



THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

March 2014

A Membership Chapter of the American Humanist Association

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/>

<http://hsnm.wordpress.com>

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HSNM Meetings in Albuquerque

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

Saturday, March 8

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, March 15

HSNM Topical Discussion 10:00 AM - Noon

Rationality: An Evolutionary Advantage?

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, March 22

HSNM Speaker Meeting 10:00 AM - Noon

Paths to Power: Women, Politics and the Change We Need

Martha Burk

Free and open to the public

Multi-purpose Room, NM Museum of Natural History and Science,

1801 Mountain Rd. NW

Refreshments: Barbara White

Humanist Minute: TBA

Save the Date

Saturday May 3rd, 2-5 PM, UNM Campus

The Unholy Trinity Tour comes to Albuquerque!

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, Local Chapter

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

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

President's Message

by Zelda Gatuskin

“Is solace only possible with the suspension of disbelief?” This question has been rattling around in my mind lately. To put it more bluntly: “Do I really have to drink the Kool-aid to gain peace of mind?”

Peace of mind, solace, forgiveness, courage - these are emotional needs that spiritual and religious practices set out to fill. Those of us raised in the Judeo-Christian tradition perhaps noticed that the same beliefs intended to provide inner strength were also effective at feeding guilt and insecurity, necessitating more solace, comfort, etc. We suspected it was all intended to keep us busy and obedient with manufactured needs and misdirected fears. Our first step in actually finding peace of mind, then, would be to purge our minds of those oppressive myths and imaginary threats.

“I am done with the judging, vindictive god.” Really, I had that figured out by the time I was ten. But it doesn't change the fact of those first impressionable years, and so I have been judging myself ever

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.

since. Peace of mind remains elusive. Still, a first step is a first step. And shrugging off the patronizing, puritanical, tyrannical weight of an organized religion is a huge first step. Where do we go from there?

Many in my generation - and I suspect this is still true today - looked out across the religious landscape and wondered what we were missing. We were ready to give up a religion, but not all religion. Some looked for a better match in Eastern, pagan, or indigenous traditions. Since these have their own imposed rigors of behavior and ritual practice, others preferred the New Age buffet of mix-'n-match rites from any and every "spiritual" source. "Spiritual" was preferred over "religious" so as to distinguish between an organizational structure and something pure, personal, internal.

But what about that peace of mind? I know that many people who leave the religion they were raised in do find a home in another faith community, whether traditional, adapted or invented. I'll go further and say that in the whole gamut of spiritual practices and philosophies we will find a lot of overlap with humanism. It is one of our own tenets, after all, that morality and compassion are natural human traits - we would expect to find similar humanitarian concerns, for instance, across the religious-nonreligious spectrum. Where we do not overlap is in the acceptance of a central myth as truth. Humanists do not endorse belief in myths no matter how benign, creative or comforting they may be.

Which brings me to another variant of my question: Why can't the metaphor itself be enough? I mean, the myths are not going away any time soon. The gods, the saints, Adam and Eve, the damn snake, Noah, Shiva, Zeus - they are part of our history, language and collective imagination. You could say we're stuck with them, but why let them be a burden? Stories - our ability to invent them, adjust them and interpret them - are an essential element of human existence. To accept a story as a story - so that it can be examined, discussed, even re-imagined starting, progressing and culminating in a variety of ways - enhances our understanding of ourselves and the world. Passive faith in the story as truth, on the other hand, can be truly destructive. If we cannot distinguish between actual history and the stories we make up, then how will we ever confront the future, and the impact that our *behavior* (not beliefs!) will have on human destiny?

Faith traditions profess to offer serenity, hope and joy to

the true believer. We can debate whether that is typically the case, but my interest here is in whether we can have all of those good feelings *without* the supernatural belief. As far as I can tell, humanists are a happy bunch - also brave, caring and optimistic. The ills of the world - poverty, violence, injustice - present themselves to us not as punishments, lessons or karmic scorekeeping to be reconciled emotionally and then “let go,” but as conditions that require and are capable of correction - by people!

It turns out that facing reality isn't a hindrance to peace of mind, and solace comes from confronting problems honestly in the knowledge that we are equipped and empowered to work toward solutions.

March Speaker Meeting

“Paths to Power: Women, Politics and the Change We Need”

Women are the majority of voters and have the potential to control any election. Recognizing the paths to political power and how to leverage our numbers is the key to positive change.

Martha Burk is Money Editor for Ms. Magazine, Director of the Corporate Accountability Project for the National Coalition of Women's Organizations (NCWO), and Producer/Host of “Equal Time with Martha Burk” on KSFR public radio. She is the author of *Your Voice, Your Vote: The Savvy Woman's Guide to Power, Politics, and the Change We Need*.

HSNM Nuts & Bolts

This month, as HSNM members, you are receiving a ballot with your newsletters asking you to vote Yes or No on whether HSNM should incorporate. The ballot contains a brief explanation of the issue as well as instructions and deadlines for voting. If you would like to review the Draft Articles of Incorporation, please contact Leland Franks at lelandof@Gmail.com or 505-247-1537.

As members, you are also reminded that you may sit in on HSNM Governing Board meetings, and you may request a copy of the Minutes from our Secretary Jerry Gilbert (drjgilbert@aol.com, 505-400-9649). The next GB meeting has been tentatively scheduled for April 12, following the Informal Meeting.

Up And Coming: New Projects for HSNM Feminist Caucus and A Local LGBTQ+ Humanist Council

Things have been relatively quiet with the Feminist Caucus as we've been gently prodding things along in the capital. Our Chair ERA Captain, Sylvia Ramos, has been working hard with Albuquerque NOW to get in resolutions (the latest is SM2, which just passed the first level of jumps and hoops and needs your support), and is keeping the Equal Rights Amendment fresh on our representatives' minds. We're always looking for volunteers and energy to get things done, and it's never too late to get involved! HSNM has long talked about getting involved in the LGBTQ community, and we're getting motivated to march in this year's Albuquerque Pride Parade. With our own number of LGBTQ+ members and vocal allies, this would be an important activity to get us involved. If interested in volunteering for a local LGBTQ+ Humanist Council, or if you're interested in getting involved with the FC, you should consider coming to a networking meeting on March 22 at 12:30, following the speaker meeting with Martha Burke at the NM Museum of Natural History and Science.

What, Pray Tell, is a Dudebro?

By Ashley Jordan

More than once lately, I've had someone ask me, “What is a Dudebro?” I use this term often enough that I'm sure you've heard it by now, but I'm not surprised if you don't know exactly what it means. It's a relatively new term, and it deserves defining. Prepare yourself; the picture I am about to paint will have you groaning and can at times provoke the urge to strangle someone.

A DudeBro, simply speaking, is a person of the male gender that one might encounter wearing a cheap fedora and claiming to be a “nice guy”. These nice guys are often found talking about how “nice” they are over and over, and yet they can't seem to find a girlfriend. They “treat women with respect” and then are shocked that the women (who have become “sluts” and “whores” in his vocabulary) won't sleep with them. They use words like “friend-zone” as if being a woman's friend is a fate worse than death, as if women are machines that you put niceness tokens into until sex falls out.

A DudeBro asks people with differing opinions to educate him. He is never, ever willing to expend his own time and energy researching the claims of others, such

as that a pay gap exists, or that racism isn't funny. He wants to interrupt and derail whatever work you are doing to solve these issues so that you can explain to him what the issue is, and then, most likely, he won't believe you until you find a fellow DudeBro to repeat the same words. And then, after the issue has been explained, they "can't see how that's really a problem" because it doesn't affect them.

To be a DudeBro is to be that guy who walks into the philosophy class on the day of finals, after not having attended a single class, and while all the other students are hard at work on their essays he walks to the front of the class, demands everyone's attention and says, "The color blue that I see may not be the color blue that you see." Then, he turns to the teacher and demands an A+, despite the fact that all of the other students have worked the entire semester on their theories, have shown up for every class and have spent blood and sweat and tears on their work. If the teacher refuses, as they should, the true DudeBro will claim prejudice and bias, and wail about the injustice of his life and how "the system" is keeping him down.

A DudeBro will say things like "Reverse discrimination is a thing!" or "The real problem here is false rape reports!" or "Women? I think you mean Females." Or even, "Affirmative Action is discrimination against Whitey!"

So why do I call people DudeBro's? I want to be perfectly clear here. If I call someone a DudeBro, you can bet I'm using it derogatorily. Being a DudeBro, as I hope I have illustrated, is not something to be proud of. The term originated on the internet, where angry, frustrated feminists who were sick of Men's Rights Activists calling them B*tches for their opinions and wondering whether or not equality meant they could hit women without consequences, needed something to call this collective group of misogynistic trash and were left wanting. After all, language is gendered. Every possible insult in the English language comes back to really insulting women.

Thus, the DudeBro was born. Now, you might be saying at this point, "But isn't calling them names just as bad as when they call you names?"

Actually, it isn't. Calling someone a "feminazi" has a cultural stereotype with real world consequences associated with it. Using slurs that have been used to actually physically oppress people in the past (and present in most cases) is far worse than creating a word to mean "ignorant men".

Let's take, for example, the differences between the N-word and "Cracker". You see people (white people) discussing it all the time- which one is the worse word? Well, chances are, the one you are not willing to say because of years of slavery and discrimination against people it's used to describe is the worse word.

Actually, Cracker originated in much the same way as DudeBro. Frustrated African Americans, sick of white people saying things like "I have a black friend so I can say your word, right?" and "I'm not racist but (something racist)", needed a word to mean "Ignorant White Person". Have you ever watched a white person be called a cracker and get so upset and insulted? It's because they think that word means the same thing as words they've use to describe others. It's mean and, oh, it hurts their feelings. That's nice and all, but words that hurt your feelings are not the same as words that were born from systematic oppression and discrimination against a group of people that often led to the enslavement or murder of those people.

So when I call someone a DudeBro, beware, for they have offended me beyond apology. Because when a DudeBro apologizes, what they really mean is "Oh, I'm sorry you feel that way" and not "I'm sorry I'm a racist, sexist, discriminatory individual and I'll change my ways".

Perhaps, one day, when DudeBro's no longer roam the wilds of college campuses, catcall women in the street and get offended when they don't like it, ask anyone who isn't white why they hate white people, claim they are victims of heterophobia, and continually ask, over and over, to the point of obsession, when they are going to be allowed to hit women because of "equality", perhaps then I will no longer need to use the word.

Today is not that day.

Food For Thought Quote

"I, even now, persist in believing that these black marks on white paper bear the greatest significance, that if I keep writing I might be able to catch consciousness in a jar." — Jeffrey Eugenides