



THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

March 2016

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/>

<http://hsnm.wordpress.com>

president@humanistsocietyofnm.org

HSNM Meetings in Albuquerque

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

Saturday, March 12th

HSNM Informal Meeting 10:00 AM - Noon

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

Highland High School Library

4700 Coal SE

Park in the SouthWest parking lot at Jefferson and Coal

There will be signs to guide you from there.

Refreshments provided.

Saturday, March 19th

HSNM Topical Discussion 10:00 AM - Noon

TBA

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, March 26th

HSNM Speaker Meeting 10:00 AM - Noon

Planned Parenthood: What is it and What's going on?

Marshall Martinez

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

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)

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

Santa Fe Atheist Community

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

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

Next Speaker Meeting Topic

“Planned Parenthood: What is it and What’s going on?” For our next speaker meeting we hear Marshall Martinez speak about Planned Parenthood. His talk will cover who Planned Parenthood is, why it get involved in advocacy. Subjects like funding, procedure bans, “witch-hunts”, legislation, what’s upcoming for 2016 and how you can get involved. Come and hear an informed speaker on these subjects, it’s going to be a great talk.

Speaker’s Bio

Marshall Martinez is the Public Affairs Manager in New Mexico, for Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains. A Native New Mexican, Marshall has spent a majority of his life as an organizer, even when he didn’t know what that was. Working in HIV/AIDS Prevention and Awareness as a teenager in Alamogordo New Mexico, Marshall learned at a young age how important comprehensive and responsible sexuality education is, and in this work was able to draw the connection beyond sexual health to emotional and mental

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
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, Randall Wall, Paragon2012@comcast.net. 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.

health for teenagers. After moving to Albuquerque in 2001 he began a formal career in political and community organizing, working for organizations like the League of Conservation Voters, AFSCME Public Employees Labor Union, and serving multiple years on the board of Equality New Mexico. Marshall's passions have always been strong on the issues of Reproductive Healthcare Access, being raised by a strong mother and having two younger sisters he sees the sacredness of Women's Bodies and destinies and works hard to ensure their choices about them are respected.

HSNM Governing Board (GB) Meeting

Saturday, March 26, 2016, 12:10 PM

Special Collections Library
following the Speaker Meeting

We are seeking new Members-at-Large to fill the Board. If you are interested in joining the GB and/or a committee, please plan to attend. GB meetings are open to the general membership; all HSNM members are welcome to sit in and will be invited to offer their input. For more information about open positions, please contact Ananda Parnell at 505-480-6377.

Screening of "Equal Means Equal"!!

The Albuquerque Chapter of the National Organization for Women (Abq-NOW) and the Southwest Women's Law Center (SWLC) invite you and a guest to a fund-raising* Private Screening of the documentary film *Equal Means Equal* directed by Kamala Lopez on Sunday March 13, 2016 from 3 to 6 PM at the National Hispanic Cultural Center, (1701 4th St SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102)

The film will be preceded by a Meet the Director Reception and followed by a Panel Discussion.

*Money raised will fund programs to educate the public about women's rights and the need for the Equal Rights Amendment *

Donations of \$10.00 or higher, based on personal circumstances, will be greatly appreciated.

RSVP by March 7 to be included on the list of attendees email: now.abqnm@gmail.com phone: 505 322-7879

“*Equal Means Equal* is an unflinching look at how women are treated in the United States today. By following both real life stories and precedent setting legal cases, director Kamala Lopez discovers how outdated and discriminatory attitudes inform and influence seemingly disparate issues, from workplace matters to domestic violence, rape and sexual assault to the foster care system, the healthcare system and the legal system. Along the way, she reveals the inadequacy of present laws in place that claim to protect women, ultimately presenting a compelling and persuasive argument for the urgency of ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment.”

<https://www.tugg.com/titles/equal-means-equal>

Go to this link to see a trailer for the movie: <https://vimeo.com/110109438>

Humanist Minute **by Harry Willson - May 1997**

My philosophical friend berates me quite sharply, for stating that Nature is consistent and the physical world dependable, and that I derive great comfort from that underlying reliability.

“You want life to make some kind of sense,” he rants. “It does not make any sense at all. I believe your wanting it to make sense is a left-over from the long religious training that you had. You want life to make sense. What a hopeless and ridiculous desire you have.”

So, I have that to think about. I frankly doubt that learning Greek and Hebrew and church history and “systematic theology” [which I called a contradiction in terms then and still regard as such] is the source of my hopeless and ridiculous desire. I rather think that it could better be blamed on my earlier study of science and mathematics.

I am willing to suppose, for the moment, for argument’s sake, that the human search for meaning, including that of Viktor Frankl and the other existentialists, may be wishful thinking. We humans are good at adding meaning, if we possibly can. Samuel Becket does it in *Waiting for Godot*, by the creation of a beautiful, near-perfect play, in which the plot and the point clearly state that nothing means anything. Tchaikovsky does it with his Sixth Symphony, labeled sentimental and even maudlin by some critics, in which he makes Death, or the acceptance of Death, somehow a thing of Beauty.

Maybe the meaning is only added by the human artist, and not innately there. But, if so, where did the artist get it? Can the part be meaningful, and the whole not?

Besides, I meant something more basic than humanity’s experience of death, when I spoke of the dependability of Nature. Matter reveals a pattern, an order, an orderliness. The structure of the atom, the generalizations being discovered by the analysis of Chaos [which used to be the word for primordial disorder!] reveal pattern. I am greatly comforted by the dependability of Nature. What goes up must come down. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Lying about reality doesn’t change it. Nature cannot be successfully lied to or lied about. Unless some other physical force moved it, Harry, your hammer that you can’t find is right where you left it.

My friend seemed to think that the existence of Ice Ages proved that Nature was not dependable. But I didn’t mean dependably supportive of humans. I meant dependable in its adherence to the rules of physics. Ice Ages are a global cooling, caused by interference with solar rays, changes in the orbit, movement of the poles, whatever. I like Ice Ages; they come about for real reasons.

And now, getting personal, I sense some meaning, some kind of sense after all, in the pattern of my own life. Almost every biography I read displays meaning and consistency. I’m reading one after another, trying to discover the meaning of a human life. A marvelous example of the good this inquiry does me comes out of Howard Fast’s examination of his own life, in *Being Red*. He moved from Communism to Zen, and tells of a Zen teacher who taught him to be glad for the opposition of small-minded, lying, ear-hearted anti-Communists.

My philosophical friend, who began as a sensitive activist not at all unlike Howard Fast in his youth among the Wobblies of the northwest, sold his soul to Mammon and gave up on ever improving the world and the lot of the poor in the world. Now he reaps bitter results, blaming the very structure of the Cosmos itself for his Despair. We are allowed to be puzzled about Cosmic Purpose, given the time and distances, but Despair is ego yelping as the end nears with no sense of any underlying meaning.

I am willing to admit that my “religious training” sometimes provides the vocabulary with which I do my thinking about all this. Dietrich Bonhoeffer first made me look at the meaning of my own life, as he told about the meaning he saw in his, looking at it from inside a

Nazi jail cell, with the strangling piano wire in place. John Bunyan described the Giant Despair, accurately. Viktor Frankl described *Man's Search for Meaning*. I have rejected the ecclesiastical institutions, which claim to represent and embody "religion." But I continue to wrestle with The Big Questions, and this one is the biggest of them all - - does anything matter? Does it matter what I do, or believe? I believe it does, and I base my belief on the reliability of Nature, not some kind of "supernatural" revelation.

P.S. I regard the word "supernatural" as an oxymoron. If something exists, it is natural. If it is not natural, it does not exist at all. Whatever is, it is natural. Nature is What There Is. There is nothing at all outside of Nature, or beyond Nature. And Despair is Ego.

From October 1996 through December 2009, Harry Willson wrote a "Rant of the Month" for the Amador Publishers website. The complete set of essays can be found at www.amadorbooks.com.

A Flood of Tax Breaks for Noah's Ark

by Merrill Miller
Humanist.com

Many humanists are both bemused and irritated by Ken Ham, a vocal creationist and evolution denier. Ham runs the Kentucky Creation Museum and famously debated Bill Nye (2010 Humanist of the Year) in 2014 about the origins of the universe, a debate most agree Nye won. Ham's anti-evolution organization, Answers in Genesis, is also known for building Ark Encounter, a theme park based on the biblical story of Noah's ark in which God punishes a sinful world by drowning the Earth in a mass flood, only saving Noah, his family, and a few select animals.

While many humanists would probably prefer that Ham and his organization stop propagating untruths about the age of the planet and about the origins of life on it, Ham and Answers in Genesis do have the freedom of speech to spread their misinformation. However, one would hope that the state, in its constitutional obligation

to remain secular, would not assist Answers in Genesis in its proselytizing projects.

Unfortunately, on January 25, US District Judge Gregory Van Tatenhove ruled that Answers in Genesis may receive tax subsidies while also being permitted to practice hiring discrimination. The judge's decision acknowledged that Answers in Genesis is a religious organization, but stated that its project of creating an explicitly religious theme park advances the secular goal of boosting local revenue through tourism. The state of Kentucky, which originally granted Answers in Genesis the tax benefits in 2010 but then backed out of the deal out of concern for violating the Establishment Clause, will not challenge this most recent ruling.

Ham himself is crowing about the decision, calling it "a victory for the free exercise of religion in this country." He also describes the state's previous decision to not grant Answers in Genesis the tax subsidies as discrimination against Christians.

This ruling should be disturbing to humanists not only because it permits the state of Kentucky to advance Christianity, but also because it sets a precedent that could be used in other cases to require states to subsidize religious organizations that practice hiring discrimination. (ThinkProgress has a more detailed analysis of the ruling [here](#).) By promoting the religious message of the Ark Encounter project and advancing Answers in Genesis and its bad "science," the state is favoring Christianity over other religions and nonreligion. It's also complicit in spreading the misinformation that Ark Encounter will inevitably promote and adding to the poor state of science education in this country.

Given the uphill battle that humanists are already fighting to oppose the teaching of creationism in public schools and to encourage scientific literacy and inquiry, these tax breaks for Answers in Genesis are just one more disturbing reminder of how vigilant we must be to protect science education and the Establishment Clause.

Food For Thought Quote

"You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough."

Mae West