



THE NEWSLETTER OF
The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION
 of CONNECTICUT



AHA Chapter

August 2017

UU Humanists Local Group

John Dietrich and the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis

Please join us on Monday, August 21 at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, when Doug Peary will talk about his work publishing the sermons of John Dietrich, who was influential in developing humanism as minister at what is arguably the most influential Unitarian society: the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis.

Doug says about his work making Dietrich's writings more available: "I found two books on John Hassler Dietrich several years ago. I saw some parallels of my life with his and that he was my mentor, friend and Humanist Hero. Dietrich wrote about 3,000 sermons in his lifetime on Humanism, but only about 370 of them were preserved and in a mechanical form which was unreadable. Dietrich spoke to thousands of people each week from 1911 to 1938. I have now edited 250 of them in 12 volumes in the last year and will do more of them. I have discovered that Dietrich has developed an entire Philosophy of Life.

"His Church in Minneapolis has started a program to promote Humanism for the next 100 years. In early 2016 I spoke to their minister, Rev. Dr. David Breeden, and asked for permission, which I received, to edit the sermons. Breeden is also head of the UU Humanist Association and on the Board of The Humanist Institute, which recently moved to the Minneapolis area. I attended a meeting at their Church on October 16, 2016, to celebrate 100 years since Dietrich started as Minister there and

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 2017

Sat., 5	Explorations: <i>The Twelve Chairs</i>	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>The Kingdom of Speech</i> by Tom Wolfe	2:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m
Mon., 21	Monthly Meeting Main program: Doug Peary — <i>John Dietrich and the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis</i>	7:00 p.m 7:30 p.m
Sun., 27	Board meeting	2:00 p.m
Mon., 28	Dinner Discussion at the Wood-n-Tap, 2100 Dixwell Avenue, Hamden, CT. (203) 248-9663. Topic: Is Amazon Evil?	7:00 p.m

SEPTEMBER 2017

Sat., 2	Explorations: TBA	2:30 p.m
Mon., 4	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m
Sun., 17	Board meeting	2:00 p.m
Mon., 18	Monthly Meeting Main program: ACLU of Connecticut	7:00 p.m 7:30 p.m
Sat., 23	Book Discussion: <i>Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies</i> by Jared Diamond.	2:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m
Mon., 25	Dinner Discussion at the Wood-n-Tap, 2100 Dixwell Avenue, Hamden, CT. (203) 248-9663. Topic TBA	7:00 p.m

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announce their plan to escalate Humanism over the next century.

I am the first person of our generation to read all 370 essays and I see the power. It has made sense of my life, and I cannot wait to see it make sense to all

our descendants."

The evening will start at 7:00 p.m. with an informal period of conversation and refreshments. Doug's talk will begin after brief announcements at 7:30 p.m. Come and bring a friend!

Explorations: "The Twelve Chairs"

This story, based on the 1928 novel by Ilf and Petrov, takes us back to the years following the Russian Revolution, as the aristocracy finds itself struggling to adapt to communist governance. While a seemingly Tolstoyesque tale, the screenplay is written and directed by Mel Brooks, and will keep you in suspense, and probably hysterics, as well. As summer draws to its close, this is a great way to spend a lazy afternoon.

Join us at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, August 5, at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden.

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

Social Dinners

Please join us on the first Monday of each month for our social diner at 7:00 p.m. at the Turkish Kebab House at 1157 Campbell Avenue in West Haven!

**Book Discussion:
 “The Kingdom of Speech”**

Please join us at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 19, at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. Our book for August will be *The Kingdom of Speech*, the most recent work from “new journalist” Tom Wolfe.

From *Amazon*: [The book] is a captivating, paradigm-shifting argument that speech – not evolution – is responsible for humanity’s complex societies and achievements.

From Alfred Russel Wallace, the Englishman who beat Darwin to the theory of natural selection but later renounced it, and through the controversial work of modern-day anthropologist Daniel Everett, who defies the current wisdom that language is hard-wired in humans, Wolfe examines the solemn, long-faced, laugh-out-loud zig-zags of Darwinism, old and Neo, and finds it irrelevant here in the *Kingdom of Speech*.

[Note: Book Group participants will recall Dan Everett and his adventures in linguistics, religion, and the Amazon from our selection *Don’t Sleep, There are Snakes* in April 2014.]

“Tom Wolfe aims his unparalleled wit at evolution, arguing that complex language is the singular superpower that allows humans to rule the planet.” – Harper’s Bazaar

Our September discussion will be on the fourth Saturday, September 23, and not the usual third Saturday. The discussion will be on Jared Diamond’s *Gun, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*.

**Dinner and Discussion:
 Is Amazon Evil?**

What did *you* think when you heard that Amazon plans to acquire Whole Foods? The internet is mixed. Some are alarmed (*The New York Times*: “[Amazon Bites Off Even More Monopoly Power](http://tinyurl.com/y9m4psof)” <http://tinyurl.com/y9m4psof>), while others are pooh-pooing that sentiment (*Forbes*: “[Five Reasons Why 'The Retail Apocalypse' Is A False Scare Story](http://tinyurl.com/yaocppq5)” <http://tinyurl.com/yaocppq5>). What about reports that Amazon is so afraid of theft that it abuses its employees (*Vanity Fair*: “[Amazon Reportedly has Scoreboards to Shame its Workers](http://tinyurl.com/y7znuzuy)” <http://tinyurl.com/y7znuzuy>)? Some see a more generalized monopoly problem rather than a problem specifically with Amazon (*American Prospect*: “[Bring Back Antitrust](http://tinyurl.com/y8nd32pl)” <http://tinyurl.com/y8nd32pl>). But nobody can deny that Amazon is astonishingly large (*Visual Capitalist*: “[The Extraordinary Size of Amazon in One Chart](http://tinyurl.com/hsn7lqd)” <http://tinyurl.com/hsn7lqd>). So what do you think? Is Amazon using its size, influence, and power for good or evil? Is an organization that large destined to be evil?

This discussion will take place over dinner at the Wood-n-Tap, 2100 Dixwell Avenue, Hamden, at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 28. Please read as many of the referenced articles as you can. Because we need to make sure we can all sit together, please RSVP to development@cthumanist.org or at meetup.com.

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