

MACHAR, The Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism

SHABBAT CELEBRATIONS AND SPEAKERS January- June, 2008

Friday Evening Shabbat Celebrations- 7:30 pm; Speaker- 8:30 pm
Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda MD 20814

PROGRAM DETAILS

Friday, January 11

Teen-Led Shabbat & Teens Turn the Tables & Teach!

Lizzi W. and Jacob B., speakers

Machar's Teen Group will lead our first Shabbat service of 2008, adding their own creative touches. Two of last year's b'nei mitsvah students, Lizzi W. and Jacob B., will give encore presentations of their talks. Lizzi will speak on the Dada protest art movement, its Jewish members, and its relationship to the values of Secular Humanistic Judaism. Jacob will compare the ethics and other features of Buddhism and Judaism, discussing why many Jews explore Buddhism while maintaining their Jewish identity and values.

Friday, February 8

Eroding Rights, Emerging Evidence: Abortion in the United States

Jonathan Wittenberg

Few issues are as fraught with controversy—or misinformation—as abortion. With the Supreme Court increasingly hostile to the rights enshrined in *Roe v Wade*, reproductive freedom in the crosshairs in many states, and “junk science” from social conservatives on the rise, sound scientific evidence is critical to preserving access to abortion. Jonathan Wittenberg, Director of Development at the Guttmacher Institute, a reproductive health think tank, will present new research on abortion and its implications for ongoing policy debates. Jonathan was Machar's first B'nei Mitzvah!

Friday, March 7

Shabbat Celebration- 7:30 pm; followed by Potluck Dinner/ discussion.

We will meet in the Chalice House of Cedar Lane UU Church for this Shabbat evening.

Our Shabbat Celebration will draw from readings in our new Shabbat Celebration book to take a look at perceptions of Jewish identity.

Coming Out of the Closet as Secular: How? When?

Brenda Platt, facilitator

Atheists are among the most hated and distrusted minority groups in America. As a result many of us tend to hide our secular beliefs from extended family, neighbors, co-workers, and others. Should we? Need tips on what to say when *[fill in the blank]*? At this interactive and designed-to-be-entertaining potluck dinner, participants at tables will be given one or more challenge situations to discuss. During dessert, we'll have fun sharing the best response ideas.

Friday, April 11

Humanism vs. Mere Atheism

Edd Doerr

Humanism and mere atheism are not the same. Humanism is a naturalistic life stance concerned with ethics, social justice, compassion, community and making our world better for all. Mere atheism is negative. Edd Doerr, president of Americans for Religious Liberty (founded by Sherwin Wine) and former president of the American Humanist Association, has been active in the humanist movement for 60 years. He is the author of over 3,500 published books, articles, book and film reviews, short stories, poems, letters, and translations.

Our Shabbat Celebration will include readings that speak to the Humanist philosophy that shapes us as Jews.

Friday, May 2

Yom HaShoah Shabbat

Followed by Herb Silverman, speaker

Come join the Social Action Committee on this special Shabbat to consider the lessons that should have been learned from our own Holocaust about the ethnic, racial, and religious barriers that divide groups and often lead to war and genocide. Special guest Herb Silverman, President of the Secular Coalition for America, will discuss the dangers of a focus on religion that divides groups and alienates non-theists, and the importance of putting aside religion to join together in the common task of building a better society.

Friday, June 6

While we can't know how Albert Einstein would have celebrated Shabbat, our celebration will address some of the questions that he might have found interesting.

Einstein and God

Ed Goldin

Born to Jewish but secular parents, Einstein resonated positively to religious exposure. As a teenager, he found science and moved away from religious dogma. In the public spotlight he expressed quasi-deistic ideas about religion which drew strong reactions from some conservative religious quarters. Throughout the rest of his life, Einstein held true to his respect for Spinoza's God and his own personal concepts of a cosmic religion. Machar member Ed Goldin is a professor of physics, teaching at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, affiliated with American University.