



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

# The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

July 2010



CSH Affiliate

## *A God In Which I Do Not Believe*

*P.J. Deak returns with the Story of Abner Kneeland, Blasphemy and the History of Free Thought in America*

In Boston in the 1830's, a de-frocked Universalist-Minister-turned-"atheist"-lecturer named Abner Kneeland was accused by his contemporaries of being "a hoary-headed apostle of Satan"; his magazine, "The Boston Investigator," was referred to as "a lava stream of blasphemy and obscenity which blasts the vision and gangrenes the very soul of the uncorrupted reader"; his lectures for the Society For Free Enquiry were dubbed "infidel orgies" by the popular press and a prosecuting attorney in the courts of Boston argued that "if Kneeland were not punished, marriages [would be] dissolved, prostitution made easy and safe, moral and religious restraints removed, property invaded and the foundations of society broken up."

In a nation where "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" are espoused as our most precious values, what could one man possibly believe that would bring the wrath of American society down upon him with such fervor? And why were 2,000 people filling the Federal Street Theater in Boston every Sunday and Wednesday to hear him speak? Find out on July 19 when P.J. Deak introduces Abner Kneeland — a progressive thinker who helped open the doors of social tolerance in 19th century America and pre-dated the Humanist Manifesto by 100 years.

Join us at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden on Monday, July 19. Coffee and conversation starts at 7:30 p.m. followed by P.J. Deak's presentation at 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend!

## *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).

### JULY, 2010

Sat., 3	Humanist Conversations: Belief	2:30 p.m.
Sun., 4	Barbeque at Crystal Lake, 100 Livingston Road in Middletown	Noon to 4:00p.m.
Mon., 5	Social Dinner at Equinox Diner, 285 Boston Post Rd, Orange. (203) 298-4100	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 10	Documentary by Ken Burns on Mark Twain	POSTPONED
Sat., 17	David Schafer: "The Historicity of Jesus and Early Christianity: A Historical, Scientific, Scholarly, and Critical Examination" (part 4)	2:00 to 5:00p.m.
Mon., 19	Monthly Meeting	7:30 p.m.
	<b>Main program:</b> P.J. Deak presents "A God in Which I Do Not Believe"	8:00 p.m.
Sun., 25	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Thu., 29	Social dinner, Michel Angelo's Pizzeria, 825 Cromwell Ave., Rocky Hill. (860) 257-3136	7:00 p.m.

### AUGUST, 2010

Sun., 1	Book Discussion: Paul Robeson: A Biography	3:00 to 5:00p.m.
Mon., 2	Social Dinner at Circle Diner Restaurant, 441 Post Rd, Fairfield. (203) 255-9177	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 7	Humanist Conversations: TBA	2:30 p.m.
Sat., 14	David Schafer: "The Historicity of Jesus and Early Christianity: A Historical, Scientific, Scholarly, and Critical Examination" (part 5)	2:00 to 5:00p.m.
Mon., 16	Monthly Meeting	7:30 p.m.
	<b>Main program:</b> David Schafer presents "Absolute Infidel, Absolute Nomad"	8:00 p.m.
Thu., 26	Social dinner, Michel Angelo's Pizzeria, 825 Cromwell Ave., Rocky Hill. (860) 257-3136	7:00 p.m.
Sun., 29	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.

[WWW.CTHUMANIST.ORG](http://WWW.CTHUMANIST.ORG)

## *Historical Jesus?*

In our last session we learned how the "Four Gospels" of the Christian New Testament were chosen from a large and highly diverse pool of candidate gospels, and how they related to each other, in time and in content. In this session we'll pick up at that point, compare passages from the Four Gospels, and see what happened next. Join us Saturday, July 17, at 2:00 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in the Social Hall. Come and bring a friend!

## *Conversations: Belief*

Join us Saturday, July 3, at 2:30 p.m. in the library at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden when we will watch a short video of Michael Shermer explaining how the human tendency to believe strange things boils down to two of the brain's most basic, hard-wired survival skills. He explains what they are, and how they get us into trouble. We'll discuss what this has to do with the Fourth of July.

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

**Email List**

To join, send an email addressed to [hac-announce-request@cthumanist.org](mailto:hac-announce-request@cthumanist.org) with the subject **subscribe**.

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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 everyone who contributed to this issue.

***Twain Video Postponed***

We will announce a new date and time in our next newsletter.

***“Paul Robeson: A Biography”***

Our next book discussion will be on Sunday, August 1, 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. The book we will be reading is “Paul Robeson: A Biography” by Martin Baum Duberman. Note that a paperback edition of the same book is titled “Paul Robeson: A Biography (Lives of the Left)”. Lots of copies are available in Connecticut public libraries as well as in book stores and online. (Browse for libraries at: <http://www.iconn.org>)

Martin Duberman is Distinguished Professor of History at the City University of New York and the author of some twenty books.

Enthralling. . . A marvelous story marvelously told. — *The Washington Post*

A massive classic deserving of the biggest audience for black literature since *Roots*. — *Kirkus Reviews*

A superb biography....History written in the grand narrative tradition. — *The New York Times Book Review*

It will rank among the finest biographies of any twentieth-century American figure — *The Nation*

This big, engrossing, empathetic biography by distinguished historian-playwright Duberman is a major act of cultural restoration. — *Publishers Weekly*

***Barbeque: 7/4***

Brian Ditter and Tara McLaughlin invite HAC to a barbecue and pot luck Sunday, July 4, noon to 4:00 pm at Crystal Lake Park, 100 Livingston Rd. Middletown.

Please RSVP by phone: Brian Ditter: (860) 262-1291, (860) 704-0439 or Tara McLaughlin: (860) 545-5065.

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

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

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 mi. turn left at Millbrook Rd. (there's a traffic light and a fire station on your left). In 1.4 mi turn right onto Livingston Rd. and then turn right into the park.

From 84: Take I-691 E toward Meriden and continue onto CT-66 (eastbound). In 2.0 miles turn right onto CT-147 S. In 2.3 miles turn right and continue on CT-147 and CT-157. In 2.5 miles the road takes a sharp left (Middlefield Rd.). At the end of the road, turn right onto CT-17 (Main St.) and then take your first left onto Haddam Quarter Rd. In 1.7 mi. turn left at Arbutus St. In 1.4 mi. bear right onto Livingston Rd. The entrance to the park will be on your left in 0.6 mi.

**MEMBERSHIP**

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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Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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