



Humanist Society of New Mexico



August 2011

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/> zelda@amadorbooks.com

Quote of the Month

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

William Butler Yeats

HSNM Family Co-Op Alternative Children's Sunday School

No Meetings for the Summer
Call 505-292-4375 for more information
or go to www.Meetup.com.

Santa Fe Humanists Saturday, August 6th, 10:30am

Charity

Community Room, La Farge Branch of the
Santa Fe Public Library, 1730 Llano St.
For more information contact Bill Weihofen
(505) 988-1343

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, August 1st - General Discussion
Monday, August 15th TBA

Copper Canyon Restaurant, 5455 Gibson (opposite
Lovelace Hospital) in conference dining room.
Dinner at 5:30; talk follows.

New Mexicans for Science and Reason

Wednesday, August 17th, 7pm

New Developments in Wind and Solar Power
Sandra Begay-Campbell

UNM Law Building, Room 2405
1117 Stanford NE

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, August 13th

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: Mina Yamashita

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Saturday, August 20th

Topical Discussion – Open to the Public

Can the Arts Change Your Life?

Erna Fergusson Library, 3700 San Mateo Blvd. NE

Saturday, August 27th

Speaker Meeting – Open to the Public

*The Potentials – George Lakoff Study
Group*

By Jane Ronca-Washburn, Lisa Franzen, Ann
and Dick Harrison, and Janet Resnick-Wandel

Humanist Minute: TBA

Refreshments: Leland Franks

UNM Law School, Room 2406, 1117 Stanford NE

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.

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

Veronica Garcia, Public Information Chair

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 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. HSNM dues are now paid separately from AHA dues, visit www.americanhumanist.org for more information about the American Humanist Association.

President's Message – For August 2011

by Zelda Gatuskin

I was saddened to learn of the death of one of our most loyal members, Sidney Stone, on July 9. He was with his daughters and their families in California when he suffered a stroke on June 27. How fortunate for him to have his family gathered around him in his final weeks, but how unfortunate for us to have wished him off on his summer vacation never to see him again. And yet, as I write, I see Sidney clearly in my mind's eye. He has on a neat summer suit with a bolo tie, and his halo of white hair is only outshined by his smile.

I didn't know Sidney well or long, but I spent an afternoon with him last summer when we traveled to San Jose for the AHA Conference. We found each other in LAX waiting for the flight to San Jose. It was nice to have a travel buddy, while we took turns watching the luggage and wandering the terminal. We managed to sit together on the plane (he boarded ahead of me and used that crisp jacket to save me a seat). Once all the protocols and safety instructions were completed and we had taken flight, Sidney turned to me and said, "So, do you want to hear my story?"

I sure did. He told me much about his life and his work, about Marcia and their two daughters, of whom he was so proud. He was modest about his own accomplishments, though clearly he still relished the memories. As an astrophysicist with Los Alamos Labs he'd had a seat in the front row of history when the great minds of the day were developing the weapons that would put an end to WWII, and he'd come through a humanist.

Rarely does one wish for a plane trip to be longer, but I did that day, along with wishing I had a recording device, but we were on the ground before I knew it; all those fascinating details of Sidney's life already fading from my memory as we traversed what seemed like an endless maze of corridors. I couldn't believe how far we had to walk to get out of that airport. It turned out that one of the terminals was under construction and we'd had to go all the way around it to get to the shuttle stop out front. More astonishing was the way Sidney, at 88, trucked along without a pause or a whimper - unlike me! I think the man could have walked a few more miles without getting winded.

"To know him is to love him." This was not a mere platitude in Sidney's case. But more, to know him was to feel loved. Sidney, in simply being who he was, the way he was, was about the best advertising for humanism we could have. My experience with Sidney was part of the inspiration for our Humanist Lives project, in which we will be collecting oral histories from our senior members and producing them in a variety of media formats. We are quickly moving from the planning stages to actual taping sessions, thanks to our Humanist Lives co-chairs, Lisa and Ashley. If you should get a call about participating in the project from one of these formidable young women, just say Yes! The project is as much about the continuity of our own organization as introducing a wider audience to humanism through stories of how people come to, and live out, humanist philosophy.

We will publish a full bio of Sidney in a future issue along with details of the memorial which is being planned for mid-October.

New HSNM Scholarship at UNM

by Carolyn Kaye

Thanks to a generous, anonymous donor, HSNM has been able to initiate a \$1,000 UNM scholarship in our name for the 2011-2012 academic year. The scholarship will be awarded based on merit and need to a student with at least twelve academic credits. As the donor-provided funding will not have then been exhausted, we may elect to continue the scholarship if this medium proves successful, or discontinue it if not. After the student has been selected by UNM, we will contact her or him and perhaps invite the student to attend and be introduced at a future meeting. In view of the difficulty of student college self-financing, we are gratified to be able to help a student in need to attain higher education. (Scholarship Committee: Ruth E. Francis, Jerry Wesner, Paul Deal, Carolyn Glen Kaye)

Book Report: "The Soros Lectures" by George Soros, 2010

by Carolyn Kaye

When George Soros was a young boy in Hungary, his father, by his wits alone, secured escape for his family and many other Jews. Obviously, this kind of searing experience has a profound effect on one, and in Soros' case, led this brilliant boy to try for a career in philosophy. When his work was overlooked, he pursued wealth to fund his philosophy by means of hedge fund trading. He was successful...*n'est ce pas?*

Here, Soros has compiled five of his lectures into a strong denial of the "Efficient Market" theory currently

taught in most universities and subscribed to by many libertarians and tea party folks. He proposes a human uncertainty 1) Fallibility Principle which holds that market participants' human differences in values, interest, motives, knowledge, etc. lead them to perceive current market conditions differently. This leads to the 2) Reflexivity Principle which affirms that they may then react inappropriately (or appropriately) thereby influencing and changing the market -- indeed a continuous feedback loop may occur and is unpredictable. The market keeps changing reflexively to their perceptions and actions. When there is considerable divergence between perceptions and reality, market disequilibrium (not the free market heralded "equilibrium") sets in and may lead to "Boom/Bubble/Bust" scenarios.

I have greatly reduced and oversimplified, as it was necessary for this feeble mind to read deep parts of the book twice to comprehend. There is not much "How To" (alas!) in the book but there is observant prediction for the world's future financial stability. Soros states that there is absolute need for market regulation, that government is necessary to stave off collapse. He observes that China must stop thinking of itself as an imperialist victim, but realize it is the new imperialist on the block. He believes the Breton Woods arrangement is ending and, therefore, a new financial system WILL evolve. Part of his thesis is that more open societies are needed, particularly China, if this evolution is efficacious and chaos is prevented. Indeed, he says, "our future depends on it."

A good read...No. An enduring one? My yes.

Next Speaker Meeting Bios and Introduction

George Lakoff has written several books that use the language of his field, cognitive linguistics, to describe our national dialogue between conservatives and liberals. These books have inspired a book club - "**The Potentials**" - consisting of five people who recognize the need for a strategic response to the assault on our democracy. They have been meeting together since 2009, reading "The Political Mind" by Lakoff, and Thom Hartmann's, "Cracking the Code." Member Janet Resnick-Wandel writes, "Our mission is to raise our ability to frame and communicate our liberal values so that we will be at ease in using them in conversation. We seek to share what insights we have gained so others can likewise benefit from the tools we have learned. Hopefully we can light a spark among other groups of liberal-minded people by presenting a condensed summary of the principles of framing, and thereby start a new tradition of using the vehicle of a book club to engage each other to be better communicators of the

liberal worldview."

About the presenters: **Jane Ronca-Washburn** is a founding member of the Albuquerque Chapter of the Network of Spiritual Progressives, and a member of DFNM and precinct chair for the Democratic Party. **Dick Harrison** is a Presbyterian minister who has been active in social justice work through the years. He took part in the Selma March on Montgomery with Dr. King. He is currently an APD Chaplain. **Ann Harrison** is active in the Albuquerque Center for Peace. She was chair of the Social Justice Council and a member of the Coordinating Council and Administrative Committee at the UU Church. **Janet Resnick-Wandel** has been a member of Democracy for New Mexico (DFNM), Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP), Merging Left - a local grassroots media organization, and has been a precinct chair for the Democratic Party.

Death Creeps Slowly

by Jean O'Hara

Quietus comes when everything is filched;
A professor sees so many dull minds.
Darkness falls in the library, thus, zilched,
Know more fastly romping roe deer or hinds.
At fifty does man think surely that
He will expect to stop breathing like May
Flies and not draw a ring or throw the hat?
No, death is small, smelly bowling lanes, say!
At fifty what is this thing allele?
Barnacles asking for handouts or else,
The old Mendelian concept, man or belle?
No, the little man never belches welsh.
So, when the postal worker's union gets
Discriminated against peasants rake debts.

Letters to the Editor

Do not separate humanity into different packages: one package consisting of heterosexuals, a second package representing homosexuals and a third package representing bisexuals. Humanity belongs together, not in separate packages. When we conduct measurements of human qualities, we use the bell curve. Use the bell curve in considering human sexuality.

At one extreme, we have people who think that only the opposite sex is attractive. At the other extreme, we have people who think that only the same sex is attractive. The great majority sees attractiveness in both sexes. A single individual may move to different locations on the curve with experience and the passage of time.

Social pressure to marry and reproduce comes down

to us from tribal times, when the largest tribe was likely to have succeeded in battle. Therefore, having large families was necessary. Also, pressure comes from our own parents, who are happy to have us to love and want us to have children to love. Even so, we have seven billion people on a small planet and needn't feel obligated to add to that number. We would reduce the number and express parental concern in other ways, such as helping to finance educations.

Our gay brothers and sisters rebel against criticism and want to "out" themselves. By all means, they should do that. When one thinks of the beautiful kids who have been shamed and even driven to suicide, we should do whatever can be done to do away with secrecy and shame.

One woman said about this subject, "The churches have a lot to answer for." They do – insofar as they are tied to tribal loyalties and packaged people.

--Lois Reisz Kimbrell

Thanks for including the (abridged) "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" in the same issue as Donald Gutierrez's review of *The Sorrows of the Empire* by Chalmers Johnson. One can go down the list of 30 rights and see how militarism violates every single one of them. Those ideals give a glimpse of how to survive "the disaster that lies ahead for the United States and the world if the juggernaut of American imperial militarism is not somehow stopped." I say, "survive" because it looks to me like the cancerous growth of the self-destructive system of militarism cannot be stopped. I expect it to destroy itself and much more. The logic and the momentum say that the best we can do is reduce the magnitude of the disaster. In a train wreck the casualties usually can be reduced by slamming on the brakes at the earliest possible moment. People working to secure any one of the 30 rights are pulling against the momentum of militarism. That is why it can be very frustrating and discouraging work at this time. That is also why it must be done.

--Dale L. Berry

The Atheists and Freethinkers of New Mexico

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

Sunday, August 7th, 9am

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice,
202 Harvard SE

Tuesday, August 23rd 6:30pm

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