



Humanist Society of New Mexico



July 2012

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

Quote of the Month

Most of the shadows of life are caused by
standing in our own sunshine.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, July 14th

Informal Meeting

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

Refreshments: Salem Smith

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Saturday, July 21st

Topical Discussion – Open to the Public

Are We Having Fun Yet?

Erna Fergusson Library, 3700 San Mateo Blvd. NE

Saturday, July 28th

Speaker Meeting – Open to the Public

*A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who
Don't Plan to Die*

Gail Rubin

Humanist Minute: Contact Roy Moody to
volunteer

Refreshments: Janet Johnson

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

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 Saturday, July 7th, 10:30am

An Informal Discussion

Religious Humanism

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

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

HSNM Rio Rancho/Westside Group

No Meeting for July 2012

This group is open to all members of HSNM
Contact Jerry Gilbert @ drigilbert@aol.com
or 505-400-9649

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/Speaker Programs

Fred March: Past President/Education

Leland Franks: Treasurer

Jerry Gilbert: Secretary/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

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 July 2012

by Zelda Leah Gatuskin

Where to start describing the recent AHA National Conference in New Orleans? The city itself is an adventure, and provided quite a counterpoint to our humanist business: Voodoo shops, bourbon shots, girlie bars, tubas, taxidermied alligators, centuries-old architecture, jazz bands, beads, beignets, horse-drawn carriages, crawfish, gawking tourists, more beads, periodic downpours, more voodoo, and a panhandler to say, "god bless you," on every corner.

In the bubble of the conference hotel, a few hundred humanists convened to report on our doings near and far, celebrate ourselves, and, of course, debate. For the eight of us from HSNM, it was a time to contribute to AHA initiatives, broaden our horizons, and bond with each other. Our chapter was noticed for our numbers, our visibility and participation in meetings and special sessions, and, I'm told, our camaraderie. As we fanned out through the conference events, we were perceived as a happy and helpful group. I am truly proud of our chapter and honored to have led our delegation.

Following on the heels of launching our own local Feminist Caucus, HSNM took the lead on AHA Feminist Caucus events. I stepped up to some organizational and ceremonial duties for AHA FC Chair, Stephanie Downs Hughes, who could not attend the conference, and what do you know? I came home as her Co-Chair. It was rewarding to be so warmly embraced as a spokesperson for the women of the AHA, and I was thrilled to meet our Humanist of the Year, Gloria Steinem, and to actually present the Humanist Heroine Award to Debra Sweet.

Gloria (we're now on a first name basis, you know) was as funny and blunt as ever in talking about patriarchies and matriarchies. Her exposition on how the traditional church floorplan corresponds to the anatomy of the female reproductive system was classic, irreverent yet intellectual, Steinem. Peace activist Debra Sweet and her associate tabled throughout the conference for their anti-war organization, World Can't Wait, and they joined us at our Feminist Caucus lunch meeting. Both awardees affirmed the importance of the FC and our work in their acceptance speeches, though in private neither were very encouraging about the likelihood of passing ERA legislation before the election.

Moving on to other issues of concern to humanists, I was pleased to hear Isaac Asimov Science Award winner Ira Flatow make so many references to the fine arts in his talk. His message was that science could be taught the way we teach art - as something one can learn about and experience without being expected to make a career of it. Science informs and enriches our lives whether we go into it professionally or not, just as art does, so we could take some of the pressure off young students to "be good" at it and simply allow them to learn science in a more fun and organic way. Humanist Lifetime Achievement Award winner James Randi showed us just how fun and funny, not to mention liberating, science can be.

Yes, it was exciting to brush shoulders with these and other "famous" humanists, but the conference was full of accomplished participants. We made friends in the elevator, over meals, browsing the displays, attending sessions and waiting in line for coffee. We provided a boost to our host chapter, the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association. Our humanist vibe oozed out to the hotel staff, the copy shop clerks and Starbucks baristas. No doubt, our outspoken nontheist talk raised eyebrows in the land of god-bless-yous, but our emphasis on education and equality was clear. We might not be god-fearing, but we are "good people" as one of the servers said to me at dinner. Good people with beads.

Next Speaker Meeting Topic

A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die

Americans tend to avoid funeral planning, which affects life's other plans. A funeral is one of the top five expenses a family will incur. You (or your family) face a host of choices to make and options to consider whenever the Grim Reaper comes knocking at the door. Just as talking about sex won't make you pregnant, talking about funerals won't make you dead - and your family will benefit from the conversation. You can reduce stress at a time of grief, save hundreds, even thousands of dollars, and create a meaningful, memorable "good goodbye."

Certified Celebrant and author Gail Rubin uses funny films to help start funeral planning conversations. She will show selected movie clips and bring light to the serious subject of final disposition. She'll dish the dirt on green burial and converse about cremation's carbon footprint. Your options now extend beyond burial, cremation or donation to science - find out what's new! There's a growing corps of Certified Celebrants trained to create a life tribute that is all about the deceased and his or her family - with or without any religious

overtones, as each individual desires.

Gail Rubin, *The Doyenne of Death*TM, is the author of *A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die* and *The Family Plot Blog* (<http://TheFamilyPlot.wordpress.com>). She is a member of the Association for Death Education and Counseling and the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association. Rubin, a Celebrant certified by the Insight Institute, has spoken at, planned, and attended hundreds of funerals and memorial services.

Search Committee Seeks Volunteers

Jerry Wesner has been appointed to chair the HSNM Search Committee, which will seek candidates for our upcoming Governing Board elections and oversee the nominating process. The Search Committee will begin meeting shortly after July 4. If you are interested in joining the committee, write to Jerry at JNWESNER@aol.com or call 821-8614.

HSNM Membership Renewals and Elections

Our election process is laid out in our HSNM Bylaws, which can be found on our website ("Organization" page) or requested from Treasurer Leland Franks. This year's election schedule will be reviewed in the August Newsletter, which will also contain your membership renewal form. The form is already available on our website or you can pick one up at our meetings, if you just can't wait to send in your dues and donations.

HSNM Scholarship Winner Announced

by Carolyn Kaye

We are delighted to announce that, Saba Saeidi Rizi, an honor student in nuclear medicine at UNM, has received the first HSNM scholarship award of \$1,000. Despite initial English as a second language problems, Ms. Saeidi Rizi graduated from Amy Biehl High School in Albuquerque after immigrating to the United States with her parents and sister just six years ago. She was selected by UNM to receive one of only four coveted places in undergraduate nuclear medicine. The course work is rigorous with higher math and science comprising all of the classes. In addition, she serves an unpaid internship at UNM Hospital. Last summer, Saba also worked in the Dominican Republic, performing humanitarian work.

When does she sleep? Her father and mother, Karim and Mahnaz Saeidi Rizi, told us that is in the car as they drive her from one assignment to another. With some wonderment, they said she has always been one of those unusual children who never needed parental nagging to complete her work. Somebody needs to study that phenomenon so that we may all duplicate it in our

children!

Saba would like to become a doctor of medicine, but finds the financial obstacles daunting. Diminutive, charming, intelligent, and displaying a wonderful humanitarian and work ethic, we are fortunate to be able to contribute in a small way to this remarkable human being's education and development.

HSNM Represents at AHA 71st Annual Conference

By Ashley Jordan

Congratulations members! Our chapter made its presence known at the AHA's annual conference in New Orleans. With about eight members in attendance, including President Zelda Gatuskin and former president Fred March who led wonderful education breakout sessions, I kept getting asked if we were all there for something special. "Why are so many HSNM members in attendance?" people asked, and I got to smile and say, "Oh, we're just awesome." It was really wonderful to have such a presence there, and to be able to look around any room and find a familiar face.

This was especially useful when I began to experience a strange phenomenon. As a young person attending the conference for the first time, I had no idea what to expect, but I was disappointed on at least one level. That level was the incredible lack of support for new and young members by the AHA or its members. The "New Member Meet and Greet" was an un-facilitated mingling of members in the vendor's hall, and there were no sessions directed at the younger demographic that the AHA keeps claiming to want to pull in. I began to feel a little alienated, almost like I was getting the cold shoulder. I heard this feeling echoed on more than one occasion from other young members.

This was really strange to me, because it was so unlike anything I had experienced at home, in our group. When I first began attending, I had no idea what humanism really was or if I wanted anything to do with it at all, but I was warmly welcomed and it was the sense of community that HSNM provides that made me really want to stay. It was that community that was so needed at the conference.

The best time I had, hands down, was Saturday night after the banquet, when a few of us got together in the bar and decompressed together. It made me so grateful that I came to humanism when I did, where I did, because we really are a remarkable group of people here in HSNM. The AHA could learn a thing or two from us, and with how active we were at the conference, I bet they are taking notice.

Happy Anniversary Bill & Shirley Little!

Bill and Shirley celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 8th. The photos in the paper showed a couple as happy and handsome today as they were 60 years ago. Their warmth, vitality and willingness to serve has enriched HSNM for many years. Congratulations to Shirley and Bill, and warm wishes for many more happy and healthy years to come.

A Remembrance & Farewell to Adela Amador

Author, Publisher, Philosopher, Cook

Adela Amador died on May 25, 2012, one month short of her 90th birthday. She was co-founder of Amador Publishers as well as an author and longtime contributor to New Mexico Magazine. Her work includes recipe books and a collection of stories told in her distinctive native New Mexican voice. Adela was reared in Placitas where she grew up learning the traditional women's skills of sewing and cooking. During the 1960s she moved to Albuquerque.

She first worked at J.C. Penney Company and later opened her own drapery shop, Draperies by Adela, in 1980. The shop was located on North Fourth Street and for many years, even after she stopped doing the sewing herself, she still visited it every morning. At age 47 Adela decided she wanted to go back to school and she attended the University of New Mexico. At 52 she received her degree in Spanish Literature and a minor in Philosophy. While in college she began writing cuentos (folk tales) for an assignment, and some were published in anthologies at UNM. This, combined with the encouragement of her husband Harry Willson (1932-2010), convinced her she was a writer. She began work on a cookbook that would become Amador Publishers' most popular title and would help sustain the company.

Twelve Gifts: Recipes from a Southwest Kitchen is a 22-page cookbook composed of twelve recipes ranging from dinner ideas to desserts to margaritas. The opening author's note, written in Adela's own hand, explains that all of the recipes are "simple, tasty and easy to make." This little book has sold over 12,000 copies and is in its fourth printing. The book caught the attention of New Mexico Magazine. Soon after its publication, Adela began writing their "Southwest Flavor" food column, in which a unique Adela short story or anecdote preceded the recipe(s) of the month.

Adela's column, which was about much more than food, would become the magazine's most popular feature. She held this writing position from 1993 to 2006. In 2000, a collection of her "Southwest Flavor" articles and recipes was published under the same name. Adela also authored a collection of short stories and reminiscences, titled Undercurrents: New Mexico

Stories Then and Now, about the lives of different peoples of New Mexico over the past century. Jorge Gabaldo said of Adela's work, "*Escribe con el corazon en el punto de la pluma*" ["She writes with her heart on the point of her pen"].

The Albuquerque Journal's June 9th article on Adela by Matt Andazola states:

"Amador Willson was hungry for experience, and almost never looked or acted her age. At 80 years old, she hiked to the top of Machu Picchu in Peru."

And further quotes our own President, Zeldia Gatuskin as saying "She was never overly academic or intellectual in her writing,..."; "She just said it in plain words and called it as she saw it."

Adela was a lovely lady and will be missed by HSNM.

2012 Atheist Alliance of America Convention

Denver Atheists & Freethinkers are organizing a convention to take place over the Labor Day weekend.

The theme this year is "The Ascent of Atheism." The convention starts on Friday, August 31, and ends with a family-friendly picnic in the mountains at nearby Genesee Park on Monday, September 2. Aside from the picnic, the convention will be held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in downtown Denver, where luxury rooms are available to convention guests at the very special rate of \$85 a night.

People can see more details and register at the AAA website, at Atheistallianceamerica.org

Those who can't make it out this year are invited to "like" our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AtheistAllianceOfAmerica2012NationalConvention

Unelectable Atheists U.S. States that Prohibit Godless Americans from Holding Public Office

By Matthew Bulger, Humanist Network News

With election season upon us, and a near constant stream of public jabs and rebuttals between incumbents and their challengers, we should focus on something besides the Americans that are running for office. Instead, let's turn our attention to a rather peculiar set of state laws relating to elections and nonreligious Americans.

It's well known that there aren't many open atheists in Congress or in state government, and that atheists aren't held in high esteem by potential voters. Some question our dedication to what they view as a "Christian nation" while others feel that they can't relate to a candidate who doesn't share the same faith as they do.

Whatever the reason, public distrust isn't the only means by which atheists are discouraged for running from office. In fact, running for a spot in state legislatures as an atheist is outright illegal in some states. Obviously, these laws are trumped by the "No Religious Test Clause" of the United States Constitution, which is found in Article VI, paragraph 3, and states that:

*The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but **no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.***

However, these laws are still on the books and have given atheist candidates trouble in the past. Cecil Bothwell, an atheist who in 2009 won an election for a Asheville, North Carolina city council seat, was almost unseated by local critics who pointed to a provision in North Carolina's constitution that prohibited nonbelievers from being elected. This provision of the state constitution is similar to provisions in Arkansas, Maryland, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. The provisions follow:

Arkansas, Article 19, Section 1:

No person who denies the being of a God shall hold any office in the civil departments of this State, nor be competent to testify as a witness in any Court.

Maryland, Article 37:

That no religious test ought ever to be required as a qualification for any office of profit or trust in this State, other than a declaration of belief in the existence of God; nor shall the Legislature prescribe any other oath of office than the oath prescribed by this Constitution.

Mississippi, Article 14, Section 265:

No person who denies the existence of a Supreme Being shall hold any office in this state.

North Carolina, Article 6, Section 8

The following persons shall be disqualified for office: Any person who shall deny the being of Almighty God.

South Carolina, Article 17, Section 4:

No person who denies the existence of a Supreme Being shall hold any office under this Constitution.

Tennessee, Article 9, Section 2:

No person who denies the being of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil department of this state.

Texas, Article 1, Section 4:

No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification

to any office, or public trust, in this State; nor shall any one be excluded from holding office on account of his religious sentiments, provided he acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being.

So, what do you think of these laws? Are they an affront to the secular nature of our local, state, and federal governments, or are they just antiquated but harmless relics from the past? Should there be an active effort to remove these anti-atheist provisions from the respective state constitutions, or should the nonreligious movement just let federal law trump these discriminatory provisions as conflicts arise?

I think that the legislatures of these states have a duty to eventually get around to removing these provisions and any other elements of their state constitutions that institutionalize discrimination. Now might not be the time due to the large number of pressing issues that plague this nation, but the change ought to eventually be made. Atheists, or any other religious minority for that matter, shouldn't have to go to court after winning an election just so that federal law is upheld and discrimination is rejected.

Armies and Citizens Move by Jean O'Hara, Nov. 1994

A train goes down the track clickety clack
It makes frequent stops along the nation
Transferring Americans on it back
Moving people, never a sensation.
Death is not the only lone traveler,
See the mixed people going where destined,
Machines and the silent unraveler
Gunned, prodded, transported and then machined.
The conductor passes on passengers,
The engineer constructs, then, throttles trains.
Dining cars swerve, waiters place down fasteners,
Wheels and cotter pins spin towards one's brains.
Death is the final demeaning agent,
No more round trip tickets to the bourn spent.

Let's Lighten Up

A couple of New Jersey hunters are out in the woods when one of them falls to the ground. He doesn't seem to be breathing, his eyes are rolled back in his head.

The other guy whips out his cell phone and calls the emergency services. He gasps to the operator: "My friend is dead! What can I do?"

The operator, in a calm soothing voice says: "Just take it easy. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead."

There is a silence, then a shot is heard. The guy's voice comes back on the line. He says: "OK, now what?"

A very shy guy goes into a bar and sees a beautiful woman sitting at the bar. After an hour of gathering up his courage he finally goes over to her and asks, tentatively, "Um, would you mind if I chatted with you for a while?"

She responds by yelling, at the top of her lungs, "No, I won't sleep with you tonight!" Everyone in the bar is now staring at them. Naturally, the guy is hopelessly and completely embarrassed and he slinks back to his table.

After a few minutes, the woman walks over to him and apologizes. She smiles at him and says, "I'm sorry if I embarrassed you. You see, I'm a graduate student in psychology and I'm studying how people respond to embarrassing situations."

To which he responds, at the top of his lungs, "What do you mean \$200?"

First Unitarian HUManist Group, 7pm

July 10th, 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, July 28th, 2:45pm

Saturday, July 28th, 2:45pm

Starbucks

1309 N. Main Street, Roswell, NM

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, July 2nd - General Discussion

Monday, July 16th

Critical Thinking: It Ain't Necessarily So
Marshall Berman

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