



THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

May 2013

A Membership Chapter of the American Humanist Association

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

HSNM Meetings

Meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

Saturday, May 4th 10:30 am

Santa Fe Humanists

Open Discussion, UU Library
107 W. Barcelona Rd., Santa Fe
For more information contact
Martin Tierney (505) 983-5001

Saturday, May 11th

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
Refreshments:

Saturday, May 18th

10:00am to noon

HSNM Topical Discussion

Can We Save Public Education?
North Valley Library, 7704-B 2nd
Street NW

Saturday, May 25th

10:00am to noon

HSNM Speaker Meeting

"The Privilege and Responsibilities

of Being a Public Servant" by Pete
Dinelli

Humanist Minute: Special Presen-
tation - see

inside. Refreshments:

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

Other Meetings of Interest

Saturday, May 4th

2:45pm **Roswatheists**

Starbucks, 1309 N. Main St.
Roswell, NM

Wednesday, May 8th

7:00pm **NMSR**, www.nmsr.org
"Evolution" by Paul Watson
NM Museum of Natural History,
1801 Mountain Rd. NW, Albu-
querque, NM

Tuesday, May 14th

7:00 to 8:30pm

First Unitarian HUHumanist Group

First UU Church, Fellowship Hall
3701 Carlisle NE, Albuquerque,
NM

Saturday, May 18th

2:45 **Roswatheists**, Starbucks
1309 N. Main St., Roswell, NM

President's Message for May

by Zelda Gatuskin

Humanists hold a naturalistic philosophy versus a supernatural belief, thus we dispense with gods and religious doctrine. The roots of secular humanism grow out of and in reaction to the Judeo-Christian religions. We still tend to explain ourselves in the context of our opposition to what I call the He-god of the Old Testament and the Christian Bible. What we are is not that. Not authoritarian, not patriarchal, not superstitious, not seeking salvation in an afterlife, not accepting myth as history or ancient texts as revealed wisdom that supercedes direct experience and observation. Humanism is post-religion - an innovation in consciousness, social organization and problem-solving that has been developing for many centuries and is gradually coming to predominate modern thought.

Where things get dicey is this concept of "spirit" - not a god spirit but our own. Something is alive within us. If we acknowledge that we are part of nature and subject to its laws, then that spark or spirit as we perceive it must be part of oth-

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: 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.

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 person 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.

er living things as well. Religions have claimed certain traits exclusively for humankind as imbued by a creator, but science is finding more and more of these in other species: play, decorative art, the concept of fairness, tool use and language, to name a few. Science has allowed us to cast off the theistic notion of human superiority (below God but above Nature) in favor of placing us squarely within this marvelous system of unknown and possibly unknowable origin. The resulting sense of wonder, curiosity and aliveness is for many of us close if not equivalent to a spiritual feeling. But the word "spirit" still rankles - we wouldn't want to be misconstrued as holding an irrational belief in something outside of our physical existence.

Be that as it may, the spirit is strong in New Mexico. We live alongside indigenous peoples whose philosophy and traditions are far removed from those of our puritanical predecessors. If we put aside our antagonism for anything religious or ritualistic, we might recognize a form of humanism and kindred naturalistic attitudes that can help us reconcile science and spirit.

My friend Stephen Sachs, a PhD in Political Science, has written an unabashedly spiritual book of commentary and poem-prayers "Walking The Four Directions" based on his participation in many Native American ceremonies. In the wake of several mass killings this spring, from intentional slaughter to industrial accident, I was struck by this passage, which refers to the circle in ceremony and as an organizing social principle:

"Reverence for all of nature, of which people are a part, guides the behavior expected within community, which is primary to one's identity. In general each individual seeing him/herself in relationship to all others in the community feels a responsibility to act properly and cooperatively, to maintain a harmonious and balanced set of relationships. Everyone affected by a decision must have a say in its making, for places in the circle have no meaning without the whole of the circle. Likewise there is no circle without each of the individual locations, with their unique way of seeing and contributing to the whole."

This is at once a spiritual and rational stance. In our modern society, we can be technologically networked to the world, yet actually quite isolated. When too many are left out of the circle, disruption and destruction ensue. The Native American concepts of balance, beauty

and community strike a strong chord with me, as I find myself more often describing my philosophy as naturalistic rather than non-theist or agnostic. It puts me in the circle instead of outside of it. The circle is not only the blessing way and the beauty way, it is the humanist way.

New HSNM Treasurer Appointed

Richard Grady has accepted appointment as the new HSNM Treasurer following the resignation of Eric Pax for health reasons. Richard was already on our Governing Board as Member-at-Large. If you would like to be considered for the open Member-at-Large position, or if you would like to nominate someone, please speak with one of the current Board members. Our thanks to Richard for “stepping up” and best wishes to Eric, whom we hope to see back at our general meetings soon.

Next Speaker Biography and Topic Along with Special Guest

Both natives of Albuquerque, Pete Dinelli and his wife Betty have been married 29 years and have two mid-20s sons earning degrees from UNM this year. Pete earned his BBA from Eastern New Mexico University in 1974 and his Juris Doctorate in 1977 from St. Mary's University of San Antonio, Tx. and became a licensed attorney for New Mexico in 1978. As a public servant, Pete has been Assistant District Attorney and Assistant Attorney General, and then Chief Deputy District Attorney; followed by serving as Deputy City Attorney for Albuquerque, and capped his public service in 2008-9 as the Chief Public Safety Officer for the City of Albuquerque responsible for overseeing the Albuquerque Police Department, the Albuquerque Fire Department, the Fire Marshall's Office, the Emergency Operation Center and the 911 Communication Center. Previously Pete spent six years in private legal practice; and served as a Worker's Compensation Judge for the State of New Mexico having statewide jurisdiction as a trial judge. He also served four years as an Albuquerque City Councilor.

His topic is entitled “The Privilege and Responsibilities of Being a Public Servant”, an experience based discussion of the role of government in a local setting and the Challenges and successes of local government. As an example, while serving the City of Albuquerque as Chief Public Safety Officer, Pete led the closing of some 40 so-called “Conve-

nience Stores” as nuisances to their neighborhoods.

Our special guest for the May Humanist Minute will be Stephanie Miller from Roadrunner Food Bank, who will present a plaque to HSNM in recognition of the donations we have raised for them. Let's surprise her with another batch of donations. Please bring your non-perishable food item(s) (nothing out of date, please). We are not collecting checks this time, just boxed/canned food; there will be a collection box by the refreshments.

HSNM Crushes it at KUNM (Again!)

by Jay Lee Evans

For the third funding drive in a row (Yay!), HSNM members were “In-the-House” during the recent KUNM pledge-drive. HSNM Volunteers took calls and recorded pledges to keep the eclectic, community-focus radio station on the air and help pay for the wide variety of programming that KUNM provides.

We raised a bunch of money; hit our goals; enjoyed some good fellowship with our partner volunteers; and were treated to a yummy fresh meal donated by the reliable and creative chefs of Flying Star.

With two fund-raiser pledge drives per year, you too will soon have the opportunity to gain the SAME ROSY GLOW of SATISFACTION you may notice on our volunteers. Good on ya, HSNM!

HSNM Rummage Fund Raiser

by Jay Lee Evans

Dusty Old Crap?

Got some collected memorabilia (not junk!) that should have enough value that your FRIENDS and NEIGHBORS might want to SPEND some money on, and by doing so SUPPORT your HSNM bottom-line?

IT'S NOT YET CONFIRMED, but your governing board thought it might be a good fund-raising opportunity to organize a rummage/yard/garage/white elephant sale event.

This would do TWO GOOD THINGS (at least):

- * Reduce your personal clutter; and
- * Raise some bucks for the perpetually paltry and dangerously depleted HSNM treasury.

Since we have recently joined the 'Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice,' it'd be PRETTY EASY to hold our event there some weekend day (Location: SE-corner Harvard/Silver; South of Central (near UNM)). **How's that sound to you?** If you have even the teeniest bit of interest in this idea, and if you have even the slightest amount of energy to figure out how to make this idea a success call or write Jay Lee Evans at (505) 917-6450 or jlerrr@g.com or talk to me after a meeting!

Book Review: Will in the World

by Lois Reisz Kimbrell

Will in the World, How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare, by Stephen Greenblatt, W. W. Norton and Company, New York, 2004

This is easily the best one-volume book on William Shakespeare I have ever encountered. It gives you a man who grew up in financial difficulties that might have humiliated him to the point of yearning to become wealthy, and whose initial ventures in love were disastrous enough to make him bypass family life in order to accomplish an astounding amount of superior theatre work in London - thereby earning both respect and wealth.

Well, all of that sounds familiar. How is this single volume different from all of the other single volumes on Shakespeare?

This is much more frank and knowing. For example: Will left his wife and three children to live and work in London in a profession that was just beginning to be highly successful because of the work of Christopher Marlowe. One cannot imagine Will's making such a decision without some previous theatre experience and connections.

Will had been a teacher in Lancaster before he married Ann Hathaway, and he could have met traveling actors for the first time in Lancaster. Probably did. And he could have had his first experiences in acting and writing for audiences there, so that going to London to act and write at a later date was not entirely out of the blue. Even more telling was his eventual homosexual affair with the powerful Earl of Southampton, who could and did exert influence on Will's behalf. The fragile youth named Will became another kind of man, one who knew how to climb. The sophisticated Will

flattered Queen Elizabeth and then King James, both of whom favored him. It would have been impossible to climb any higher than that.

Of special interest in Greenblatt's work are observations about how to convey private thoughts and feeling from the stage. There was the soliloquy, of course, and Shakespeare used it often and well. Also, he used repetition and vocabulary. He used repetition for Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice." Amazing amounts of it. Actors playing Shylock must feeling overwhelmed trying to memorize it accurately. Recent studies show that Will's vocabulary increased sharply while writing "Hamlet." In fact, the experience of "Hamlet" seemed to release him to write a series of magnificent tragedies, one after the other.

We don't know how all of that came about and would give anything to know. Will achieved expertise quickly at his writing table and continued to be astonishing until he decided to return to Stratford and live out the rest of his life near his beloved daughter, Susanna, her husband and child. He rewarded himself with family life.

You are sure to find this book fascinating. It delivers questions you may not have thought of before and suggests some answers, while the mystery of genius remains.

America's State Terrorism

by Donald Gutierrez

Part I

What is state terrorism? It is any kind of force or violence--including torture--employed by a government to intimidate or terrorize others--another nation, people, class, group, individual. But what is the state? The state is a nation or country in its most abstracted, legalistic, militarized, coercive form. It is the "part" of the country that declares war and persuades or, finally, forces the country to go to war; it also makes almost everyone and every organization (except some mega-corporations and investment banks) pay taxes at threat of fine or imprisonment. And it is that formidable power of the state to coerce the country that underlies the difference between state and country. The state is seen by some as an abstraction or symbolic embodiment of the country. However, that is deceptive because in crucial issues such as going to war, opposition and thus differ-

entiation between country and state often become dramatically clear despite the incessant need of the state to make state and country appear inexorably one-- "united in resolve," as a state speech-writer would phrase it.

The country, however, is the actual, literal, physical embodiment of a geographical area and the people within it. It is bound together by history, customs, commerce, climate, consciously shared locations and so on. It is Lake Tahoe, Boston, the Alleghenies, Portland, the Midwest prairies and grain farmers, etc. It is geographical space occupied foremost by people. Though federal institutions like Congress and the White House are said, and claim, to represent it, that representation is too often a fiction promoted to give the state more power than it deserves, including power over the country, that is, over the general population. Except for the Pentagon's own employees, few Americans feel that the Pentagon represents them or is their institution.

What these distinctions have to do with state terrorism is that the virtually separated character of state from country suggests and provides a significant space for the State to conduct itself in pernicious activities that violate a variety of laws. Those violations range from the Geneva Conventions and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the United States Army Field Manual and the Constitution. Some of these legal transgressions include the Extraordinary Rendition actions that began under President Clinton and continued and enlarged under President Bush, the black cells which secretly house Muslim detainees of "interest" almost 200 of whom have died during detention, the brutal treatment of Americans like Robert Walker Lindh and Bradley Manning and the recent revelations about the utterly savage torture being imposed on Iraqi Sunnis by Iraqi security forces trained for that purpose by American counterinsurgency officers like Colonel James Steel. Though the preceding comprise merely a selected list of illegal, criminal activities conducted by our government, what should concern Americans, besides the sheer immoral horror of this "on-the-dark-side" conduct by the American state, is what it could bode for American citizenry itself (a point I'll explore later in this essay).

The dark center of state terrorism is torture. It is used to punish non-conforming, rebellious or critical individuals or groups and/or to demonstrate their torture as a warning to others who would oppose the state or, indirectly but crucially, the "interests" of commercial or social elites. Torture of course is also employed to extract "intelligence." As such, it has played a huge role in the proxy wars of the "Cold-War" era (Vietnam, Central America, etc.) and in the so-called "War on Terror" in dealing with non-state enemies like al-Qaeda or the Taliban. Lacking statehood, these insurgent or guerilla entities were claimed by the Bush Administration to reside outside of international codes of prisoner treatment, and thus vulnerable to a state's readiness to violently extract from them information about the enemy. However, although international codes such as the Geneva Conventions actually protect even stateless combatants, Washington under the Bush II Administration has twisted legal argumentation to assert that stateless combatants are beyond legal protection against state torture.

State torture is designed to terrify and thus intimidate and repress as well as punish. It is a way of spectacularly dramatizing absolute power and the extreme consequences of challenging that power. State terrorism as torture might "work" in extracting information but, as pointed out convincingly by Alfred McCoy (*The Question of Torture*), American Army Interrogator Tony Lagouranis (*Fear Up Harsh*) and others, what is pulled or shocked or half-drowned out of a victim is often unreliable, and, as a consequence, ends up doing more damage than good for even the realpolitik of a punitive state. As for the tortured individual, he or she might break under torture but if and when they get free, they will surely feel unremitting hatred towards the United States--state and country. And even if they don't, due to being virtually destroyed by torture as sentient, coherent human beings, their family, relatives or others won't ever forget the extreme and unwarranted violence imposed by the United States on one of their own.

Part II

The use of torture directly by the United States has profound (and international) implications due to the country's traditional fame as a citadel of freedom and humane values. If such an exemplar imposes torture on its captives of war, then the use of torture becomes all the more acceptable to states all too ready to opportunistically use Washington's practice of torture. But aside from the serious danger of that influence resides a crucial consideration: when does a state--any state-- determine that dissent, protest, criticism

are to be regarded as treason? Such a development can--and does-- occur in societies in which the state claims itself and the country grounded constitutionally in freedom of expression and public demonstration.

This real possibility of traditionally democratic societies coming to regard citizen dissent as treason or at least a legal offense makes such recent laws as the Military Commissions Act of 2006 and the National Defense Authorization Act (2013) disturbing and even pernicious. The MCA excuses major crimes committed in the past (by, say, the Bush Jr. administration) in a manner that also excuses state crimes committed in the future, thus protecting state officials from being charged with any war crimes, crimes against humanity or even genocide that they may commit as state officials. As if to further undercut the power and rights of civil society, the NDAA gives the state (particularly the president) the right to detain any American indefinitely and without due process. And if the American state can go that far in endangering individual freedom (and it certainly is very far), it is, at this tipping point in the individual's constitutional rights, where past practices such as rendition and torture (native or abroad) become very possible. As it is, we now have arguably illegal presidential targeted killings of both Americans and foreigners which propels the country further down a darkening road.

This tendency towards increasing restriction of an individual's liberty by the state would explain another, related aspect (and practice) of state terrorism abroad-- "disappearing" dissidents and critics of the state, and, on the grisly other hand, leaving parts of the "disappeared" in prominent public places--someone's head in a public square, a mutilated body hanging off a bridge. Such manifestations are as forceful and extreme a technique of state terror and, thus, control as one can imagine, for it it embodies one's worst nightmare become true, become flesh in the ghastly form and image of one's loved ones or friends demonically brutalized.

Though such treatment has resulted in a deep desire for vengeance or underground resistance by family or others, such state terrorism has also induced terrified silence and submission. Except for the horrific American tradition of lynching and race riots, such extreme political terrorism is yet to occur in our country. Nevertheless, it should hardly be overlooked

that Washington policies have supported and even instigated state terrorism in other nations dependent on America's favor and support. A few examples--among many--include the brutal Contras warfare against Nicaragua's Sandinista government, the Kermit Roosevelt-CIA overthrow of the Mossadegh democracy in Iran and the instigation of the overthrow of the Sukarno democracy and the consequent massive slaughter of Indonesians brought about through Washington's urgent encouragement in the form of cash, lists of "enemies" to murder, arms and sophisticated communications paraphernalia. And, as mentioned above, we now, thanks to Wikileaks, know of the counterinsurgency practices of Iraqi against Iraqi conducted by our military under experienced torture-instructors like Steel.

Could such state terrorism be turned inward, the threat of electric shock conveyed through a clip attached to an ear lobe and finger or inserted inside the gums or genitals of Americans become a reality--as they have been realities carried out in many Latin-American nations by graduates of our "School of the Americas"? Indeed, such terrorism already has occurred in our country. There is, for example, the torture practiced by Chicago Police's Chief Jon Burge and staff for around 20 years (beginning in 1971) who employed suffocation by plastic bag, mock execution threats and electric shock to the genitals to force false confessions out of male and female African-American criminal suspects for around twenty years beginning in 1971. Chicago was hardly an exception; the term "third degree" didn't come out of nowhere nor apply only to Chicago.

(continued next issue)

Tomorrow's Hope Undoes Goats

by Jean O'Hara

Discuss happiness with anyone, it goes
And comes like life which is then definite.
Tears do not wash what reality is close
Only that which is a lie - is final finite.
There is nothing that is a million's worth
Except the thing that puts man in his earth.
What's so tough about nothing if they don't
Want your money? See how they say, "We don't."
Is that a bird sitting on the pole there?
O, that's an old bore sitting in his chair.
Crest of a robin red breasted, no doubt,
O yea, that was it. See his loud clout:
The open question is where was the mooch met?
It's simply this feathered friend, it's definite.