



# The Humanist Association of Connecticut

Newsletter for December, 2023

## Welcome to December

It's December, time for our annual business meeting, elections, and Winter Solstice Party. There's also our Annual Brunch in Wallingford on December 25th, along with most of our other regular programs.

## The Other Side of Prospect

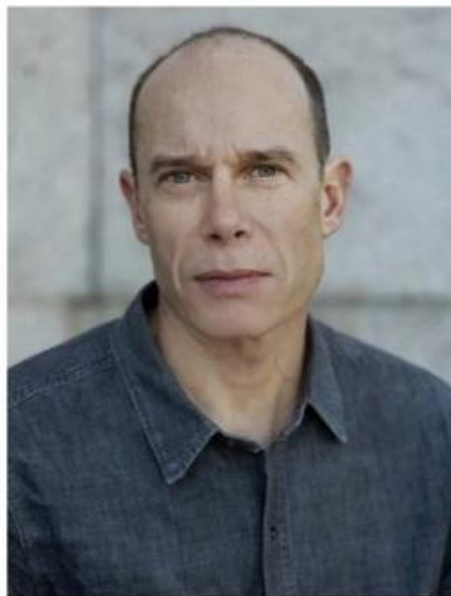
A Book Discussion Series, and an Afternoon with Nicholas Dawidoff

### THE OTHER SIDE OF PROSPECT



A STORY OF VIOLENCE,  
INJUSTICE, AND  
THE AMERICAN CITY

**NICHOLAS DAWIDOFF**



Coming in January/February 2024

An important series of events has been planned using the book *The Other Side of Prospect* as a springboard for conversations about race, criminal justice, and the state of our post-industrial urban communities. All events are jointly sponsored by the USNH Adult Religious Education Committee, the Anti-Racism/Eight Principle Team, and the Humanist Association of Connecticut.

All are encouraged to read the book, by local author Nicholas Dawidoff, in advance of the events. The book is widely available in public libraries, through Audible, Hoopla, and Kindle, and through many book retailers!

On January 14 & 28, and February 18, 2024, all Sundays, Becky Sandmann and Gayle Walter will facilitate a 3-part book discussion from 12-2pm at USNH. Each of the three discussion sessions will explore a different aspect of Dawidoff's book, so if you are interested, please plan to attend all three sessions if at all possible.

The Book Discussion series will be followed by a full afternoon of programming with the author, Nicholas Dawidoff, on Sunday, February 25, from 12 to 3pm.

**SAVE THE DATE!!!** Stay tuned for details about registration for the event.

We will start with the author's talk with Q&A, then take a short break with light refreshments, followed by a discussion with a panel of community representatives on the issues addressed in the book, moderated by Nicholas Dawidoff himself!

(The option to attend remotely will be available.)

## Calendar for December, 2023

Sat, 2	2:30PM to 4:30PM	Humanist Explorations - "Babette's Feast"
Mon, 4	7:00PM to 9:00PM	Social Dinner at Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave, West Haven CT
Sat, 16	2:30PM to 4:30PM	"Accidental Gods" by Anna Della Subin at Wilson Branch Library, 303 Washington Ave, New Haven CT
Mon, 18	6:30PM to 9:00PM	Winter Solstice Celebration & Annual Meeting!
Mon, 25	12:00PM to 2:00PM	Annual Brunch at Pacific Buffet & Grill at Pacific Buffet & Grill, 20 Ives Rd, Wallingford CT

### Humanist Explorations - "Babette's Feast"



Saturday, December 2, 2023  
2:30PM to 4:30PM

This fine film from 1987, based on a story by Isak Dinesen (known also as Karen Blixen) tells the tale of an ascetic religious group in late nineteenth century Denmark. Having renounced all possibility of earthly pleasures in lieu of their religious devotion, their lives are changed by the arrival of a French political outcast in the community. Babette alters their lives in a way they never dreamed possible and the relationship between earthly pleasures and emotional (some would say spiritual)

ones become blurred and inseparable. This stunningly beautiful and bittersweet film will be shown in its English language incarnation, to avoid the distraction of subtitles. These two short videos will prepare you for this film - <https://youtu.be/5V7z-O1HG5E?si=zQamfMrTbfuAadb> and <https://youtu.be/H5w9skKcdnA?si=bFoAuQpRMBb6wG1>

USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden CT

### "Accidental Gods" by Anna Della Subin



Saturday, December 16, 2023  
2:30PM to 4:30PM

Our book for December is *Accidental Gods: On Men Unwittingly Turned Divine* by Anna Della Subin.

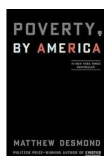
From Amazon: A provocative history of men who were worshipped as gods that illuminates the connection between power and religion and the role of divinity in a secular age

In a revelatory history spanning five centuries, a cast of surprising deities helps to shed light on the thorny questions of how our modern concept of "religion" was invented; why religion and politics are perpetually entangled in our supposedly secular age; and how the power to call someone divine has been used and

abused by both oppressors and the oppressed.

"Subin doesn't cover Q-Anon or January 6, but reading her account of the global and historical power of the irrational, I became more and more convinced I might be reading the year's most relevant book about American politics." – Tom Scocca, *Air Mail*

Wilson Branch Library, 303 Washington Ave, New Haven CT



"Poverty, by America" by Matthew Desmond  
January 20, 2024



"Invisible Man" by Ralph Ellison  
February 24, 2024

### Winter Solstice Celebration & Annual Meeting!



Monday, December 18, 2023  
6:30PM to 9:00PM

It's that time again for our traditional solstice POTLUCK DINNER with live music provided by Mickey Koth and John Kalinowski! Please bring a dish to share. There will be a short Annual Meeting, primarily for the election of the Board. We'll have a Solstice Quiz, and Frank Avitable will do the annual reading of Lois Woodrow's "Ode to the Tilt". You will have an opportunity to pay your Membership dues, both for 2023, if you have not yet

paid, and for 2024; please bring a check or cash. Nina Stein, our Treasurer, will be ready to collect! Let's get together and CELEBRATE!

USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden CT

## Annual Brunch at Pacific Buffet & Grill



Monday, December 25, 2023  
12:00PM to 2:00PM

Enjoy our year-end brunch with other humanists! We're returning to the buffet restaurant in Wallingford that we have met at in the past, Pacific Buffet & Grill (<https://pacificbuffetandgrill.com/>). Come out and socialize with friends on a day when most of the country is closed. Occasionally people will decide to follow this event with a movie.

Pacific Buffet & Grill, 20 Ives Rd,  
Wallingford CT

## Other events

**Social Dinner:** Monday, December 4, 2023  
7:00PM to 9:00PM

Turkish Kebab House, 1157 Campbell Ave,  
West Haven CT



## Slate of Officers for 2024

### Officers of HAC

- President: Carol Siddall
- Vice President:
- Secretary: Patricia Williams
- Treasurer: Richard Siddall

### Standing Committee Chairpersons

- Hospitality: Amy Wexler
- Membership: John Connell
- Development:
- Programs: Carol Siddall
- Publications: Richard Siddall
- Publicity: Aaron Goode

### At-large Board Members

- Frank Avitable

## Sock collection

While New Haven Public Library is no longer collecting socks, Gayle Walter has found an organization which is a ready recipient of new socks, the most needed item of clothing at shelters, especially during the winter months.

Please bring your contributions of *new* socks, all sizes, to any HAC meeting.

## Membership Renewal Time!

HAC's membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st, so if you have not paid in the last few weeks it's time to renew. See below for a link to the membership page on the HAC web site, or bring your payment to one of this month's events.

To join HAC or renew your membership, visit our membership page.

HAC is a chapter of the American Humanist Association, a member of the Connecticut Coalition of Reason, and a UU Humanists local group.

© 2023, the Humanist Association of Connecticut  
c/o USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden CT 06517-2214