



Humanist Society of New Mexico



May 2012

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

Quote of the Month

Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less. - Marie Curie

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, May 12th

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: Eric Pax

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Saturday, May 19th

Topical Discussion – Open to the Public

*Do We Choose Whom We Love or is it
Something Beyond Our Control?*

Erna Fergusson Library, 3700 San Mateo Blvd. NE

Saturday, May 26th

Speaker Meeting – Open to the Public

Miss Representation

A Film by Jennifer Seibel Newsom

see inside

Humanist Minute: Sylvia Ramos

Refreshments: Feminist Caucus

UNM Campus, Anthropology 163, Albuquerque
(Anthropology Building Auditorium)

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, May 5th, 10:30am

An Informal Discussion

The Social Origins of Morality

Cafe Room, Southside Branch of the
Santa Fe Public Library, 6599 Jaguar Drive

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

HSNM Rio Rancho/Westside Group Saturday, May 19th 1:00-3:00pm

4611 Los Reyes Rd
Rio Rancho

Discussion Topic: Humanist Views on Religious
Policies

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

[Special Projects]

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

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, News and Notes

Spring is quickly moving into summer, and the irrigation ditch where we take our daily walks affords many opportunities to observe nature, tamed and untamed and all stages in between. I'm impressed by how plant and animal life have adapted to changing conditions over the years. I remember when the water came down the ditch twice a week; then it was limited to once a week; and for the past several years, we only get water every other week. And yet, there is a pair of ducks that still makes our ditch their part-time home. Wherever they were all winter, and wherever they go in the off weeks, they continue to appear regularly every spring with the first flow of water, and can be found paddling about happily when the water is high, or flying overhead from one lingering puddle to the next as the water drains away. Ducks in the desert -- raising babies, no less -- hardly troubled by the people and dogs walking or trotting along beside them; bravely co-existing with predatory hawks, roadrunners, tame and feral cats, and who knows what-all that comes out at night.

Nature is not only resilient, it's relentless. Mustard weeds have grown waist-high already in the bone-dry back alley. The ants' nests are swarming back to life. Wherever a small rock casts a small shadow in which a drop of moisture can linger, a tiny tumbleweed sprouts. Even more impressive, given my decidedly not-green thumb, the intentional plantings have mostly survived and in some cases thrived.

My biggest success has been with the wisteria in front of my studio, positioned to grow for shade and color over the wrought iron that protects the big, south-facing window. Poor thing couldn't even shade itself at first. For several summers we had to put a sort of tent over it in the hottest months. But this spring I am sitting in the dappled light of a healthy vine that drips with lush purple blooms. Yes, I had a hand in its success, but still, I was only giving an assist to nature to do what it does anyway.

And that's my point. That's all we're ever doing. We are in nature, part of nature, working with nature. Our own minds are an ecosystem of sorts. Are we going to let them be paved over, or can we allow a little space there for something to grow? Thoughts and emotions are

part of our organic nature. Perception, consciousness, creativity, curiosity, analysis, learning -- these are natural processes that are not readily suppressed. Surely if they could be quieted, they would be by now, given the immense exertions throughout history of power-greedy control freaks and their punishing institutions.

And what of the future? We have in our collective imagination unpleasant images of humanity becoming programmed, robotic, or actually increasingly inorganic, while the "State" manages a homogeneous, mechanized society with dictatorial dispassion. Some might see certain aspects of contemporary culture as evidence that we are already well down that path.

What role can we play as humanists to prevent the nightmare from coming true? Shall we respond with a counter set of maneuvers designed to impose the social format we prefer on those we consider less enlightened or less well-intentioned? I would rather we simply be that drop of water, that spot of shade, that crack in the pavement in which minds and hearts may naturally grow -- naturally good, strong and beautiful -- thus creating more and more fertile soil where all can thrive.

On the Horizon

We will have an expanded Speaker Meeting for May at which we will screen the film *Miss Representation* and officially launch our own Feminist Caucus HSNM. Please note the new location and extended schedule. We have a nice big venue and we want to gather as many people as we can to see this important film. HSNM is partnering with the UNM Women's Resource Center to provide this free screening and discussion. Special thanks to Summer Little of the WRC for making it all possible.

HSNM presents a *free* screening of *Miss Representation* a film by Jennifer Siebel Newsom

When: Saturday May 26, 2012, 10:00 a.m.

Where: UNM Campus, Anthropology 163, Albuquerque (Anthropology Building Auditorium)

Who: Presented by the Humanist Society of New Mexico and Feminist Caucus HSNM in partnership with the UNM Women's Resource Center.

Details: Free and open to the public. Meeting runs from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The film is 90 mins. There will be a break for refreshments and then discussion following the screening. Optional donations will be collected for the **MissRepresentation.org** call-to-action campaign.

About the Film

Like drawing back a curtain to let bright light stream in, *Miss Representation* uncovers a glaring reality we live with every day but fail to see. The film exposes how mainstream media contribute to the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America. The film challenges the media's limited and often disparaging portrayals of women and girls, which make it difficult for women to achieve leadership positions and for the average woman to feel powerful herself.

Do you know that:

...Women hold only 3% of clout positions in the mainstream media (telecommunications, entertainment, publishing and advertising).

...Women comprise 7% of directors and 13% of film writers in the top 250 grossing films.

...The United States is 90th in the world in terms of women in national legislatures.

...Women hold 17% of the seats in the House of Representatives.

...Women are merely 3% of Fortune 500 CEOs.

...About 25% of girls will experience teen dating violence.

...65% of American women and girls report disordered eating behaviors.

from the website

<http://www.missrepresentation.org/the-film>

The annual AHA National Conference, to be held this year in early June in New Orleans, brings together national and international humanists, freethinkers, activists and scholars. Our HSNM delegation will be actively involved: Representing the AHA Feminist Caucus, Ashley Jordan and I will present a screening of *Miss Representation* with discussion following (May will be a warm-up for us, we need you to attend and provide input); also, I will co-chair the AHA Feminist Caucus lunch meeting with AHA Board member Amanda Knief; and Ashley and I will assist with some other FC duties. Our HSNM Past President Fred March has also been called into service to facilitate the Kochhar Humanist Education Center's program, Educating Humanists: Visions and Action. He will provide a presentation on his courses, The Many Faces of Humanism and Case Studies in Global Environmental Policy - A Humanist Perspective; and we will talk about our Humanist Lives project and show Jevon Campisi's video. Other HSNM members will be in attendance as well, and you will hear all about the conference from your delegation at our June Speaker Meeting.

Speaking of which...**Our June 23 meeting will be held in the social hall of the UU Church** on Carlisle and Comanche, and, assuming the space is comfortable for us, we will continue to meet there through the summer while the Law School undergoes renovations. Many thanks to our VP Roy Moody for making the arrangements -- show your appreciation by arriving early or sticking around after to help with set-up and clean-up.

What is a Feminist Caucus?

"Feminist"- any person who believes in the political, economic and social equality of the sexes; pertaining to any organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests. "Caucus" - a meeting of a group of persons belonging to or supporting the same political or social movement.

A group of us, men and women, have been meeting and corresponding about organizing around some key issues in an effort to effect real advances for women's rights, and to demonstrate our support for the AHA Feminist Caucus and AHA initiatives on behalf of gender equality. Here is what we've come up with; the May 26 meeting will provide opportunity for wider discussion.

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.
- * 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.

Our proposed "membership" policies:

The Feminist Caucus HSNM is a committee of HSNM and does not collect separate dues or require donations. Voluntary donations to help further our mission are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible as allowed by law. You can support our work by joining the HSNM and our Feminist Caucus. You can also help us in our phone/email campaign to bring us closer to full ratification of the ERA even if you are not an HSNM member, as a Friend of the Caucus.

Are you psyched?! Please let me know if you can help with our May 26 event by: helping with refreshments,

sending/posting fliers, making phone calls and giving rides to our members who need assistance getting to the meeting, greeting and helping with literature at the event, taking photos and video.

Farther on the Horizon

AHA President David Niose will be in Albuquerque in October with his new book *Nonbeliever Nation*. We want to partner with all of our local freethinker groups to organize an event for him to be held on Monday evening, October 22 so he can talk about the book and bring his humanist message to wider attention. Let's hear your ideas.

We'll Remember Each November

by Sylvia M. Ramos, M.D.

April 19, 2012

I remember the day in 1982 when all our efforts to get women's rights protected by our Constitution came to a halt just three states short. The anger and disappointment we felt were distilled into a simple, non-violent phrase, "We'll remember each November", that my 11-year-old daughter, Carolyn, and thousands of children around the country wore emblazoned in green letters on white shorts and white letters on green t-shirts. Sadly, not even our subsequent activism at the ballot box and our perceived advances in social, economic and political spheres have guaranteed women in this country the right to participate fully as citizens on an even playing field. One just needs to listen to the recent diatribes against women's right to equal pay for equal work and access to birth control medication, among others, to know that without an Equal Rights Amendment more than half the American population will never have the opportunity to control their own lives and achieve their full potential. Individual remedies such as the Supreme Court Decision in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and the Lilly Ledbetter Act (2009), helpful though they may be, will not ensure that attacks on our rights won't re-surface any time there is economic, societal and political uncertainty. In fact, as global pressures disrupt economies and societies around the world, these attacks can be expected to become more frequent and more acrid.

Given these realities and the heightened awareness of these issues in the news media today, it becomes incumbent upon us to push forward, once again, to ratify the ERA and ensure that our children, boys and girls, can grow up in a country where their opportunities and achievements will be based on their personal talents and character, not on their gender. That is their right as human beings. As Hillary Clinton said in her most

eloquent speech at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, "... it is no longer acceptable to discuss women's rights as separate from human rights...women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights".

(<http://voxygen.net/classes/contemporary-public-address/hillary-clinton-womens-rights-speech/>)

The Feminist Caucus of the Humanist Society of New Mexico has just been formed to address issues that affect women's rights in our community and has chosen as its initial effort to push for the removal of the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. This would allow the additional three states needed to move into the column of thirty-five states, including New Mexico, that have already ratified the amendment and to ensconce, finally, the right of women to equal protection under the law in our Constitution. This effort is being led nationally by Carolyn Cook of United 4 Equality and a coalition of about 50 other national and state organizations that include the American Humanist Association.

(www.united4equality.com)

We invite all members of the Humanist Society of New Mexico, their families, friends and colleagues to join us in this most worthy effort.

(www.humanistsocietyofnm.org)

Coming Soon from Amador Publishers

From Fear to Love, My Journey Beyond Christianity began as personal enquiry: "Well, Harry, if you don't believe *that* anymore, what *do* you believe, and on the basis of *what*?" At one point I exclaimed, "I've found the cure to a disease that no one else has!" But now I do not believe that the difficulty is so exclusively my own.

—Harry Willson, 1997

Here at last is the third book in Harry Willson's humanist trilogy. The "enquiry" that he began at the age of 62 spilled over into two carefully crafted and reader-friendly works of philosophy, *Freedom from God* and *Myth and Mortality*, which he thought should be published first. Harry's friends and readers will delight in this retrospective of a life dedicated to discovery and frank discussion of what makes us tick. Those who come for the first time to the work of Harry Willson, former clergyman and committed writer-teacher-activist, will discover an informed, irreverent voice of reason in a world gone mad on dogma, hype, guilt trips and power trips. Above all, Harry's commitment to personal and mutual liberation shines through.

watch for updates at www.amadorbooks.com

Sex Education

by Laverne Rison

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe.
She had so many children she didn't know what to do.
The question I would ask is this, wasn't she told before
her first kiss?

Flowers for Futaba Fukushima Prefecture

by Sylvia Ramos Cruz

Saffron ripples soft in the salted breeze
suffuses the landscape where monks tread lightly
on bared bones of homes and bamboo groves,
framed against towers capped by fractured rafters,
remains of concrete monsters who blew their tops.

Each turn unveils a meditation—
weather vanes pointing east and west;
necrophory ants removing dead mates from their nests;
school children hiding under silk umbrellas.
Seeds slide through their fingers as prayer beads,
fall mute on weary soil, mingle gently with the elements.

Radiant yellow sunflowers, purple amaranth cascades,
crimson cockscomb zigzag the rubble,
sway in summer squalls, shift horizons.
Roots reach deep and wide like hands open to welcome
strontium, cesium, iodine into their veins
in ritual purification.

Note: Futaba is the small town where the Fukushima Daiichi plant is located. Ninety percent of its homes were destroyed in the catastrophe and it has been completely evacuated. Some plants, including sunflowers, amaranthus, cockscomb and field mustard, are believed to absorb radiation from the ground. Millions have been planted in the area.

May 3, 2012 is National Day of Reason

As in previous years, this year's National Day of Reason is scheduled to coincide with the Congressionally-mandated and federally-supported National Day of Prayer. We invite all who value the separation of religion and government to join us in commemorating the Day of Reason, and in building awareness for this important cause.

<http://nationaldayofreason.org/>

Nature Changes, Not Mothers

by Jean O'Hara, May, 1997

A simple concept – a mother – no fuss;
Changes from this simplicity results
In marasmus and things that make a muss -
Orphans and various step insults.
So, one has whatever trades by surrogates
Are foisted upon one to outstrip fates
One of the legacies of fates, forsooth,
Mothers do withstand a liar's truth.
Freedom of opinions and expressions
First come from a mother's impressions.
The Cenozoic period – millions
Of years ago, came, earthly man, billions!
One holocaust flexes mothers' triceps,
Christendom, flex ad baculum biceps.

Let's Lighten Up

A sales rep from Tyson Foods arranges to visit the Pope.

After receiving the papal blessing he whispers, “Your Eminence, we have a deal for you. If you change The Lord’s Prayer from ‘give us this day our daily bread....’ to ‘give us this day our daily chicken....’ then we will donate \$500 million dollars to the Church”.

The Pope responds saying, “That is impossible. The prayer is the Word of the Lord and it must not be changed.”

“Well,” says the Tyson man, “we are prepared to donate \$1 billion to the Church if you change the Lord’s Prayer from ‘give us this day our daily bread....’ to ‘give us this day our daily chicken....’”

Again the Pope replies “That is impossible. The prayer is the Word of the Lord and it must not be changed.”

Finally, the Tyson guy says, “This is our last offer. We will donate \$5 billion to the church if you change the Lord’s Prayer from ‘give us this day our daily bread....’ to ‘give us this day our daily chicken....’” and he leaves.

The next day the Pope meets with the College of Cardinals to say that he has good news and some bad news.

“The good news is that the Church has come into \$5 billion.”

“The bad news is that we are losing The Wonderbread Account!”.

First Unitarian HUUMANIST Group

May 8th, 7pm

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

The Atheists and Freethinkers of New Mexico

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

Sunday, May 6th, 9am

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice,
202 Harvard SE

Tuesday, May 15th, 6:30pm

Social Meeting at 6:30pm at Mimi's Cafe, 4316
The 25 Way, Near Jefferson and I-25

Roswatheists

Saturday, May 12th, 2:45pm

Saturday, May 26th 2:45pm

Starbucks

1309 N. Main Street, Roswell, NM

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, May 7th - General Discussion

Monday, May 21st

Who Wrote Shakespeare's Plays?

David Thomas

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