



THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

August 2013

A Membership Chapter of the American Humanist Association

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

HSNM Meetings and other meetings of interest
HSNM meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

Saturday, August 3

10:30

Santa Fe Humanists

Library of Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Santa Fe, 107 W.
Barcelona Rd., Santa Fe, NM

2:45pm Roswatheists

Starbucks, 1309 N. Main St.
Roswell, NM

Saturday, August 10

10:10am to noon

HSNM Informal Meeting

HSNM Members and their Guests
Only. For invitation or questions,
please contact Zelda Gatuskin at
505-344-6102

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian
School NE, Albuquerque, NM

Wednesday, August 14

7:00 to 9:00pm

NMSR

The Chelyabinsk Meteor

Mark Boslough
Museum of Natural History and
Science

Saturday, August 17

10:00am to noon

HSNM Topical Discussion

“Food Fight! Nutrition in America”

Special Collections Library
423 Central Ave. NE

2:45

Roswatheists

Starbucks, 1309 N. Main St.
Roswell, NM

Saturday, August 24

10:00am to noon

HSNM Speaker Meeting

“History of Islam in Black
America: A Young Man’s Search
for Faith”

by Onesimus Al-Aminl

CNM - Montoya Campus, 4700
Morris NE, Rm H-128

HSNM Family Co-Op

Alternative Children’s Sunday
School

Classes for kids of all ages at 10:00
AM on the 1st and 3rd Sundays
each month at a local private
school.

Call 505-292-4375 for more in-
formation or go to www.MeetUp.com/Humanist-Family-CoOp/

President’s Message for August 2013

Report on 2013 AHA Conference - Part 2

[Watch videos here: <http://conference.americanhumanist.org/live/>]

Continuing with my report on the
AHA Conference 2013, here are a
few other recurrent themes and elements of the weekend.

Diversity. Overall, we noted that the demographics of the annual conference are changing steadily but incrementally. There are a few more young people each year; enough LGBT presence not to be remarkable; more women. There remains a rather embarrassing lack of racial diversity that does not no-

The Humanist Society of New Mexico

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

Bill Kimbrough: Vice President/Speaker Programs

Leland Franks: Past President

Richard Grady: Treasurer

Jerry Gilbert: Secretary/Membership

Jay Lee Evans, Member-at-Large

Ashley Jordan, Member-at-Large

Randall Wall, Member-at-Large

Ongoing Projects:

Ron Herman, HSNM Family Co-op Coordinator

Randall Wall, Newsletter Editor

Sylvia Ramos, Chair, Feminist Caucus-HSNM

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, 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.

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.

ticeably improve from year to year. A young academic, Ayanna Watson, founder of Black Atheists, presented "Black Freethinkers and the Harlem Renaissance," which highlighted the role of the arts in the black humanist movement. Ayanna reminded us how pseudo-science has been used to betray and dehumanize non-whites. She suggested that we don't need a marketing strategy to attract minorities, we simply need to care about them and think about things from their perspective.

David Tamayo, president of Hispanic American Free-thinkers gave a talk, "Latinos Exercised Their Power in the Last Election: Now What?" which reveals the uncomfortable fact that humanists and political conservatives have something in common - we're not attracting Hispanics. There's no question that our hearts are in the right place, but we still have only token multiracial representation in our organization.

Organization Nuts and Bolts. The conference contained a dedicated "leadership track" put together by the United Coalition of Reason. Excellent sessions addressed such challenges as fundraising, using social media, and growing local chapters. The presenters had hands-on experience running local groups and provided useful guidance. Here is where the philosophical passion of our humanist movement got some grounding. Half reality check and half charm school, this set of sessions repeatedly stressed the need to convey a positive, happy, welcoming atmosphere and not indulge overly in religion bashing, argument and labeling. To be appealing, a group should look like they're having fun - or, better yet, actually be having fun. (Like us!)

At the annual State of Humanism Address and other official functions, our new AHA President Rebecca Hale was welcomed with much enthusiasm and support. We're proud to have her as a member of the AHA Feminist Caucus, which was also well received. With my national FC co-chair Stephanie Hughes from Chicago, and help from Sylvia Ramos and Ashley Jordan, I led the FC business meeting, attended by about thirty people. The FC also hosted the Thursday night film screening of "Tough Guise," with discussion ably moderated by Ashley. Stephanie and I presented the Humanist Heroine Award to poet/journalist Katha Pollitt. The Ratify the ERA campaign, spearheaded by Sylvia and highlighted throughout the conference, was embraced by all of the AHA.

Community. From the vision of Fred Edwords and the United Coalition of Reason in bringing local free-thinker groups together for collaboration and mutual support, to the expanding role of the AHA's Humanist

Society in training and certifying humanist Celebrants and Chaplains, to the probing questions of Leon Seltzer (“Humanism and Spirituality”), Louis Altman (“Is Humanism a Religion?”) and Sean Carroll (“Purpose and the Universe”), it is clear that our movement is growing in scope and function. Teresa MacBain (“Finding Community in Unlikely Places”) and Rebecca Hensler (“Grief Beyond Belief”) each spoke movingly about the need for emotionally supportive, nontheist community. They echoed the premise of many of the talks on education and building humanist groups: Once we have discarded religion and supernatural belief, where do we find community, caring, values, ethics, emotional strength and the tools for sorting out who we are and how we should act in the world?

And so we finally come to Personal Growth and Fulfillment. Matt Harding gave a delightful presentation on how he has found his bliss by going around the world getting people to dance with him. His videos of people near and far (including some humanists in San Diego), all dancing to the same music, break down cultural barriers and show how alike we humans are and how naturally eager we are to like and help each other. Nikki Stern gave her talk “Hope in Small Doses,” in which she espouses “a reasoned version of hope in an uncertain world.”

Our AHA awards recipients, each in their own way, demonstrated the humanist ideal of thinking for oneself, seeking and speaking truth, and applying one’s talents to the benefit of all. Richard Leakey (who provided his address on video), Carl Coon, Dan Savage, Greta Christina, and Katha Pollitt inspired with their insightfulness, eloquence, wit and sincerity. But I want to emphasize that for every noteworthy presenter who held the stage, dozens and dozens of extraordinarily accomplished, wonderful people filled the audience. It was a pleasure to be among them.

Humanist Speaker Meeting August 2013

For our August Speaker Meeting we will hear Onesimus Almin. The title of his talk will be *History of Islam in Black America: A Young Man’s Search for Faith*. Onesimus was born and raised in Clearwater, Fl and reared in the Baptist faith. He grew up a juvenile delinquent and was incarcerated at the age of 17 in 1993. It was there that he found Islam or Islam found him. He spent five years in that system studying and reading not only Islam but also the Christian Bible and also elements of Hinduism, mainly Hari Krishna and the

Bhagavad Gita and whatever he could read dealing with religion. He relocated to Albuquerque in December, 2008 and began attending CNM in 2011 majoring in sociology. Currently, he plans to transfer to UNM in August and double major in family studies and religion with a minor in sociology.

He is also currently a member of the Nation of Islam and works with various community groups as a mentor and community volunteer.

Update on Our Women’s Equality Day Celebration and Rally for the ERA

by Sylvia M. Ramos, MD

Responding to our request, Governor Susana Martinez and Mayor Richard Berry have signed proclamations declaring August 26, 2013 Women’s Equality Day in New Mexico and in Albuquerque, respectively. Our preparations are proceeding thanks to the help of more than a dozen, community based, non-profit organizations.

There is still time for you to become involved to help make this, our first step into community activism, a resounding success. Please contact any of the HSNM members who have volunteered and are actively engaged in the work (Zelda Gatuskin, Jerry Gilbert, Cynthia Yabut, Jeanette Smith, Ashley Jordan and Carolyn Glenn) and ask them how you may help.

Additionally, please invite any elected officials you know as well as friends and relatives to attend the event.

Thank you. Sylvia Ramos

Women’s Equality Day Celebration & Rally for Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment

Sunday, August 25, 2013 1:00 to 3:00 PM

Tiguex Park in Old Town, Albuquerque (Mountain Road and 19th Street NW)

Celebrate Women’s Rights with words and music
Learn why we need the ERA~~~ Meet your elected officials and community leaders
Help make Equal Justice for all a reality in our country!

For more info: Email: feministcaucushsnm@hotmail.com

[Facebook.com/NmWomensEqualityDay](https://www.facebook.com/NmWomensEqualityDay)

Twitter: @NMWEday

The Equal Rights Amendment: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

Humanist Legal Center Helps Atheist in Quest for U.S. Citizenship

www.americanhumanist.org

(Washington, DC, June 20, 2013) — U.S. immigration officials have reversed their demand that an atheist woman applying for U.S. citizenship get a letter from a church to justify her request to opt out of the requirement that she "bear arms" in defense of the United States.

The reversal comes after Margaret Doughty, 64, was assisted by the American Humanist Association's Appignani Humanist Legal Center in her fight to defend her constitutional right to assert a secular moral basis for her conscientious objector status, rather than a religious one. Ms. Doughty has been a legal resident of the U.S. for over 30 years.

"The Constitution requires that secular beliefs and religious beliefs be treated equally under the law, and we're pleased that officials at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services have reversed course and recognized this," said Bill Burgess, attorney for the American Humanist Association's Appignani Humanist Legal Center. "We hope Margaret Doughty's case ensures that non-religious applicants for U.S. citizenship are treated fairly."

A letter was sent by the Appignani Humanist Legal Center to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services officials June 17 outlining the Supreme Court rulings that require the government to treat secular and religious conscientious objectors alike.

In response to the AHA letter and many other letters, the USCIS decided to reverse course and withdraw its request for evidence, stating to Ms. Doughty in an e-mail sent this afternoon: "In light of the full explanation in support for your request for an exemption from bearing arms as it relates to the naturalization oath, this Service hereby withdraws the request for evidence (RFE) issued on June 7, 2013. This Service accepts your detailed statement in satisfaction of the information requested by the RFE. Your application for naturalization has been approved."

As soon as Margaret received this e-mail, she called AHA's attorney Monica Miller. "I am truly grateful for

all of the wonderful support I have received in this process," Margaret said to Miller. Margaret added, "I think the AHA letter swayed everything."

During the steps required to becoming a naturalized citizen, Doughty openly expressed her objection to warfare to immigration officials because part of the process includes an oath of loyalty which, in part, requires a pledge that the new citizen would bear arms in the county's defense. The law permits those who object to doing so for moral reasons to omit this portion of the oath.

Letter to the Editor

No, it didn't take me ten years to settle on my hypothesis that conspiracy theories about the events of September 11, 2001 were themselves concocted and disseminated from secretive actors within the administration of George W. Bush. However, the difficulty that President Obama has had in bringing federal agencies into line with his stated goals tends to confirm my suspicions that Bush packed federal agencies with members of Far Right groups and hate groups who did not leave when Obama took office. By refusing to confirm many of Obama's appointments the Republicans have shielded their people from pressure to comply with the President's will

Dale L. Berry

Priorities Eventuate Actual Civil Eternities

by Jean O'Hara

I cannot stand a priest that stands on his
Hands and does nothing except his asked quiz.
It comes when the question is never asked or
Accident is the end of the floored bore.
No answer, then that is the thing.
One man saved himself by remembering
What to do when it's time to sing.
Is that my newspaper? Don't know who knows.
Then the next thing one sees is that it's Spin Nose.
One comes into the world without clothes.
It is not possible to continue in those throes.
Look what to consider of the lows,
Know the vagabond at liberty goes.