



Humanist Society of New Mexico



January 2013

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

Quote of the Month

When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you.

African Proverb

HSNM Family Co-Op

Alternative Children's Sunday School

Classes for kids of all ages are at 10:00AM on the first and third Sundays of each month at a local private School.

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

Santa Fe Humanists

New Year Organizational Meeting
A get-together to choose a new facilitator and plan for future meetings.

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

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

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, January 7th- General Discussion

Monday, January 21st

Topical Discussion

*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, January 12th

Informal Meeting

General Discussion starts at 10:10am
HSNM Members and their Guests Only. For invitation or questions, please contact Zelda Gatuskin at 505-344-6102.

Refreshments: Randall Wall

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Saturday, January 19th

Topical Discussion – Open to the Public

Patriotism

Special Collections Library,
Central and Edith

Saturday, January 26th, 10:00am

Speaker Meeting

Open to the Public

Our Universe, Our Home
Dee Friesen

Refreshments: TBD

First Unitarian Church (Social Hall)
3701 Carlisle NE, Albuquerque

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 \$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.

President's Message for January 2013

by Zelda Leah Gatuskin

If you are reading this newsletter, then we have survived another doomsday prophecy and must carry on with humanity. I'm sure that will not be a disappointment to humanists, though I do detect an air of hopefulness among end-of-the-world predictors. From religious doctrines about End Times, Armageddon, the destruction that must presage messianic renewal, to the secular offerings of Hollywood, we can observe a longing - if not to end it all already, then at least to practice the end.

Let's look at all those movies that are made about grand disasters. Aside from the entertainment value (if you're into that sort of thing) of meteor crashes, alien invasion, nuclear apocalypse, tidal waves, earthquakes, etc., these fictions give us a chance to rehearse our practical, ethical and emotional responses to dire circumstances. The screenplays typically suggest that the survival of humankind depends on the survival of a few exceptional individuals or small groups, while all the rest of the teeming masses may be swept away. Their lost lives are available for inspiration, motivation and dedication to renewal, while their high-maintenance physical presence has been conveniently eliminated along with the cancerous urban/industrial landscape.

Real life is a little more complicated than that and not readily reconfigured with the stroke of the scriptwriter's pen. The problems we face as a society ultimately boil down to the workings of human psychology, which is still driven in large part by fear, physical cravings and possessiveness regardless of how much security we achieve. Humanists may be inclined to wonder if our species can evolve fast enough, intellectually and emotionally, to achieve a genuinely fair and mutually respectful society before we blow ourselves up or poison the planet to the point that it will no longer sustain human life. Adherents to inflexible doctrines, whether religious, political or economic, may be more likely to indulge in a fatalistic wish to actually or metaphorically wipe it all away and start anew. As I write, Congress is contemplating "going over the cliff" and "taking the nuclear option."

Is Kaboom really our only choice? Sure, things get messy when you've got a lot of sentient life kicking around. Our methods for dealing with personal desires and decisions are murky; group consensus, if we can

achieve it at all, is tenuous. So many things are beyond our control - all of history, for a start. So, do we exert such control as we have over the future through violent, destructive, irreversible acts? I suppose there is a comforting certainty to being wiped out, hitting rock bottom. One's priorities at that point have been greatly simplified and clarified.

Perhaps the urge to keep starting over, to back up or undo modern developments, is simply a failure of vision. We know what collapse looks like. We know what survival looks like. We also know what flourishing societies look like, and how they become corrupted. Do we yet know what sustainable success for our species looks like? Humanists are involved in imaging and pursuing that agreeable, sustainable future. We are not hurtling toward the end times but finding our way toward better times - with curiosity, creativity, caring, reason and hope.

Plus we have fun. Thanks for a great 2012, everyone. Let's keep going!

HSNM's Humanist Light celebration on December 8 was great fun, and we raised \$740.00 plus several boxes of foodstuffs for the Roadrunner Food Bank. Many thanks to all who participated and to Mina at the Summit Apartments for hosting us.

Speaker Topic and Bio

Dee Friesen (Lt. Col. retired USAF) is current and past president of The Albuquerque Astronomical Society (TAAS). Dee served in Vietnam, Europe, Korea and the Philippines as well as Texas. He also is retired as Captain from American Airlines, and has over 12,000 hours of flight time from jet fighters to air transport to very large commercial aircraft plus gliders. Dee taught physics at the Air Force Academy, and currently teaches astronomy at New Mexico Tech and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in addition his involvement with Explora Science Center with TAAS. He also is an avid cyclist with the New Mexico Touring Society. Dee's wife, Ruth, is the founder of the ReStore in Albuquerque.

Topic: Our Universe; Our Home will examine the size, space and time of where we live.

On the Horizon

February 12 is Darwin Day.

February 14

Tom Neilson & Lynn Marie, award-winning singer-

songwriters - and humanists - come to town for a Valentine's Day Concert!

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at the Albuquerque Center for Peace & Justice, 202 Harvard SE (at Silver).

Share the music of love, political satire & global cultural change. This is a fundraiser for the United Nations Association, Albuquerque Chapter, & The Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice. Donation \$15, couples \$25.

May 10-12 - Southwest Book Fiesta

HSNM and Amador Publishers will team up to promote humanism and humanist books at the Southwest Book Fiesta, to be held at the Albuquerque Convention Center May 10-12, 2013. This is a huge effort on the part of New Mexico's literary community to increase awareness of reading and literacy. It will be one of the largest book festivals in the region, bringing together authors, publishers and the reading public in a family-friendly community event. The Book Fiesta is being heavily promoted and is projected to draw over 20,000 attendees over the course of the three days. A shared booth has been reserved for HSNM and Amador Publishers. We need to start preparing now to make the most of this opportunity to show off what HSNM does. If you would like to help prepare hand-outs, organize volunteers to staff the booth, or volunteer to staff the booth, or if you have written a humanist book that you would like to sell at the booth, please contact Zelda.

New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards Seeks Judges

For the past six years, the New Mexico (and now Arizona) Book Awards has been honoring the best books from across the region. Beginning in 2011, HSNM has been a sponsor of the Philosophy category. Here is a recent notice from the organizers asking for volunteers to help judge the 2013 competition. If you enjoy books, this is a great way to support our local literary community.

JUDGES - Each year, approximately 70-80 judges are needed to review books in the almost 45 categories. Many of our judges return each year and review whatever number of books that we can or have time for. Some judges review 3-4 books and some help evaluate literally dozens of books. Our judges are teachers, librarians, bookstore staff, authors, publishers, and avid readers. We never allow a judge to review a category in which they have entered books for consideration, but we do allow them to be a judge in other categories of their choosing. The judging process will take place between

February and the end of August. Last year we evaluated over 1,500 books in 44 categories. We are lining up judges again for this year but we are always looking for more judges. If you are interested or know of someone who might be interested please let us know. Email us at LPDPRESS@q.com

Book Review: American Nations
Reviewed by Jerry Wesner

American Nations, by Colin Woodard, copyright 2011, is a book about the national, ethnic and social groupings that made up, and still make up, the peoples of North America. Woodard is a writer and journalist who lives in Maine. His premise is that, with a few exceptions, the groups who initially settled sections of North America, especially the United States, still influence behaviors even today.

What he calls Yankeedom starts with New England, but its influence spread south to New Netherland and west around the Great Lakes, into the Dakotas. But Yankeedom jumped across the continent to influence the Left Coast, from south of San Francisco clear into Canada's coastal region. New Netherland started with the Dutch and never covered much land, but its influence on New York City and environs continues to set the agenda for the city and surroundings, and influences much more. The Midlands began with Philadelphia, but stretched west as far as the northeast corner of New Mexico, north past the west edge of Yankeedom, and into Canada. Tidewater had enormous influence on the beginnings of the United States; Virginia provided four of the first five Presidents and wrote the Declaration, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. But as it never reached inland, its land area was also limited, and so its later influence. The Deep South, or Dixie, goes from Virginia into Florida, and west into Texas. First slavery, and then racial discrimination, is one of its gifts to the nation. Greater Appalachia, formed by poorly educated, violent English, Irish, and Scots settlers, runs from Tidewater clear into the southeast corner of New Mexico. New France is mainly the southern edges of Quebec and Louisiana; small but with much influence. El Norte, originally in Mexico and still heavily represented there, runs from Corpus Christi to Los Angeles, up the center of New Mexico into Colorado. The last region settled, the Far West, runs from near Las Cruces across the western side of the central states into Canada, and includes all the Rockies and goes nearly to the coast. Geographically huge, its population has limited but not stopped its "every-man-for-himself" influence.

The interactions among these "nations" determine which religions flourish where, which bills clear

Congress and which don't, and who wins local, regional, and national elections. Note that state lines seldom matter; southern Georgia is more like east Texas than northern Georgia. Some groups work well together on many issues; others have a natural and poorly disguised antipathy.

What does it matter? It can predict which cities and rural areas will support and oppose gay marriage, higher taxes, enhanced government services, the United Nations, and many of our current conflicts. Why Chicago sometimes seems misplaced in Illinois. Why Albuquerque, Farmington, and Roswell seldom all agree on any issue. (New Mexico is the only state with four nations represented; sometimes it shows.)

Many of Woodard's premises can be questioned; at times he seems to stretch similarities and differences to make a point. But I believe I understand some of the ways my country works, and doesn't work, better than I did before reading *American Nations*.

Ghetto Gestalt

by Jean O'Hara, June 23, 1998

Corrosiveness of the goods surrounding
The proletariat erodes concrete
Jungles that are ghettos on abounding
Poached gestalts that forced lies try to complete.
To bow to the soothsayer and say yes
Is to take an easy Homer's scene and then
Murk it by removing beauty and guess
How much more embarrassment is for men.
To take that which does not belong to one
And inject in a symphony false notes
That spoil music that man's labor won through dun.
"Desecration of truth, beauty by war:",
Says proletarian, "that's who you are".

First Unitarian HUManist Group, 7pm

January 14, 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, January 5th, 2:45pm

Saturday, January 19th, 2:45pm

Starbucks, 1309 N. Main Street, Roswell, NM