



THE
HUMANIST SOCIETY
OF NEW MEXICO
NEWSLETTER

October 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, October 8th

HSNM Informal Meeting

The informal meeting usually held on the second Saturday of each month is being suspended until further notice. Topical and Speaker meetings will continue as usual.

Saturday, October 15th

HSNM Topical Discussion 10:00AM – Noon

Practical Utopia

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, October 22nd

HSNM Speaker Meeting 10:00AM – Noon

My Story Coming Out as a Transgendered Woman

Tara McCaughin

Botts Hall, Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Next Speaker Meeting

Donna Tara McCaughin, Tara as we know her, came out as transgendered in 2000 and had her gender re-assignment surgery in 2001 at Chonburri, Thailand. Her talk will be about her life as a transsexual woman since her surgery. She will touch on her life as a transgender activist, describe how she has helped fight against discriminatory anti-trans laws and her belief that the future will lead to a greater acceptance of marginalized trans persons.

Upcoming HSNM Elections

Do you know this is an election year? I'm betting you heard a little something about it. Well, HSNM is having an election this year as well. It's time to elect our board this October. The Search Committee has made it's selection of candidates. The candidates bios are provided below. Ballots have been included in the mailing

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>)

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.

Officer/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 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 submission to: Editor, Randall Wall, Paragon2012@comcast.net. The deadline for Newsletter submission is the third Friday of each month. Website submission may be send 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 humanist responsible for its own affairs.

of this newsletter. Remember that you must have renewed your HSNM membership by September 15th in order to be able to vote in this election. Each member is allowed one vote, joint memberships count as two votes.

The roster of candidates:

Randy Wall, for HSNM President

Randy was born and raised in Artesia, New Mexico. In 1986, he earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology at New Mexico State University. He has worked in a healthcare setting since and is currently employed by Presbyterian Healthcare Services as an Administrative Secretary. His interests include the martial arts, science, popular culture and of course, Humanism.

Tara McCaughin, for HSNM Vice President

Tara 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

Richard Grady, for Treasurer

I am a retired accountant and have lived in Albuquerque for 6 years, but I have been a member of AHA quite a bit longer than that. I love music, especially classical, opera and jazz, and sing in a barbershop chorus and quartet. I am the treasurer of the local chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society, and also a trumpet player who once played in the Tulsa Philharmonic. My other principal hobby is Tournament Bridge. I have three children and 10 grandchildren. I love movies and read voraciously.

Cynthianne Yabut, for Secretary

I am a retired desk-top publisher/editor, currently Secretary of HSNM. I like reading (science fiction, popular science, economics, and alternative history fiction). Occasionally work at the polls and have served as an observer at the Planned Parenthood clinics when the nutcases were in town. I goof off by playing Canasta and volunteering with the PetSmart cat rescue at Academy and Wyoming.

Cheryl Gatner, for Member-at-Large

Originally from Canada, I have lived in the US for the past 21 years. I worked as an RN in Canada, Saudi Arabia and here in the US. Being brought up our family was Secular for the most part, though I did attend the United Church of Canada several times and really never understood what their premise was until I was in my early 20's. I have always lived as a Humanist. My interest and passions vary but I am now interested in social justice causes, women's rights and presently helping coordinate the newly formed Humanist Sunday School CoOp. My family live in Canada but I have my 3 "furry" children here with me. I am honored to be asked to be a member-at-large for our local Humanist chapter.

Jeanette Smith, for Member at Large

I'm originally from Ohio, graduated from St. Vincent's Girls Academy, and went on to earn two Master's degrees from UNM. I worked 23 years in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, then 20 years in the Albuquerque schools. I've been retired 3 years now and am enjoying myself. I'm divorced, with one adult son. I've been a Humanist for about 20

years.

The HSNM Past President also serves on the Governing Board. This is not an elected position. **Ananda E. Parnell, HSNM President 2014-2016** Ananda Parnell is a native New Mexican, born in Albuquerque, and raised in the Manzano Mountains. She has BA degrees in English and German, an MBA (2006), and is currently a teacher at Highland High School, and is a professional chaplain (Doctor of Divinity). Ananda started teaching in 2004, and sponsored the Gay Straight Alliance at Eldorado High School, as well as Highland, where she now co-sponsors the Humanists of Highland, an atheist group on campus. Ananda is an interfaith, nondenominational minister; her D.D. dissertation was on spiritual needs in the transhuman age. Her faith base is a "New Age" practice called Agni Yoga, most closely related to Buddhism.

Long Time HSNM Member Dale Roff Remembered

Dale Roff, 86, long time member of the Humanists passed away on Sept. 11, 2016. He is survived by his 4 children, Mark, Derek, Kent and Page. His good friend of 20 years, Patty DeRose was with him before he died.

Dale was born and raised in Juno, Alaska. Dale graduated with a degree in architecture from MIT. He then worked as an architect for the B.I.A. (bureau of Indian Affairs) first in Juno and when this office closed Dale and his family moved to Albuquerque where he was offered the same job here. After his divorce Dale remained good friends with his ex-wife and children. Patricia and Dale have been friends since 1996 and she has been a welcome addition to his family.

God and Politics: What's a Humanist to Do?

By Andrew Norman
December 13, 2012
The Humanist.com

The Institute for Humanist Studies (IHS), a new think tank conducting humanist research on social and political issues, met in Houston last week to reflect on the nature of theism's impact on public

policy. What is that impact, and how should we as humanists respond to it?

In this issue of *Brainstormin'*, I offer one perspective on the themes raised at this fascinating symposium.

Joseph Baker, a sociologist at East Tennessee State University, set the stage by establishing that theism has a demonstrable impact on a wide range of public policies. In particular, measures of a state's religiosity are often excellent predictors of that state's policies regarding such things as abstinence-only sex education, youth access to contraception, abortion, gay marriage, and the teaching of evolution. It is also a good predictor of economic insecurity, higher levels of religiosity correlating with higher levels of insecurity and societal dysfunction. (It is likely that societal dysfunction and religiosity are mutually reinforcing.)

Baker also shared data suggesting that the *type* of theism prevalent in a state has a big impact on the kinds of policies embraced by that state. Individuals who believe in a distant, non-judgmental god are closer to atheists in their public policy views than they are to those who worship a personal, judgmental deity. For political purpose, it's not whether you're a theist that matters, but whether you believe in a *personal* deity.

This has important implications for humanists. To enact policies we feel are enlightened, we will often need to build coalitions with theists who share our values. We need to recognize the diversity within theism, avoid the temptation to lump all theists together, and engage liberal and moderate theists in constructive dialogue.

Adam Chalom, a leader in the movement for Humanistic Judaism, provided a fascinating look at how theism and ethnicity intertwine in the politics of Israel. Peter Derkx, a professor at the University of Humanistic Studies in the Netherlands, described the dilemma that religious fundamentalism poses to democracies that espouse religious tolerance. Can we meet the threat these belief systems pose without compromising our commitment to tolerance and religious freedom?

Next up was Barbara Forrest, a professor of

philosophy who was a key witness for the prosecution in the landmark *Kitzmiller v. Dover* "intelligent design" trial. She posed a practical question with interesting philosophical dimensions: Given that religious fundamentalists will often champion unenlightened public policies, how can secular humanists and religious moderates form effective political coalitions? In particular, how do we negotiate our deep philosophical differences (which include both disagreements about the supernatural and disagreements over what counts as evidence)? The solution, Forrest argued, is to bracket our metaphysical differences and embrace a shared commitment to a public concept of evidence. That is, we can (at least temporarily) set aside the question of whether supernatural entities exist, and agree that *issues that affect us all need to be resolved on the basis of evidence in principle available to all*. Private revelation, which may be admitted as a kind of evidence in matters that affect only one's self, has no evidential value in debates over public policy. In public discourse, only publicly accountable talk has authority. An elegant solution to an important problem—and one humanists would do well to heed.

Author and activist Sikivu Hutchinson highlighted the fact that secularism has made few inroads among women and people of color, pointedly arguing that humanists need to take bold stands for social and gender justice if it hopes to win a following among traditionally disadvantaged groups. Campaigner and blogger Maryam Namazie shared her extensive knowledge of political Islam, calling attention to the problems created when public officials capitulate to religious leaders in the name of pluralism. To secure human rights for all, she argued, we must thoroughly "de-religionize" public policy.

This excellent symposium brought together key humanist thinkers and posed questions of critical importance to our movement. The wisdom contained in the forthcoming collection of essays from the Institute for Humanist Studies promises to be an important resource for academics, public officials and humanist activists for years to come.

