

AMERICAN ATHEISTS OF CONNECTICUT

Special Issue

1991 Convention Information

Seventh Annual Regional Atheist Meeting

Each year in August, atheists in the northeastern United States gather in volume for a one day event that has come to be known as RAM under the sponsorship of the Connecticut Chapter, together with the co-operation of the national office in Austin, Texas. Travelling from afar away as upper New Jersey, eastern New York State, New York City, and upper New England, we assemble for several reasons, one of them being the obtainment of information that will be carried back to our individual communities for use in our (however rebuffed) exertions to counter the unblushing influence of religion on the process of law-making or law-revision, on the maintenance of sectarian traditions in public places, and on the demand for atheists rights.

In Connecticut, for example, a bill designed to clarify and enlarge the scope of advance medical directive statutes was written in part by a member of the Connecticut Hemlock Society. Unhappily, this most humanely oriented bill was cut to pieces by a joint judiciary and public health services committee. Behind the scene could be heard the flapping of indignant wings by the anti-abortion lobbyists, who suspect a causal link between beginning-and-end of life promulgations, holding that, even with iron-clad safeguards against abuse, a lovingly administered euthanasia must lead with dead certainty to a recurrence of those mass executions experienced in Germany and elsewhere during the dictator years. Thanks to religiously trained secretaries, from this ill-advised misconstruction flows a legislative piece that will present to neither patient nor health care provider an unambiguous, straightforward program for dealing with death distinguished by gentleness and compassion.

Unlike the votaries of christianity, this region's atheists visit no meeting houses along a strip like Albany Avenue in Hartford, where church stands virtually next door to church in unrelieved monotony. Within an uncongenial setting of steeples, carillon chimes, and Sunday morning gridlock, to be the one and only atheist constrains to a carriage in insularity. Exclusive of those few who adopt an eremitic or reclusive life-style, each atheist remains nevertheless a social creature with longing for intellectually agreeable companionship. To national and regional conventions gravitates that far larger contingent which would embrace this important aspect of fellowship.

Mr. Jon. G. Murray, President of American Atheists, has indicated that he will be present. We look forward to Mr. Murray's arrival. Three other speakers have been engaged: Retired naval officer, Arpad Toth, tenders the keynote address. Commander Toth, Professor emeritus of Computer Science at Keene State College is the chapter director in New Hampshire, where a lively, assertive atheist organization prospers. Some of you will remember George Whitney, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, for it was he who delivered the keynote lecture at RAM II. Convinced that humor is one of the better ways to expose the infirmities of religion, Dr. Whitney, will, I am sure, spike his rhetoric with a ration of comic anecdotes. Last, but definitely not least, the addressee at Last Place, Tuxedo Park N.Y. and our third addressor, Michael Last, recipient of this year's outstanding atheist award must be hailed as one of our nation's most vocal, insistent, and (believe it or not) successful political activists.

From mid-afternoon onward, the remaining time will be allocated to the formation of and participation in intimate discussion circles together with chairperson reports as a follow-up.

Please try to register early! This procedure relieves anxiety and enhances the prospect for a plenary tabulation of registrants.

Franklin Marshall, Director
Connecticut Chapter, American Atheists