



THE  
HUMANIST SOCIETY  
OF NEW MEXICO  
NEWSLETTER

September 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, September 10th

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, September 17th

HSNM Topical Discussion 10:00AM – Noon

To be Determined

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, September 24th

HSNM Speaker Meeting 10:00AM – Noon

*A Day at the Museum*

New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science

1801 Mountain Rd. NW

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**

A Day at the Museum (of Natural History and Science)

This September we are unable to meet in our usual place, so why not meet in a different time as well? Back to the time just after the formation of our universe, or our galaxy, or the formation of the Earth. We could go back to the time of the when the dinosaurs were in charge. Where would such a place exist? The New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science of course. We're planning to meet in the Museum lobby at 10am on September 24th. We can get a group rate if there are ten or more of us. RSVPS would be desirable (but not required.) Please call Tara at (352) 484-7135 to RSVP or if you need a ride to the Museum.

**ByLaws Excerpt: Elections**

G. Elections: Election of Board members by 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.

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](mailto:president@humanistsocietyofnm.org). HSNM dues are now paid separately from AHA dues, visit [www.americanhumanist.org](http://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.

Membership will take place each even-numbered year. The President will appoint a chairperson to form a Search Committee of at least two other members, all of whom have the approval of the Board, by July 4 of the election year to seek candidates to stand for election. The Committee will announce, in the August Newsletter and through other appropriate means, that nominations (including self-nominations) are being accepted for Board positions including four (4) officers and two (2) MaL. Candidates will submit proof of membership in good standing and a short biography to the Committee by September 15. The Committee may conduct a formal interview of any candidate and may recommend one or more candidates for each position. The Committee will arrange for the names and biographies of each candidate, indicating the position they seek, to be published in the October Newsletter. Sealed ballots, approved by the Board, will be distributed with the October Newsletter to all Members in good standing by September 15. Ballots must be returned by October 15 to be counted. Each Member in good standing by September 15 will be entitled to one vote for each elected position.

Votes will be tallied and recorded by the Board and those elected by a simple majority will be entitled

to take office on November 1. Tie votes will be settled by a coin toss.

Editor's Note: Please remember that you must have renewed your HSNM membership by September 15th in order to be eligible to vote.

## My Favorite Charity

by Cynthia Yabut

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[info@solarcookers.org](mailto:info@solarcookers.org) | [www.solarcookers.org](http://www.solarcookers.org)

SCI is a nonprofit that provides solar cookers, with training in making and using solar cookers, around the world. There are many benefits of solar cookers:

- Solar Cookers can be used to pasteurize water, using free, zero-emission solar energy
  - Many areas do not have sources of clean drinking water, and water-borne diseases take a heavy toll, especially among infants.
- The use of solar ovens replaces the use of scarce and expensive wood or charcoal in cooking, and thus help prevent deforestation in arid areas
- Solar cookers help improve the quality of life
  - In some villages, women must walk for hours to get wood, or pay for wood/charcoal for cooking meals, then cook over open fires. With solar ovens, they have more time to tend gardens and animals, or run a small business, and can use their earnings to pay school fees and buy clothing for their children.

In short, the distributions of solar ovens improves the environment and the lives of the people, and is dirt-cheap to boot. A win-win-win.

## Taking Another Look at "Daniel Deronda"

by Zelda Leah Gatuskin

[Excerpts from my blog post of 8/23/16. Read the complete post here:

<https://zeldagatuskin.wordpress.com/>]

I was puttering around in the studio not so long ago, steeping myself in the far left politics of Democracy Now as they were rebroadcasting an interview with Edward Said (1935-2003), when an unexpected literary reference caught my ear and caused me to pay closer attention to the radio.

What on earth could Edward Said, noted academic and proponent of Palestinian rights, have had against George Eliot, one of the greatest English novelists of the nineteenth century? Really? He says her novel *Daniel Deronda* has contributed to the rise of Zionism, the displacement of the Palestinians, and the schism between the Western and Arab worlds? I decided I had better take a look.

And so I finally broached this lengthy novel by the author of *Middlemarch* and *Silas Marner*, among other notable works.... I picked up the fat volume in the library again and, again, perused the back cover of *Daniel Deronda*. Right -- the "Jewish" subplot. The book gets mixed reviews for that ....having heard Edward Said actually diss this book by name, I was eager to see what all the fuss was about. Surely Eliot had to have gotten something right, artistically, for critics and readers to still feel so argumentative about this work.

She did. And now I am going to argue my own point, which is that Mary Ann Adams (1819-1880), a.k.a. George Eliot, was first and foremost writing about the universal plight of women.

The intertwined culture clashes -- Christian/Jew, male/female, rich/poor -- explored in *Daniel Deronda* are strikingly similar to those playing out today. In fact, there is a nearly exact parallel between Eliot's "enlightened" Christian characters' abhorrence for the Jewish custom of keeping women separate from men at temple, while virtually enslaving and prostituting their own

women within a society that kept them destitute except by support of a male family member, and contemporary Western censure of Muslim women's head-covering practice, while tolerating and abetting the demeaning objectification of women ... and the same general diminishment of status based solely on gender that most every culture and every religion has propagated for thousands of years.

Literary analysis of *Daniel Deronda*, which was first published in 1876, makes note of Eliot's fascination with Judaism, her special interest in its long historical roots, and her friendship with Jewish scholar Immanuel Oscar Menahem Deutsch. I suppose her ardently feminist philosophy is so well evidenced by her own biography that it goes without saying, but surely that had something to do with her need to probe the far reaches of history for the source of Jewish tenacity and morality. Must all societies be organized around male dominance and female subservience? Shall our fates be forever dictated by either a divine plan or stupid luck-of-the-draw, in which there are but two possibilities: having male benefactors who are decent and generous, or who are abusive and uncaring? And in either case, it's a woman's duty to submit? Says who?

In leading up to the subject of Jewish self-determination (which is not even hinted at until two-thirds into the novel), Eliot dwells at length on the unhappy choices facing her heroine, Gwendolen, a young woman with seemingly every asset except one -- an inheritance. Gwendolen harbors a disdain for men and male wooing, which we come to understand, in between-the-lines Victorian fashion, is the result of disturbing experiences with her stepfather. But what is she to do? That man is out of their lives, but their assets have gone with him. Mother and sisters are dependent on relatives; and when the uncle's investments crash, all hopes rest on a prospective husband for Gwendolen.

In the context of the full novel, we can see that Gwendolen has suddenly found herself in a similar position to the Jewish characters she will later meet -- forced to suppress her higher aims in order to secure physical sustenance for herself and her

family. While Gwendolen's aims may seem vague and vain against the lofty religious yearnings of Jewish (male) scholars, the latter need only lower themselves to moneylending and trade in goods, whereas Gwendolen's very person is on the line.

I suppose it's more comfortable for male academics to blame Eliot for promulgating Zionism without regard for the native inhabitants of Palestine, than to acknowledge that the real villains of this story are fathers, husbands and wealthy lechers. For all of the oafish, oblivious, conceited, domineering and downright dastardly male characters who inhabit this novel, Eliot offers a single decent, rational, modern man: Daniel Deronda. He is the star of the book because he treats women with respect. He also has some significant identity issues of his own.

Finally, four-fifths through the book, we come to the nut of Eliot's argument, and mine. I think this short excerpt speaks for itself and I will not be giving away important plot details by quoting it here:

*"I gather that [your father] opposed your bent to be an artist. Though my own experience has been quite different, I enter into the painfulness of your struggle. I can imagine the hardship of an enforced renunciation."*

*"No," said the Princess, shaking her head, and folding her arms with an air of decision. "You are not a woman. You may try -- but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl. To have a pattern cut out-- 'this is the Jewish woman; this is what you must be; this is what you are wanted for; a woman's heart must be of such a size and no larger, else it must be pressed small, like Chinese feet; her happiness is to be made as cakes are, by a fixed receipt.' That was what my father wanted. He wished I had been a son..."*

With that reference to the binding of Chinese women's feet, Eliot tips the scales already heavy with the accumulated weight of Gwendolen's torment -- we are not talking about only Jewish women here, but all women.