



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

February 2012



CSH Affiliate

Charles Darwin And The Meaning Of Life

As yet few people fully understand and appreciate the magnitude of what Charles Darwin accomplished in his lifetime, with a bare minimum of basic scientific information at his disposal. Darwin (2/12/1809—4/19/1882) had absolutely no way to anticipate more than an infinitesimal fraction of the profound knowledge that would ultimately flow from his acute observations of plant and animal species, living and dead, and his brilliant insights into their interpretation. Even now, nearly 130 years after his death, we are only beginning to fill in the countless billions of blanks among the puzzles his keenly observant and fertile brain bequeathed to an astonished posterity. On February 20, David Schafer will attempt to position Darwin in the scientific milieu of the mid-19th century, and demonstrate just how far, up to this moment, his Theory of Evolution has helped humanity in our quest to understand our own position in the universe and, in the process, to recognize what and who we are. Join us at 700 Hartford Turnpike on Monday, February 20 for refreshments at 7:30 p.m. and the program at 8:00, with a lively discussion to follow!

Bill McWilliams

We will miss Bill McWilliams, 76, of New Fairfield, beloved husband of Cecilia (Dembiczak) McWilliams. Bill died at Danbury Hospital, on Wednesday, January 25, 2012. Bill was born in Pittsburgh, PA, son of the late William R. and Lillian (Blocher) McWilliams. He graduated from Brentwood H.S. and Carnegie Institute of Technology, in Pittsburgh, PA. During his life he worked as a Physicist for IBM and Vitramon. Bill was a devoted member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury for decades. He served as an active member on the Board of Directors of the Association of Religious Communities (ARC) of Danbury and was Treasurer for 20 years. Bill regularly attended Humanist Association of Connecticut (HAC) events and often suggested books for discussions. This past July he led a discussion for HAC of a book about comparative religions. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his sons, William A. McWilliams, of Danbury and David B. McWilliams, of New Fairfield, as well as two grandchildren, Emily E. and Allison H. McWilliams. A memorial service was held in Danbury on January 31 and he will be buried at Jefferson Memorial Park in Pittsburgh, PA. Contributions in his memory may be made to: ARC Interfaith Peace Camp, 325 Main St., Danbury CT 06810.

Calendar of Events

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

FEBRUARY

Sat., 4	Humanist Conversations: "Hot Coffee"	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 6	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Mon., 20	Monthly Meeting	7:30 p.m.
	Main program: Dr. David Schafer on "Charles Darwin And The Meaning Of Life"	8:00 p.m.
Thu., 23	Hartford Area Dinner, Location TBA	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 25	Book discussion: "Uncle Tom's Cabin," by Harriet Beecher Stowe.	3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sun., 26	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.

MARCH

Sat., 3	Humanist Conversations: TBA	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 5	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Mon., 12	Monthly Meeting	7:30 p.m.
	Main program: The Center for Inquiry's Executive Director, Tom Flynn, on Ingersoll	8:00 p.m.
Thu., 22	Hartford Area Dinner, Location TBA	7:00 p.m.
Sun., 25	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.

WWW.CTHUMANIST.ORG

Conversations: Hot Coffee

Everyone knows the McDonald's coffee case. It has been routinely cited as an example of how citizens take advantage of our legal system. The 2011 film, "Hot Coffee," reveals what really happened when Stella Liebeck spilled coffee on herself and sued McDonald's, while exploring how and why the case garnered so much media attention, who funded the effort, and why.

Watch and discuss this film with us on Saturday, February 4, at 2:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden.

Refreshments will be served.

www.cthumanist.org

Email List

To join, send an email to:
hac-announce-request@cthumanist.org
with the subject **subscribe**.

To unsubscribe, send an email to:
hac-announce-request@cthumanist.org
with the subject **unsubscribe**.

Officers

- President June Schafer
(203) 281-6232
president@cthumanist.org
- Vice-President Douglas Peary
- Secretary Richard Siddall
- Treasurer Carol Podgwaite

Committee Chairs

- Program David Schafer
- Membership Halina Platt
- Development Manny Ratafia
- Publications Carol Siddall
- Publicity Dan Blinn
- Hospitality Randy Olear

Newsletter

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

Renewal Time

We are very grateful for your continued membership and support!

As usual, we have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope with a renewal form for your convenience. We're doing this a little later than usual, due to our envelope-reorder schedule falling in December.

We would like to thank everyone who has already renewed. (We have attempted to not put a renewal in those envelopes!)

We look forward to another year of humanist bonhomie!

Copyright © 2012, Humanist Association of Connecticut.

Articles may be reproduced without written permission, providing attribution is given.

Published monthly by the Humanist Association of Connecticut, 27

Friday Night Cinema at USNH

The Unitarian Society of New Haven (USNH) at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden, is hosting a series of potluck dinners followed by a movie and discussion to be held the first Friday of each month through May, 2012. The potluck dinner is at 6:30 p.m. and the movie starts at 7:00 p.m.

On Friday, February 3, the movie will feature the amazing NOVA film, "What Darwin Never Knew," an introduction to an understanding of how humans evolved from more primitive forms.

Friday, March 2, will be a Frontline episode on immigration reform, "Lost in Detention" with Maria Hinojosa.

On Friday, April 6, the movie will be the powerful 35-minute 1985 UUA film intended to stimulate a vigorous discussion after viewing, "How Open the Door? Black Pioneers in a White Denomination."

Finally, on Friday, Friday, May 4, the movie will be Charles Ferguson's Academy Award winning "Inside Job" about the global economic crisis of 2008, and what caused millions of people to lose their savings, their jobs, and their homes.

Book Group: "Uncle Tom's Cabin"

We will be discussing Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 25 at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. We're planning a group trip to the Harriet Beecher Stowe house in Hartford - watch for details!

The following is from the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center website (<http://www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org/>):

Harriet Beecher Stowe's best known novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (1852), changed forever how Americans viewed slavery, the system that treated people as property. It demanded that the United States deliver on the promise of freedom and equality, galvanized the abolition movement and contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War. The book calls on us to confront the legacy of race relations in the U.S. as the title itself became a racial slur.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" was a runaway best-seller, selling 10,000 copies in the United States in its first week; 300,000 in the first year; and in Great Britain, 1.5 million copies in one year. It resonates with an international audience as a protest novel and literary work.

Many copies are available in Connecticut libraries as well as in book stores and online. The book is also available free on-line at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/StoCabi.html> and is a free download on many electronic readers such as Kindle.

We hope to see you on February 25 at 700 Hartford Turnpike at 3:00 p.m. for what promises to be an interesting discussion!

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		Name(s): _____
i Adult	\$35	Address: _____
i Family	\$50	_____
i Newsletter Only	\$10	Telephone: _____
i Our membership year is 1/1-12/31.		E-Mail Address: _____
i In cases of financial hardship, the association may waive the membership fee. Please mail checks for annual membership payable to		Please add me to the e-mail Announce List (circle one): YES NO
i Humanist Association of Connecticut to: Humanist Association of Connecticut, 27 Thornton Street,		Where did you hear about us? _____
i Hamden, CT 06517-1321.		Comments: _____

