



# Humanist Society of New Mexico



April 2012

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/> [zelda@amadorbooks.com](mailto:zelda@amadorbooks.com)

## Quote of the Month

Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not.

Oprah Winfrey

## Upcoming HSNM Meetings

Meetings are free and run from 10:00 to noon  
(except where noted)

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**Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**

### Informal Meeting

*General Discussion starts at 10:10am*  
Restricted to Members and their Guests Only. For invitation please contact Zelda Gatuskin at 505-344-6102 for details or questions.

Refreshments: Janet Johnson

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

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**Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>**

### Topical Discussion – Open to the Public

*Snobbery, Elitism and Humanism*

Erna Fergusson Library, 3700 San Mateo Blvd. NE

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**Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup>**

### Speaker Meeting – Open to the Public

*The Social Determinants of Health*

Bill Kimbrough

Humanist Minute: Atilla Csanyi

Refreshments: HSNM Board

UNM Law School, Room 2405, 1117 Stanford NE

## HSNM Family Co-Op Alternative Children's Sunday School

Informal MeetUps: field trips, hikes, socials  
Call 505-292-4375 for more information  
or go to [www.MeetUp.com](http://www.MeetUp.com)

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**Santa Fe Humanists**  
**Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 10:30am**

*What It Means to be Human*

Cafe Room, Southside Branch of the  
Santa Fe Public Library, 6599 Jaguar Drive

For more information contact Martin Tierney  
(505) 983-5001

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**HSNM Rio Rancho/Westside Group**  
**Saturday, April 21 1:00-3:00pm**

4611 Los Reyes Rd  
Rio Rancho

Discussion Topic: "Earth Day: how humanists  
express responsibility to other species  
and our environment"

This group is open to all members of HSNM  
Contact Jerry Gilbert @ [drigilbert@aol.com](mailto:drigilbert@aol.com)  
or 505-400-9649

**H**umanism 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.

## **The Humanist Society of New Mexico**

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association.

The purpose of HSNM is to promote ethical, naturalistic, democratic Humanism among its members and within its community.

### **Officers/Committees**

*Zelda Gatuskin: President*

*Roy Moody: Vice President*

*[Education/Programs]*

*Fred March: Past President*

*[Special Projects]*

*Leland Franks: Treasurer*

*Jerry Gilbert: Secretary [By-laws, Membership]*

*Carolyn Kaye, Member-at-Large*

*Randall Wall, Member-at-Large*

### **Ongoing Projects:**

*Ron Herman, HSNM Family Co-op Coordinator*

*Randall Wall, Newsletter Editor*

*Attila Csanyi, Friendly Philosopher's Director*

Subscription to HSNM Newsletter, published monthly, accompanies HSNM membership or can be obtained by nonmembers for \$15 annually. HSNM membership is \$15/year (\$20 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](mailto:paragon2012@comcast.net) or 1009 Childers NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112. The deadline for Newsletter submissions is the third Saturday 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.

## **President's Message for April**

Do you ever find yourself wishing that Homo sapiens would hurry up and evolve already? Clearly it is the unique quality of the human mind that has given us the evolutionary edge so far. Language, self-awareness, science, imagination -- other species possess intelligence, but none has been able, individually or collectively, to organize theirs in the way that humans have made routine for the past fifty thousand years or more. While the common notion that we only ever use about ten percent of our brains has been soundly debunked, there is evidence that, regardless of how many cylinders are firing, we're dumber in groups.\* Why is this?

Humans can work together effectively to build just about anything, to fight wars, to harvest crops and process food, but getting together intellectually is more problematic. New ideas are most often met with some combination of derision and fear. Small groups of curious, broad-minded individuals push forward alongside or close behind a "genius" -- a Plato, DaVinci, Newton, Beethoven, Darwin, Jefferson, Picasso, etc. -- and, in direct proportion to their progress, a great force of reactionary hysterics pulls back to center, to the status quo, and may even try to go backwards. We are seeing that backlash acted out today in multiple arenas.

In groups, we approach problems from the assumption that they exist independently of ourselves, and that solutions will come through manipulating and "fixing" something "out there," in the same way we might adjust the temperature of the oven or put air in a tire. But social order problems do not arise from external forces so much as from the internal makeup of the species attempting to organize. To quote Walt Kelly's Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us." Look around at the problems plaguing our communities, nations and humanity itself. Does it seem like every attempt at a solution digs us in deeper? Why is that? Could it be a failure of imagination, of compassion, of some inherent but under-developed capacity of consciousness?

Can we make the next evolutionary leap without going over the cliff and taking a significant portion of nature as we know it with us? I think we can, but like all

species that must adapt to new conditions or face extinction, we will need to diversify our gene pool, by which I mean our gene pool of ideas -- our "meme pool" (the word "meme" itself being an example of how concepts evolve). What game-changing ideas have we missed out on, over the course of the last few millennia, by marginalizing the voices of everyone who is not a white, male, Judeo-Christian landowner from the western world? (Note that all of the trailblazers listed above do fall into that elite category.) Perceived in this light, extending equal rights, opportunities and respect to all people, everywhere, is not just a matter of being fair to them, it's a question of survival for all.

*\* With the exception of groups of humanists, of course... see theme for our next Topical Discussion Meeting!*

### **HSNM Selected for AHA Pilot Program**

AHA has started a Video Camera Loan program for chapters. Under this program, they will loan out video cameras to AHA chapters so that we'll be able to film our programs for our archives as well as for distribution over the internet. "Through this program, we hope to show people what it is that our chapters do--and largely, what humanists do." We have already received a camera, and the following link so we can familiarize with its features. If you would like to learn to use the camera and try recording some of our events, please contact Zelda.

Kodak Playfull HD Video Camera:

[http://reviews.cnet.com/digital-camcorders/kodak-playfull-hd-video/4505-6500\\_7-34507370.html#reviewPage1](http://reviews.cnet.com/digital-camcorders/kodak-playfull-hd-video/4505-6500_7-34507370.html#reviewPage1)

### **Humanist Minute Sign-up**

The Humanist Minute is delivered by one of our members at the beginning of each Speaker Meeting (4th Saturday of the month). We don't stick literally to a minute, but try to keep it to two or three. The material is not pre-screened in any way. It can be a reading, a riff or a rant - if you're a humanist, it will be a Humanist Minute. Sign up with Roy Moody.

### **Refreshment Sign-up**

Refreshments are provided at the Informal Meeting (2nd Saturday) and Speaker Meeting (4th Saturday) each month. If you sign up to bring refreshments, you are only responsible for the snacks and, if you want, a cold beverage. Bill and Shirley Little (thank you, thank you) bring the coffee/tea set-up and supplies. If in doubt about what will be on hand, contact the Littles. Also, you can be reimbursed for the cost of refreshments by giving/sending a request with your receipts to our

Treasurer, Leland Franks. We need volunteers for August through end of year. Sign up with Randy Wall.

### **Review: John Pilger's *The New Rulers of the World*, Part 2**

by Don Gutierrez

These journalistic confrontations may seem like small victories against the vast backdrop of lies and murder committed by institutions of state and finance. However, as a journalist's struggle with powerful institutional individuals to pry the truth loose, they are crucially important. Probably few Americans are aware that a senior CIA officer named Ralph McGehee once described "the terror in Indonesia from 1965-66 as a 'model operation' for the American-run coup that got rid of Salvador Allende in Chile seven years later." Indonesia, according to McGehee, also served as the model for "Operation Phoenix" in which American-led death squads murdered at least 50,000 Vietnamese (50).

Throughout Rulers, Pilger especially punctures the government propaganda of the United States and England. As a major American justification for attacking nations like Iraq and Afghanistan has been their alleged connection with terrorists, Pilger at some length provides numerous instances of the United States harboring terrorists. He cites, among others, Guatemala's defense minister Hector Gramajo, El Salvador's general Jose Guillermo Garcia, Argentina's admiral Jorge Enrico and the Chilean death-squad soldier Armando Fernandez Larios, all individuals involved in state torture and murder, sometimes on a mass scale. Most of these major criminals and others like them have lived in comfort in areas like Florida.

According to Pilger, "What all these people have in common, apart from their history of terrorism, is that they were either working directly for the US government or carrying out the dirty work of American policies." It is only a step from mentioning these Washington-backed terrorists to underlining the terrorist character of the formerly named School of the Americas: "Given that the evidence linking the school to continuing atrocities in Latin America is rather stronger than the evidence linking al-Qa'ida training camps to the attack on New York, what should we do about the 'evil-doers' in Fort Benning, Georgia?" (140-41)

Pilger's final chapter analyzes a First World's brutalization of the Third within the same country. "The Chosen Ones" elaborates White Australia's racist policies towards the Aborigines, from depriving them of land rights (by acting as if Australia was unoccupied until Europeans arrived) to policies of genocide.

According to one authority, the Aborigines' population fell from 120,000 to 20,000 by 1920, with at least 10,000 killed outright. Pilger also deflates the myth among White Australians that the government is pouring millions of dollars into Aborigine welfare to no avail, pointing out that Aborigines continue to be deprived of housing, access to education and hope.

Pilger is an outstanding journalist because he asserts the crucial questions and considerations few journalists want to pose, such as whether Saddam Hussein or American and British leaders and their sanctions killed more innocent Iraqis. The ultimate question he poses is whether the West's war on terrorism is really an elaborate hoax meant to disguise the state terrorism behind the new imperialism called globalization.

### Origins

by Sylvia Ramos Cruz

*-reflections on Blue Pool,  
painting by Helen Frankenthaler, 1985*

Brain, heart, spine poised to swim,  
slither, take the skies, tread on land.

She leaves us standing  
before the Sphinx—

with Gregor Mendel one hundred years before,  
carefully cross-pollinating scores of common peas  
unraveling the roots of our heredity

and Darwin pondering barnacles, Galapagos fossils,  
wrens transmuting into finches in his garden  
divining how one species alters into another.

Easier, perhaps, to have stood with Botticelli,  
agape at the birth of Venus,  
Aphrodite rising from the stirrings of Poseidon  
fully-formed, exquisite *ad infinitum*.

### Live and Let Live

by Jean O'Hara, 8/2/94

What are you going to do if there's no  
Big toad stool on which a frog sits to puff?  
Nobody wants to make an overture show,  
Leader, or not to a small frog's fate  
Though, it is simpler to be a large frog.  
So with a small puddle one may get great,  
Therefore, if one wants to posture, sit log.  
Lily pads, moreover, depict puffers' fate.

So, the rub is, bask days and nights, and then gaze  
At the withering flowers crushed, crumpled-  
After which one sees that birds, bees, lose days.  
Yet, leaders, bull frogs and toads' music humbled  
Doth seek nature to immortalize life,  
Thus, letting the world live in peace, less strife.

### First Unitarian Humanist Group

**April 10<sup>th</sup>, 7pm**

7pm to 8:30pm

Social Hall, First Unitarian Universalist Church,  
3701 Carlisle Blvd. NE

Open to both Religious and Secular Humanists

Meets the second Tuesday of each month

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### The Atheists and Freethinkers of New Mexico

<http://atheists.meetup.com/75>

**Sunday, April 1st, 9am**

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice,  
202 Harvard SE

**Tuesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm**

Social Meeting at 6:30pm at Mimi's Cafe, 4316  
The 25 Way, Near Jefferson and I-25

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### Friendly Philosophers

**Monday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> - General Discussion**

**Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup>**

*Humanism and other "Ism's"*

Zelda Gatuskin

*Copper Canyon Restaurant, 5455 Gibson (opposite  
Lovelace Hospital) in conference dining room.*

*Dinner at 5:30; talk follows.*