



# THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

September 2014

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/>

<http://hsnm.wordpress.com>

[zelda@amadorbooks.com](mailto:zelda@amadorbooks.com)

## **HSNM Meetings in Albuquerque**

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

### Saturday, September 13

**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, September 20

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

*How Do Venues Affect Attendance?*

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

### Saturday, September 27

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

*"What Is Secular Buddhism?"*

Roy Moody

Free and open to the public

Botts Hall, Special Collections Library

423 Central Ave. NE, Albuquerque

Humanist Minute: TBA

-----  
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](http://www.nmsr.org))

**First Unitarian HUmanist Group**

(<http://www.uuabq.org/classes.html>, 505-344-8930)

**Freedom from Religion Albuquerque**

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

**Santa Fe Atheist Community**

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

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

## **President's Message**

by Zelda Gatuskin

We all survive our childhoods. Obviously, or we wouldn't be here. But we do not come through unmarked. The innocence of childhood is much overplayed. Children catch on pretty quick to both blatant and subtle signals coming from those around them. Adults' embarrassment, worry, amusement, satisfaction, confusion and dishonesty are all registered if not fully understood by humans of very young age.

Childhood by its nature is full of firsts. Novel experiences can stay with us forever. We hope these will be encouraging, educational, beneficial memories. Since Frank and I have been taming/raising a stray cat and her kittens this summer, I have been recalling being a kid and the time our pet cat gave birth to her litter in the middle of the night. That was an eye-opener, to say the least. We had gotten a paperback book about cat care and had prepared for the event. The mother cat had not read the book, but everything proceeded without too much fuss, naturally.

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

Zelda Gatuskin: President  
Randall Wall: Vice President/Speaker Programs  
Leland Franks: Past President  
Richard Grady: Treasurer  
Ashley Jordan: Member-at-Large, Newsletter Editor  
Cynthianne Yabut: Member-At-Large ,  
acting Secretary

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](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 humanity responsible for its own affairs.

I know we had the kittens long enough to give them names - all literary women: Emily and Charlotte Bronte, Agatha Christie and Daphne DuMaurier, though as it turned out, they were not all female. We kept "Daffy." Dad took the others to the SPCA. His earlier "jokes" about rocks and sacks and rivers hadn't gone over real well. I remember having the uneasy feeling that my father, in other circumstances, could have and would have dispatched the newborn kittens. He'd been to war, after all. But it turned out he was no match for three daughters, a wife and mother-in-law.

Memories of recurring events become embedded through repetition. It is hard to remember the very first experience of an annual family tradition. Details change from year to year, but the format is the same. An iconic memory emerges; here's one of mine: Every Mother's Day we'd pile into the station wagon, my Mom and Dad, me and my two sisters, Grandma Sarah and Aunt Sarah, and sometimes Grandma Sadie and Grandpa Julie, and drive to Bordentown, NJ, which was exactly halfway between our home in Wilmington, DE and my Uncle Irv's house in Teaneck. There was a Howard Johnson's at the Bordentown exit of the NJ Turnpike where Irv, Aunt Gladys and cousin Howie would meet us. It always rained (that's how we remember it) so that after our big lunch, we'd rush out to the station wagon and squeeze everyone in to give the Mother's Day gifts; and although Aunt Sarah wasn't married and wasn't a mom, she too got gifts. It was a happy time, all crowded in together, the rain beating down. Often the sun would come out, finally, about the time we were ready to head home.

How idyllic it all sounds. But even my safely swaddled suburban upbringing was edged with heartache, and rumbled with undertones of old, mostly stupid, family feuds. Worse was Hebrew School and the history lessons concerning attacks on Jews in the Holocaust, the Russian pogroms, the Spanish Inquisition, and all the way back to biblical times. Not the best fodder for a young, extremely vivid imagination. When I was older and attempting an objective assessment of my "roots" I would look back on all of that as amounting to a form of abuse, though it probably didn't seem so to the more extroverted or inattentive or tough-minded kids. I wonder what it would be like to have grown up without having to look so deeply, so early, into the darkest aspects of human experience - to have ever been innocent. I will never know.

Still, I only had to experience those violations of humanity in my imagination, intellectually, emotionally. How much more branded, if not stunted, is the person who really suffered such things, who has survived physically but must live with the scars and trauma. People do come through and overcome the most horrendous deprivation and assaults. We console ourselves with uplifting examples of those who are “now living a normal life” and the knowledge that at least some are able to put the past behind them and enjoy a secure and fulfilled adulthood.

Yes, humans are resilient. We who are here are all survivors. But there can be no reclaiming the time when a healthy new mind is poised on the brink of awareness and prepared to burst into willful, curious, joyful discovery. That is a moment of potentiality that only comes once in a lifetime. Imagine the beauty and achievements of a society in which all children have that moment of innocence, that sense of security, that chance to thrive. Imagine a world in which we do more than survive.

### **September Speaker Meeting What Is Secular Buddhism?**

By Roy Moody

Secular Buddhism is an emerging form of Buddhism that is based on humanist, naturalist, and non-theist values. Secular Buddhism can be thought of as a flavor of humanism or naturalism and takes from Buddhism only what is compatible with naturalism and mainstream science.

Roy is a retired professional speaker and is a member of the First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque. He is Coordinator of the Humanist Discussion Group, the Secular Buddhism Study Group and is a member of the Adult Education Committee, the Forum Committee and the Food Pantry Program. He is actively involved with insight meditation as a daily practice. His speaking topics include the areas of Humanism, Naturalism, Secular Buddhism and Non-Theistic Spirituality.

### **Reminder: Dues are Due!**

This is your reminder, HSNM members! It's now September, which means August has left us in the dust. If you haven't already, be sure to get your membership renewals in as soon as possible to enjoy the benefits of

HSNM membership all year long. To be eligible to vote in our Governing Board elections, your dues must be received by September 15.

### **Governing Board Nominations Still Open**

If you've been on the edge about stepping into a leadership position for HSNM, now is the time to decide! Nominations are still open for a short while longer, so if you would like to be considered for a position on the HSNM Governing Board, now is the time to contact Jeanette Smith (232-9838, [jeanettec47@gmail.com](mailto:jeanettec47@gmail.com)), Jerry Wesner (821-8614, [JNWesner@aol.com](mailto:JNWesner@aol.com)), or Salem Smith (359-9411, [SalemWSmith@gmail.com](mailto:SalemWSmith@gmail.com)).

Nominations close on September 19th.

### **Rally Against Anti-Choice - September 5th!**

By Cheryl Gatner

A rally is being put together by members of Freedom from Religion ABQ, NOW ABQ, and other groups, to protest the arrival and speaking event of Troy Newman, the President of Operation Rescue, who will be the keynote speaker at “The Gabriel Project” fundraiser. The honored guest at this fundraiser will be Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan.

The event will take place at the Embassy Suites Hotel on September 5th, and protesters intend to rally outside from 5 to 6:30 pm.

As you may or may not know Operation Rescue is an anti-abortion terrorist group who was surreptitiously involved in the murder of Dr. Tiller. Cheryl Sullenger serves as a senior policy advisor for Operation Rescue under Troy Newman. In 1988 she pled guilty to conspire to blow up the Alvarado Medical Center abortion clinic with a gasoline bomb and served 2 years in US federal prison. Sullenger denied any contact with the man who shot Dr. George Tiller but after finding her phone number on the murderer's dashboard of his car, she admitted that she had kept him informed regarding Tiller's scheduled court dates.

I believe Albuquerque is ground zero for these strident anti-abortion groups and we will see mounting pressure over the next year. Many local anti-abortion groups will be in attendance, and our pro-choice groups should make our presence known.

For more information, contact Cheryl Gatner at [kewwlnurse@gmail.com](mailto:kewwlnurse@gmail.com).

### **Stand With Amanda Scott**

*(Originally published by the Secular Student Alliance)*

Standing up for your rights can be a very difficult and brave thing to do. However, no one should ever be vilified and harassed the way that many secular people are when they speak up for their rights.

Amanda Scott is a student at Faulkner State Community College. On June 19th, she testified before her local county commission against a resolution to display a plaque with "In God We Trust" on it at the Mobile Government Plaza. However, her voice was not listened to, and the commission voted 2-1 to approve the plaque.

Amanda wasn't done standing up for what she knew was right. She stood up once again on August 7th for a proposal to allow other individuals and groups to put up their own plaques. The one proposed by Amanda and the Mobile Atheist Community, had "In Reason We Trust" written on it. Once again, the commission ignored her voice.

However, Amanda knew she could still get her perspective listened to. So when the largest local TV station requested an interview after her second testimony, she accepted. This news station, rather than focusing on the presence of the plaque, asked their audience what they thought about Amanda speaking up for her rights.

The results were horrific and beyond what anyone should have to deal with. Her community posted death threats, told her to leave the country, attacked her character, and attacked her appearance.

After a different news outlet ran a story about the hate mail she had received, more people stepped up to tell Amanda that she deserved the harassment and even accused her of lying about receiving them.

This is atrocious behavior; anyone should be able to stand up for their rights and their belief without

receiving death threats.

We are so proud of the work Amanda has done towards advancing equality in her community, in spite of the hatred and harassment that has been directed towards her. We want to recognize Amanda's bravery in standing up for her fellow secular Americans in Mobile, Alabama, and are thrilled to be able to recognize her courage with an Award for Outstanding Activism.

Amanda, please know that you have the full support of the Secular Student Alliance. We know that an award from us doesn't make up for the harassment, but we hope it can serve as a reminder that you are doing fantastic work, and we are proud to have you as a part of the secular student movement.

Thank you for your courage, Amanda!

*(If you'd like to send Amanda personal letters of support or encouragement, you can email them to Gordon Maples at [updates@secularstudents.org](mailto:updates@secularstudents.org).)*

### **The Expendables**

By Jean O'Hara

A writer tries to portray something in  
A universal realm so that one can  
Get the totality of pickings slim.  
That's not p plus not p is an also ran.  
So, two bad hands don't make a plus  
Just like two p's that are a bad fuss.  
What's the problem with preventing malevolence?  
Is it physiological or social? Something just held in  
abeyance?  
Fear, you say, is a concern only of the scientific moralists,  
Then increase security and cultivate courage.  
That is how some do as rational humanists.  
Thusly, one can eliminate all the bugaboos' entourage.  
Yes, artists live without a dime in search of security,  
They seek more knowledge, a reach towards perpetuity.

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

*"It's not our job to toughen our children up to face a cruel and heartless world. It's our job to raise children who will make the world a little less cruel and heartless." - L.R. Knost*