



# THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

February 2015

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/>

<http://hsnm.wordpress.com>

[president@humanistsocietyofnm.org](mailto:president@humanistsocietyofnm.org)

## **HSNM Meetings in Albuquerque**

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

### Saturday, February 14th

**HSNM Informal Meeting** 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

For HSNM members and their guests. For invitation or questions,  
please contact Ananda Parnell at 505-480-6377.

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE.

Refreshments provided.

### Saturday, February 21st

**HSNM Topical Discussion** 10:00 AM - Noon

*Compassion*

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

### Saturday, February 28th

**HSNM Speaker Meeting** 10:00 AM - Noon

*Festival House: Colorful Stories From a Festive Inn*

By Judy Aron and Madeline Aron

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](http://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 Ananda Parnell

It's only natural that people come together in the energizing spirit of shared purpose. When people do so, for a demonstration of what they affirm and what they uphold, let others take notice and pay heed, as worthy ideas and noble sentiments ring out. It doesn't matter what day we meet, or where we gather, but it does matter why we come together: for mutual inspiration and making a community. It should matter that we feel like we're on a shared journey.

It must matter that we think we can make a difference to more than just our personal lives. Thinking big can't be left to big religions and their big gods. We think that humanity can be good without high gods peering down on us, and without high priests lording over us. We think that we can think for ourselves.

It is truly human to try to think, to ponder our situation, and to pass judgment on things concerning us all. We wonder not only about who we are, but also about what we

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

Ananda Parnell: President  
Randall Wall: Vice President/Speaker Programs  
Cynthianne Yabut: Secretary  
Zelda Gatuskin: Past President  
Richard Grady: Treasurer  
Ashley Jordan: Member-at-Large, Newsletter Editor  
Cheryl Gatner: Member-at-Large

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](mailto:president@humanistsocietyofnm.org). HSNM dues are now paid separately from AHA dues, visit [www.americanhumanist.org](http://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.

ought to be. We are a species only recently rising to a consciousness of our common humanity. We are so very curious about what will eventually become of us.

To grow into our true potential, we must be prepared to learn—from our trials, our experiments, and our explorations. We may not like what we learn. We may instead want to stay at home and stick to our traditional ways; keeping our heads down to look upon familiar ground can make us feel secure and rooted. We feel certain of what we're doing when we don't have to do very much. If we think we know exactly why we're here and what we are for, we don't have to think at all. But this sense of security and certainty is a dangerous trap for humanity.

Let us take a fair and proportionate measure of human life. Let us all stand together, and by standing up, show how you can stand up for yourself, right here on the ground that you occupy. Stand up straight and let a mark be made to show how tall you can stretch, to a height worthy of a human being. From that height now survey all you can see, everything for which you care, that sphere of what you call your life. Now think about how far we can see when we stand together, and stand on the shoulders of visionary giants who came before us, who taught us and inspired us as they helped humanity grow. Think about how far we have yet to see, and think about how those coming after us will see much farther, only because we are bold enough to stand tall for ourselves, in our own time.

What can our knowledge of nature and humanity say on the wisdom imparted by Humanism? I think nature's perspective tells us this:

- That every life is interrelated, woven and composed of nature's vibrant cords.
- That the unseen world of nature's energies shape life and life's beauties in endless new forms.
- That your essential energy cannot be lost or destroyed, but only recycled with perfect efficiency.
- That there is an afterlife, as consequences of one's conduct may influence posterity and affect countless generations.
- That though our brief spark of consciousness fades out when our bodies die, the virtuous parts of our characters can be woven into a community to come.

- That each person should long consider the shortness of life, and the smallness of self-importance.

Together these worldly ways of nature tell us that you are more than you may appear, even to yourself. They tell us that the supreme reality recycles everything, and preserves what is necessary. They tell us that energizing powers are available to help you conduct through yourself what is truly best, on a journey towards the future where everything must go. They tell us that we will all someday be judged for what we think or do, by those who must inherit our best along with our worst.

These are humbling messages, but they are also reassuring. Together they say that you have arrived into the world where you belong, and you belong to the world that gave you life. That we have no right to hope for a better afterworld until we have made this world better. That no one is entitled to fear death until one has feared to fail at life.

These are truly the messages of good sense and noble purpose. We can regard them as the words of an all-natural faith, a truly universal faith—a conviction in what is naturally good within us, a fidelity to what is naturally best about us, and a devotion for a future worthy of us all. If we can confidently trust in our good sense and shared journey, the farther we will travel, and the more posterity will be reverently grateful for our hard work. And we just might prove worthy of the finest home that we will ever know.

## **February Speaker Meeting**

### **Festival House: Colorful Stories From a Festive Inn**

By Judy Aron and Madeline Aron

Judy and Madeline Aron will share memories and photos of Festival House of Lenox, Mass., an interracial hotel and cultural center whose doors were open to all. Their parents, Bruno and Claire Aron, originally of New York, had bought the neglected estate and turned it into Festival House, mindful that people were coming to the area because of the Tanglewood music center only to find that the county's few inns were closed to them because they were Jewish or black -- "because of their name or appearance," as Bruno Aron said in an interview.

Since the closure of Festival House, the old Ventfort

Hall estate has continued as a cultural center and museum. The Aron sisters, both longtime residents of Albuquerque, recently returned to offer this talk and slide show at the very site of their many fond girlhood memories. Visitors to their home included Lorraine Hansberry, the playwright of "Raisin in the Sun," Pete Seeger, jazz legends Randy Weston and Dizzy Gillespie, and New York artists Anthony Toney and the brothers Moses and Raphael Soyer, among others.

Judy Aron has lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico since 1973. She and her husband have two daughters and three grandchildren and have an independent financial planning business. Judy was born in Pittsfield, Ma. in 1948 and lived there with her parents, Claire and Bruno Aron for 3 years. They then moved to Lenox, Ma. where her parents purchased Festival House.

Judy graduated high school from Bronx High School of Science, went on to college at University of New York, and to University of California Los Angeles. She then earned a Masters in Education at Northeastern University of Boston in 1970. After moving to Albuquerque she spent several years working in the alcoholism field both with a non-profit organization and with the state. In 1980 she earned a Masters in Business at UNM, and has been in the financial planning field since then.

Madeline Aron is the younger daughter of Clair and Bruno Aron, owners of Festival House, a hotel run at Ventfort Hall from 1951-1961. She earned a bachelor of General Studies at the University of Michigan. Since 1974 she has been living in New Mexico, where she earned a Bachelors of Fine Arts and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She has been an educator in the Albuquerque Public Schools, and ran a private piano studio. She is now a massage therapist. Growing up in Berkshires, and especially in Lenox, near Festival House, has fostered her lifelong love of nature and the arts. She has recently produced a multicultural compilation CD of NM artists that supports environmental causes, entitled "In the Heart of the Wild Flame."

Here is an excerpt from a typed manuscript about Festival House found among the Arons' papers. (author unknown; date would be between mid-1950s and 1961):

"The mansion, built in Elizebethan style was built with imported woods and marble. Even the landscaping brought together the rarest species from China and

Germany, Japan and Africa, to make it a showplace. Some forty years ago, the Morgans sold what was known as Ventfort Hall, to W. Roscoe Bonsal, a leading industrialist of the time. The old estates were dying. Income taxes made it difficult to maintain too many places and fancy brought them to new areas. After a decade of neglect this property was acquired by Bruno and Claire Aron and renamed Festival House.

“Mr. Aron approached it from a very unusual angle. By training he was a social worker. A graduate of the New York School of Social Work he had been working with young people for many years and from 1945 to 1950 in neighboring Pittsfield. Mr. Aron felt the need for a place that would accomodate so many of the people who wished to attend the many activities which the area offered, but were limited by the high cost of the area. Also, he felt that there was need for a place that operated on democratic principles - that was open to all, regardless of race or creed.

“Festival House lives this principle, and in consequence has become one of the unusual spots in that section of the country. Since its inception Festival House has served as a Hostel for members of the American Youth Hostel. In quarters located in the carriage house of the estate as many as forty people who choose to see this country by bicycle or by hiking find quarters there. Often Festival House is host to foreign student groups. In the main building which serves as the hotel, the moderate rates and this infomal, friendly atmosphere prevail. Programs include folk dancing and folk singing, art classes and disussions. Festival House boasts one of the biggest and finest record libraries to be found anywhere. The staff has much to contribute to the guests.... Certainly, the thousands who have come to Festival House are glad that there is such a place available to them, and such people as the Arons, whose interst in people is so rich and deep.”

### **Newsletter Submissions: We Want ‘Em**

Do you enjoy sharing your work with others? Do you often find yourself wanting to share your thoughts,

ideas, feelings and experiences with likeminded people? Do you have journals full of poetry, sketches, or book reviews that have never seen the light of day?

HSNM is always open to you as members so that you can share things in our newsletter. Your editor enjoys receiving insightful reviews, jokes, poetry, and articles to print, and would love to have too much to chose from rather than too little.

Please think about contributing to our newsletter to keep the content from turning stale. We really aren’t kidding when we say we want your submissions. The newsletter deadling is the 3rd Friday of every month. That’ll be March 20th, April 17th, and May 15, to name a few coming up.

### **Drops and H2O**

By Jean O’Hara

As flowers need water so do ships, boats.  
One cannot have a man talking to rocks.  
The friend need a companion not horse oats.  
Too much of some things like beach pebbles shocks.  
There is beauty in the world not dumps sogged.  
A man’s word or honest conversation  
Is a thing that cannot be water-logged.  
Flowers drenched soon die. It’s cruelty, not fun.  
Little poesies sway and dance in nature’s  
Wind to the tune of a string quartet where  
Blooms the lady that turns a man’s head, yours,  
Or mine, or someone else’s. Just stay the fair  
Flowered course and see your share and load the  
End result that violins cannot stomp coda.

### ***Food For Thought Quote***

*“If you look at the world and say ‘Yes, there are enough homes for people, yes, there is enough food for people, but if we give it away for free they won’t have earned it and the economy will collapse’, then you have chosen money (a constructed medium of exchange) over living beings who only want to continue living in peace and safety. And I have no qualms telling you, that is the wrong choice, and you have been brainwashed by this destructive, exploitative system.” - Markus Bones*