



# THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

July 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, July 11th

**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, July 18th

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

*Music, Music, Music*

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

### Saturday, July 25th

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

*Weird Mysteries: Applying Science to the Paranormal*

By Benjamin Radford

Free and open to the public

Botts Hall, Special Collections Library

423 Central Ave. NE, Albuquerque

Meetings by HSNM Affiliates are held throughout the month.

For more information please visit their websites.

**Atheist Skeptical Kingdom of Albuquerque** ([www.meetup.com/ASK-Atheist-Skeptical-Kingdom-of-Albuquerque](http://www.meetup.com/ASK-Atheist-Skeptical-Kingdom-of-Albuquerque))

**Freedom from Religion Albuquerque**

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

**New Mexicans for Science and Reason** ([www.nmsr.org](http://www.nmsr.org))

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

**Santa Fe Atheist Community**

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

## President's Message

by Ananda Parnell

To say that I have been both absolutely distraught and overjoyed by humanity as of late would be an incredible understatement. From hearing individuals talk of the best ways to start eradicating institutionalized racism in the wake of yet another domestic terrorist attack, to discussions about parents raising transgender children, becoming overwhelmed with “surly behavior and acting out,” and then subsequently kicking these children out of their homes, to rising violence against the homeless populations, it astonishes many to hear me still talk about the faith I have in humanity. Many humanists even question the use of the word I use—faith—to describe the fearless and courageous acts of so many others to speak up and act against ignorance and subjugation among other horrific human thoughts and actions.

There is a large element of faith in all religion. Buddhism has faith in the inexorable laws of karma; Mohammedanism in the unyielding will of Allah; Confucianism in the

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.

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nually, HSNM membership is \$20/year (\$30  
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27293, Albuquerque, NM 87125-7293.

Send Newsletter submissions to:

Editor, Randall Wall, Paragon2012@comcast.  
net. The deadline for Newsletter submissions  
is the third Friday of each month. Website  
submissions may be sent to president@hu-  
manistsocietyofnm.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 ev-  
ery 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.

moral nature of Heaven; Christianity in the love of God;  
and Humanism, in its non-religion, has faith in man as  
the measure of values.

There is a large element of faith in all philosophy.  
Idealists have faith in eternal values; Realists in the  
objective reality of facts; Naturalists in an inner survival  
urge; and Pragmatists in the workableness of truth.

There is a large measure of faith in all science. Faith in the  
orderliness of nature and in man's mind to comprehend  
it makes science possible. There could be no science  
if we began with chaos on the part of the universe and  
incompetence on the part of man.

There is a large element of faith in all human relations.  
The foundations of government, the warp and woof of  
economic relations, and especially the very structure  
of the home, partake in large measure on the nature of  
faith.

Hypotheses, postulates, and assumptions in their proper  
realm are comparable to faith in the realm of religion. In  
this way, I speak of the faith of Humanism. Competent  
philosophers, scientists, and even theologians, regard  
working assumptions as tentative. They constantly  
check for error; they diligently gather new data and re-  
examine the old generalizations in light of the new facts.  
They welcome criticism and verification from competent  
people. Their faith is consciously experimental. This is  
also the case for Humanist faith.

Humanism aims to comprehend man in his total setting;  
to know ourselves as children of this universe (as indeed  
we are made up of the same elements that are in our  
entire universe), as the individual member of the human  
group, and as the parent of the civilizations yet to be. It  
sets as its definite goal, not knowledge for its own sake,  
but knowledge as a means to the enrichment of human  
life.

Humanism has faith in the trustworthiness of the  
scientific spirit and method; it relies on freedom of  
inquiry and controlled experiment. Fundamentalism  
is skeptical of science; Modernism merely flirts with  
science; but Humanism says that, while science may  
give us inadequate knowledge, it gives all we have  
and we must make the most of it. Upon science and  
the legitimate inferences from its established facts we  
are dependent for our knowledge of the nature of the

universe, the evolution of life, and of man's prowess and possibilities. And how stimulating yet sobering it is to contemplate the universe of modern science! Indeed our consistent searching has brought us to the point where we recognize that we are not separate, but an integral component of nature and science. We are now using science to try and fix what ignorance has destroyed and generate a more deeply connected world—and indeed universe.

As man has needed moral ideas for his advancement, he has achieved them. Morality has never been handed down from heaven in systematized code, though such has been thought by the origin of both the Hammurabic and Mosaic codes. When man needed the moral idea of private property, he achieved it; then he who took that which belonged to another became a thief. When man needed the moral idea of communal property, he achieved it; then he who thrived by monopoly became a social parasite. When man needed the moral idea of the sacredness of human life, he achieved it; then he who killed another human being became a murderer. Man achieves his moral ideas; and when he gets done with them he replaces them with more and better ones—hopefully! But man's past achievements are only preparatory. They have merely opened our eyes to the greater possibilities of governing ourselves through different codes.

Humanism has faith in the possibility and nobility of a mutual social order. The past in social theory has been divided largely into two views of individualism and socialism. Humanism rejects both social theory constructs and holds firmly to the faith in mutualism, which embraces whatever is valid in individualism and socialism and is, in its deepest sense, experimental democracy. Its plans are mobile; it is genuinely scientific; it says let us try this thing and see how it works. In this sense, the religious experiment has failed. It has placed too many at odds and depleted resources, leaving us strangling in a world universe that requires us to breathe.

Faith is not something intangible; but rather, it is the drive within ourselves to create better circumstances for the way we live and the space we occupy. It is the belief that we all would live better if all life were valued. It is the belief that we will gain a deeper moral and ethical responsibility to each other, the world, and all that sustains us.

**Next Speaker Meeting:** Weird Mysteries: Applying Science to the Paranormal

Many Americans believe things for which there is little evidence and no definitive proof. Many people read astrology columns, and recent polls show that over half of the public believe in ghosts. Yet the issue is not one of belief but evidence: Either ghosts, Bigfoot, and psychic powers exist or they do not; if they exist, there should be scientific proof. How good is the scientific evidence for these claims? How does a science-based investigator approach these mysteries and separate fact from fiction in miracle claims? Come find out!

Benjamin Radford is a research fellow at the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry and author or coauthor of seven books, including *Mysterious New Mexico: Miracles, Magic, and Monsters in the Land of Enchantment*.

**Next Topical Discussion Meeting:** The topic for July is Music, Music, Music! Music has a way of soothing us and expressing what we can't say in words. So July is a time to celebrate all in our lives through music. We will talk about our favorite songs. If you like, bring a musical instrument and we'll make some joyful noise out in the courtyard after our topical meeting. Let's just make a day of song and celebration!

**American Humanist Association's Statement on the Charleston Shootings**

June 18, 2015

The American Humanist Association is saddened by yesterday's tragic shooting of nine people at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, by an individual who, according to the most recent reports, was motivated by hate and racism.

In its focus on our shared humanity and respect for human dignity, humanism condemns such acts of brutal violence. Humanists stand in solidarity with religious and non-religious communities to condemn hate in all forms, and we hope that this tragedy will result in immediate action by local and national governments to end gun violence and hate crimes in this country.

## **Sandy Rios: Obama Created Racial ‘Unrest’ Behind Charleston Shooting**

by Brian Tashman

Used with the permission of People for the American Way

American Family Association official Sandy Rios, speaking on her radio program last week, accused President Obama of “using” the Charleston church massacre “to try to whip people into an emotional frenzy about disarming the American people.”

Rios, who previously said that Obama “enjoyed” the shooting because it offered him an opportunity to “remove guns from the hands of the American people,” told a caller that the president is “dangerous” and “stirred a lot of this unrest up.”

She said that not only has Obama “made racial tensions much worse,” but he has also released tens of thousands of immigrant “murderers” and “robbers” onto “our streets.”

Rios also spoke to a caller who claimed that the Sandy Hook and Aurora massacres were false flag events designed give the government “another reason to get the guns,” blaming the Aurora movie theatre shooting on a government “mind control program” that peddled “reuptake inhibitors.”

“Mao did it, Lenin did it, Stalin did it, Hitler did it, Pol Pot did it, when they take the guns, it’s over,” he said.

Rios responded that “everything you said was true, I don’t know about the inhibitor part, but certainly what Mao did with the guns and the whole move to remove our ability to protect ourselves and that it is the only thing standing between us and tyranny.”

## **Washington Times Recruits for David Lane’s Christian Nation Army**

by Peter Montgomery

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Last week the Washington Times published a glowing profile of David Lane, a GOP political operative and Christian-nation extremist. The article reported on Lane’s efforts to mobilize “an army” to lead the charge for his battle with “secularists.” Just days

later, the Washington Times officially became part of David Lane’s recruitment effort, launching a petition campaign co-sponsored and co-branded with Lane’s American Renewal Project.

According to the campaign’s website, “The Washington Times has agreed to deliver the petition to the Supreme Court.” It’s ridiculous to imagine that the decision in the marriage case has not already been made, even if it has not yet been made public, or to think that petitions to the Supreme Court would have any impact at this late date, which is, as the website recognizes, “just days away from deciding whether homosexual couples are entitled to marry.” So the only real purpose for the petition seems to be for the Washington Times and Lane’s American Renewal Project to build their email lists and recruit participants for a campaign of massive resistance to a pro-equality ruling.

They didn’t even bother to put much effort into the writing. Here’s the utterly non-compelling petition:

“Tell the Supreme Court to Leave Traditional Marriage Alone

To: The Supreme Court

I want the Supreme Court to know I believe that marriage should remain the sanctified union of a man and women.”

I want the Supreme Court to know that I believe, as Thomas Jefferson did, that judges should stick to the Constitution and not create new law when it comes to the issue of marriage in America.”

I want the Supreme Court to know that I believe opening marriage to same-sex couples invalidates the institution of marriage that hundreds of millions of American men and women agreed to over the last two centuries when they said their vows.

I’m signing this petition because I want the nine Supreme Court justices to leave traditional marriage alone.”

As we reported just last week, the Washington Times “has long been a right-wing propaganda vehicle in the guise of a newspaper,” and has partnered with Ralph Reed’s Faith and Freedom Coalition, the National Organization for Marriage, and the Conservative Political Action Conference.

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

*“ We don’t want to live in a country where you need a security guard for Bible study.”*

*Joseph P. Riley, Charleston Mayor*