



Humanist Society of New Mexico



August 2012

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

Quote of the Month

A society that cannot help its poor, cannot save its rich.

John F. Kennedy.

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

Santa Fe Humanists Saturday, August 4th, 10:30am

An Informal Discussion

Secularism and Its Discontents

Community Room, La Farge
Branch of the Santa Fe Public Library,
1730 Llano Street

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

HSNM Rio Rancho/Westside Group

No Meeting for August 2012

This group is open to all members of HSNM
Contact Jerry Gilbert @ drigilbert@aol.com
or 505-400-9649

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, August 11th

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: Barbara White

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Saturday, August 18th

Topical Discussion – Open to the Public

Share

Your Favorite Literary Passage - Poetry or
Otherwise

Palo Duro Senior Center, 5221 Palo Duro NE

Saturday, August 25th

Speaker Meeting – Open to the Public

Literary Arts and Activism

Donald Gutierrez

Humanist Minute: Please volunteer

Refreshments: TBD

Special Collections Library,
Central and Edith

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/Speaker Programs

Fred March: Past President/Education

Leland Franks: Treasurer

Jerry Gilbert: Secretary/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

Sylvia Ramos, Chair, Feminist Caucus-HSNM

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 2012

by Zelda Leah Gatuskin

Now is the time for all good Humanists to come to the aid of their organization and pay their dues! And while you're at it, if you can afford to pitch in something extra, you really should!

There, that wasn't so hard. I have not been one of those presidents who actively seeks out donors and pursues fundraising opportunities. Some people are good at that, and I am not. But that doesn't change the reality that HSNM needs to keep the money coming in, or that it is my job to see that we do. So, with nothing but facts and logic I hereby appeal to all and every to send us money, as much and as soon as possible. Why? Because...

HSNM dues are low and our monthly Topical and Speaker meetings are always free and open to the public. This is in keeping with our commitment to a democratically run organization and our educational mission. We want to keep HSNM membership affordable so that financial status is never a barrier to participation in the organization. Dues-paying members vote in Officer Elections and from time to time on key governance issues; membership is required for Committee and Governing Board positions. We want to make decisions among, and draw our leadership from, as diverse a group as possible, not limited to those in a certain income bracket. Therefore, we do not base our dues on how much money we need to operate in a year or how much we need for ambitious new plans – we stick to an amount that is affordable to those of modest means.

HSNM has expenses every month. We pay a fee for our room rental at the Summit Apartments; when the Humanist Sunday School is in session, we pay for their room rental at the UU church, as we do for Speaker Meeting room rental when we cannot meet at the Law School. We also pay fees for our space at the Law School when we need to use their media equipment. We print a 4-to-8-page Newsletter every month, and pay for postage to send hard copy to those who don't pick one up or receive it by email. We pay for a P.O. Box, postage, and the necessary supplies for our (all volunteer) Committees and Officers to do their work.

HSNM has expenses for advertising, outreach and special events. Our objective is to be as visible as

possible so that the wider community can take advantage of our educational programs; freethinkers seeking community will find us; and our worthy initiatives can be strengthened by working with other organizations. Toward this end we maintain a domain name and website; we sometimes run display advertising; we look for opportunities to table at local events, usually requiring a fee or donation; and we sometimes expand on our Speaker Meeting and spend a little extra on refreshments and supplies. (Most of the refreshments provided at our regular meetings are donated; we do have a policy of reimbursing those costs upon request – but hardly anyone requests.)

HSNM is a statewide organization - and New Mexico is a big state! We are very active here in Albuquerque, and have even expanded to include a Rio Rancho subgroup. We are trying to connect more closely to our folks in Santa Fe and to coordinate and communicate better with other local freethinker groups. A brave few have started a regular Roswell meeting. But farther afield, members need more support and better ways to connect. Albuquerque itself is so sprawling that we could do more to serve our East Mountain members, to carpool, to provide babysitting or meeting times that better suit our young families. We have worked hard to expand and diversify and we have met with success. But with success comes more and new challenges.

HSNM is at the forefront of significant AHA initiatives. Thanks to the efforts of Ron Herman in organizing our HSNM Family Coop and Humanist Sunday School; Fred March in working closely with AHA staff and the Kochhar Humanist Education Center; Lisa Lee and Ashley Jordan in mobilizing our Humanist Lives project; and Sylvia Ramos in forming our own Feminist Caucus HSNM, which has provided support for me to become Co-Chair of the national AHA FC, our Chapter has gained a reputation for innovation, commitment and accomplishment in all areas of humanist endeavor. By staying closely connected to the national organization, we have seen increasing AHA involvement in our projects and more national speakers coming to NM, plus more opportunities for our members to take active roles in national programs. This year, eight HSNM members attended the AHA Conference in New Orleans, and three of us were funded in whole or in part by HSNM and registration credits from AHA; I think we will see a boost to our local programs in the coming year thanks to the goodwill and new friends we made there. I hope more HSNM members will have the opportunity to attend AHA Conferences in the future.

My thanks to everyone who has given so generously of yourselves, your time and resources to HSNM - to

those who support us from afar, keeping up via the Newsletter and website; to those who have always given extra without being asked; to those who keep the meetings scheduled and the coffee and cookies coming; to those who write for the Newsletter, circulate emails, keep lists, read books, track current events, tell jokes; to those who greet our new guests and inspire them to come back with your warmth and intelligent conversation... in short, to all of you. Money is such a small part of what makes HSNM the positive and dynamic community it is, but it is the part I get to address this month. We need your dues and a little extra if you can spare it. Please don't give until it hurts - give as much as feels good.

Next Speaker Meeting Bio

Donald Gutierrez served on the University of Notre Dame English Department faculty from 1968 to 1975, then joined the English Dept. at Western New Mexico U. in Silver City. He retired in 1994, having published six books of literary criticism, three of which focus on D. H. Lawrence and Kenneth Rexroth. Since retirement he has published over fifty essays and reviews, most of which concern social justice and American state terrorism abroad. Many of these and some new pieces have been collected in a new book, "Feeling the Unthinkable: Essays on Social Justice," soon to be released by Amador Publishers. Don will discuss how literature serves as both a mirror of societal attitudes on justice and a tool for change. With poetry by Sylvia Ramos.

City Slicker

by Jean O'Hara, August 1999

The best Western Civilization is
Threatened not so much by the dodo bird
And Ptolemaic universe's bids
But by what the modern good man has endured;
For instance, say an urban person wants
To divest slicker from the hectic scene
Of Washington, D. C.'s fast paced ghost haunts,
Then, own a sylvan West Virginian dream.
So thence, be worried by nothing, therefore,
But whether one's farm produces a heifer,
Or a baby bull and finds then the score,
Is that the tenant farmer much defter
Has altered the sturm und drang to include
Rudely bulls for heifers. No farmer's crude.

Why the Conservative Worldview Exalts Selfishness

By George Lakoff and Elisabeth Wehling, Alternet.org

In his June 11, 2012 op-ed in the NY Times, Paul Krugman goes beyond economic analysis to bring up the morality and the conceptual framing that determines economic policy. He speaks of “the people the economy is supposed to serve” — “the unemployed,” and “workers”— and “the mentality that sees economic pain as somehow redeeming.”

Krugman is right to bring these matters up. Markets are not provided by nature. They are constructed — by laws, rules, and institutions. All of these have moral bases of one sort or another. Hence, all markets are moral, according to someone’s sense of morality. The only question is, Whose morality? In contemporary America, it is conservative versus progressive morality that governs forms of economic policy. The systems of morality behind economic policies need to be discussed.

Most Democrats, consciously or mostly unconsciously, use a moral view deriving from an idealized notion of nurturant parenting, a morality based on caring about their fellow citizens, and acting responsibly both for themselves and others with what President Obama has called “an ethic of excellence” — doing one’s best not just for oneself, but for one’s family, community, and country, and for the world. Government on this view has two moral missions: to protect and empower everyone equally.

The means is The Public, which provides infrastructure, public education, and regulations to maximize health, protection and justice, a sustainable environment, systems for information and transportation, and so forth. The Public is necessary for The Private, especially private enterprise, which relies on all of the above. The liberal market economy maximizes overall freedom by serving public needs: providing needed products at reasonable prices for reasonable profits, paying workers fairly and treating them well, and serving the communities to which they belong. In short, “the people the economy is supposed to serve” are ordinary citizens. This has been the basis of American democracy from the beginning.

Conservatives hold a different moral perspective, based on an idealized notion of a strict father family. In this model, the father is The Decider, who is in charge, knows right from wrong, and teaches children morality by punishing them painfully when they do wrong, so that they can become disciplined enough to do right and thrive in the market. If they are not well-off, they are not sufficiently disciplined and so cannot be moral: they

deserve their poverty. Applied to conservative politics, this yields a moral hierarchy with the wealthy, morally disciplined citizens deservedly on the top.

Democracy is seen as providing liberty, the freedom to seek one’s self interest with minimal responsibility for the interests or well-being of others. It is laissez-faire liberty. Responsibility is personal, not social. People should be able to be their own strict fathers, Deciders on their own — the ideal of conservative populists, who are voting their morality not their economic interests. Those who are needy are assumed to be weak and undisciplined and therefore morally lacking. The most moral people are the rich. The slogan, “Let the market decide,” sees the market itself as The Decider, the ultimate authority, where there should be no government power over it to regulate, tax, protect workers, and to impose fines in tort cases. Those with no money are undisciplined, not moral, and so should be punished. The poor can earn redemption only by suffering and thus, supposedly, getting an incentive to do better.

(to be continued)

First Unitarian HUManist Group, 7pm

August 14th, 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

Roswatheists

Saturday, August 11th, 2:45pm

Saturday, August 25th, 2:45pm

Starbucks

1309 N. Main Street, Roswell, NM

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, August 6th - General Discussion

Monday, August 20th

Our Favorite Literary Passages

Participants

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

Dinner at 5:30; talk follows.