



Humanist Society of New Mexico



December 2011

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

Quote of the Month

Enlightenment is always the same. Backwardness takes many different forms.

Rebecca Newberger Goldstein

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, December 10th

HSNM HumanLight Celebration

*and collection for
Roadrunner Food Bank*

12:00 noon to 2:30 pm

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

for members and their guests

see inside for details

Saturday, December 17th

Topical Discussion – Open to the Public

Paths to Liberation

North Valley Library, 7704-B 2nd Street NW

Note new location!

(Use entrance for First Choice Community Health)

HSNM Family Co-Op Alternative Children's Sunday School

3:00 p.m. first and third Sundays

Unitarian Universalist Church (UUC)

Comanche and Carlisle, NE

Call 505-292-4375 for more information

or go to www.Meetup.com.

Santa Fe Humanists

Saturday, December 3rd, 10:30am

What's Happening With Our Holidays?

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, December 5th - General Discussion

Monday, December 19th

Music for the Holiday Season

Jane Ellen

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

Dinner at 5:30; talk follows.

*There will not be a
Speaker Meeting in December,
see you in January!*

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

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

December already? Let's take stock of what we've accomplished together in 2011:

First of all, we sustained our ambitious schedule of three monthly meetings in Albuquerque, plus one in Santa Fe. The diversity of topics and quality of discussion have attracted a number of visitors and new members. Our speaker meetings provided well informed perspectives from distinguished presenters on significant social issues, culminating with AHA Humanist of the Year 2011, Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, sharing her insightful and positive approach to promoting humanism.

Through our excellent website and monthly Newsletter, we promote our projects and meetings and those of related groups to facilitate the growth and cross-pollination of our local community of humanists and freethinkers.

We have continued to sponsor and actively promote a Children's Humanist Sunday School, which meets twice monthly as a project of the HSNM Family Co-op.

Our members are frequently out and about in the community, teaching, organizing and consciousness-raising on humanism and a range of social justice issues important to humanists.

We've launched an exciting cross-generational project called Humanist Lives, through which we are gathering oral histories and views on humanism from our senior members.

These activities have drawn the interest of our parent organization, the American Humanist Association. We are building a close and mutually supportive relationship with the AHA leadership and staff, after negotiating through a surprise change in their chapter policies that was handed down last January. We had a challenging year in general from the organizational standpoint, during which we successfully completed the revision of our HSNM Bylaws.

We have sought out opportunities to make ourselves more visible in the community and contributed to worthy local institutions in the process. For the second year, we provided a phone team for the KUNM pledge drive in support of community radio; and we sponsored a new "Philosophy" category for the New Mexico Book awards, which gives secular books a chance to stand

apart from the proliferation of religious publications. We have also opened the "Humanist Society Fund" at UNM to provide a \$1,000.00 scholarship to a resident of NM, granted on the basis of merit and financial need.

We sound great, don't we? But our work for 2011 is not done. We'll be collecting food and checks for the Roadrunner Food Bank at our HSNM HumanLight celebration on Saturday, December 10, from noon to 2:30 p.m. at The Summit (see below for full details). Bring a box, a can - or a case - of non-perishable food and/or a check made out to Roadrunner Food Bank, and all will be donated on behalf of HSNM.

Throughout the year, I have tried to acknowledge specific members and the contributions they make to HSNM operations. In this column I acknowledge *us* as a group. We're all in this together, through our membership publicly declaring our humanist values and establishing a platform from which to speak and act with authority. That's a big deal. Let's keep it growing.

Mark your calendar!

**HSNM HumanLight Celebration
and collection for Roadrunner Foodbank
Saturday December 10, 2011 - Noon to 2:30 p.m.*
The Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE,
Albuquerque**

This party will be in lieu of our monthly Informal Meeting at the Summit, there in our usual room, but starting at Noon, for a potluck lunch. Please come and enjoy the camaraderie of your fellow humanists. Family and friends are welcome. Bring a dish** and a donation*** and maybe a joke or a song.****

* Set-up time starts at 11:30 a.m., clean-up from 2:30-3:00 - if you can come early or stay late to help, leave a message for Carolyn Glen Kaye, 323-5288.

** You may call Marilyn Brownstein, 293-0556, to tell her what you are bringing or for suggestions on what is needed. We are striving for a nice balance of festive foods.

*** For a list of needed food donations, go to www.rafb.org. Checks should be made payable to Roadrunner Food Bank. Donations will be delivered by our go-to guys, Leland and Roy.

**** Our entertainment coordinator is Jay Lee Evans, jlerrr@q.com.

Out of the Albuquerque area? In town, and willing to host a member? Contact Zelda about home hospitality.

What is HumanLight?

HumanLight is officially celebrated on December 23rd. From the HumanLight website <http://humanlight.org/>:

HumanLight illuminates Humanism's positive secular vision. In Western societies, late December is a season of good cheer and a time for gatherings of friends and families. During the winter holiday season, where the word "holiday" has taken on a more secular meaning, many events are observed. This tradition of celebrations, however, is grounded in supernatural religious beliefs that many people in modern society cannot accept. HumanLight presents an alternative reason to celebrate: a Humanist's vision of a good future. It is a future in which all people can identify with each other, behave with the highest moral standards, and work together toward a happy, just and peaceful world.

Reason Rally - March 24, 2012

Thousands will attend the largest secular celebration in world history! Celebrate secular values with stars of the movement* and stars of the screen on the Mall in Washington D.C. Sign up for updates at REASONRALLY.org. Let's plan on a big Albuquerque contingent. So far, 15 secular organizations have signed to attend, a few of whom are: AHA, American Atheists, The Brights, Center for Inquiry, Military Atheists and Freethinkers, the Richard Dawkins Foundation, Secular Student Alliance, Society for Humanistic Judaism, and more. Call Carolyn Kaye (323-5288) if you might like to attend. Perhaps we can arrange shared hotels and other details.

* Richard Dawkins, PZ Myers, James Randi, Greta Christina, and Taslima Nasrin.
Performances by Jamie Holstein and Bad Religion

Author Discusses Religious Child Abuse

At 7 pm on December 6, Janet Heimlich will discuss the topic of religiously motivated child abuse and neglect. Ms. Heimlich is the author of *Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment* (Prometheus Books, 2011), the first book to fully study this issue. The talk will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Santa Fe at 107 West Barcelona Rd. in Santa Fe. Attendees can purchase copies of *Breaking Their Will* at Collected Works or at the event itself. For more information, please email Ms. Heimlich at janet@janetheimlich.com or visit <http://www.religiouschildmaltreatment.com/>.

Humanist Minute, October 22, 2011

Confront or Accommodate Those with Religion?

by Ron Herman

Good morning. I call this my “FOUR Minute Minute,” and you will soon see why. Today I would like to ask “What does it mean for a person to identify themselves as a ‘Humanist’?”

Many of us first identified as “Humanists” because of the similarity of that word to “humane.” We feel that we should all treat one another in a humane manner, bringing out the best of human qualities. But for most of us the word “Humanist” also indicates a rejection of religious beliefs and practices in our lives, considering those totally in the realm of myth and superstition. We reject the idea of being “good” just to avoid god’s condemnation.

But if you reject religion, how do you talk with religious people? There is a debate within our groups about whether we should confront believers or politely accommodate them. To be clear, “confront” means to meet boldly, face to face, perhaps defiantly with evidence, perhaps with some antagonism. To accommodate, on the other hand, means to adapt our words and our criticisms to “make room” for believers in our discussions and to try to reconcile our differences.

I am one who advocates for some degree of confrontation. I think we should consider the bold example given us by Dawkins, Dennett, Harris, and Hitchens in this regard. We should consider being more confrontational for FOUR reasons, which are easy to remember using the acronym F-O-U-R.

The first reason to confront believers is FEAR, our fear that our nation will continue to decline and our freedoms erode because of irrational, religion-based decision-making by our leaders. Fear that our friends and family members will get in trouble because of irrational, religious-based decision making.

The next reason in the “FOUR” is OUTRAGE, outrage that irrational religion is promoted shamelessly so often in so many places – even by government officials and political candidates - with almost no criticism.

The “U” in the acronym is for Urgency. The trend toward radical religious influence in cultures around the world is alarming. It is urgent that we critics of religion speak up and speak out.

“R” is for RESPONSIBILITY.” I would like to suggest that those of us who have led the critical study of religion and the paranormal in our families and in this organization have the primary responsibility of confronting the irrational claims of the religious in our communities.

Now, to these FOUR I will add a “C” and an “R.” It will require COURAGE to confront the claims of believers. And we must do so with RESPECT for the feelings of others. Let us lack neither Courage nor Respect as we confront religious beliefs out of Fear, Outrage, a sense of Urgency, and Responsibility.

Additional Notes:

There is a spectrum of confrontation levels and of topics to confront:

Levels:

physical violence/abuse

written abuse

verbal abuse

written criticism

verbal criticism

non-engagement (ignore)

verbal support

written support

verbal praise

written praise (the highest form)

Topics: church dogma and policies (somewhat abstract, not always practiced), motives of leaders, personal beliefs, personal practices/lifestyle, personal integrity/values, individual rights

The Pledge of Allegiance

by Jerry Gilbert

Official versions (changes in *bold italics*)

1892

"I pledge allegiance to my flag and the republic for which it stands: one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

1892 to 1923

"I pledge allegiance to my flag and *to* the republic for which it stands: one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

1923 to 1924

"I pledge allegiance to *the flag of the United States* and to the republic for which it stands: one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

1924 to 1954

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States *of America*, and to the republic for which it stands; one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

1954 to Present

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation *under God*, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Since 1954 when the phrase "under God" was added to the Pledge, many humanists and non-humanists have protested the addition. There have been several lawsuits brought claiming a violation of the First Amendment's Establishment of religion clause.

In 2008 filmmaker Michael Moore suggested the wording be changed to: "I pledge allegiance to the people of the United States of America, and to the republic, for which we stand, one nation, part of one world, with liberty and justice for all."

I certainly prefer Moore's version to the current one, but I think the key to the Pledge is a declaration of belief in and a commitment to the Constitution. The Constitution is the foundation of our being a nation of laws; it embraces the essential democratic principles we choose to live by; it provides means for allowing flexibility in our enactment of those principles; and it is the focus of the President's oath of office.

Additional keys to the Pledge:

1. We prefer a representative form of government—a republic.
2. We are one nation in a structural sense and in terms of identity, although we can question if we are "indivisible," since we are a dual federalism which respects state authority, and we encourage a variety of opinions.
3. We are a collection of diverse ethnicities, sometimes resulting in an internal conflict of loyalties—between national origin and American citizenship.
4. Liberty and justice are two of the most essential ingredients of our democratic way of life. We might disagree on whether these are the two most important

principles to be included in a pledge, or if more than two should be included, or whether, in fact, we actually have liberty and justice for all. Equality could certainly be placed on the same level of importance.

Here is my suggestion for the Pledge:

"I pledge allegiance to the Constitution of the United States of America, and to our republic which is based on that Constitution. We are one democratic nation, multicultural, fighting for liberty, equality, and justice for all."

How would you rewrite the Pledge of Allegiance?

Humanism and Feminism Go Hand In Hand

by Ashley Jordan

There are some troubling things going on for women in our country these days. I'm not talking about the 2010 census, which showed that women are still earning only 78 cents for every dollar a man makes. I'm not talking about the fact that the messages we are sending young boys and girls on the television everyday tell them that a woman's value and power lie in her youth, beauty, and sexuality, and not in her capacity as a leader.

I am talking about the decriminalization of Domestic Violence in Topeka, Kansas in order to save money prosecuting the charges. I am talking about Personhood USA attempting to redefine a person as a fertilized egg in Mississippi, which sets women's rights back to pre-1940's standards. I am talking about the fact that the Equal Rights Amendment is still only ratified in 35 states and not the 38 states it needs to be a part of the constitution.

As a young feminist, and as a young humanist, I find it disturbing that our country, which is 51% female, is still so conflicted over the issue of women's rights. When I am told that I cannot make the same wage as a man because I am a woman, or that I cannot prosecute the person who beat me or my children, or that the 10,000 potential human beings in my ovaries are more important than the living breathing human being that I already am, I know there is a problem. As humanists, can we turn a blind eye to the blatant subjugation of half our human race?

Why is the Equal Rights Amendment, which was begun in 1972, not yet a part of our constitution? How can a state tell women that it's too expensive to prosecute the person who beat them within an inch of their life? Why should the fact that I have ovaries make me incapable of choosing what can or cannot be done to my own body?

I am beginning to think that 21st century Feminism is nothing more than saying, over and over again, "I am more important than a Zygote. Yes, really."

The Equal Rights Amendment

www.equalrightsamendment.org

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

These simple words comprise the entire text of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), affirming the equal application of the U.S. Constitution to both females and males.

The ERA was written in 1923 by Alice Paul, suffragist leader and founder of the National Woman's Party. She and the NWP considered the ERA to be the next necessary step after the 19th Amendment (affirming women's right to vote) in guaranteeing "equal justice under law" to all citizens.

The ERA was introduced into every session of Congress between 1923 and 1972, when it was passed and sent to the states for ratification. The seven-year time limit in the ERA's proposing clause was extended by Congress to June 30, 1982, but at the deadline, the ERA had been ratified by 35 states, leaving it three states short of the 38 required for ratification. It has been reintroduced into every Congress since that time.

In the 110th Congress (2007 - 2008), the Equal Rights Amendment has been introduced as S.J. Res. 10 (Sen. Edward Kennedy, MA, lead sponsor) and H.J. Res. 40 (Rep. Carolyn Maloney, NY, lead sponsor). These bills impose no deadline on the ratification process in their proposing clauses. The ERA Task Force of the National Council of Women's Organizations supports these bills and urges groups and individuals to advocate for more co-sponsors and passage.

States that have still not ratified the ERA:

Alabama

Arizona

Arkansas

Florida

Georgia

Illinois

Louisiana

Mississippi

Missouri

Nevada

North Carolina

Oklahoma,

South Carolina

Utah

Virginia

White Elephant Sale – A Peace Portrait

by Jean O'Hara, March 12, 1997

Sailing through the Panama Canal in 1926

Did not institute bridge, it was in 1776.

Washington did not have the sun set,

It was whist in Britain where no guns met.

Yes, commoners have to pay for the board,

While pasteboards by others get reneged for a hoard.

A moment's halt, you are not with me, just against me

And Lo! You stash my cards, my fortunes and country.

All you have to do is declare everything White Elephant,

Look up notice boards, sociologists and score all
sycophants.

Sturm and Drang do not go with a stand/slant,

The ceiling is not over, go book and contract is not cant.

Yea! One must bow to convention, have a book and not
pant

Knowing specified actions over tricks on the same plant
like an elephant on an ant, extant.

The Atheists and Freethinkers of New Mexico

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

Sunday, December 4th, 9am

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice,
202 Harvard SE

Tuesday, December 20th, 6:30pm

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

New Mexicans for Science and Reason

*No meeting information available – see
www.nmsr.org for further information*