



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

# The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

September 2011



CSH Affiliate

## Origins Of Humanism: What Took So Long?

Join us on Monday, September 19 at 7:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden when we will hear from one of our original founders, Dr. David Schafer!

“We humans are story-telling animals. Early stories intended to explain the origins of things became firmly implanted in our traditions. Such myths featured the most familiar agencies, humans or anthropomorphic entities, but supposedly endowed with special powers and beyond human perception. The first recognizable stirrings of Humanism are evident early in the first millennium BCE, when contacts between cultures began to multiply. Differences among stories from different cultures reinforced doubts in skeptical minds, and naïve acceptance of local myths was replaced by individual introspection and rebellion. Historian Karl Jaspers has called this period, from roughly 800 to 200 BCE, the Axial Age. Jaspers and author Karen Armstrong (*The Great Transformation*) have emphasized marked changes in religious thought during the Axial Age. Jennifer Michael Hecht (*Doubt: A History*), on the other hand, has described the concomitant rise of philosophy and skepticism. As I will show, the two are aspects of the same phenomenon. But if the seeds of Humanism were sown in the Axial Age, why did traditional religions flourish for centuries after that while Humanism has come into its own comparatively recently? I will

## Calendar of Events

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT. RSVP for dinners at [meetup.com/cthumanist](http://meetup.com/cthumanist).

### SEPTEMBER

Sat., 3	<b>Humanist Conversations:</b> lecture 11, Harvard University's <i>Justice with Michael Sandel</i>	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 5	Labor Day Cookout at Crystal Lake, 100 Livingston Road in Middletown	12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.
Mon., 12	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 17	Social walk in Woodbridge, with optional group lunch to follow	10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Mon., 19	Monthly Meeting <b>Main program:</b> Dr. David Schafer — The Legacy of Unitarian Universalist Humanism	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Thu., 22	Dinner at Imperial Caribbean Restaurant, 51 Shunpike Rd., Cromwell. (860) 613-0005	7:00 p.m.
Sun., 25	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.

### OCTOBER

Sat., 1	<b>Humanist Conversations:</b> TBA	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 3	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m.
Sun., 9	Social walk in Woodbridge, with optional group lunch to follow	10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Mon., 17	Monthly Meeting <b>Main program:</b> TBA	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Sat., 22	Social walk in Woodbridge, with optional group lunch to follow	10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Sat., 22	Book discussion: Russell Shorto's <i>Descartes' Bones</i>	3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Sun., 23	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Thu., 27	Dinner at Imperial Caribbean Restaurant, 51 Rd., Cromwell. (860) 613-0005	7:00 p.m.

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offer two explanations—one extrinsic and one intrinsic to Humanism. Both have been, and continue to be, very important.”

David Schafer took his degree in physiology with a minor in physics in 1959 from the University of Minnesota. For the next forty years he taught physiology and conducted research, mainly on cholera, in New York, Calcutta, Bangkok, Minneapolis, and New Haven, under the auspices of the US Fulbright Foundation in India, The Johns Hopkins University Center for Medical Research and Training, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the US Veterans Administration. Retiring from active research, co-founded this organization (HAC), studied and taught at The Humanist Institute, and from 2003 to 2010 was president of the Unitarian Universalist Humanists.

## Conversations: Identity

Join us Saturday, September 3, at 2:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. We will view and discuss lecture 11 of Harvard University's *Justice with Michael Sandel*. The first half asks, “What happens if our obligations to our family or community come into conflict with our universal obligations to humanity?” The second half is an inquiry into loyalty. “Is patriotism a virtue, or a prejudice for one's own kind?”

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# Book Group: "Descartes' Bones"

The next HAC book discussion will be on Saturday, October 22, from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. We will meet at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. The book we will be reading is "Descartes' Bones: A Skeletal History of the Conflict between Faith and Reason" by Russell Shorto, and Dan Blinn will be the moderator. Lots of copies are available in Connecticut public libraries.

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# Woodbridge Walk

Join us Saturday, September 17, Sunday, October 9, and Saturday, October 22 from 10:30 a.m. until noon for a walk on a walking/jogging trail in Woodbridge followed by optional lunch. Fitzgerald Trails is located at 100 Center Road in Woodbridge, Connecticut, and there's plenty of parking at the Woodbridge Town Library at 10 Newton Road. *We will meet on the trail next to the intersection of Center Rd (Route 114) and Beecher Rd.* If you arrive after 10:30 a.m., just wait at this location and you will see us in a few minutes, or you can call one of the mobile numbers below. The event will be canceled in the event of rain. Contacts: Manny Ratafia: e-mail: [manny@ratafias.com](mailto:manny@ratafias.com), home (203) 387-7348, cell (203) 901-9553; or Nina Stein: home (203) 757-2539, cell (203) 215-0022; or Marsha Zellner: home (203) 393-2816, cell (203) 494-3856.

# Labor Day Cookout, Rain or Shine

Brian Ditter and Tara McLaughlin invite HAC to a cookout and pot luck on Labor Day, Monday, September 5, from noon to 4:00 p.m. under the pavilion at Crystal Lake Park, 100 Livingston Road, Middletown. Please RSVP to Brian Ditter by text at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, voice at (860) 704-0439, or Tara McLaughlin at (860) 545-5065. Please let Brian know if you can help set up that morning.

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

**From New Haven:** take I-91N to exit 15 for CT-68 toward Yalesville/Durham. In 0.3 mi. turn right onto CT-68. In 0.9 miles route 68 takes a left. Follow 68 for 4.2 miles, when you will turn left onto CT-17 (Main St.) Take your 2nd right (0.5 mile) onto Haddam Quarter Rd. In 1.7 miles turn left at Arbutus St. In 1.4 miles bear right onto Livingston Rd. The entrance to the park will be on your left in 0.6 mile. The pavilion will be on your left.

**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 mile, turn left at Millbrook Rd. (there's a traffic light and a fire station on your left). In 1.4 miles turn right onto Livingston Rd. and then turn right into the park. The pavilion will be on your left.

# FFRF Convention in Hartford!

The Freedom From Religion Foundation will be holding its 2011 conference from October 7 to 9 at the Marriott Hartford Downtown, 200 Columbus Blvd, Hartford. For more information and to register for the conference, see <http://ffrf.org/outreach/convention/>

06517-1321. Submissions and requests for permission to reprint articles should be made to this address or to [editor@cthumanist.org](mailto: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

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