



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT



CSH Affiliate

February 2015

The Continuing Evolution of Darwin's Theory of Evolution

Please join us at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, February 16 when we will mark Darwin Day with a special presentation by our very own Dr. David Schafer.

The advancement of scientific knowledge never ends. One new fact leads to another investigation. Today nearly everyone recognizes that "The Origin of Species" was the culmination of Charles Darwin's successful efforts to make sense of his remarkable observations of relationships among myriad varying life forms. At the same time, "The Origin" was also the beginning of a series of new questions, previously unthinkable and at the time mostly unanswerable, of which many are being answered today, and others are still waiting to be asked. David Schafer will track the progress of evolution's evolution, starting with some well-known events and moving up to some less familiar and perhaps also surprising (and possibly even disturbing!) discoveries of recent times.

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 2015

Sat., 7	Conversations: <i>Steven Brill's Bitter Pill</i>	2:30 p.m
Thu., 12	Birthday Bash For Charles Darwin at Eli's on Whitney, 2392 Whitney Avenue, Hamden.	7:00 p.m
Mon., 16	Monthly Meeting	7:30 p.m
	Main program: The Continuing Evolution of Darwin's Theory of Evolution - David Schafer	8:00 p.m
Sat., 21	Book Group: "Sex at Dawn: The Prehistoric Origins of Modern Sexuality" by Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jethá	2:00 p.m
Sun., 22	Board meeting	2:30 p.m
Sat., 28	David Niose: "Fighting Back the Right"	2:00 p.m

MARCH 2015

Mon., 2	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave., West Haven. (203) 933-0002	7:00 p.m
Sat., 7	Conversations: Discussion of "Aid in Dying" in Connecticut Legislature, with Tim Appleton of Compassion & Choices	2:30 p.m
Mon., 16	Monthly Meeting	7:30 p.m
	Main program: Travels to England, Wales, & Scotland - Susan & Steve Boshi	8:00 p.m
Sun., 22	Board meeting	2:30 p.m

www.cthumanist.org

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Here are some highlights of David's abbreviated bio. David was a Fulbright Professor of Physiology and Biophysics at Calcutta University, India, with a concurrent appointment to

conduct basic cholera research for the Johns Hopkins Center for Medical Research and Training from 1963-66. From

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Book Discussion: Sex at Dawn

The book for February will be “Sex at Dawn: The Prehistoric Origins of Modern Sexuality” by psychologists Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jethá. This thought-provoking book weaves together evidence from anthropology, archaeology, primatology, anatomy, and psychosexuality to show almost everything we “know” about sex is suspect.

Per the jacket flap: “In the tradition of the best historical and scientific writing, ‘Sex at Dawn’ unapologetically upends unwarranted assumptions and unfounded conclusions while offering a revolutionary understanding of why we live and love as we do.”

“The essential corrective to the evolutionary psychology literature, ‘Sex at Dawn’ irrefutably shows that the urgent sexuality apparent everywhere in human society and that requires layers of religious, social, and psychological suppression was a constant feature on the African savanna. The more dubious its evidentiary basis and connection with current reality, the more ardently the scientific inevitability of monogamy is maintained - even as it collapses around us. Darwin and science have been corralled into fomenting useless, irrational guilt.” - Dr. Stanton Peele.

This book will perhaps shed some light on the depictions and discussions of sexuality in recent book group selections “The End of Men: And the Rise of Women” and “Ecotopia.”

A podcast discussing the book with author Chris Ryan can be found on our Meetup site.

Copies of the book are available in some area libraries.

The discussion will take place on Saturday, February 21, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in the library of the Unitarian Society of New Haven at 700 Hartford Turnpike, New Haven.

Refreshments will be served.

(Note: Copies of David Niose’s book, “Fighting Back the Right: Reclaiming America from the Attack on Reason,” have arrived. The book will be the selection in a future month, and copies are available for purchase at a discounted price of \$16 at Humanist Association of Connecticut and Hartford Area Humanist events.)

Birthday Bash For Charles Darwin

Join us for a birthday bash for Charles Darwin, the father of the Theory of Evolution, at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 12, in the Bobcat Room of Eli’s On Whitney, 2392 Whitney Avenue in Hamden. Bring your favorite story or quote about Mr. Darwin to share. There is plenty of free parking across the street in front of the restaurant (driveway entrance on School Street). The restaurant has agreed to separate checks, and we have a semi-private room.

Please RSVP so we can tell the restaurant how many to expect. You can RSVP for the event at www.meetup.com/cthumanist/, email president@cthumanist.org or development@cthumanist.org, or leave a message on Carol Siddall’s phone at (203) 264-8546.

Continuing Evolution

1966-68, he joined the Rockefeller Foundation in Bangkok, Thailand, where he was acting physiology chair, new medical school, Mahidol University. The Rockefeller Foundation also supported two years of cholera research and six Bengali post-graduate students as teaching assistants. Not one to waste an opportunity, during those five years David also engaged in advanced study in Hinduism and Buddhism. After returning to the U.S., David spent the rest of his scientific career with the US Veterans Administration, concurrently with Yale when he came to Connecticut from Minnesota. He also co-founded the Humanist Association of Connecticut and served as its president, after which he became national president of the Unitarian Universalist Humanists, 2003-2010.

We will gather for coffee and conversation at 7:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike on Monday, February 16, with David’s presentation starting after brief announcements at 8:00 p.m.

Please Renew Your Membership

Our membership year runs from January 1 to December 31, so it’s renewal time again. If you have not already renewed your membership for 2015, please mail in your payment with a form from any newsletter, or give your payment to an officer at any HAC event.

David Niose: “Fighting Back the Right”

David Niose, Legal Director of the American Humanist Association, past-president of the American Humanist Association and past-president of the Secular Coalition for America, will be discussing his new book, “Fighting Back the Right: Reclaiming America from the Attack on Reason,” at USNH on February 28 at 2:00 p.m.

“Fighting Back the Right” discusses the rapidly changing political scene and demographics in America, as increasing numbers are identifying as non-religious and support for issues such as marriage equality are at an all-time high. David will discuss the emergence of a new alliance of progressive interests who are committed to fighting for rational public policy in America and reversing the damage inflicted by decades of conservative dominance. Copies of the book will be available for sale, and refreshments will be served.

7th Annual Darwin Day Dinner

The 7th Annual Darwin Day Dinner will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday February 7. This year the event will be held at the Norwalk Inn & Conference Center, 99 East Avenue in Norwalk. The cost is \$65 per person.

The speaker this year is Prof. Richard O. Prum, William Robertson Coe Professor of Ornithology, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Yale University, and Curator of Ornithology and Head Curator of Vertebrate Zoology at the Peabody Museum in New Haven. His talk is titled “Aesthetic Evolution by Mate Choice: Darwin’s Really Dangerous Idea” and will address some fascinating issues: Aesthetics and beauty permeate our culture – but how are these derived from the perspective of evolutionary biology? What is aesthetic evolution? What mechanisms of aesthetic evolution have impacted humans and human sexuality? And what is meant by “coevolution of the human arts?” If you already have heard Professor Prum interviewed on NPR, then you already know that we are in for a treat.

To reserve your seat, visit <http://www.darwindayct.org> or contact John Levin at (646)221-9134 or jlevin@tfm-llc.com.

The dinner is sponsored by a group of organizations, including the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Fairfield County, the Unitarian Church in Westport, Humanists and Freethinkers of Fairfield County (HFFC), the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, the Bartlett Arboretum and the Connecticut Audubon Society.

Conversations – Steven Brill’s Bitter Pill

Please join us at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 7, when we will watch Charlie Rose interview lawyer, journalist, and entrepreneur Stephen Brill about Brill’s 26,000 word February 2013 Time cover article that has been called the “longest story Time ever published.” Brill turned the article into the book “America’s Bitter Pill: Money, Politics, Backroom Deals, and the Fight to Fix Our Broken Healthcare System.” Refreshments will be served.

Tony Pinn at February Yale Humanist Haven

On Sunday, February 8, at 1:00 p.m., Tony Pinn will discuss his personal journey and Humanism in African American communities.

In “When College Is More Than the Classroom: A Personal Journey from Belief in God to Humanism,” Professor Pinn will discuss his movement away from theism toward an approach to life devoid of God and gods. In telling the story of the Humanist he knows best, he will provide a sense of what Humanism means and does within the context of African American communities in larger terms.

Tony Pinn is the Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor of Humanities, Professor of Religious Studies, and Founding Director, The Center for Engaged Research and Collaborative Learning at Rice University; a board member of the Humanist Institute; and Director of Research for the Institute for Humanist Studies in Washington, D.C.

This Yale Humanist Haven event will take place on Sunday, February 8 at 1:00 p.m. at The Grove, 760 Chapel Street, New Haven. Parking is available on the street or in nearby lots.

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 Cinema: Friday, Feb 13th

Please note that the USNH Cinema will be held on the *second* Friday this month. An optional potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. will be followed by the documentary film, *The Billboard From Bethlehem* (2013), at 7:15 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. The film maker, Bruce Barrett, will be a special guest at this event!

This movie tells the stories of former Israeli soldiers and Palestinian combatants who come together with 100 children to paint a giant mural in the West Bank advocating a peaceful resolution to the decades-long Middle East conflict.

SMART Recovery on Facebook

Efforts to provide a modern, science-based alternative to 12-step addiction recovery programs have begun to pay off in the last year. Thanks primarily to the efforts of Joseph Esposito, there are now weekly meetings at the Hagerman Memorial Library in East Haven on Saturday afternoons at 12:15 p.m., and a Yale Humanist Community-sponsored meeting at the Grove in New Haven on Monday nights at 6:30 p.m.

Now more than 20 years old, SMART Recovery uses a combination of simple worksheets and self-administered cognitive behavioral therapy to build and maintain motivation to abstain; deal with urges and cravings; manage thoughts and behaviors; and balance short and long-term needs.

The latest development is a Facebook page, which you can find at: <https://www.facebook.com/SMARTRecoveryCT>.

You do not need to be a trained counselor or have had addiction problems to facilitate a SMART Recovery meeting. Since 12 Step programs are available in most towns in Connecticut, there's a huge need for more SMART Recovery facilitators so that people suffering from addictive behaviors can choose a program that works for them.

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.

<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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