



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

# The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

April 2014



CSH Affiliate

## Celebrating Our 25th Anniversary

Twenty-five years ago Joanie and Bob Rafford teamed up with June and David Schafer to organize a chapter of the American Humanist Association in this area. We invited Fred Edwards, Executive Director of the AHA, as our first speaker. Since there were other AHA groups in Connecticut at the time, Fred suggested we call ourselves the Humanist Association of Central Connecticut, and we did. Bob provided a boilerplate model for our Bylaws, which our 21 charter members rewrote and adopted. (We'll distribute a list of the names of those charter members at our April meeting.) We've held monthly meetings ever since. After a few years we became the only AHA affiliate in Connecticut, so we decided to drop the word "Central" from our name.

Rev. Dr. Robert Rafford had formerly been an ordained Congregational minister, but later, realizing he had become a Humanist, had switched to the Unitarian Universalist ministry, with Joanie's approval. Twenty-five years ago they both worked at St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, where Bob was a chaplain and Joanie was—and still is—a secretary in the Oncology department. Some years after that Bob became a professional genealogist, helping clients learn about their

## 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).

### APRIL 2014

Sat., 5	Humanist Conversations: "Revolutionary Optimists"	2:30 p.m
Mon., 14	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m
Mon., 21	25th Anniversary Meeting & Potluck Dinner Main program: Bob and Joanie Rafford	7:30 p.m 8:00 p.m
Sat., 26	Book Discussion: "Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes" by Daniel Everett	2:00 p.m
Sun., 27	Board meeting	2:30 p.m

### MAY 2014

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., 19	Monthly Meeting Main program: Ken Feder	7:30 p.m 8:00 p.m
Sun., 25	Board meeting	2:30 p.m

### [www.cthumanist.org](http://www.cthumanist.org)

[www.meetup.com/cthumanist](http://www.meetup.com/cthumanist)  
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family heritage.

For twenty-five years the Raffords have remained among the most consistent stalwarts of our group, pitching in wherever and whenever needed. Bob has been a board member and Joanie has been a member of our Nominating Committee. Nearly every summer they have held a well-attended and much enjoyed picnic for us at their home in Middlebury, in fair and foul weather. Over the years Bob has officiated at humanist weddings and funerals of several members,

most recently the wedding of two of our board members, Carol and Richard Siddall.

Bob and Joanie, with some help from Doug Peary, another charter member, have now prepared a history of a few of the highlights of the past 25 years, and will tell us at our meeting on April 21 what it has meant to them. Come help us celebrate this important milestone! We'll share an anniversary potluck dinner and cake at 7:30 p.m., followed by the program at 8:15.

## Charity Miles

If you are a smartphone owner and Facebook user, you can support the Connecticut Food Bank by installing the "Charity Miles" app on your Android or iOS phone. You can earn donations for walking, running, or cycling at any time.

## Humanist Conversations

At 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 5, at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden, we will watch and discuss the March 1, 2014, *Independent Lens* episode, "Revolutionary Optimists," from PBS. Children in the slums of Calcutta are starting a revolution. Called to action by visionary former attorney Amlan Ganguly, the 'Daredevils' have already made radical health and sanitation improvements in one of the city's poorest slums - awakening a neglected populace to the real possibility of change. Refreshments will be served.

[www.cthumanist.org](http://www.cthumanist.org)

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**Email List**

To join, send an email to:  
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with the subject **subscribe**.

To unsubscribe, send an email to:  
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**Officers**

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Secretary	Deidre Kennedy
Treasurer	Carol Podgwaite

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Development	Manny Ratafia
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**Newsletter**

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

## Ask an Atheist Forum — April 7

The Yale Humanist Community and Hartford Faith & Values are hosting an “Ask an Atheist” forum in New Haven. The April 7 forum will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in Yale University’s Linsly-Chittenden Hall, room LC 102, at 63 High Street in New Haven. The forum will provide the public and faith community the opportunity to ask questions of secular groups in Connecticut. Panelists include Chris Stedman, Humanist Chaplain and author of “Faithist,” Dennis Paul Himes, State Director of American Atheists, and Tanya Barrett, co-chair of the Connecticut Coalition of Reason. Hartford Area Humanists president Dan Blinn will moderate.

Hartford Faith & Values (<http://hartfordfavs.com>) is Connecticut’s nonsectarian, nonprofit news website. This event is a fundraiser for them, and a donation of \$5 is suggested.

## “Don’t Sleep, There Are Snakes”

The Book Discussion Group will meet on Saturday, April 26 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden to discuss Daniel Everett’s “Don’t Sleep, There Are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle.” A riveting account of the astonishing experiences and discoveries made by linguist Daniel Everett while he lived with the Pirahã, a small tribe of Amazonian Indians in central Brazil. Daniel Everett arrived among the Pirahã with his wife and three young children hoping to convert the tribe to Christianity. Everett quickly became obsessed with their language and its cultural and linguistic implications. The Pirahã have no counting system, no fixed terms for color, no concept of war, and no personal property. Everett was so impressed with their peaceful way of life that he eventually lost faith in the God he’d hoped to introduce to them, and instead devoted his life to the science of linguistics. Part passionate memoir, part scientific exploration, Everett’s life-changing tale is a riveting look into the nature of language, thought, and life itself. The book is widely available in public libraries. Refreshments will be served.

## 2014 Walk Against Hunger

The Connecticut Food Bank’s 2014 Greater New Haven Walk Against Hunger will be held on Sunday, May 4, and the Humanist Association of Connecticut will once again be participating. Connecticut Food Bank is one of President June Schafer’s favorite charities, and the Food Bank supports June’s work through USNH at the Waverley Townhouses in New Haven.

You can join our team of walkers, or donate to support our team, by going to our team page on the Connecticut Food Bank’s site at <http://cthumanist.org/walk>. You can also make donations by mail to HAC, or in person at any of our upcoming events. Please make checks payable to Connecticut Food Bank.

If you’d like to walk but have another commitment that day, the Waterbury walk will be held two weeks after the New Haven walk. You can also sign up as a “virtual walker.”

<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	
! 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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