	Book discussion: <i>The Cider House Rules</i> by John Irving.	3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Mon., 16	Monthly Meeting Main program: Gregory Shenk, Ph.D. — “Sociobiology at Sixty-Six”	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Sun., 22	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Tue., 24	Hartford Area Dinner at Hanafin’s Pub, 21 Rankin Rd., Glastonbury. (860) 659-8599. Guest Speaker: Dennis Paul Himes	6:30 p.m.

AUGUST

Sat., 4	Humanist Conversations: TBA	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 6	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 11	Talk by Marsha Zellner, M.D.: “Does it Bite?” with potluck dinner beforehand.	4:00 p.m. potluck 4:45 p.m. talk
Sun., 19	Monthly Meeting Main program: David Niose, President of the American Humanist Association, talks about his new book, “Nonbeliever Nation”	3:00 p.m. 3:30 p.m.
Sun., 26	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Tue., 28	Hartford Area Dinner at Hanafin’s Pub, 21 Rankin Rd., Glastonbury. (860) 659-8599. Guest Speaker: TBA	6:30 p.m.

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Conversations

As the 2012 election nears, we might be musing about the current political climate, wondering, perhaps, “Who are we as a nation? And what is it that’s tearing us apart?”

E.J. Dionne’s new book, *Our Divided Political Heart: The Battle for the American Idea in an Age of Discontent* (Bloomsbury USA, 2012), argues that from the very beginning, our country has been characterized by a deep but healthy tension between our love of individual liberty and our devotion to community. On May 29, The Brookings Institution hosted a discussion with E. J. Dionne about the lost balance between individualism and community and the corrosive implications for the political environment and policymaking.

Join us on July 7, 2012, at 2:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden when we’ll watch this webcast in which Dionne talks about his book and follows up with lengthy answers to audience questions. We can discuss our own questions and answers over refreshments.

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Hartford Area Dinner & Speaker: Dennis Paul Himes

The guest speaker for our July 24 Hartford-area dinner will be Dennis Paul Himes, the American Atheists coordinator for Connecticut.

Join us at Hanafin's Irish Pub, 21 Rankin Road, Glastonbury for drinks and socializing at 6:30 p.m; dinner at 7:00 p.m. To car pool from Hamden, meet in the parking lot at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, at 5:40 p.m.

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July 14 Book Group: John Irving's "The Cider House Rules"

Our next book discussion will be John Irving's *The Cider House Rules* on Saturday, July 14, at USNH at 3:00 p.m.

As a special treat, on Friday, July 13, we will screen the 1999 film adaptation starring Tobey Maguire and Michael Caine. John Irving and Michael Caine both won Academy Awards for the film, which was also nominated for Best Picture. We'll start with a potluck supper starting at 6:30 p.m. with the film to follow. Please bring a dish.

After the book discussion, we will vote on our next fiction selection. The choices will be:

- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn
- *Galapagos* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

If anyone has other suggestions for either fiction or non-fiction books that you would like the group to consider, please email Dan Blinn directly at publicity@cthumanist.org.

Anyone who would like to moderate a discussion of a particular book should let Dan know that, too.

Does it Bite?

Talk and slide show by Marsha Zellner preceded by potluck dinner.

Have you ever wondered what is real vs imagined of the stories of flesh-eating spiders or wolves and bears with a preference for human flesh? Marsha Zellner, M.D., will give an in-depth look (with illustrations) at the venomous snakes and insects in the continental US, as well as discussing a variety of animal bites and the diseases associated with them. She will discuss identification, geographic location, those at risk, prevention, and urgent medical care for those unfortunate enough to be bitten.

Marsha is a full-time emergency medicine physician at St. Vincent's Hospital in Bridgeport, and is board certified in internal medicine. She is also a certified Wilderness First Aid Provider. Marsha has extensive experience as a hike leader and educator for Mosaic Outdoor Clubs of America.

The talk is Saturday August 11, 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden. We will start with a potluck dinner from 4:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. Marsha's presentation will follow with plenty of time for questions and answers.

Please bring a dish to share!

David Niose on Sunday in August

Our featured speaker for August will be David Niose, President of the American Humanist Association. David will be talking about his new book, *Nonbeliever Nation*, on Sunday, August 19, at 3:00 p.m.

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 letters, articles, photographs, poetry, comic strips, news items, cartoons and

other illustrations related to humanism. 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.

MEMBERSHIP	
i Adult	\$35
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i Newsletter Only	\$10
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i In cases of financial hardship, the association may waive the membership fee. Please mail checks for annual membership payable to	
i Humanist Association of Connecticut to: Humanist Association of Connecticut, 27 Thornton Street, Hamden, CT 06517-1321.	
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