



# THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

July 2013

A Membership Chapter of the American Humanist Association

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/> [zelda@amadorbooks.com](mailto:zelda@amadorbooks.com)

HSNM Meetings and other meetings of interest  
HSNM meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

### Saturday, July 6

10:30

#### **Santa Fe Humanists**

Library of Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Santa Fe, 107 W.  
Barcelona Rd., Santa Fe, NM

#### 2:45pm **Roswatheists**

Starbucks, 1309 N. Main St.  
Roswell, NM

### Saturday, July 13

10:10am to noon

#### **HSNM Informal Meeting**

HSNM Members and their Guests  
Only. For invitation or questions,  
please contact Zelda Gatuskin at  
505-344-6102

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian  
School NE, Albuquerque, NM

### Wednesday, July 20

7:00 to 9:00pm

#### **NMSR**

“Climate Change Comes to the Rio  
Grande”

Dagmar Llewellyn

Museum of Natural History and  
Science

### Saturday, July 20

10:00am to noon

#### **HSNM Topical Discussion**

“No Privacy for YOU! How’s that  
Sound?”

Special Collections Library  
423 Central Ave. NE

2:45

#### **Roswatheists**

Starbucks, 1309 N. Main St.  
Roswell, NM

### Saturday, July 27

10:00am to noon

#### **HSNM Speaker Meeting**

“The Female and Male Perspectives  
on the Middle East”

by Lorraine Ell and  
George Lawrence-Ell

Humanist Minute:

CNM - Montoya Campus, 4700  
Morris NE, Rm H-128

### **HSNM Family Co-Op**

Alternative Children’s Sunday  
School

Classes for kids of all ages at 10:00  
AM on the 1st and 3rd Sundays  
each month at a local private  
school.

Call 505-292-4375 for more in-  
formation or go to [www.MeetUp.com/Humanist-Family-CoOp/](http://www.MeetUp.com/Humanist-Family-CoOp/)

### **President’s Message for July 2013 Report on 2013 AHA Conference - Part 1**

by Zelda Leah Gatuskin

The recent 2013 Conference of the American Humanist Association in San Diego brought together 450 AHA members and presenters from across the country. Our own chapter representation was in the double digits (okay, 11) and we were noticeable in our leadership, from our work for the Feminist Caucus to Ron Herman’s presentation about our Family Co-Op, with one of our own families including their two children also in attendance. HSNM Family Co-Op’s Alternative Children’s Sunday School was one of the early, and remains

## The Humanist Society of New Mexico

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association  
Member of The New Mexico Coalition of Reason

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

Richard Grady: Treasurer

Jerry Gilbert: Secretary/Membership

Jay Lee Evans, 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

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](http://www.americanhumanist.org) for more information about the American Humanist Association.

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.

one of the few, humanist children's programs that are up and running among AHA chapters and affiliates. I came back from the conference, as I have each year, with a renewed appreciation for HSNM - the longevity of the group, our ability to maintain a consistent meeting schedule, and our members' willingness to branch out into more kinds of activities and more involvement in the local community as well as participation in national initiatives.

Here are some of my thoughts about the conference and some of the issues and ideas that I found worth noting. A variety of approaches to and aspects of humanism were covered over the four days. Many of the sessions were recorded and can be viewed online here:

<http://conference.americanhumanist.org/live/>

Please have a look so we can discuss these topics among ourselves. Is there a subject you would like to learn more about at one of our speaker meetings or explore at our topical discussion meeting? Something you would like to comment on in this Newsletter?

**Secularism.** A significant purpose of this and every AHA conference was to bring ourselves up to date on the status of secularism in the U.S. In his talk "The Secular Moment: Challenges Ahead for Church-State Separation," Rob Boston pointed out that the concept of a "Christian Nation" came after the Civil War and not from our Founders. Today it is pushed energetically and almost desperately by the religious right. Their latest campaign replaces "family values" with "religious freedom," on which basis they now demand changes to school curricula, prayer at government functions and the right to discriminate in employment.

Amanda Knief, AHA board member, attorney and author of *Citizen Lobbyist*, gave a scathing critique of the Faith-Based Initiative as a political boondoggle that does little in the way of providing aid to those in need. Edwina Rogers, Executive Director of Secular Coalition for America, gave a report on that organization's impressive accomplishments over the past year. Edwina is clearly an effective lobbyist and coalition builder - rock solid in her defense of secularism without ever seeming embattled or negative, she knows the issues, the numbers and the law inside and out. (I could use a volunteer just to keep up with the SCA news bulletins and strategy sessions - Edwina doesn't scrimp on the emails either!)

Finally, wrapping up the whole bundle of church-state

controversies into a single unassailable constitutional package, Edward Tabash provided a history lesson, “The True Meaning of the Separation of Church and State” from the perspective of the Founders themselves, who really did intend for everyone to be free to believe or not believe as they choose and equal in the eyes of the law.

**Children and Education.** Closely tied to the issue of separation of church and state is the matter of public education, as well as private education. Clearly we support secular, thorough, accurate, science-based public school curricula. But what of our responsibility to protect every child’s right to adequate education and health care? The panel “Religious Fundamentalism and the Abuse of Children” was moderated by Richard Dawkins and included activists and authors on the front lines of the church-state frontier. Sean Faircloth, Liz Heywood, Janet Heimlich and Katherine Stewart asked us to confront the very real harm that religious fundamentalism does to vulnerable individuals, communities and our democracy.

The conference offered two excellent sessions on humanist education - the “Humanism Begins at Home” panel in which HSNM participated, and a symposium on The Teaching of Ethics. Margaret Downey, a contributor to *Parenting Beyond Belief*, in colonial character and costume, presented an overview of “The Life and Work of Thomas Paine” to the delight of young and old. And for the scholars among us, there was the traditional Thursday “Philosophy of Humanism Symposium” all-day marathon.

*In Part 2: Diversity, Organization Nuts and Bolts, Community, and Personal Growth*

### **Humanist Speaker Meeting July 2013**

The Female and Male Perspectives on the Middle East  
by George Lawrence-Ell and Lorraine Ell

George and Lorraine will discuss the cultural and religious environment of the Middle East, in particular Saudi Arabia and Iran, as seen from both male and female perspectives. They will share the political attitudes and societal beliefs they saw in the Mideast in the 70s and 80s and compare them to the current circumstances. There has been significant change.

Both Lorraine and George have taught at King Faisal University in Mammam, Saudi Arabia.

In the 70s Lorraine and George managed training projects for Fortune 500 companies in Saudi Arabia and Iran. They later co-founded a regional investment firm managing assets over 80 million.

With both BA and MA degrees from Michigan State University, Lorraine is a distinguished member of the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society. She represents Portfolio, LLC as an investment adviser and Chief Operations Officer, and serves on the board of the Albuquerque Committee on Foreign Relations.

George has graduate degrees in both International Relations and Applied Linguistics and has taught at universities both here and abroad, including Michigan State University. He founded and directed The Human Intelligence Research Institute in Vienna, Austria. His broad knowledge and experience continue to inform the strategies and mission of Portfolio, LLC.

### **It’s time to Mobilize for Women’s Equality Day**

A rally will be held for Women’s Equality on Sunday, August 25 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM at Tiguex Park in Old Town Albuquerque. Sponsored by the Humanist Society of NM and organized by our Feminist Caucus, the event will be produced by a coalition of groups that so far includes:

- \* Southwest Women’s Law Center
- \* Albuquerque Progressive Women
- \* Santa Fe NOW
- \* Progress Now NM
- \* UNM Women’s Resource Center
- \* NM Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
- \* FFR-ABQ
- \* NM League of Women Voters
- \* YWCA

More coalition members are signing on every week. What a great opportunity for humanist outreach and activism. Please pitch in to help make this a noteworthy event that brings people together and increases awareness and action for equality and social justice.

If you can help with any of these specific tasks, and/or would like to attend upcoming planning meetings, contact Sylvia Ramos by email to [feministcauschsnm@hotmail.com](mailto:feministcauschsnm@hotmail.com) or phone: 505 401-0601.

\* Publicity: News Media - radio, newspapers; Social media - Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr; Distribute Flyers; Word of mouth - Board meetings, professional group meetings, church, everywhere; Professional Bulletins such as NM Bar Association.

\* Loan Equipment: speakers/microphone, CD player, 10x10 ft. tents, tables.

\* Entertainment/Amenities: Songs, Music, Family Activities.

\* Develop/Print Literature: Flyers, Petitions to sign, postcards and address labels to send Congress, handouts on ERA, FC and HSNM.

\* Decorations: Banners, placards, posters, balloons. Day of Event:

\* Carpool for HSNM members and volunteers.

\* Staff Registration/Greeting tent.

\* ERA Petition/Postcard Circulation and Signature gathering.

\* Set up and Decorate - come early.

\* Take down and Clean up - stay late.

You will be working side by side with members of the groups listed above and others. Many elected officials are expected to attend. We want to demonstrate our power to mobilize a grass-roots campaign for human rights across a wide political, professional and philosophical spectrum. At the very least, please plan to attend - and bring a friend!

### **Speaking out on Sexual Assault in the Military: A Letter to Congress, June 12, 2013**

Dear Representative Lujan-Grisham [also sent to others in the NM Delegation]:

As an American citizen who is deeply concerned about the current vicious problem of sexual assault within all of our U.S. Armed Forces -- i.e. rape by a member or members of any given military unit perpetrated against any other individual within our military (or outside our military, for that matter), I appeal to you thru your Congressional power(s) to disallow any of our American military control of any and all legal procedures regarding:

1) Reporting by rape victims of rape within any military unit.

2) Investigation of the rape of victim or victims within any American military unit.

3) Legal trial(s) of military perpetrators of rape committed upon anybody (who is or is not in our military) regardless of the military ranks involved.

4) Just and tough sentencing of any rapist who happens to be a member of any of our military forces.

I want any and all legal action RE the above handled by American civilian law and its legal court system. I do not want the foxes to be in charge of the hen and rooster coops!

And I'll tell you this: If I were a mother or father today of a young boy or girl who was military-eligible, I would do everything in my power to dissuade that youngster from enlisting in any part of the military -- as conditions apparently now stand.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns. Better yet, please put a stop to this national disgrace.

Yours Truly,

Marjorie C. Burt

P.S. I vote -- and I discuss national problems with others.

### **Roswatheists**

by Doris "Roswatheist" Rashad

Wow; two articles in two consecutive newsletters! Roswatheists just has lots of news lately. First of all, in June's edition of the HSNM newsletter, I told you that Roswatheists is at 18 members. Since then, we've gained another six members, bringing us up to 24 Roswatheists-woohoo!

The second announcement is HUGE! As of May 7th, Roswatheists is an official affiliate of American Atheists. You can see this at <http://www.atheists.org>. Simply click on the "About" tab, select "Local Partners and Affiliates", and you'll see us right there on the map. I've been working on partnering with American Atheists since February, but it was worth the wait. The only downside, and it isn't really a downside--all things considered, is that we're listed as "Roswell Atheists".

Announcement 3: We also have a new web address, or a few. All will take you straight to Roswatheists' meetup site, but they're easier to remember. Roswatheist Justin Hamm did this for us. The addresses are: <http://roswellatheists.com>, <http://roswellatheists.net> and <http://roswellatheists.org>

A big, fat f-ing thanks again to Randall and Zelda for allowing us to take up space in the HSNM newsletter! We are so grateful to have such a lovely affiliation with another freethinker organization.

In last month's newsletter, I mentioned that there were two original members of Roswatheists. My husband, Abdul, first Roswatheist has been incredibly supportive

since the beginning of this. All the work that's gone into organizing, he has been there every step of the way.

May His Noodly Appendage touch you...R'Amen!

### **PFAW Applauds Proposed Constitutional Amendments to Reverse Citizens United**

Used with the permission of People For the American Way [or People For the American Way Foundation]  
Posted June 18

WASHINGTON –Today two constitutional amendments aimed at undoing the harm caused by the Supreme Court in a series of cases, including *Citizens United v. FEC* – which held that corporations have the right to spend unlimited amounts of money influencing elections – were proposed by Senators Tom Udall (D-NM) and Jon Tester (D-MT).

Marge Baker, Executive Vice President of People For the American Way, released the following statement:

“A constitutional amendment is the only way to completely reverse the damage done to our democracy by the devastating *Citizens United* decision and related cases. No one takes amending the Constitution lightly, but there have been multiple moments in American history where the people have had to collectively undo the harm done by the Supreme Court when it acts against justice, democracy, and the common good.

“Americans’ voices are being drowned out by huge corporations and wealthy special interests. We are heartened that these senators understand the need for a constitutional amendment to take our democracy out of the hands of corporations and wealthy special interests put it back into the hands of everyday people, where it belongs.”

Across the country there is unprecedented public support for this type of reform. To date fifteen states and more than 400 cities and towns have called for a constitutional amendment overturning *Citizens United* and related cases.

### **Book Review: “The Great Agnostic: Robert Ingersoll and American Freethought”**

by David Chivers

Humanist Network News

Let me start by saying what this book is not. *The Great Agnostic* by Susan Jacoby is not a biography of Robert Ingersoll. It is, rather, an argument for restoring Ingersoll to a respected place in the pantheon of American thinkers.

The book does give a brief outline of Robert Ingersoll's life, known even in his own time as “The Great Agnostic.” Born in 1833 in the small town of Dresden, New York, Ingersoll became a lawyer, a Civil War cavalry colonel, and an influential Congressman, coming to public fame in 1876 with his nomination speech of James Blaine at the Republican convention that year. His oratorical skills quickly made him a desired public speaker, and he remained so throughout his life.

But even as he found fame, he also found notoriety, for although his views on religion were at first largely unknown to the general public, he never hid them, and as his fame grew his atheism (or agnosticism, terms he saw as synonymous) came to the fore. At a time in this country when oratory was a spectator sport, his incredible gifts for public oratory, wit, and erudition caused his fame spread quickly, and soon he was making a handsome living from the lecture circuit, pushing his ideas for women's equality, for Darwinism, and against religion. Ingersoll was truly one of the great popularizers of these ideas among the American public, a virtual one-stop shopping for progressive ideals. He actively sought out audiences who did not agree with him, and along with his lectures he was a frequent debater as well.

Jacoby lets Ingersoll's ideas come from his own words, frequently quoting from the numerous contemporary accounts and collections of his speeches. She is quick to point out that these probably do not do justice to his actual presentation—Ingersoll was more performance artist than writer. He knew his arguments and could tailor them to the needs of the night, to the mood of the audience, to the particular arguments raised against him. In some ways, that explains why he is no longer as iconic a figure as he was in his own day. The force of his personality could not be captured the way it would have been today, when television and YouTube would have preserved the skills that made him such a star of his time.

To readers of Susan Jacoby's other books, particularly "Freethinkers," some of this will be familiar terrain. Ingersoll was a major presence in that book, and I remember at the time thinking he deserved a book all of his own. I would still like to see a more complete biography of him. But Jacoby's book is nonetheless fascinating, and a solid argument for restoring Ingersoll to his place among the pantheon of American thinkers.

### Letter to the Editor

Donald Gutierrez's "America's State Terrorism" leads me to wonder if he has experienced persecution personally when he says that the national security state "will go after anyone anywhere in civil society that attempts to unmask it." Actually, exposure is a necessary part of being a terrorist state. If no one knows about the horrific treatment of whistle-blowers, how can anyone be terrorized by it? After September 11, 2011, I slowly came to believe that the claim that a secret plot within the U.S. Government was responsible was itself promoted by secret organizations within the government. After all, who is really afraid of a few hundred foreign terrorists? But a perfect crime committed by powerful schemers within our official agencies - let all subjects of the mightiest empire that ever existed on earth tremble with dread!

So, what can be done? A "deep desire for vengeance or underground resistance" is easily manipulated and "terrified silence and submission" is the whole point of the monstrous operation. There are many things that power addicts don't want ordinary people to know about but their brutality and their power lust are not in the category. We need to go case by case, situation by situation, to understand what they dread. Hindsight is useful in this. Obviously, the tobacco companies resisted for fifty years the idea that smoking is harmful to health. The big food processing companies today are similarly in denial about the health consequences of too much sugar, fat and salt. My guess (biased, no doubt, by being a conscientious objector to military service and my belief in non-violent action) is that today's armed forces feared the end of militarism. They don't want to believe in nonviolent power so they provoke violent reactions in peaceful demonstrations whenever they can. They know how to deal with violence. Every army in the world (as far as I know) runs on petroleum products

so we get stubborn resistance to knowledge about the consequences of dumping far too much CO<sub>2</sub> into the air. The people whose wealth is built on exploiting fossil fuels understandably don't want to believe in the destructiveness of what they have done and continue to do. Experts in terror, lethal violence and ruthless accumulation of wealth, collude among themselves to keep the rest of us in confusion, corruption, fear or giddy enthusiasm. The razzle-dazzle is unlimited. We live in a time when the knowledge exists to do much better but those who think they have a lot to lose are vigorously defending the (probably doomed) status quo.

Dale L. Berry

### The Flowers

by Jean O'Hara

Don't kill a flower, just look at it, then  
It has a Battle's chance to live longer.  
Three dozen roses sent, refused, given  
And said to beat the band become stronger.  
It matters if the soil is not Russian;  
Cultivating American Beauties  
Requires suitable garden percussion  
That transcends international duties.  
Only flowers flower, if that is so, how  
Come a light may flower and brighten some  
Day so that a beautiful poesy is now  
Seen as the muse gives light, never to be undone.  
Yes, the scintillating light that flowers  
Comes from sunshine this day, not tomorrow's

### Quotes of Robert Green Ingersoll

Tolerance is giving to every other human being every right that you claim for yourself.

I am the inferior of any man whose rights I trample under foot.

Religion can never reform mankind because religion is slavery.

The greatest test of courage on earth is to bear defeat without losing heart.

If I owe Smith ten dollars and God forgives me, that doesn't pay Smith.