



Humanist Society of New Mexico



February 2011

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

Quote of the Month

The essence of immorality is the tendency to make an exception of myself.

Jane Addams

HSNM Family Co-Op Alternative Children's Sunday School

First and third Sundays, 3 PM
First Unitarian Church

Call 505-292-4375 for more information
or go to www.Meetup.com.

Santa Fe Humanists Saturday, February 5th, 10:30am

Interactions Among Religions

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

For more information contact Bill Weihofen
(505) 988-1343

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, February 12th

Informal Meeting

General Discussion

Visitors please contact Zelda Gatuskin at
505-344-6102 for details or questions.

Refreshments: Marilyn Brownstein
Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Saturday, February 19th

Topical Discussion

The Essence and Origin of Evil

Erna Fergusson Library, 3700 San Mateo Blvd. NE

Saturday, February 26th

Speaker Meeting

*Can Our Democracy Survive under
Citizens United v. FCC?*

By Sherry Tippett
(see inside)

Humanist Minute: Jerry Gilbert

Refreshments: Zelda Gatuskin
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
(HSNM)**

A Membership 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 [Public Information]

Roy Moody: Vice President

[Education/Programs]

Fred March: Past President

[Special Projects]

Leland Franks: Treasurer [By-laws]

Jerry Gilbert: Secretary [Membership]

Carolyn Kaye, Member-at-Large

Ted Cloak, Member-at-Large

Ongoing Projects:

Ron Herman, Director of Classes

Randall Wall, Newsletter Editor

Phil Smith, Webmaster

Attila Csanyi, Friendly Philosopher's Director

Subscription to HSNM Newsletter, published monthly, accompanies AHA/HSNM membership or can be obtained by nonmembers for \$15 annually. Local membership (HSNM only) is \$15/year (\$20 for two adults in the same household); AHA membership is \$35 for the first year, \$45 thereafter, and includes HSNM membership. Send local 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.

President's Message

By Zelda Gatuskin

Some call it Karma, which is the principle that when one does good deeds and acts honorably, those "positive vibes" are reflected back, and good things will come of good behavior.

Some call it a Blessing, where doing good brings rewards from God in the form of a good life.

Some call it The Golden Rule, wherein understanding one's own wants and needs allows one to understand others' needs. It is both logical and loving to suppose that by treating others with respect and kindness, one can expect to be treated in the same manner.

Some call it Science, as in DNA. Each one of us is encoded with such survival skills as the ability to work together and the need for approval from others in our tribe. Behaving agreeably is then a necessary reflex.

Some call it Math, in that the more one reaches out to help others, the more friends one makes; the more one's network and influence grows; the more one's reputation spreads, and the more likely that everyone, in turn, will be helped by this network.

You could call it Common Sense. When one participates constructively and generously in a community, all our lives are enriched. We are supported personally by the relationships we build, and in the process we build a stronger, better-functioning society.

Whatever you call it, humans are eager to please and to be praised by each other. We like the word, Yes. Yes, I will help you. Yes, I approve of what you are doing. Yes, you are valued. Yes, you can count on me. What is this mechanism that, when it's working right, causes human beings to come together, to say Yes, and to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts?

HSNM is a laboratory. Here we explore the possibilities for a humanistic society. Can we live by our humanist principles and balance personal freedom with social responsibility? Can we say 'Yes' and feel rewarded, not resentful, by what is asked of us? What can we accomplish together as a group? How much might we each grow personally by giving a little extra energy to help reach the group's goals?

Since I said 'Yes' to a leadership role in HSNM, I have worked very hard at it and felt very good. What is

this good stuff? Has my Karma improved? Maybe God is blessing me. Reason and reflection tell me that all of this good stuff actually comes from all of you. Having more bright, caring, thoughtful, open-minded, helpful people in my life has been good for me. I recommend it. When the opportunity to pitch in for a worthy cause comes around, just say 'Yes.'

Happy Birthday, Lois Kimbrell!

One of HSNM's founding members will be 90 years young on January 31. Lois shared some words of wisdom at our last Topical Meeting: *No matter what your age, never stop trying to learn more and improve yourself.* That's worth taking to heart, from someone we think is just about perfect.

HSNM Governance Notebook

by Zelda Gatuskin

Committees Workshop: Saturday, February 12, noon - 1:30 p.m. at the Summit.
All members are invited and encouraged to attend!

In order to start the process of organizing our HSNM committees and projects for 2011, we have reserved our room for additional time following the February Informal Meeting at the Summit. Whether or not you are able to commit to a committee position or ongoing task, we would like to have your input. Feel free to bring a bag lunch or snack to share. The session will begin with brief presentations and open discussion about the history, purpose and priorities of each committee. Then we will break into small groups to work in committee. Once again, I want to express my thanks to all who those who serve HSNM on an ongoing basis, keeping our meetings and communications flowing smoothly. If you are performing a particular task for HSNM and are unable to join us on 2/12, please contact a member of the Board to provide your input (and wish list) so that we can benefit from your experience and represent your needs at this session.

Next Speaker Meeting Bio and Introduction

Sherry Tippet has been an attorney in New Mexico since 1983. She has served as Assistant Attorney General, County Attorney and City Attorney. She is now in private practice where she practices in the area of water and civil rights. She is a former Santa Fe School Board member and is involved in a variety of community activities including her current service as

President of the Board of the NM Center for Democracy and Civic Education. She is the mother of twenty year old Matthew Tippet-Vannini.

Sherry's topic for February 26th will be "**Can Our Democracy Survive under Citizens United v FCC?**"

In January, 2010 the Roberts Court issued what many legal experts believe is a crushing blow to democracy, by ruling that corporations have First Amendment rights equal to individuals and that, therefore, the political contributions of corporations cannot be limited. As a result the recent November 2nd midterm election was the most expensive in the history of our nation: 4 Billion dollars was spent and much of that spending was untraceable pursuant to Citizens United. Fifty leading law professors and former state Attorneys General wrote a letter to Congress urging a Constitutional Amendment. A bill has been introduced by Representative Donna Edwards and many states are now organizing movements to garner the ¾ majority needed for a Constitutional Amendment. Learn what individual states are doing and how you can get involved.

Reading Between the Lines: The Tea Party's Real Constitutional Philosophy

www.pfaw.org

Used with the permission of People For the American Way

Despite all the hype, the Tea Party is not a "populist," "libertarian," or "constitutionalist" movement. Rather, it is a movement of grassroots frustration that has been co-opted by wealthy corporate interests to fight *against* the historic victories of Populism, *against* the key movements for civil liberties and civil rights, and *against* modern constitutional principles, argues a new report by Jamie Raskin of People For the American Way.

As the newly-empowered House GOP takes to the House floor to read the Constitution in its entirety, Raskin's report questions the Tea Party movement's asserted allegiance to the text and history of the Constitution, its claim to champion the liberty of the people, and its identification with earlier populist movements. "Americans who still love the promise of political democracy, the real Constitution and Bill of Rights, and the progress of human liberty and equality should carefully read the fine print, as well as between the lines, before they drink the tea being served at this party," Raskin writes.

Raskin, a Senior Fellow at People For the American

Way, is also a Maryland State Senator and a professor of constitutional law at American University's Washington college of Law.

The report, *Corporate Infusion: What the Tea Party's Really Serving America*, discusses the modern Tea Party movement's history and track record, including:

- advocating in the 2010 elections for repeal of the 17th Amendment--popular election of U.S. Senators--a key victory of American Populism in the last century;
- advocating in the 2010 elections for repeal of the 16th Amendment and attacking the federal power to impose an income tax, which is essential to modern democracy;
- fighting the 14th Amendment's guarantees of equal protection and birthright citizenship and arguing for repeal of parts of the 14th Amendment, including its crucial first sentence;
- asserting the unconstitutionality of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and defending the right of private establishments to discriminate on the basis of race and other arbitrary factors;
- advocating for a return to the gold standard and thus assailing another great victory of the Populist movement for working people;
- opposing the reproductive rights of women and the civil rights and liberties of gay and lesbian citizens; and
- calling for ever more "deregulation" and generating a host of silly and false political issues, like allegations about the president's citizenship and religion, while ignoring and obscuring gigantic corporate scandals and crimes of our times, including the multi-trillion dollar sub-prime mortgage scam, the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and the lethal collapse of Massey Coal's mines in West Virginia.

"Our Constitution reflects the American people's historic fight for a strong democracy, civil liberties and the common good," said Raskin. Although the Tea Party has been billed as embracing all of those values, it has been co-opted and channeled to fight for the power of big corporations, not the rights of the American people. We should take a close look at what the Tea Party's words about the Constitution really mean."

Responding to the planned Constitutional "read-out" by the Republican majority in the House of Representatives on Thursday, Raskin said: "It's a fine idea to celebrate and study the Constitution, but the document they're reading aloud is about two minutes longer than the one the Tea Party supports. And what does it mean to read the Establishment Clause out loud when you support the

teaching of creationism in our public schools? Or to repeat the words 'due process,' 'liberty' and 'equal protection' but deny their application to all citizens? Or to read the Commerce Clause and the necessary and proper clause but deny their use in advancing the public health and welfare? It's one thing to read the Constitution, quite another to defend its meaning."

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, February 7th

Open Forum

Bring a Your Own Topic for General Discussion

Monday February 21st

Mme Curie and the UN Declaration of 2011
as the International Year of Chemistry

Led by Marshall Berman and Attila Csanyi

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

The Atheists and Freethinkers of New Mexico

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

Sunday, February 6th, 9am

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202
Harvard SE

Tuesday, February 15th, 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

Wednesday, February 9th, 7pm

*Science Offers New Insights into the Origins of the
First Americans*

Jim Dixon

UNM Law Building, Room 2405

1117 Stanford NE

Albuquerque Philosophy Meetup Group

Thursdays at 7pm

Varied Topics

For location see: www.meetup.com/philosophy-229