



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CONNECTICUT

October 2007



CSH Affiliate

Remembering Rabbi Sherwin Wine (1928-2007)

Join us at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, October 15 at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden for a tribute to a remarkable man.

Our program for October will be dedicated to a celebration of the life and accomplishments of Rabbi Sherwin Wine, who was a featured speaker co-sponsored by UUs for Jewish Awareness and the HUUmanists at the recent UUA General Assembly, where his topic was "A Jewish Perspective on the Future of Humanism." Tragically, less than a month later he was fatally injured in a taxicab accident in Morocco while on vacation. We will honor this great leader.

Sherwin Wine recognized that most people adopt their religious views early in life, and continue to adhere to them as adults largely out of respect for their parents, and other elders and their cultural traditions. Having grown up in a Conservative family, he then studied to become a Reform rabbi, but eventually became uncomfortable with the supernatural elements. In 1965, he was quoted in Time magazine as saying "I find no adequate reason to accept the existence of a supreme person."

Nevertheless he continued to believe strongly in the importance of perpetuating what he saw as the best elements of the Jewish cultural traditions. From his congregation in a Detroit suburb he gathered around him a loyal nucleus of eight families of

Calendar of Events

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT. RSVP for dinners at humanism.meetup.com.

OCTOBER, 2007

Sat., 6	Humanist Conversations: Presentation on Loyal Rue's book, <i>Religion is Not About God</i>	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 8	Social Dinner at Pasta Fair, 262 Boston Post Road, Orange. (203) 799-9601 for directions.	7:00 p.m.
Mon., 15	Monthly meeting Main program: Remembering Rabbi Sherwin Wine (1928-2007)	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Sun., 21	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Thu., 25	Hartford-Area Dinner at Lemongrass, 7 South Main Street, West Hartford. (860) 233-4405.	7:00 p.m.
Sat., 27	Book Group: <i>The Fundamentals of Extremism: The Christian Right in America</i> . Kimberly Blaker, ed.	2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER, 2007

Sat., 3	Humanist Conversations: TBA	2:30 p.m.
Mon., 12	Social Dinner at Pasta Fair, 262 Boston Post Road, Orange. (203) 799-9601 for directions.	7:00 p.m.
Mon., 19	Monthly meeting Main program: TBA	7:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
Sun., 25	Board meeting	2:30 p.m.
Thu., 29	Hartford-Area Dinner at Lemongrass, 7 South Main Street, West Hartford. (860) 233-4405.	7:00 p.m.

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like-minded Jews to establish the humanistic Birmingham Temple. A few years later (1969) he founded the Society for Humanistic Judaism, based on preserving Judaism's highest ethical traditions and reverence for the value of each person, which today has some 10,000 members in 30 congregations.

In the 1980s he worked to advance cooperation among various humanist organizations, helping to found the North American Committee for Humanism. Recently Harvard University

selected as its second Humanist chaplain Rabbi Greg Epstein, a young man trained in Humanistic Judaism. In this and many other ways, Rabbi Sherwin Wine has truly left an indelible mark upon American Humanism.

Please join us on Monday, October 15 at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden. We will begin with a half-hour of conversation at 7:30 p.m. followed by the main program at 8:00 p.m. Come, bring a friend, and learn more about this amazing human being!

Conversations: Religion is Not About God

Join us for Humanist Conversations on Saturday, October 6 at 2:30 p.m. at 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden, when Cynthia Harvey will present some explanations and examples from the book *Religion is Not*

About God: How Spiritual Traditions Nurture Our Biological Nature and What to Expect when They Fail by Loyal Rue, Rutgers University Press, 2005.

"If religion is not about god, what is it about? It is about us.

... The purpose of this book is to show how the ideas, images, symbols, and rituals of religious traditions have been designed to engage and to organize human

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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: 120 copies. Annual subscription price \$10.00, included in membership.

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

Dinners

For this month's Hartford area dinner we will be returning to Lemongrass, a Thai restaurant at 7 South Main Street, West Hartford. Call (860) 233-4405 for directions. There's inexpensive on-street parking nearby.

Conversations — continued from front page...

neural systems." The thesis of this book is that religion can be naturalized. "Naturalism is a variant of metaphysical monism [which declares] that all meaningful distinctions pertain to observed or reasoned facts within a self-contained and continuous order of being. For the naturalist, the order of being is the order of nature..." "To naturalize religion is to provide explanations for religious phenomena that are consistent [E. O. Wilson] with our scientific explanations for other natural facts." So this writer is going to tell us what aspects of our human nature respond to religion or philosophy or other considerations we have about our experience of life.

We often talk about religion as though it is equivalent to the dogmas of religious organizations. Here is a study of the functions of religious ideas and practice from the perspective of utility to survival. Rue's terms for human achievements essential to survival are "personal wholeness and social coherence."

Refreshments will be served.

October Book Discussion

The next book we will read is *The Fundamentals of Extremism: The Christian Right in America* edited by Kimberly Blaker. (Most 2006 HAC members have received this book as a membership benefit, although members who haven't been to a meeting in a while may expect to find it in their mailbox this fall.) It is also available in bookstores and online. We will meet on Saturday, October 27, from 2:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike in Hamden.

This book comes very highly recommended.

The following quotes and information come from <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0972549617/humanistassoc-20>.

John Shelby Spong, best-selling author of *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*: "a blockbuster exposé of the activities of the Religious Right... This is ... a thorough analysis of a present crisis."

Richard Dawkins, Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University, author of *Unweaving the Rainbow*: "I have just read this brilliant book ... almost without a break, and I am stunned and horrified ..."

Nadine Strossen, President of American Civil Liberties Union, Professor of Law, New York Law School: "an especially important book for all who care about the rights and well-being of women and children."

Gerald A. Larue, Emeritus Professor and Religion Adjunct Professor at University of Southern California, author of *Playing God: Deciding Your Life and Death*: "In other words, this book is a 'must read' volume."

John M. Swomley, Emeritus Professor of Social Ethics, Saint Paul School of Theology, author of *Liberation Ethics*: "the most careful and devastating evaluation of the impact of fundamentalism ... ever produced in the United States..."

From *Cultic Studies Review*, **Frank MacHovec**: "This book is an encyclopedic indictment of the extreme Christian right, but ... can be applied to any extremist belief system."

From *San Antonio Current*, review by **Anjali Gupta**: "This book's authority hinges on meticulous documentation of a slow but tangible national shift... to an unabashedly apostolic theocracy."

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