



Humanist Society of New Mexico



December 2012

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

Quote of the Month

Nothing is more dangerous than an idea, when it's the only one we have.

Alain

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

No Meeting this Month

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

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, December 3rd- General Discussion

Monday, December 17th

TBD

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

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, December 8th, 4:00 - 7:00 PM

HSNM Humanist Light Potluck and
Collection for Roadrunner Food Bank
Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE
Open to HSNM members and their guests; see
inside for more details

Saturday, December 15th

Topical Discussion – Open to the Public

The Value of Stories

Erna Fergusson Library, 3700 San Mateo Blvd. NE

Saturday, December 1st, 10:00am

November/December Speaker Meeting

Open to the Public

Sailing the Rising Tide of Reason
Fred Edwords

UNM Law School, 1117 Stanford NE, Rm 2401,
Albuquerque

*Refreshments: Zelda Gatuskin, Carolyn Kaye,
Shirley Little*

No HSNM meeting on December 22
See You Next Year!

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

Bill Kimbrough: Vice President/Speaker Programs

Leland Franks: Past President

Eric Pax: Treasurer

Jerry Gilbert: Secretary/Membership

Jay Lee Evans, Member-at-Large

Richard Grady, 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

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 December 2012

by Zelda Leah Gatuskin

We sure had a glorious autumn here while the east suffered the ravages of Hurricane Sandy. The news of the storm and its aftermath felt surreal from the vantage point of our blue skies and sunshine. As we enjoyed a reprieve from the coming of winter, I wondered where summer had gone, and spring before that... It seemed like I had spent the year inside my computer, churning out streams of correspondence, lists, forms, code and pixels. My 2012 memories were stitched together from trips I'd made away from home: New Orleans in June, Delaware in July, Seattle in September. In between, brilliant New Mexico went by outside my window - but where was I? I decided not to let fall get away from me.

There is a spot in our backyard that provides a very good view of a large, hearty cottonwood tree. From this distance and angle I can see the entirety of its great, cloud-shaped canopy framed against the sky. For about a week I brought out a chair in the warmth of the day and just sat. The tree had progressed from sporting subtle dabs of gold to an all-out yellow-orange coif that literally glowed against the pure blue of the sky. Each day I rested my eyes on the composition of Changing Cottonwood Against Cloudless Sky and felt warm and content and, yes, reverent.

It was a kind of meditation. My thoughts went here and there and I did not try to hold onto them. Naturally I was thinking of all the places I had lived and traveled on the east coast and the misery many were enduring in the cold and wet, in sad contrast to my present comfort. But what came to mind most often was a scene from my time in Boston years ago:

I'd completed my freshman year at Emerson College, taken an apartment with a girlfriend and was exploring the possibility of switching to one of the nearby art schools. To this end, I got a job at an art supply store and enrolled in several studio courses that I could attend at night. It was the fall semester and I remember walking to the subway stop after dark in the bustle and sparkle of city streets, riding in the unnatural illumination of the train and looking out at the alternating dark-light, dark-light of tunnels and platforms, to arrive in a somewhat darker and less busy neighborhood. Here I scooted around the corner to a big building and descended to a basement room in the Massachusetts College of Art.

There in the basement classroom, a young assistant professor compelled us to rule our art paper with pale pencil grids to be filled in with gouache (opaque water color), which we were learning to mix with scientific precision into hues, shades and tints. Our textbook was Johannes Itten's "The Elements of Color" and we followed along by attempting to recreate the complimentary and contrasting abutments of colored squares presented therein. I learned much about how colors are perceived differently based on their proximity to other colors. But sitting in my backyard watching a cottonwood tree change color, it occurred to me that not a thing had gone on in that classroom, or in the damp, glittering commutes there and home again, or within the nondescript brownstone where I dabbled-in my homework grids, that came close to conveying the qualities of color provided by this common New Mexico sight: golden leaves against blue sky.

Knowing the science behind the colors of nature does not make them less beautiful. Understanding the reason we perceive certain combinations of visual elements as especially pleasing or striking does not alter those immediate emotional reactions. Being convinced that all of nature - including us - is interconnected and the result of consistent, predictable processes does not make it less awesome. Mainly, though, I just want to share the blue sky feeling with you to carry us through the cold months. Happy Humanist Light, everyone, and best wishes for the coming new year.

Speaker Topic and Bio

Over the past few years, with the rise of the "New Atheism," interest in freethought and humanism is growing. And the more recent billboard and bus ad campaigns have stoked the fires of enthusiasm. So how can local humanist groups benefit from this secular "coming out?" And how can they capture this interest to help their memberships grow? "Sailing the Rising Tide of Reason," a lecture and PowerPoint presentation, provides an illustrated history of the exciting, stunningly successful advertising and media campaigns of various organizations in the community of reason.

Fred Edwords, a former executive director of the American Humanist Association, is now the national director of the United Coalition of Reason. Over his thirty-year career as a humanist leader he has lectured, debated, and taught on humanist philosophical issues and effective outreach techniques. He has appeared on national and local television in the United States and Canada, has been interviewed on radio and for newspapers around the world, and has lectured in North America, Europe, and India.

Dues are Due for Some of You

If you have not paid your dues for 2012-2013, please do so by the end of the year so you can renew at the old rate. The approved dues increase goes into effect January 1, 2013: Individual dues will go from \$15.00 to \$20.00 and couple's dues will go from \$20.00 to \$30.00. Our renewal/enrollment form is online here: www.humanistsocietyofnm.org/HSNM-form.pdf or contact president@humanistsocietyofnm.org. *Note to prospective members: We welcome new enrollments throughout the year!*

HSNM Humanist Light Potluck and Collection for Roadrunner Food Bank

Saturday, December 8th, 4:00 - 7:00 PM

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Our Humanist Light Party is just around the corner! We are having a potluck the evening of December 8 at the Summit Apartments *instead* of the informal meeting we would normally have from 10 to noon. *There will **not** be a meeting the **morning** of December 8; **come at 4:00 pm*** with a dish for the potluck dinner and your contribution to the Roadrunner Food Bank - canned and boxed foods and/or checks made out to Roadrunner. Call Shirley Little at (505) 407-5167 to let her know what you are bringing for dinner or to get an assignment. Contact one of your Members-at-Large - Jay Lee Evans, Ashley Jordan, and Richard Grady - with your ideas for entertainment and decorations. If you can help with tables and chairs, call Carolyn Kaye at (505) 323-5288.

HSNM Year in Review - Some of the cool things we did in 2012:

- * We sent teams to KUNM to answer phones for both their Spring and Fall pledge drives.
- * Our Humanist Lives committee interviewed several more of our senior members and is close to completing a second short video with filmmaker Jevon Campisi, which we previewed at our November 10 membership meeting.
- * We again awarded a \$1,000 scholarship, through the fund set up with UNM, to Saba Saeidi-Rizi, a student in UNM's Nuclear Medicine program.
- * We again sponsored the Philosophy category for the New Mexico Book Awards. (The winner was *A Hidden Light* published by Gaon Books.)
- * We hosted a variety of distinguished local and national speakers for our monthly speaker series and maintained our informal and topical meeting schedules as well - no small feat in the face of many venue changes!
- * Our Family Coop tabled at the Albuquerque Children's Fair and continues to develop their Humanist Sunday School.

* Our Feminist Caucus made waves and many allies with our Pass the ERA campaign.

* We were one of the most active Chapter contingents at the AHA 2012 National Conference in New Orleans.

Many thanks to everyone who helped make these and all of our HSNM endeavors enjoyable and successful!

Feminist Caucus Report- HSNM 11/10/12

By Sylvia Ramos, Feminist Caucus HSNM Chair

FC-HSNM Mission:

The Mission of the Feminist Caucus HSNM is to advocate for and defend equal rights and opportunities for all women and all men everywhere.

These are our key action items:

* Press Congress to remove the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to allow 3 more states to ratify it so that it can become the law of the land (see below).

* Provide the news media with education and critique on feminist issues to counter erroneous, misleading, inadequate and biased news coverage.

* Publicize and promote U.S. adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

* Mobilize our network to participate in actions to resist or support, as appropriate, local or national legislation based on adherence to our stated mission.

For more information on the Feminist Caucus of the Humanist Society of NM and our Pass the ERA campaign, go to:

<http://www.humanistsocietyofnm.org/hsnm-fc-era.html#action>

On October 29, members of the Feminist Caucus HSNM and the Santa Fe chapter of NOW volunteered to help the UNM Women's Resource Center with their 40th Anniversary Celebration, at which Gloria Steinem was the featured speaker. Here are some of Gloria's remarks as remembered and written by Caite Mathis and Sylvia Ramos:

* The biggest danger to movements today is the idea that they are over.

* More young women are feminist supporters today than us Golden Oldies.

* *It takes 100 years for a movement to be accepted...*

* We are not *ranked*, we are *linked*.

* Equal pay would be the biggest economic stimulus ever...because women are going to spend the extra money they would receive.

* Only 17% of Congress is women. The US is #80 in the world in terms of [political] representation of women.

[Note, in 2013 that will go all the way up to 19%.]

* Until women have equality we won't have Democracy.

* "I dream of a multi-language radio broadcast to places where there isn't even electricity or literacy so that women get information about their rights...via satellite."

* At last we are making laws against violence against women... They used to say that domestic violence against women was because women were masochistic or that it was just life... We have not diagnosed the violence... in our society. Violence in the home, domestic violence, is the seed of ALL violence. Polarization of gender roles indicates the violence level in society. The best predictor of a state's peacefulness is its level of violence against women....

* From the author Valerie Hudson's book, "Sex and World Peace": Females are now a minority in the world because of infanticide and honor killings. The average woman who has killed in self defense gets a longer sentence than a man who has killed NOT in self-defense.

* The women's movement was fueled by civil rights.... [But] there was enormous inequality in those movements. There is a deep connection between sexism and racism. All women are impacted by racism. One cannot continue racism unless one also controls reproductive rights = sex.

* We have never really delved into the genocidal violence of Europeans... [Our forefathers]

* Matrilineal cultures of earlier times controlled fertility and agriculture... The Iroquois Confederacy was the inspiration for the Women's Suffrage movement, the Underground Railroad, Socialism, and Feminism. There are many languages of native peoples that don't have gender. Hierarchy is NOT human nature."

* Monotheism is imperialism in religion. Most religious architecture represents the body of a woman ...in order for the patriarchy to take over the mystique of reproduction.

* The Christian idea...You are born of an inferior creature so you are born in sin...but we'll give you something better – everlasting life. Baptism: to be reborn through the patriarchy.

* In 95% of human history, the paradigm is a circle, not the pyramid.

HSNM Family Co-op – A Children's Sunday School

by Ron Herman, Class Coordinator

Five years ago, some young parents discovered the Humanist Society of NM and offered to help start this school. In 2008 we started the program with a workshop by a noted author, Dale McGowan, presenting a half-day workshop based on his book *Parenting Beyond Belief: On Raising Ethical, Caring Kids Without Religion*. Several families with little kids met twice each month during the first year and created some great lesson plans.

Those lessons have been on the website of the American Humanist Association ever since. (Look for their Education website page and the “resources” tab.) Dale McGowan returned for another seminar a couple of years ago, and we started a second class with some new parents and kids. We met in a classroom at the First Unitarian Church.

Our classes are not a “drop-off” baby-sitting school, but a place where parents participate with their children in stories, music, and science projects that reflect Humanist values. Having at least one parent attend with their child or children insures full supervision and involvement. Parents take turns leading the classes with help from other parents.

We suspended classes over this past summer, but we have met from time to time on an informal basis for hikes, picnics, and field trips. I recently arranged for us to meet in a local Montessori school that has excellent facilities, and we plan to resume classes there on Sunday mornings within the next couple of weeks. We expect to have about 5 families with 8-10 children, mostly under 8 years old. We use the Internet site Meetup.com to help us schedule our events, and we currently have 24 parents who are members of that group. I also cross-post Humanist Society events on that Meetup site. And we have a page on Facebook. We plan to offer helpful seminars for parents from time to time. We have an allocation in the Humanist Society budget, but we would like to raise more money to bring in noted speakers and to pay for our class space.

That Meetup and our classes and events are great ways for parents to meet other parents who are raising their children without religious dogma. We can offer mutual support to parents dealing with various issues as their children grow, issues like peer beliefs and religious holidays, bullying, self-image and respect for others, behavior problems, and peer pressures. We encourage techniques like behavior modification, good communication, and learning through stories about “how the world really works” and “being good without God.”

Child education is an important focus, because after 200 years of modern science and public education, more than half of the people in the world are still operating on the basis of beliefs rooted in myth and superstition. And children face a growing number of threats to their mental health and security from other children, the media and video games, drugs and alcohol, early pregnancy, sexually-transmitted diseases, brainwashing, and crime and abuse. Our children live in a world of conflicting ideologies, terrorism, and war, where a growing number of governments prohibit criticism of the state religion. Even the United States is moving

increasingly in that direction. These beliefs and practices threaten to send humanity back to the Dark Ages, heightening the risks of war, oppression, terrorism, mass destruction, overpopulation, and environmental suicide. This is a stark outlook, but one that appears to be a very real possibility to many scientists and analysts today, including Jared Diamond and Kimberly Blaker. Some religions even embrace this dismal future as the inevitable fate of a fundamentally-evil human species and part of some “god’s plan.”

Our children need a rational and more positive alternative to that kind of future! They will be making this future, so we want them to know the principles of Humanism. Humanism offers an alternative view of humanity, the world around us, and that future. We are proud of our human struggles throughout history and continually strive for a better world with genuinely-prosperous and fulfilling societies. We see religious delusions as serious barriers to progress and human rights, and we seek ethical alternatives for our kids based on practical approaches, behavioral science, and accumulated wisdom.

So, if you or someone you know might be interested in attending our classes, see me after this meeting.

Security: A Slippery Slope of a Word

by Donald Gutierrez

“Security” is a word one sees and hears of a lot. There is the security of safe investments, of home alarm systems, of a bank deposit box, of an adequate health insurance plan. There is the security of having a degree from an outstanding university--but in an “insecure” job market. there are “securities” here and there and everywhere, and financial securities and insecurities.

Then there is the National Security State--a whole national governmental system that needs or represents or arrogates security for the nation. This security state is there to make you--consumer citizen--feel safe, “secure.” Secure. Secure from what, though? Well, enemies. Enemies of the state, terrorists, perhaps, ultimately, the enemy in yourself, as yourself, that enemy of the State which the Communist Chinese state strives to “re-educate” or exterminate, or which the American state might--sooner than we think--send to Guantanamo, or, worse (thanks to Presidents Bush Jr. and Obama), Bagram or Diego Garcia--indefinitely.

Security--the Secure State, the National Security State. Is the state--let us say the American State--insecure? Or concerned about the insecurity, the safety, of its citizens, “its” country? Or is the security state concerned about its own insecurity, its hold on authoritative, even authoritarian, power? It’s said that in

France the government is afraid of the people, but that in the United States, the people are afraid of the government. If that latter proposition is true, why is the American state concerned about security? Might Americans someday, somehow come to feel that they don't want state security, that it violates and endangers their own "security" as free, self-responsible individuals? Is, thus, the United States national security system in place ultimately to protect the state and its "interests" against its citizens?

Let's put "security" and "interests" together. That combination is richly suggestive and, in one respect, the two items are a snug fit. The security of the United States (i.e., corporate America) depends heavily on the power of the state to protect, expand and secure American "interests" abroad. Less, much less, is it a matter of protecting the ordinary American from "terrorist" bombs falling on him and his family than of making sure that Shell Oil or Exxon or Monsanto has "secure" control of some foreign, usually third world, market. Such "security" is further secured by Washington feeling assured (or secure) about the power people ruling in those targeted markets. For many decades it appears that America's corporate "interests" has depended on the insecurity, the utter dependency, of large segments of the populations of countries that are secured by a tradition of elite and hyper-military rule combined with the massive power and support of American financial, military and corporate institutions.

But security imposed from above can lead to insecurity. By devastating--too often literally--the humane security of other nations and peoples to achieve Global Security, the United States--that is, its rulers--exposes itself to revenge, payback, Blowback. Thus, in assailing and even destroying the security of other societies, the United States, rather than enhancing its own security, exposes and weakens it. Though this exposure should be obvious to those in power who design the exploitation of other nations, wealth accumulation blinds sense and decency in its dazzling light.

The consequences of this ironic development are enormous: guilt, suspicion and insecurity in the state propels "insecurity" about not only the possible payback or retaliation ("terrorism") of subjected foreign countries or subversive organizations, but about its own citizenry as well. The populace itself, which was to be protected and in whose name the security state arose under President Truman in 1947, becomes, through a process of inexorable projection, suspect. This is so because the guilt, fear and need to control so integral to the state focus inexorably on what is closest at hand, its own citizenry. The external enemy, the Terrorist, becomes identified with the citizen critical of the state. This

internal "enemy" is thus also a threat, perhaps more dangerous because he/she is part of our society, indeed, is our society. He must be secured, and that is best achieved by his being watched ("surveilled") for any signs of criticism and disapproval of the state. He must be contained. Before long, containment leads or can lead to capture and, finally, to the security of penal confinement and, ultimately, solitary confinement.

If this darkening process assures security, security and a free, liberatory society have become polarized and the National Security State has become what is implied its becoming from its late 1940s inception: a nascent totalitarian state in which state and individual are locked in a death embrace of freedom, liberty, the open society on the altar of Security.

Jongleur Acknowledges Glee

by Jean O'Hara, August 24, 1994

See the day we went to Chicago.
A flower blooms to die too soon, "Live", said
The poacher; nothing is happening, no
Wives, pardoner, nun's lawyers' tales that led
To the none, yet the lonely heart there got lost
Like the bleeding heart flower that's no one's.
Remember its name because it is bossed
By Columbine with precious dripping plums
Turned purple and whose staining pets Earth
Has accepted to remove the memory
Because everyone was not of worth
That saw the inversion that happened, see;
So, if multitudes miss the changing skies,
Then, it is the flower that lives: man dies.

First Unitarian HUManist Group, 7pm

December 11th, 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, December 8th, 2:45pm

Saturday, December 22nd, 2:45pm

Starbucks, 1309 N. Main Street, Roswell, NM