



THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

August 2014

A 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, August 9

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, August 16

HSNM Topical Discussion 10:00 AM - Noon

Should America's Borders Be Open?

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, August 23

HSNM Speaker Meeting 10:00 AM - Noon

HSNM General Membership Meeting

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 HUumanist 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

My lease on this space will soon be up. By my calculations, this is my third-to-last President's Message. I expect I will continue to write for the Newsletter, but as of November 1, a new HSNM President will take the reins, and he or she will have dibs on this primo placement, first page, above the fold. Who will it be?

What could be better than being President? I am not being facetious. It is an affirming and confidence-building experience to be President, especially of a group like HSNM. The job is what you make it. The membership will praise you when you do well, and help you when you struggle. In addition to the Governing Board, on which I will continue to sit as Past President, there are a number of past officers of HSNM from whom to seek guidance. Also, the staff at the national AHA office are available to provide practical assistance on a variety of matters.

And then there's science. There is nothing magical about writing an agenda, sending a notice and

The Humanist Society of New Mexico
A Nonprofit Corporation

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
Ashley Jordan: Member-at-Large, Newsletter Editor
Cynthianne Yabut: Member-At-Large,
acting Secretary

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.

running a meeting. You can learn how to do it from a book, and get good at it with practice. Since our board is small and congenial, we don't let the rules rule us, but we adhere to the necessary basics. How many times have you sat in a group trying to get something done or make a decision and thought, "Sheesh, if only someone would..." Well, you can be that someone who keeps folks on track and working together.

Public speaking or acting as a public representative takes more art than science. That too can be learned, but practice is the most important thing. Since the HSNM audience is always friendly, presiding over our meetings is a great chance to develop communication skills that will make you more effective in everything you do.

In our hyper-competitive and economically stressed society, holding a leadership position in an organization such as ours offers public distinction and practical know-how that can be put to good advantage in any line of work. The balancing act is worth the effort. I think a lot of us take ourselves out of the running for such positions because of ingrained biases, or perceived biases, to our age, gender, level of education, or length of resume. It's true that in past years the HSNM officers were generally retirees, because they had the time to give to the organization. On our current board, small as it is, we have gender balance, a range in ages, varied educational backgrounds, and a mix of working and retired members. With the speed of technological developments and the benefits to be gained from them, we would not be a very effective organization without this diversity.

What does HSNM "the next generation" look like? I had envisioned something between a democratic, grassroots organization and a well-oiled machine. I'm not sure we have achieved either. We have incorporated. We have raised our public profile. We have maintained our monthly meeting schedule and engaged in some successful special events. We're still solvent! But there are times when I worry that our success is superficial and our progress unsustainable, because too few people have been doing too much of the work. That is the cold truth, and since I have been the President for four years, I accept responsibility for this condition. But I am not admitting defeat. We are pushing on to insure that the new Governing Board will go into the next term with a full contingent of members, a healthy bank account, a clear mission, strong motivation, and sufficient

volunteers to carry on our activities. You can help by:

Renewing your membership promptly.
Giving an extra donation if you can.
Joining HSNM if you haven't yet.
Bringing in new members.
Volunteering for a task, committee chair or board position.
Coming to our General Membership Meeting on August 23 (see Speaker Meeting details).
Providing your input on where you think HSNM should be heading, and how best to get there.

Nothing to it, right?

Next month, and the month after, I'll skip the cajoling and resume my more literary/philosophical President's Message. And after that...? This space could be yours!

Come to Our HSNM General Membership Meeting (Even if you're not a member!)

Our August 23rd Speaker Meeting at Botts Hall (NW corner of Central and Edith) will feature video from some of the excellent presentations at the American Humanist Association annual conference, which was held in Philadelphia in June. We will also have reports and discussion about our chapter activities, and collect membership enrollments and renewals. Save a stamp and spend a morning with your local humanist community!

Nominations For Governing Board Open

Nominations for the HSNM governing board are now open. The board positions are President, Vice-President/Speaker Programs, Treasurer, Secretary, Past President, and two Members-at-Large.

Please give this serious thought and submit your name or another's along with your reason(s) to the HSNM Nominating Committee: Jeanette Smith (232-9838, jeanettec47@gmail.com), Jerry Wesner (821-8614, JNWesner@aol.com), or Salem Smith (359-9411, SalemWSmith@gmail.com).

Deadline for nominations is September 19 and candidates will be announced in the October newsletter along with election ballots.

It's Time to Renew Your HSNM Membership

Please support HSNM by joining now or renewing your membership for 2014-2015. This year's enrollment form includes a short questionnaire. We need member input to help guide our programming for the coming year. You may send your dues and completed form by snail mail to the address at the top of the form, or you may bring them to an upcoming meeting (give to Zelda or Richard). We also expect to have a way to pay online from hsnm.wordpress.com. When we have that in place, a notice will be sent by email. Your membership must be up to date by September 15 in order to be eligible to vote in our Governing Board elections.

If you have recently joined or renewed your membership and do not owe dues, please fill out and return the form, so we can verify your contact information and get your input.

Did You Know...

In ancient Greece, and particularly Athens, where democracy originated, they didn't have any silly elections to determine their government representatives (or organizational board members). No, the Greeks practiced something called sortition-- the selection of representatives through a randomized process like a national lottery.

This randomized process of election that pulled from the citizens of the city-state—and it's important to remember that only a select few were citizens in ancient Greece, women, children, people of color and immigrants not among them, so this system has its flaws—actually started with their belief that those who were selected were chosen by the gods. In all actuality, they probably pulled stones out of a bag, and whoever was lucky (or unlucky) enough to pull the white stones instead of the black ones got put into a governing position.

What an interesting concept, wouldn't you say?

The Scholars have argued for centuries about the benefits and drawbacks to selection by lot. *But what if Joe Everyman doesn't have the necessary knowledge to perform his duties?* Well, in Greece, they'd educate him. *But what if it puts someone we don't want into leadership?* One of the problems with selection by lot, I suppose.

Isn't it just like jury duty today? Well, I won't say they don't have their similarities.

But one thing was for certain in ancient Greece: when they used sortition, all of the positions got filled.

HSNM CLASSIFIEDS - HELP WANTED

(pay scale for all jobs ranges from Huge Thanks to Effusive Praise)

Speaker Meeting Greeters (Botts Hall)

Hours: 4th Saturdays, 9:45 AM - 12:15 PM, plus about 1/2 hour follow-up per month

Duties: Greet newcomers and visitors, make introductions, provide HSNM and AHA literature; offer a 3-month trial HSNM membership, take name and email or snailmail address.

Qualifications: If you can smile and say "Speaker Meeting Greeters" fast 3 times, this job is for you! You will also need to write legibly and/or type accurately.

Contact: Zelda at Zelda@amadorbooks.com or 505-344-6102.

Informal Meeting Refreshment Coordinator (Peace Center)

Hours: 2nd Saturdays, 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM, plus about 1/2 hour follow-up per month

Duties: Circulate the sign-up sheet for volunteers to bring snacks to 2nd Saturday Informal Meetings at the Peace Center; provide sign-up info to Ashley for the Newsletter, and help coordinate supplies and set-up with Cynthianne (who brings the coffee and tea stuff). Make reminder calls!

Qualifications: Ever organize a potluck? This is easier than that. If you are an aficionado of the late-morning nosh, you have found your calling.

Contact: Cynthianne Yabut at severinlattier@gmail.com or 505-410-2998.

Printer Whisperer (mostly at your computer, pjs allowed)

Hours: This task should take less than an hour per

month for qualified applicants.

Duties: Print mailing labels or envelopes from a database, for snail-mail Newsletters.

Qualifications: Does your computer like you? Do you have a magic touch with printers? Can you open a database without having a panic attack? This job is not for just anyone, search your soul before you apply.

Contact: Zelda at Zelda@amadorbooks.com or 505-344-5102.

Musings on A Sarcophagus

By Jean O'Hara

Wise men sitting, chanting nonchalantly
Look smug to the unaccustomed eye.
Yet the knight sitting there so gallantly
Exact more from the scene than a wise guy.
The armor is in a life like position during the seasons
Of lying in a casket with ages of dust.
Yes, centuries of darkened reasons
Are preserved as we see battles of dead rust.
Worms are vying with limestone's calcium carbonate
For the distinction of exacting carbon dioxide
To divide the oxygen from the corpse's fate.
What difference does it make if it's all outside?
Where does the élan vital go?
Is it waiting for a hereafter variation of O?

Food For Thought Quote

"Statistically, a woman is more likely to be hurt by a man than she is to ever be eaten by a shark, hit by a car, be attacked by a bear, crash in a plane, or be bitten by a spider. When a woman expresses fear of any of these events, she is still seen as a rational person. When I tell people that I am afraid of swimming in the ocean because I'm afraid of sharks, they accept it almost without question. But, when I tell people that I'm afraid of men, that men scare me more than sharks and spiders and freak plane accidents all combined, I immediately lose their respect. I am considered elitist. I am considered sub-human." — A Benediction For My Daughter, Olivia Stephens