



HUmanists News

Newsletter of the HUManists 2008 No. 1 P. O. Box 185202 Hamden, CT 06518-0202 203 281-6232

President's Corner: The Next 75 Years

This year we're celebrating the passage of three-quarters of a century since the appearance of the first Humanist Manifesto--in the May/June 1933 issue (Vol. 6, No. 3) of *The New Humanist*. The Manifesto was a kind of generalization of "religious" to encompass a new concept, "religious humanism." While this phrase has never become a household word, and many people still regard it as an oxymoron, it has made sense to a sizable group of Humanists who find meaning and satisfaction as members of a liberal "religious" congregation, e.g. Ethical, Judaic, Unitarian, or Universalist.

Unitarians and Universalists merged to create the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1961, and "religious humanism" was recognized in the same year by inclusion in *Webster's Third New International Unabridged Dictionary*. Two years later the Fellowship of Religious Humanists, "FRH," was formed by and primarily for Humanist UU ministers, and soon began to publish the journal *Religious Humanism*, which developed an international circulation. During the decades since, American society and the world have experienced a series of rapid changes, with new opportunities and challenges to this young organization. An influx of mostly non-Humanist laity and clergy from various denominations into the UUA made it seem at times as though UU Humanism was in overall decline, although there's been no real evidence that the total number of Humanists has diminished.

In response, FRH morphed into Friends of Religious Humanism and then, to emphasize its ongoing special relation with the UUA, into the HUManists Association, a grass-roots network of UU laity and clergy. New bylaws codifying these changes were adopted in 2001 at the Cleveland GA, and since then the organization has grown every year, from a membership of under 100 to a current list of over 800. Most of the increase has occurred at GAs--clearly not the most efficient process for promoting growth.

Our highly visible and successful presence at recent GAs has helped us in two important ways among those in attendance: by improving our relations with non-Humanists and by boosting the morale of Humanists. Our continued efforts in this arena are described below in information about the 2008 General Assembly. But we're also sure that significantly greater numbers of prospective HUManists will respond to effective local, district, and national advertising of our message and services. We know, too, that there is a hunger for modern Humanist-oriented and Humanism-compatible curricula for UUs and non-UUs of all ages, which a strong HUManists Association will be able to provide; and we want to encourage, create, publish, and distribute to individuals and libraries literature on all sorts of subjects of particular concern to UU Humanists.

Most exciting, perhaps, we've been experimenting on our website with the Plone open source content management system, in order to avoid, at least for the time being, the major additional costs of contracting with a professional website developer. We anticipate the release in the very near future, and steady improvement after that, of a newly dynamic site at www.humanists.org, with frequent news about local UU Humanism, prominent discussion in print of a variety of topics of special interest to UU Humanists, and before long, such attractive features as podcast interviews (we're practicing the techniques now). You won't want to let a week go by without visiting it.

Everywhere I go, I hear voices of encouragement and new confidence in the future of the Humanist movement. The outlook for the FRH/HUManists Association is clearly brighter today than it has ever been before. We hope before long to launch a capital development fund drive. In the past two years alone we've received well over \$140,000 in bequests from two estates. It's easy to see

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GA 2007 Report: “HUUmanism is Cool?”

A few of my UU ministerial colleagues lament that “we” have not provided our youth enough of a “spiritual grounding,” so they have drifted into “shallow atheism.” Having decided that HUUmanism, with its attendant stances of atheism, agnosticism and naturalistic mysticism, is the exclusive province of an aging cohort, they cannot reconcile themselves to a genuine interest in and commitment to honest disbelief, by the young.

But the religious humanism practiced by most UUs is not first and foremost about what is believed or not believed—it is about bringing a healthy skepticism to all matters social, ethical and theological. And skepticism is the home country of the young. That’s why I was not surprised to hear from several teen and young adult delegates to our Portland General Assembly in 2007, comments similar to this one, expressed by a young woman who, after being drawn in by the eye candy of our bumper stickers and buttons, said of our booth’s more intellectual content: “Oh, Yeah, Humanism... humanism’s cool!”

Cool we were, with huge photographic displays from the Hubble telescope, a former priest ready to tell the story of his “conversion” to atheism, and a giant pair of fuzzy dice, giving every visitor the chance to win books, memberships, and tchotchke. If it sounds like the carnival, well, the HUUmanists GA Booth is a combination of that and serious presentation of our specific approach to Unitarian Universalism. Competing with dozens of other organizations and vendors for the attention of four thousand delegates, a GA display must make a quick impression while people are walking past. Some folks do seek us out, but many, including the young, have to be intrigued first.

Jack Reich, Ross Henry and I lured people into conversation, and teased out their humanist sympathies. (Almost all UUs have a humanist somewhere inside!) Over five days we spoke to the better part of a thousand people. About a hundred joined. Twice that number purchased books and Journals, and still others a contribution towards free seminary subscriptions, and the still-rebuilding New Orleans UUs.

Why do the young respond to our “pitch?” Partly, it’s the basic common sense of our naturalistic, rational message. Partly because we have a ball doing it, and that sense of enjoyment is infectious. And part of it, I’m convinced, is generational. The sparse, logical liberal religion of the sixties that brought in people of my age was a perfect backdrop for the activism and metaphysical turmoil of our lives, but it often left our children wanting something more... “well... you know... spiritual.” They got their wish. Now the increasingly diverse and frequently imprecise mix of beliefs and practices that resulted has left their children dissatisfied, wanting something... “more rigorous... and... like... not so flaky.”

I’m reporting not exact quotes, but a pretty good paraphrase of what we’re increasingly hearing. Is every UU young person turning away from vague spirituality in favor of the tougher demands of rationality? No. But more and more are sounding as though their appreciation is growing. And I look forward to engaging them in conversation in Fort Lauderdale this June. If you are attending, please drop by the booth.

— Roger Brewin

President’s Corner *continuing from Page 1*

another 75 years of accelerating progress ahead for UU Humanism, led by a vigorous HUUmanists Association.

But hold on a minute! We’re talking about the future, not the past. Let’s not forget the most important part of the picture. The most essential element in this or any other organization is its members. That’s YOU. We think of you as an indispensable part of our team. This organization would not have gotten to its present position without YOU—your financial support, of course, but also your belief in what we are trying to do, to strengthen the UUA by strengthening Humanism within the UUA, and

your desire to help us make it happen. Your continued support and full participation, with your creative ideas; your suggestions; your criticisms; your word-of-mouth advertising; your local organizing, starting with twos and threes; your offering a few minutes of your time during the week; is the key to our future success. Humanism and Unitarian Universalism are a natural combination. With you behind us, we can’t lose. Surely now is the time for all of us to work together to make this organization everything it can be!

— David Schafer

HUUmanists Officers, Board, Others

Officers

<p>President Term Expires 2008 David E. Schafer</p>	<p>Secretary Term Expires 2008 Walter W. Wells</p>
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<p>Vice President Term Expires 2009 Wendy Jerome</p>	<p>Treasurer Term Expires 2009 William Miller</p>
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Board

Term Expires 2008
Kathleen D. Korb
Michael W. Werner

Term Expires 2009
Mary Louise DeWolf
(one vacancy)

Term Expires 2010
Gayle C. Walter
Lance Haworth

Others

Journal Editor
Roger Brewin

HUUmanists
News Editor
David E. Schafer

Past President
Stefan M. Jonasson

Board Changes for 2007-2008

At our annual meeting in Portland in 2007, Rev. Wendy Jerome was unanimously elected Vice President, replacing Rev. Sarah W. Oelberg, who was reluctantly permitted to retire after many years of dedicated service on the boards of FRH and the HUUmanists Association. Rev. Mary Louise DeWolf, minister of the Nature Coast UUs Inc. of Lecanto FL since 2003, was unanimously elected to fill the Board position previously held by Wendy. Rev. Carol A. Hepokoski resigned, citing her significant new duties as minister of the 370-member First UU Church of Rochester, Minnesota, and has not yet been replaced.

HUUmanists Treasurer's Report

January 1, 2007 - June 16, 2008

Please note: We have brought this report up to the present month primarily in order to show current bank balances. Accordingly the following is a preliminary summary of total income and operating expenses for most of the past 1½ years, based on accurate bank account records. Except for income and expenses from GA 2008 it covers most of the largest expenses of two calendar years. We believe that the most meaningful time for a comprehensive, accurate overlook will come at the end of the third quarter of 2008, when these data will have become available, and when we expect to commission a final report from a professional accounting firm, T. M. Byxbee Company PC, of Hamden, Connecticut. At that time we will communicate fully transparent details of all income and expenses to all HUUmanists members and other concerned parties.

NEW BEQUESTS (January-April 2007)

From Metzger estate (balance).....	\$21,336
From Zingale trust.....	\$61,300

INCOME AND EXPENSES (Checking account)

January 1, 2007-May 31, 2008

Income plus \$10,000 transfer	\$28,282
Expenses	
Checks	\$21,308
Other (e.g., debit card)	\$13,069
Total Expenses	\$34,377

NET LOSS (Income minus Expenses)..... **(\$6,095)**

BALANCES ON HAND

As of January 1, 2007
(most transferred to CD, below)..... **\$63,162**

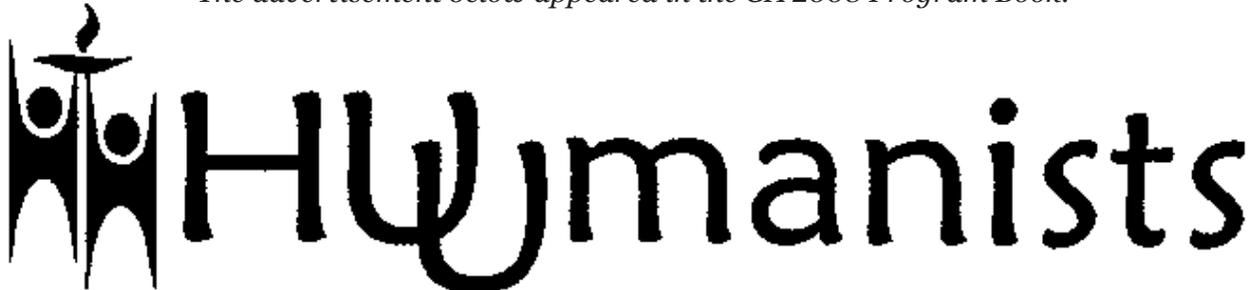
As of June 16, 2008

Checking account	12,699
Money market account	20,510
Fixed CD (currently 4.46%).....	104,171

Total as of June 16 **\$137,380**

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Miller *David Schafer*
Treasurer President

The advertisement below appeared in the GA 2008 Program Book.

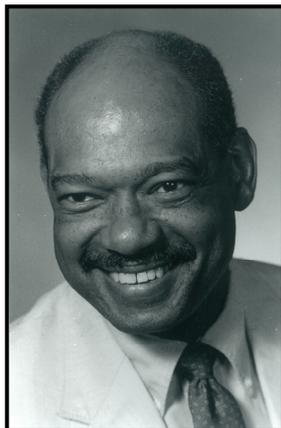


HUUmanists

HUUmanists LUUncheon and Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. – Embassy Suites Hotel

Join David Schafer, President of HUUmanists, and other Humanists from across North America for a buffet lunch followed by a brief annual general meeting, during which we will reflect upon the state of Humanism in the UUA and transact necessary business. (No charge for lunch but donations welcome!)



Is God a White Racist? A Scholar's Legacy

Saturday, 1:30-2:45 p.m. – Embassy Suites Hotel

Since the 1973 publication of his book *Is God a White Racist?* (Beacon Press reissue, 1997) Dr. William R. Jones has left a powerful impression on African American Theology, Humanism, and Unitarian Universalism. A panel of scholars and ministers will explore the manifold implications of his work for UUs today: Dr. Anthony Pinn, Professor of Humanities and Religious Studies, Rice University; D. Sharon Welch, Provost and Professor of Religion and Society, Meadville/Lombard Theological School; Rev. Archene Turner, Coordinator of Youth Ministries, Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda, Maryland; and Rev. Dr. Carol Hepokoski, Minister, First UU Church, Rochester, Minnesota. Rev. Dr. William Sinkford, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, will join us.

“Our Day is Just Beginning”

— Rev. Kenneth L. Patton

The advertisement below appeared in the GA 2008 Program Book.

Strengthening the UUA through a more active and effective Humanism

Gaia, Living Earth, and Nietzsche's "Pox Called Man"

Saturday, 3:15-4:30 p.m. – Convention Center Floridian ABC

Was Nietzsche right? In truth, we humans are making Gaia dreadfully sick, and we increasingly wield the power to render Her completely uninhabitable, for many other exquisite living species and for ourselves. Gaia is unforgiving. If we continue to amass wastes and waste resources, can our extinction be far off? Dr. Lynn Margulis is a distinguished professor of biology and co-developer of the Gaia Hypothesis. *Co-sponsored by HUUmanists and UU Religious Naturalists.*



Reaching the Unchurched from Harvard's Secular Cathedral

Saturday, 5:00-6:15 p.m. – Convention Center Grand Floridian A

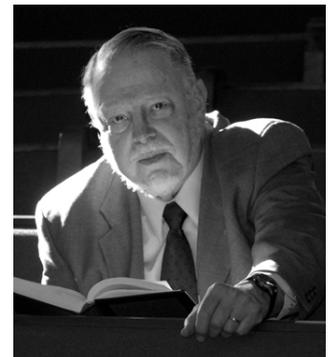
One in five 18-to-25-year-olds is atheist, agnostic or non-religious. Greg Epstein, Harvard's Humanist Chaplain, has made waves successfully targeting this audience. Now he wants to put chaplains for them on every college campus. Join him in asking: How can Unitarian Universalists' message of liberal religion best connect with these young adults? *Co-sponsored by HUUmanists and UUs for Jewish Awareness.*

Join Us in Strengthening Humanism in the UUA

Visit our display in the exhibit hall—Booth 623—HUUmanists, The Humanist Institute and the American Humanist Association invite you to visit our joint display in the exhibit hall, where you can join HUUmanists, subscribe to *religious humanism*, purchase back issues and books, learn about Humanist higher education or simply chat with folks of like mind. This is the gathering place for all Humanists throughout General Assembly!

Join us as a member of HUUmanists and help us promote and strengthen Humanism throughout the Unitarian Universalist Association. Membership includes a subscription to the journal *religious humanism*. (Membership rates: \$50 per year; \$90 for two years; students, \$20 per year. Ask about our GA discount!)

David Schafer, President ♦ 27 Thornton St., Hamden, CT 06517
(203) 281-6232 ♦ deschafer@comcast.net



The Humanist Institute

Do you wish to learn more about the depth and breadth of Humanism? The Humanist Institute, a program that prepares students to spread the message of Humanism, is accepting applications for its Sixteenth Class.

Join fellow Humanists to learn about the history, philosophy, and organizational structuring of Humanism; what it means to be an ethical human; the variety of humanist ideas in world religions; what constitutes humanist leadership; critical thinking and the methods and uses of science; issues in contemporary culture; aesthetics and humanist celebrations.

The Institute's faculty includes some of today's leading Humanist thinkers. Students come from the American Humanist Association, American Rationalist Federation, Council for Secular Humanism, the Ethical Cultural movement, Society for Humanistic Judaism and Unitarian Universalist congregations—as well as from fields such as teaching, social work, business, medicine, and law.

**Apply now for the Sixteenth Class
beginning
August 13-17, 2008
at the
New York Society for Ethical Culture**



You will attend three sessions a year
for three years
and
earn a certificate at the end.
Significant readings are involved.

Mentors of the Sixteenth Class



Fred Edwords

is currently director of communications for the American Humanist Association, headquartered in Washington DC, an organization he has been with for over 30 years in such capacities as chapter leader, editor, and executive director. Fred is a graduate of The Humanist Institute.



Alicia Forsey McNary

is a Professor of History at the Graduate Theological Union at Starr King for the Ministry at Berkeley and an interim minister with the UUA. Alicia is a member of the Humanist Institute Adjunct Faculty.

For More Information

Please visit Booth 623 at:

2008 UUA General Assembly
June 25-29, 2008
Fort Lauderdale, FL

or please contact:

NACH/The Humanist Institute
c/o Kristin Steinberg, Administrator
PMB #220, 8014 Olson Memorial Hwy
Golden Valley, MN 55427-4712

Email: manager@humanistinstitute.org

Fax: 763-545-8943

or go to:

www.humanistinstitute.org

The Humanist Institute admits students of any race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, or school-administered programs.

Do you like what you see? The preceding three ads refer to our activities at GA 2008. They illustrate the scope of our program and the ways we are cooperating with other Humanist organizations and other UU organizations to create the best possible programs at General Assembly. If you support continued activities such as these, please consider renewing your membership or subscription, using the form on the facing page.



BECOME A MEMBER/SUBSCRIBE
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION

CHECK ONE of the following options. Indicate the desired term of your option by circling the number of years.

OPTION 1. Membership.
\$50.00 / 1 year OR \$90.00 / 2 years

Membership includes subscription to the *Religious Humanism* journal, newsletter, interactive website and e-mail, special offers, and full voting privileges.

OPTION 2. Subscription
to *Religious Humanism* journal.
\$22.00 / 1 year OR \$40.00 / 2 years

OPTION 3. Student Membership.
\$25.00 / 1 year

Student Membership includes the same benefits as the Membership above, but for a reduced fee.

I am a student at (institution and location):

PLEASE PRINT your information below.

Name:

E-mail address:

Mailing address (street/P.O. box, etc.):

My congregation is:

For my membership/subscription of \$ _____

and a tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____

I attach a check for \$ _____

Complete this form by adding your signature:

MAIL THIS FORM with check or money order to:

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