



# THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

May 2016

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, May 14th

**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, May 21st

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

*Can We Save the Planet from Ourselves? Part 2*  
Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

### Saturday, May 28th

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

*Mysteries of the Roundhouse Revealed!*  
Gwyneth Doland

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

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

**Santa Fe Atheist Community**

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

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

## Next Speaker Meeting

In May our speaker will be Gwyneth Doland. You may know Gwyneth from *New Mexico in Focus* on PBS. She will be filling us in on all of the goings on at the Santa Fe Roundhouse. Come and find out what your legislators are up to!

## Speaker's Bio

Gwyneth Doland is a multimedia journalist with New Mexico PBS, KUNM Radio and New Mexico in Depth. She covers government and politics on the radio, television and online for the grant-funded People, Power and Democracy project. She is also an adjunct lecturer in the Communication and Journalism Department at UNM. Gwyneth investigated corruption in state government in 2015 and 2012 for the Center for Public Integrity in Washington, D.C. Gwyneth was previously the executive director of the New Mexico Foundation for Open Government, the editor of pioneering online news site The New Mexico Independent and a staff writer for the Santa Fe Reporter and Weekly Alibi. She is a former director of the Journalism

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  
Tara McCaughin: Member-at-Large

Subscription to HSNM Newsletter, published  
monthly, accompanies HSNM membership or  
can be obtained by nonmembers for \$20 an-  
nually, 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 presi-  
dent@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 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.

and Women Symposium and the Society of Professional  
Journalists Rio Grande Chapter.

**Introducing our New Member-at-Large  
Tara McCaughin**

Tara McCaughin is one of our newest board members.  
She and her wife are taking a great adventure moving to  
Albuquerque after living in Florida for 27 years, and so  
far they are greatly enjoying it here.

Tara has been an activist since she was 16 years old in  
1964 and has been a foremost Transgender Activist  
for the past 15 years since her own Transition. She has  
spoken in venues all over Florida and from Chicago to  
Atlanta, as well as presenting the Transgender History  
Workshop at the National Equality March in October,  
2009.

Before moving here from Gainesville, Fl. she was an  
active member of her local Humanist Society, where she  
was also a guest speaker twice. She is looking forward to  
speaking here and being an active member of HSNM.  
As an HSNM Member-at-Large, Tara is eager to hear  
from members so she can take their ideas and concerns  
to the Governing Board; she can be reached by email at  
deblynstara@yahoo.com or by phone: 352-484-7135

**An Exciting Possibility for New Mexico**  
by Babs Mondschein

“We,” a melange of passionate New Mexicans, have a  
wonderful opportunity to start a chapter of Americans  
United for Separation of Church and State (AUSCS) in  
Albuquerque. We would be the only chapter, thus far,  
in the entire state. Many HSNM members are currently  
members of AUSCS (National) and the American  
Humanist Association has a long-standing affiliation  
with AUSCS, so HSNM membership involvement is  
right up our proverbial alley.

AUSCS has no basis in secularism or theism. It is  
a religious liberty watchdog group. Their focus is  
specifically oriented towards the separation of church  
and state, separating religion from government. AUSCS  
is an activist, 501c3 national organization.

You might be thinking, “What would that activism  
‘look’ like?” Here are just a few examples of where  
organizational energies might be placed:

1. Eliminating “Creationism”/”Intelligent Design” from public school science curriculum
2. Eliminating Permanent Religious/Sectarian Signage from public properties
3. Eliminating Theist Prayer prior to public events
4. Eliminating Public Tax Support of religious institutions
5. Supporting Reproductive Choice
6. Supporting Gender Equality
7. Supporting Compassion/Choice in Dying

If a New Mexico chapter of AUSCS were to “take off” membership would be focused primarily on local issues, which is not to say that we wouldn’t also be involved with national concerns, as well.

“We” are inviting HSNM members, who may have an interest, to attend an “exploratory” meeting to determine if there is enough commitment to start an AUSCS chapter in New Mexico.

“We” would need an RSVP to track attendance, since there is limited space at the venue. If there were more people interested than the venue could accommodate, another meeting date would be added. AUSCS national has already been approached and they are very supportive of our participation as a new chapter.

Anyone interested in “investigating” this concept should be aware that this would be a participation oriented, activist organization. If we were to discover a sincere and enthusiastic interest in this venture (which would necessitate participation,) the next step would be to organize a Board of Directors, remitting our application, etc. Ultimately, our chapter would be involved in outreach to other organizations, individuals and institutions to build membership and clout within the state.

It is conceivable that organizations of like interests and goals might eventually “band together” to further the success of those interests, however, AUSCS, HSNM and other organizations would continue to operate 100% independently of each other. There would be absolutely no requirement to be a member of AUSCS and any other organization.

Coming to the “Information/Exploratory/Investigative/Q&A Meeting ” would not commit anyone to any

ongoing involvement.

Here are the meeting details:

Place: Erna Fergusson Library (505-888-8100)

Address: 3700 San Mateo NE

Date: Monday, June 6th

Time: 6:00-7:30

Please email/RSVP Babs Mondschein at [askbabsorganizer@gmail.com](mailto:askbabsorganizer@gmail.com) if you feel this meeting would be of interest and you would be willing to attend.

## HSNM Membership & Elections Calendar

The following schedule is specified by our By-laws:

July 4: Deadline for forming a Search Committee. (Zelda Gatuskin has been named chairperson; minimum 2 additional members are needed.)

August 2016: Membership renewal month; notices will be issued in our Newsletter and by email.

August 2016: The Search Committee’s formal request for Governing Board Nominations will also be published in the August Newsletter.

September 1: Membership renewals are due for Sept. 2016 through Aug. 2017 membership period.

September 15: Deadline for membership renewal in order to be eligible to vote in HSNM election.

September 15: Deadline for candidates to provide bios to Search Committee for October Newsletter.

October 2016: Ballots will be distributed to HSNM members in good standing with the October Newsletter.

October 15: Deadline for receipt of completed ballots.

October Speaker Meeting: Election results reported.

November 1: New Governing Board takes office for 2-year term.

## More Bathroom Bills Arise After South Dakota Defeat

by Trav Mamone

[TheHumanist.com](http://TheHumanist.com)

This past February we covered a proposed bill in South Dakota that would’ve prevented transgender students from using bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their gender identities. Though fortunately that bill was vetoed shortly after we posted the article, similarly atrocious bills have since popped up throughout the United States.

Last week North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory signed a bill drafted during a hasty “special session”

that requires all residents to use bathrooms designated for their biological sex as “stated on a person’s birth certificate.” In response, several corporations—including Apple, the NFL, IBM, American Airlines, and the NBA— have threatened to boycott the state of North Carolina. Just this past weekend Washington, DC, Mayor Muriel Bowser banned city employees from traveling to North Carolina on official business. Even the state’s attorney general, Roy Cooper, recently stated he would not defend the new law in court, calling it “unconstitutional” and “a national embarrassment.” Cooper, a Democrat who’s currently running against McCrory, said that not only does the law discriminate against LGBT people, but it will also “set North Carolina’s economy back if we don’t repeal it.”

Gov. McCrory, however, maintains that the law doesn’t discriminate against anyone and that the public outcry is nothing more than “political theater.” In a recent appearance on NBC News he asked, “Would you want a man to walk into your daughter’s shower and legally be able to do that because mentally they think they are of the other gender?”

Responding to the new law, a transgender man from Charlotte, North Carolina, named Charlie Comero has started passing out cards to cis women in public women’s rooms that read, “I’m following the law that was passed on March 23. I am a transgender man who would rather be using the men’s room right now. This is likely uncomfortable for both of us. Please contact your legislature and tell them you oppose HB-2.”

“Some transgender people are more at risk for violence/harassment because of this law than others due to how they are seen in public,” Comero recently wrote on his Facebook page. “My choice to do this has everything to do with acknowledging my white and (sometimes) male cis-passing privilege. I am not always seen as male. When I started feeling male privilege during my transition, I vowed to myself that I would use that privilege to bring awareness to things that might not be popular to say; anything else would be a betrayal of myself and my equity/feminist values.”

Meanwhile, Kansas legislators have proposed the “Student Physical Privacy Act,” that would give students

the right to sue schools if transgender students are caught using school bathrooms that match their gender identities. The two bills that make up the act claim, “Allowing students to use restrooms, locker rooms, and showers that are reserved for students of a different sex will create potential embarrassment, shame, and psychological injury to students.” The bills state that special accommodations can be made for transgender students, but as Tom Witt of Equality Kansas explains, “This is isolating kids, and it’s not going to end well. It’s putting a target on their backs.” Fortunately, the bills have met little support. Republican Kansas Rep. Stephanie Clayton, for example, says that “such a bill introduced so late in the session is meant to distract the public from the matters at hand for the legislature.”

Luckily, proposed bathroom bills don’t always pass. The Virginia House of Delegates killed a transphobic bathroom bill back in February. More recently, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal vetoed a bill that would allow for discrimination against LGBT people in the name of “religious freedom,” citing that “he knew of no instances in which the conflicts that the bill seeks to prevent had actually taken place.”

Businesses are starting to adopt new bathroom policies to accommodate transgender people as well. A Kroger grocery store in Atlanta, Georgia, for example, recently made headlines after installing a unisex public bathroom policy. According to a sign outside the unisex bathroom door, the purpose of having a unisex bathroom is to make things more comfortable for fathers with little girls, mothers with little boys, people with disabilities, and “those in the LGBTQ community.” A customer posted a picture of the sign onto her Facebook page and wrote, “Nice job, Kroger.”

Whether North Carolina will ultimately follow Virginia and Georgia is hard to say. However, as Comero reminds his Facebook followers, “If we fight with love and compassion, people will listen.”

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

*“One man’s ‘magic’ is another man’s engineering. ‘Supernatural’ is a null word.”*

*Robert A. Heinlein*