



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

August 2010



CSH Affiliate

Absolute Infidel, Absolute Nomad

For our August meeting, we will hear Michelle (Mickey) Koth and David Schafer discuss Ayaan Hirsi Ali's latest autobiographical book, "Nomad." Some of you may have read their review of her earlier book "Infidel," under the title "Absolute Infidel: The Evolution of Ayaan Hirsi Ali" in the January/February 2008 issue of *The Humanist*. It's available online at the AHA website:

<http://www.thehumanist.org/humanist/Schafer.html>.

Like other readers of "Infidel," including the "New Atheists," who hailed Hirsi Ali as a role model—"simply indispensable" (Sam Harris), and "a major hero of our time" (Richard Dawkins)—Mickey and David acknowledged her obvious quick intelligence and language skills and felt only admiration for her strength and courage and gratification for her emancipation from the often painful and sometimes downright destructive environments of her youth. At the same time, they deplored her stubborn and apparently ignorant insistence on a monolithic interpretation of "Islam," which led her not only to deny the very existence of moderate versions of that religion but even, in effect, to declare war on 1.5 billion Muslims. In sharp contrast to the New Atheists they concluded that "Infidel" gave a dangerously distorted view of the options available to the West in its dealings with the world Muslim community.

A lot has happened in the world, and presumably to the author, in the three years between that book and the present one. During that time Ayaan has retained her position as resident fellow of the neoconservative American Enterprise Institute. To get some idea of what passes

Calendar of Events

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

AUGUST, 2010

Sun., 1	Book Discussion: Paul Robeson: A Biography	3:00 to 5:00p.m.
Mon., 2	Social Dinner at Circle Diner Restaurant, 441 Post Rd, Fairfield. (203) 255-9177	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 7	Humanist Conversations: Belief & Survival	2:30 p.m.
Sat., 14	David Schafer: "The Historicity of Jesus and Early Christianity: A Historical, Scientific, Scholarly, and Critical Examination" (part 5)	2:00 to 5:00p.m.
Mon., 16	Monthly Meeting	7:30 p.m.
	Main program: David Schafer and Michelle Koth: "Absolute Infidel, Absolute Nomad"	8:00 p.m.
Thu., 26	Social dinner, Michel Angelo's Pizzeria, 825 Cromwell Ave., Rocky Hill. (860) 257-3136	7:00 p.m.
Sun., 29	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER, 2010

Sat., 4	Humanist Conversations: TBA	2:30 p.m.
Sun., 5	Barbeque at Crystal Lake, 100 Livingston Road in Middletown	Noon to 4:00p.m.
Mon., 13	Social Dinner at Circle Diner Restaurant, 441 Post Rd, Fairfield. (203) 255-9177	7:00 p.m.
Mon., 20	Monthly Meeting	7:30 p.m.
	Main program: TBA	8:00 p.m.
Sun., 26	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Thu., 30	Social dinner, Michel Angelo's Pizzeria, 825 Cromwell Ave., Rocky Hill. (860) 257-3136	7:00 p.m.

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Conversations: Belief & Survival

We'll meet Saturday, August 7, at 2:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden. In a short video, Michael Shermer will explain how the human tendency to believe strange things boils down to two of the brain's most basic, hard-wired survival skills. He explains what they are, and how they get us into trouble. We'll also discuss how they keep us out of trouble.

for an intellectual environment at the Institute today, visit the current list of scholars and fellows: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_American_Enterprise_Institute_scholars_and_fellows/

She has also continued to receive praise bordering on adulation and to have numerous awards showered upon her. In an effort to show whether and how the author's views and attitudes may have changed sufficiently in three years to warrant a second

autobiographical volume, Mickey and David will compare and contrast the contents of the two books, and cite some of the more memorable passages in "Nomad."

We'll begin as usual at 7:30 p.m. with half an hour of conversation and refreshments, followed by a few brief announcements and the program at 8:00. We expect that the ensuing presentation will open up a vigorous discussion, and welcome all of you to come and join in!

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Newsletter

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

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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.

Please include a SASE to have material returned. We welcome letters, articles, photographs, poetry, comic strips, news items, cartoons and other illustrations related to humanism. Approximate circulation: 180 copies. Annual subscription price \$10.00, included in membership.

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

Twain Video Postponed

We've decided to hold this until September or October, when the weather will be cooler.

“Paul Robeson: A Biography”

Our next book discussion will be Sunday, August 1, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. The book we will be reading is “Paul Robeson: A Biography” by Martin Bauml Duberman. Note that a paperback edition of the same book is titled “Paul Robeson: A

Biography (Lives of the Left)”.
Martin Duberman is Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus at the City University of New York and the author of some twenty books.

Enthralling. . . A marvelous story marvelously told. —*The Washington Post*

Historical Jesus? (Wrap-Up Part 1)

Thus far we've laid out the known facts about events leading up to the founding of a new religion, Christianity. Using handouts, short video clips, and discussion of specific issues we will now start to put together the various facts we have learned up to this point, and will discuss how best to explain what must have happened in the first century of the Common Era in order to account for the explosion of Christianity in the succeeding centuries. We'll meet at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden on August 14 from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Watch your email for suggested online readings.

Labor Day Barbeque

Brian Ditter and Tara McLaughlin invite HAC to a barbecue and pot luck Sunday, September 5, noon to 4:00 pm at Crystal Lake Park, 100 Livingston Rd. Middletown.

Please RSVP by phone: Brian Ditter: (860) xxx-xxxx, (860) 704-0439 or Tara McLaughlin: (860) 545-5065.

Brian and Tara will provide burgers/steaks, beverages, chips, and fixings. Please bring a dish to share. Tell the attendant you're there for the barbeque to avoid paying the entrance fee.

From New Haven: take I-91 N to exit 15 for CT-68 toward Yalesville/Durham. In 0.3 mi turn right onto CT-68. In 0.9 mi route 68 takes a left. Follow 68 for 4.2 mi, when you will turn left onto CT-17 (Main St.) Take your 2nd right (0.5 mi.) onto Haddam Quarter Rd. In 1.7 mi. turn left at Arbutus St. In 1.4 mi. bear right onto Livingston Rd. The entrance to the park

will be on your left in 0.6 mi.

From Hartford: Take I-91 S and take exit 22S on the left to merge onto CT-9 S toward Middletown. Take exit 11. At the end of the exit turn left onto CT-155 (Randolph Rd.) toward CT-17/Durham. In 0.7 mi. turn left at Millbrook Rd. (there's a traffic light and a fire station on your left). In 1.4 mi turn right onto Livingston Rd. and then turn right into the park.

From 84: Take I-691 E toward Meriden and continue onto CT-66 (eastbound). In 2.0 miles turn right onto CT-147 S. In 2.3 miles turn right and continue on CT-147 and CT-157. In 2.5 miles the road takes a sharp left (Middlefield Rd.). At the end of the road, turn right onto CT-17 (Main St.) and then take your first left onto Haddam Quarter Rd. In 1.7 mi. turn left at Arbutus St. In 1.4 mi. bear right onto Livingston Rd. Enter the park on your left in 0.6 mi.

MEMBERSHIP

Adult \$35
 Family \$50
 Newsletter Only \$10
 Our membership year is 1/1-12/31.
 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.

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