

# Farmington Observer

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## Father of humanism welcomes flock

By MARY GNIEWEK

The first weekend of May, 200 followers of Humanistic Judaism will meet in Farmington Hills to study the philosophy that had its roots here.

The Society for Humanistic Judaism's annual conference is heading home to the Birmingham Temple where the movement was founded in 1953 by Rabbi Sherwin Wine.

Representatives from 11 congregations in North America are expected to discuss Jewish survival. One of the topics will be conversion, another is the future of Jewishness.

Wine, an author, lecturer and leader of the Birmingham Temple congregation, believes that a quarter of all Jews in the world are humanists whether they belong to a temple or not.

As a young rabbi in a reform Jewish congregation, Wine felt a swell of discontent in himself and other Jews who couldn't be satisfied by traditional Jewish doctrine.

With beliefs to the left of the most liberal degree of Judaism, he established the first humanist temple in the world on Twelve Mile Road between Inkster and Middlebelt.

Membership has grown from eight to 400 families.

**"We are people oriented. We don't deny the existence of God, but we don't have information from him. We have information from people."**

— Rabbi Sherwin Wine

Wine calls humanism a fourth alternative to orthodox, conservative and reform Judaism. It differs from the others because it's human oriented, not God oriented.

ITS INSIGNIA, sculpted on the well manicured grounds of the temple, is an Adam, the Hebrew symbol for humanity.

"We are people oriented," Wine says. "We don't deny the existence of God, but we don't have information from him. We have information from people."

About the movement, he says "A lot of people like it, but it generates a lot of hostility. All new ideas generate both if they're important."

Not one to sidestep controversy, Wine last year publicly blasted the Rabbinical Commission of metropolitan Detroit for ensuring him for hosting a public forum for Jewish journalist I.F. Stone, an advocate of Palestinian autonomy.

Even today, other rabbis are cautious to express their views about Wine or humanism. Rabbi Richard Hertz of Temple Beth El in Birmingham, where Wine was once an assistant rabbi, would not comment.

"I don't want to say anything for the newspaper on that topic. I'm sorry," he said.

Despite a sometimes cool reception from his peers, Wine is in constant demand on the lecture circuit.

"We discover truth through human reason. We value our cultural identity as our Jewish identity," he said.

In his book, Humanistic Judaism, Wine calls Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, and Theodore Herzl "round-liberate prophets of Humanistic Judaism."

ON A BEHAVIORAL level, Wine says Humanistic Judaism represents more American Jews than the

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## Students speak out on policies during 'round table' discourse

By MARY GNIEWEK

On Monday, students from the three district high schools joined School Superintendent Lewis Schulman, administrators and a few members of the Farmington Board of Education to talk about graduation requirements and Title IX.

It was an informal meeting with banter back and forth and a noontime break for lunch, but the so-called Student Round Table has become somewhat of an institution in the Farmington school district.

Board of Education Secretary Helen Pritlow says it's a great way to get input from students while they're still a part of the system. Though the round table is an advisory group, she says it adds insight on numerous education-related areas.

Once a month meetings are held in the school district's administrative building, 3250 Shawwassee, Farmington, North Farmington and Harrison high schools each have four student delegates.

Tammy York, a Harrison senior who chairs the meetings, was appointed by

the other students last fall. Ms. York also has a permanent place and nameplate at regular board of education meetings.

"The concept of the round table is to provide for an exchange of ideas and suggestions between students, administrators and board members," says Lynn Nutter, assistant superintendent of instruction who's in charge of the program.

MICHAEL SHPIECE, current president of the board of education was president of the student round table while a student at Harrison. The makeup of this year's round table is predominantly female and college bound.

Monday they debated the current one year math requirement in high schools, but there was no student debate about the Harrison proposal calling for two years of humanities.

Instead, administrators discussed the issue which has been gaining support for the past two months. Jerry Potter, principal at Farmington High who chaired the committee which quashed the Harrison proposal, said a study of the Class of 1979 at Farmington shows

each student took a practical or fine arts class in the senior year.

"Most take a combination of both," he said. "Yes, they should have everything, but there's not enough hours in the day."

Schulman asked the student repre-

sentatives how they feel about the district's philosophy of requiring a minimum number of classes to allow a maximum number of choices. Only one responded.

"I think it's important to have a mixture," said Ms. York. "After introduc-

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## Taxation forum being sponsored

State Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington, will sponsor a public forum on taxation at 7 p.m. May 1 at the Farmington Community Library on Twelve Mile, west of Orchard Lake.

"This forum will give the residents of the 44th district the opportunity to learn more about the current property tax proposals, several of which will undoubtedly appear on the November ballot," he says.

"I think the exchange of information and ideas will be mutually beneficial, and I'm anxious to hear the views of Farmington taxpayers."

The general property tax will be one of the main topics of discussion at the forum.

Brotherton said he will also discuss the homesteaded property tax credits which permit most homeowners and renters to claim a credit against their state income tax liability.



George Fomin, a North Farmington High School student, discusses an issue during a student round table meeting. (Staff photo)

## Kennedy's sister primes local Democrats

By JACKIE KLEIN

Kennedy campaigned in Southfield last Saturday, looking tall and slender in a navy blue knit suit.

It wasn't Sen. Edward Kennedy who was smiling, making speeches, answering questions and shaking hands. It was his sister, Jean Kennedy Smith, who was stumping for the presidential candidate, flanked by local Democratic Party workers.

Mrs. Smith talked to a gathering of area Democrats Saturday, most of them pro-Kennedy, at the home of former Southfield councilman Martin Hollander and his wife Jean. She also visited the home of former Farmington Hills city council member Joanne Smith.

The senator, according to campaign

workers, is expected to be in the Detroit area before Michigan Democrats meet in caucus Saturday. Delegates will be choosing 141 delegates to their national convention.

The reason for the caucuses — one to be in Kennedy campaign headquarters on Eight Mile in Southfield — is that national party rules prohibit primaries like Michigan's in which non-Democrats may vote.

What Mrs. Smith lacks in knowledge of Michigan's wobbly economy, other technical issues and political savvy, she more than compensates for in charm, apparent sincerity and enthusiasm about her lone surviving brother. She did not discuss the Chappaquiddick incident's effect on Kennedy's quest for office.

"Teddy is surrogate father to Ethel's 11 kids, Jackie's two children, among 27 nieces and nephews, and three aging sisters, including me," Mrs. Smith said in opening remarks at the Hollander home.

"MY BROTHER has had a number of personal problems. His son had a leg amputated because of cancer. But he's a wonderful boy and he's campaigning for Teddy in Michigan. Teddy was in a plane crash and spent seven months in a hospital. He wasn't expected to walk again, but his problems have made him even stronger and more courageous."

Kennedy, who has been in the Senate for 18 years, is committed to human programs which are the heart of the Democratic Party, Mrs. Smith said. He is concerned about the elderly and their

meals on wheels, the young and the war against cancer, she said, adding that Kennedy has introduced 40 health bills since taking political office.

"Teddy isn't a big spender," she maintained. "He has a strong commitment to minorities, persons on fixed incomes, the handicapped, laborers and middle-income families. He's not committed to giant oil companies and the American Manufacturers' Association or their lobbyists."

"My brother has great concern for inflation which is climbing to 20 percent and the crises in Iran and Afghanistan. He advocates wage and price controls, less dependence on oil and gas rationing. He believes the county must make sacrifices and live through many changes in the coming years."

President Jimmy Carter's proposed budget cuts would hurt a number of human programs and would reduce inflation by only a fraction of a percent, Mrs. Smith contended. A windfall profits tax would be better, she said.

LITERATURE distributed by Kennedy campaign workers charged Carter with being responsible for the 12 percent unemployment and 18 percent "misery rates" in Michigan.

In response to questions, Mrs. Smith emphasized Kennedy will remain in the race and expects to do well in primaries and win the nomination and election.

"Don't ask me anything hard," Mrs. Smith quipped, deferring some questions to Aldo Vagnozzi, 17th District Chairman of the Kennedy campaign and chairman of the Farmington Democratic Club.

But Mrs. Smith responded to a question on what Kennedy would do about the crisis in Iran.

"He would bring the hostages home," Mrs. Smith replied. "Carter should have enlisted the support of our allies before acting unilaterally. Teddy would exhaust all diplomatic means, involve allied countries and use war as a last resort."

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## Legislature eyes rape victim rights

State Senator Doug Ross, D-Oak Park, and State Rep. Raymond Hood, D-Detroit, have introduced legislation which would prohibit police officials and prosecutors from requesting or requiring polygraph examinations for rape victims.

"It is totally inappropriate to give lie detector test to victims of rape," says Hood.

"Other victims of crime aren't asked to take such a test, so why single out rape victims?"

Ross, whose district includes Farmington, Farmington Hills and Southfield, says that lie detector tests aren't always reliable.

"A victim of rape will be suffering from extreme emotional stress, which may mean that the test results are even less reliable," he says.

Polygraphs cannot be used as evidence in court. But they are often used to decide whether or not to prosecute, according to the legislators.

"The decision to prosecute should be based on the circumstances and the evidence and not on some mechanical interrogation of the victim," says Hood.

Although state law provides that polygraphs are strictly voluntary, a prosecutor or law enforcement official who refuses to take further action until the victim submits to the examination is making it almost impossible for the victim to refuse, says Hood.

"Rape is a crime of violence," says Ross. "However, because it is associated with a sexual act, the violent nature of the offense is sometimes discounted."

"If other persons are physically assaulted, they aren't asked to take a test to see if they are lying or if somehow they may have deserved to be attacked, but this attitude seems to be all too prevalent in rape cases."