



THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

April 2014

A Membership Chapter of the American Humanist Association

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/>

<http://hsnm.wordpress.com>

zelda@amadorbooks.com

HSNM Meetings in Albuquerque

HSNM meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

Saturday, April 12

HSNM Informal Meeting 10:15 AM - 12:15 PM

For HSNM members and their guests. For invitation or questions, please contact Zelda Gatuskin at 505-344-6102.

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE.

Refreshments provided.

Saturday, April 19

HSNM Topical Discussion 10:00 AM - Noon

"If Corporations Are People, Can We Execute Them in Texas?"

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, April 26

HSNM Speaker Meeting 10:00 AM - Noon

"Grassroots Organizing - Finding Unity Among Activists"

Joel Gallegos, ANSWER Coalition

Free and open to the public

Botts Hall, Special Collections Library

423 Central Ave. NE, Albuquerque

Humanist Minute: TBA

Meetings by HSNM Affiliates are held throughout the month.

For more information please visit their websites.

New Mexicans for Science and Reason (www.nmsr.org)

First Unitarian HUmanist Group

(<http://www.uuabq.org/classes.html>, 505-344-8930)

Freedom from Religion Albuquerque

(<http://www.meetup.com/FFRABQ/>)

Santa Fe Atheist Community

(<http://www.meetup.com/Santa-Fe-Atheist-Community>)

Roswatheists (<http://www.meetup.com/Roswatheists>)

President's Message

by Zelda Gatuskin

We've heard many stories about discriminatory backlashes, not to mention painful rejection by family and friends, following an admission that one is nonreligious. Nonetheless, I still strongly endorse the "honesty is the best policy" policy. If we do not feel we can be honest about our non-faith without repercussions, then the choices are simple: bite your tongue, or go for it and bear the consequences. Take these two situations:

1. Many of your coworkers are overtly religious. They wear their crucifixes proudly, pepper their talk with prayerful exclamations, and sometimes read the bible at lunch. The boss goes to the same church. You're sure that if you mention attending HSNM meetings and describe what we talk about, you will be shunned and possibly lose the job, which would be a serious hardship. To me, that's an easy call: Keep your mouth shut. Those who are talking about personal religious beliefs in a public/work setting are out of line. Do not be drawn in. Modeling the behavior we value

The Humanist Society of New Mexico

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association
Member of The New Mexico Coalition of Reason

The purpose of HSNM is to promote ethical, naturalistic, democratic Humanism among its members and within its community.

Officers/Committees

Zelda Gatuskin: President
Randall Wall: Vice President/Speaker Programs
Leland Franks: Past President
Richard Grady: Treasurer
Jerry Gilbert: Secretary/Membership
Ashley Jordan: Member-at-Large, Newsletter Editor

Subscription to HSNM Newsletter, published monthly, accompanies HSNM membership or can be obtained by nonmembers for \$20 annually, HSNM membership is \$20/year (\$30 for two adults in the same household. Send subscription or membership request to: Humanist Society of New Mexico, P.O. Box 27293, Albuquerque, NM 87125-7293. Send Newsletter submissions to: Editor, Ashley Jordan, AshleyNJordan@GMX.com or to Humanist Society of New Mexico, P.O. Box 27293, Albuquerque, NM 87125-7293. The deadline for Newsletter submissions is the third Friday of each month. Website submissions may be sent to president@humanistsocietyofnm.org. HSNM dues are now paid separately from AHA dues, visit www.americanhumanist.org for more information about the American Humanist Association.

Humanism is an ethical philosophy that derives its principles from science and reason rather than theology. It asserts the worth and dignity of every person, advocates personal liberty tempered by social and environmental responsibility, and promotes democracy, compassion, and justice. It sees human beings as natural organisms, whose values arise from culture and experience and holds humanity responsible for its own affairs.

in a secular society is not accommodation, it is rational and ethical. I can't imagine any employer firing someone for saying, "I prefer not to talk about personal things at work."

2. Your family appears to be unanimous about lifestyle, "values" (religion) and politics. They assume you agree with their ideas, which you actually think are abhorrent, intolerant and/or delusional. Saying so in so many words would be hurtful, and you don't want to hurt them. They probably don't want to hurt you either, but they do. Unless this is the equivalent of a job (i.e., you're counting on a family loan or inheritance), there is not much harm to come from explaining how you really think and feel. Yes, you can be "fired" (disowned, shut out) from your family. One of the most feared consequences of this is losing contact with young nieces, nephews and grandchildren. But look, these are your kin. If you don't know them well enough to pick and choose whom you can confide in safely, maybe missing out on the annual reunion wouldn't be such a great loss. Or, everyone could try to get to know each other better. Give them a chance to love you for who you are.

The hardest audience we ever have to perform for is our own family. Much is made about "coming out" on a public level, but the concern is often over just a few individuals - you may be comfortable sharing something with the *world*, but you don't want it to filter back to *them*. Have things out with these individuals. Or preemptively write them off and stop letting yourself be judged and undermined by them. This way, whatever you feel comfortable saying in public can't rebound on you in private.

How about that new acquaintance? They're wearing their six-pointed star and eagerly telling you about an upcoming religious festival. Will you chime in with equal enthusiasm about the humanist meeting you regularly attend? What about rolling your eyes and saying, "I'm not into that stuff," or "I don't believe in the supernatural"? What about just rolling your eyes? I didn't even realize I was making a funny face as a lovely new friend told me that the suffering in the world was a necessary component of the karmic cycle, in which one is reincarnated through a series of (hopefully) improved lives. I was speechless, and *not* nodding in agreement. She faltered. "Well, *I* believe in reincarnation, I don't know about you..." Right there, a little epiphany! I didn't need to say much more than, "I'm a skeptic," and

we shifted the conversation back to things we had in common.

I realized then that the reason I choose not to “confront” or “come out” with people one-on-one has little to do with fear of rejection. Their judgment is not important to me - but their feelings are. I find myself protecting them as one would a child. Poor dears couldn't handle being told there is no Tooth Fairy. In other words, I'm the one feeling superior. My elitist attitude is not so different from that of a true believer who condescends to tolerate us poor lost sheep.

People who respect each other are honest with each other. On the other hand, life is full of superficial interactions that do not need to be teachable moments or all-on-the-line revelations. It's fun to debate among ourselves whether to be passive or assertive nonbelievers, but personally, I just try to be matter-of-fact about it. We skeptics do not have a dark secret that will make us pariahs if revealed. We have the empathy, imagination and critical thinking capacities that all humans possess. We should also have the courage of our convictions.

April Speaker Meeting: “Grassroots Organizing - Finding Unity Among Activists”

Joel Gallegos, ANSWER Coalition

ANSWER stands for Act Now to Stop War and End Racism. It is a national coalition with many local chapters working on a range of issues. Learn about their philosophy, organizational structure and strategies, and what you can do to get involved.

Joel Gallegos is a student at UNM and an activist within the ANSWER Coalition. Joel will talk more about the many projects ANSWER have underway at the meeting.

HSNM to Offer Free First Year Membership to Graduating Secular Student Alliance Members

This year, HSNM will be instituting a new membership policy to help integrate graduating students from the university into our larger Humanist community. New graduates who were members of the Secular Student Alliance on campus will now be able to enjoy the benefits of membership to HSNM, including access to the newsletter and participating in meetings, for free for one year. We're hopeful that this will encourage members of the SSA to give our great group a try and bring in new long term membership for HSNM.

Concerning Refreshments

In April our Speaker Meetings move to Botts Hall at the Special Collections Library on Central and Edith. Food and beverages are not permitted inside Botts Hall, but a table can be set up in the little courtyard if we want to have refreshments during our break. If you think this is a good idea and can help make it happen, please contact Zelda, and we will form a team of volunteers to take care of the Speaker Meeting refreshments every month. We continue to ask members to sign up to bring snacks to our monthly Informal Meetings at the Peace Center, where coffee (brewed!) and tea are provided by HSNM, thanks to the efforts of Cynthianne Yabut. If you can help Cynthianne with the supplies and set-up at the Peace Center, please talk with her at an upcoming meeting or write to her at severinlattier@gmail.com.

Newsletter Submissions: We Take ‘Em!

Don't forget, you can always submit articles, artwork, poetry, responses, or announcements to the HSNM newsletter by emailing them to AshleyNJordan@gmx.com. Share your thoughts with the group and help keep the newsletter interesting and dynamic!

The Unholy Trinity Tour is Coming to Albuquerque!

Saturday, May 3, 2pm - 5pm

UNM Anthropology Building, Room #163

Sponsored by the New Mexico Coalition of Reason.

www.nmcor.org and www.facebook.com/NewMexicoCoR

Matt Dillahunty, AronRa and Seth Andrews were once believers in God, the spiritual and the supernatural. Today, they're atheist activists known worldwide.

Matt Dillahunty is host of “The Atheist Experience” television show at atheist-experience.com and served as President of the Atheist Community of Austin from 2006-2013. Matt co-founded the counter-apologetics website, ironchariots.org and is a frequent public speaker and debater.

AronRa is an atheist vlogger and activist. His videos focus on biology (with an emphasis on countering creationist claims), and advocating rationalism in science education. He also posts written material on his website LocoLobo. He is currently a co-host on the podcast “Dogma Debate” and serves as the Texas State Director of American Atheists.

Seth Andrews is a professional video producer and

former Christian broadcaster. In 2009, he founded the website, thethinkingatheist.com, a community which encourages viewers to reject faith and embrace critical thought. His videos "Afterlife," "The Story of Suzie" and many others have been seen worldwide, and his weekly radio podcast is downloaded 2 million times a month.

In this tongue-in-cheek-titled tour, Matt, Aron and Seth come together to share their stories, field your questions, have some fun and encourage all within earshot to pursue and embrace a personal relationship with reality.

American Humanist Association Annual Conference
Planning for the AHA's 2014 conference is underway. Book your rooms at the Sheraton Downtown Hotel in Philadelphia, PA before they're gone! Registration is open. Go to: <http://conference.americanhumanist.org/> to register and for regular updates on events! Join guests, former U.S. Congressman Barney Frank, Eugenie Scott, Jessica Valenti, Greg Graffin, and Natalie Angier and many more, great guest speakers!

Humanism and The Arts



"Forget Patriotism, Support Humanism"

The Graffiti Project

April 18, 2006

Have a piece of Humanist Art? Send it in and see it featured in the newsletter!

Bridge Counts Abridged

By Jean O'Hara

Life is like a bridge game-
You may be Little Old Lady or seek money or fame.
The question is not always whether to finesse for a queen or play for a drop.
But rather, whether 46 chromosomes enable appraisal of elusive 13 to determine the 9 crop.
Yea! 13 to open and 46 to live to grow up,
Bearing in mind that there are plenty of slips 'twixt the lip and the cup
Now, go to the "fault is not in the stars, Brutus," but in the cards.
Remember, any human counts 13 and 46 without being one of the kings or the bards.
A spade is a spade and likewise, a heart, diamond and versatile club-
Played with rank in that order, the highest favored no trump doubling as a singleton for 23 does not flub.
If there are no other givens in life, it is a science our numbers 13 and 23 seeks,
O yes that is it, life's facing openers to determine the contract so that there is no idee fixe.
Elementary counters if played well, then portend the exact proportion of success to face
As one bids carefully his cards, walks through life and puts a number down in the proper place.
One does nothing about the cards dealt but makes the most of his deal,
Nobody changes a person or reshuffles the cards once dealt in a hand, we play for real.
You play like you have the ammunition or wherewithal.
And it is not wrong to plan, promote or endure patiently provocation over the long haul.
Does this sound as though I'm telling you that logical positivism if the bid bidden?
Then cards on the table, Homo sapiens, (not a monkey shaved,) and good company cannot be hidden.

Food For Thought Quote

"People helping other people... is the only really convincing argument for people." - E. Horne