



THE NEWSLETTER OF
The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION
 of CONNECTICUT



AHA Chapter

February 2016

UU Humanists Local Group

Darwin's Ecological Experiment

Reminder: We now start our monthly meetings with coffee and conversation at 7:00 p.m. followed by our main monthly presentation at 7:30 p.m.

Join us on Monday, February 15, in the Unitarian Society of New Haven (USNH) Social Hall to celebrate Darwin Day with a fascinating talk by HAC secretary Richard Siddall.

When Dr. David Wilkinson visited Ascension Island in the South Atlantic in 2003, he was amazed by its ecosystem. "I remember thinking, this is really weird," he said. "There were all kinds of plants that don't belong together in nature, growing side by side." Charles Darwin had visited Ascension on the return leg of the Beagle's voyage in 1836. In his diary, he recorded it as an arid, volcanic island. The lush cloud forest Wilkinson found on Ascension Island in 2003 was the product of Darwin and his closest friend, Joseph Dalton Hooker.

We'll start with half an hour of coffee and conversation at the new time of 7:00 p.m. Learn all about Darwin's experiment right after some brief announcements at 7:30 p.m.

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 2016

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| Mon., 1 | Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002 | 7:00 p.m |
| Sat., 6 | Conversations: Buried in Ice | 2:30 p.m. |
| Mon., 15 | Monthly Meeting Main program: Richard Siddall presents "Darwin's Ecological Experiment" | 7:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m |
| Sat., 20 | Book Discussion: <i>My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel</i> by Ari Shavit | 2:30 p.m to 4:30 p.m |
| Sun., 21 | Board meeting | 2:30 p.m |

MARCH 2016

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| Sat., 5 | Conversations: Program TBA. | 2:30 p.m. |
| Mon., 7 | Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002 | 7:00 p.m |
| Sat., 19 | Book Discussion: <i>Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End</i> by Atul Gawande | 2:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m |
| Mon., 21 | Monthly Meeting Main program: TBA | 7:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m |
| Sun., 27 | Board meeting | 2:30 p.m |

www.cthumanist.org

www.meetup.com/cthumanist

www.facebook.com/cthumanist

www.twitter.com/cthumanist

Speaker Fund Challenge Update!

Rebecca Williams has offered to match up to \$250 of total donations to the speaker fund between now and the March 21 monthly meeting. We've received over a third of that to date! To give us more of Rebecca's money, please drop your donation in the box marked Speaker Fund at a monthly meeting, give your donation to any board member, or mail your donation to the Humanist Association of Connecticut, 27 Thornton Street, Hamden, CT 06517.

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Humanist Conversations: Buried in Ice

Join us on Saturday, February 6, 2015 in the library at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden, when Steve Boshi will link the loss of the Franklin Expedition with today's tragedy in Flint, Michigan.

Steve says, "In 1845 the last expedition to attempt to traverse the uncompleted Northwest Passage sails from England. Two ships and 130 men disappear into the Canadian Arctic, never to be seen alive again. In Flint, Michigan, a major tragedy is now unfolding. Join us to learn how these seemingly unrelated events tie together, which will undoubtedly provoke a lively discussion and some elevated blood pressure." The documentary is about an hour long and refreshments will be served.

Yale Humanist Community February Events

These Humanist Haven events are held at 1:30 p.m. at the Grove, 760 Chapel Street in New Haven.

Sunday, February 7: "The No God Beat: What a Reporter Learned About Religion by Covering Atheists" with Kimberly Winston.

As the first national reporter dedicated full-time to covering atheists and other freethinkers at a major American news outlet, Kimberly Winston of Religion News Service has learned as much about religion and religious people as she has about nonbelievers. And what she learned is this: they have far more in common than many on either side of the divide think they do. She also rediscovered her passion for reporting on groups that seldom make headlines but often make a difference. Join Kimberly for a conversation about why she thinks that covering the godless on the "Godbeat" is the best job ever.

Sunday, February 21: "Sustainability as Social Justice" with guest speaker Bun Lai.

As our global environmental crisis worsens, sustainability is more important than ever. Join acclaimed chef Bun Lai of New Haven's Miya's Sushi for a discussion about how living sustainably is a form of social justice. Lai, who is guided by a passion for ideas and agendas that strive to make the world a better place, will share his thoughts on the challenges and promises of sustainability—and explain why the fight for social justice must include a recognition of the importance of sustainable living.

Southern Connecticut Darwin Day Dinner

The 8th Annual Darwin Day Dinner will be held on Saturday, February 13, at The Norwalk Inn & Conference Center, 99 East Avenue in Norwalk. \$62 per person (\$66 after February 7th).

This year's presentation will be, "The Mystery of Sleep," by Meir Kryger, MD, professor of medicine at Yale School of Medicine, who has treated patients with sleep disorders for over 30 years. He is chief editor of the most widely used textbook in sleep medicine, *The Principles and Practice of Sleep Medicine*, soon to be in its sixth edition, and authored *A Woman's Guide to Sleep Disorders*. He has published more than 200 peer reviewed articles and book chapters. What a great chance to learn in only one night how you really spend (approximately) 1/3 of your life!

As always, the event is open to the public, all are welcome, and everyone will go home smarter. Visit <http://www.darwindayct.org/> for more information and to order your tickets!

This year this event is sponsored by: Norwalk Public Schools Science Department, The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, the Bartlett Arboretum, Earthplace, the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, The Wilton Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, the Unitarian Church in Westport and the Humanists and Freethinkers of Fairfield County.

Renewal Time! Collection for Syrian Refugees

Memberships in the Humanist Association of Connecticut run from January 1 to December 31, so it's time to renew your membership for 2016.

We are pleased to announce we are sending a check for \$111.00 to Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (<http://www.irisct.org>) with a request the funds be used specifically to assist the settlement of Syrian refugees in Connecticut. This represents half our pass-the-basket collections from December and January combined.

Screening & Discussion: “A Better Life”

The Humanists of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Meriden, in honor of Darwin Day 2016, are holding a screening of the film, “A Better Life: 100 Atheists Speak Out on Finding Joy & Meaning in a World Without God,” by the author and film maker Chris Johnson, who will attend the screening and the discussion following. This event will take place in their large meeting room on February 27 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at 328 Paddock Avenue in Meriden.

Chris Johnson, a New York-based photographer, traveled throughout the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom interviewing and photographing atheists from many different backgrounds and professions. The resulting book and companion film highlight the many and varied ways atheists live lives of joy, passion, meaning, and purpose. You can see a preview of the film at <https://youtu.be/vEJXD6r9d78>.

Book Discussion: “My Promised Land”

Our book for February is *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel* by Israeli journalist Ari Shavit. The discussion will take place Saturday, February 20, 2016, at 2:30 p.m. (not the usual 2 p.m.) in the library of the Unitarian Society of New Haven at 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden.

“As it examines the complexities and contradictions of the Israeli condition, *My Promised Land* asks difficult but important questions: Why did Israel come to be? How did it come to be? Can Israel survive? Culminating with an analysis of the issues and threats that Israel is currently facing, *My Promised Land* uses the defining events of the past to shed new light on the present. The result is a landmark portrait of a small, vibrant country living on the edge, whose identity and presence play a crucial role in today’s global political landscape.” —from the book flap.

“This is the epic history that Israel deserves—beautifully written, dramatically rendered, full of moral complexity. Ari Shavit has made a storied career of explaining Israel to Israelis; now he shares his mind-blowing, trustworthy insights with the rest of us. It is the best book on the subject to arrive in many years.” —Franklin Foer, editor, *The New Republic*.

This book made the *New York Times* list of 100 Notable Books for 2013.

As we are in winter, the snow date for this discussion is Saturday, February 27. Watch for announcements if there is inclement weather on or near the discussion date.

The book is readily available in numerous libraries around the state.

Refreshments will be served.

CARE Conference: April 2

In October, 2013, members of Connecticut’s secular community held the SANE conference (Secular Assembly for the Northeast) at the University of New Haven. It’s time to do it again.

On Saturday, April 2, 2016, the full-day 2016 CARE conference (Connecticut Assembly for Reason and Ethics) will be held at the Mark Twain House and Museum at 351 Farmington Avenue in Hartford. Registration will open at 8:30 a.m. and the conference will continue through 5:00 p.m. The keynote speaker will be Hemant Mehta, author of several books including *I Sold My Soul on eBay: Viewing Faith Through an Atheist’s Eyes* and *The Young Atheist’s Survival Guide*, and host of the popular *Friendly Atheist* blog at <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/>. Additional speakers include Jason Heap, National Coordinator for the United Coalition of Reason, Amanda Knief, Legal and Public Policy Director at American Atheists, and Wendy Thomas Russell, author of *Relax, It’s Just God: How and Why to Talk to Your Kids About Religion When You’re Not Religious*, and host of the *Natural Wonderer’s* blog at <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/naturalwonderers/>. Breakout sessions will cover the diverse topics of interfaith dialog, community building, and political action. This is a great opportunity to visit the Twain House, connect with friends and like-minded people, and learn more about the various secular organizations in the area!

Visit the conference website at <http://conference.ctcor.org/>. Registration will open soon!

Email List

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

To unsubscribe, send an email to:
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USNH Social Cinema

On the first Friday of February, February 5, USNH social cinema at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden will present the film, *Roadmap To Apartheid*. The optional potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. will be followed by the film at 7:15 p.m.

This movie is presented by USNH Social Cinema, Peace Task Force, and Jewish Voice For Peace. “We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.” — Nelson Mandela, 1997. “Roadmap To Apartheid is powerful and compelling.” — Archbishop Desmond Tutu. “Roadmap to Apartheid is a harrowing exposé of Israel’s unique system of official discrimination.” — Naomi Klein.

For more information call 203-288-1807 or email office@usnh.org

Reason Rally 2016

The second reason rally will be held at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, from Thursday, June 2, to Sunday, June 5. The main event will be held on Saturday, June 4.

One of the rally’s sponsors is the Secular Coalition for America, which will hold its annual Lobby Day training on Thursday, June 2, 2016. Lobby Day participants will have a chance to meet their congressional representatives on Friday, June 3.

For more information, and to book tickets for the rally, see <http://reasonrally.org/>.

Sign up for a bus to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, at: <http://rallybus.net/reason-rally>. Leaving around 1:30 a.m. the morning of June 4 from One Union Place in Hartford, it’s expected to be back in Hartford around 2:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 5. It will cost about \$90 per person, and the bus will be confirmed to run if at least 40 people sign up.

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 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.

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| <p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>! 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.</p> | <p>Name(s): _____ Address: _____ _____ Telephone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____ Please add me to the e-mail Announce List (circle one): YES NO I want my newsletter electronically <u>only</u> (circle one): YES NO Where did you hear about us? _____ Comments: _____ _____</p> |
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