



# Humanist Society of New Mexico



November 2012

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

## Quote of the Month

There is, in fact, no teaching about learning. One requires the other.

Paulo Freire

## 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](http://www.MeetUp.com)

## Santa Fe Humanists Saturday, November 3, 10:30am

### What is Your Favorite Story?

A round-the-table discussion of how poetry, fiction and film  
have influenced our lives.

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

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

## Friendly Philosophers

Monday, November 5th- General Discussion

Monday, November 19th

*The Eight Threats to Democracy*

Fred March

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

## Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

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**Saturday, November 10th, 10:00am**

### HSNM Membership Meeting

First Unitarian Church (Social Hall)  
3701 Carlisle NE, Albuquerque  
Refreshments: Carolyn Kaye, Janet Johnson,  
Barbara White  
Open to the public. Come learn what we do.

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**Saturday, November 17th**

### Topical Discussion – Open to the Public

Non-Religious Spirituality

Erna Fergusson Library, 3700 San Mateo Blvd. NE

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**Saturday, December 1st, 10:00am**

### November/December Speaker Meeting

Open to the Public

*Sailing the Rising Tide of Reason*  
Fred Edwords

UNM Law School, 1117 Stanford NE, Rm 2401,  
Albuquerque

*Refreshments: Zelda Gatuskin, Carolyn Kaye,  
Shirley Little*

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

## **President's Message for November 2012**

by Zelda Leah Gatuskin

At this year's AHA conference, I had the pleasure of meeting Katherine Stewart, one of the featured speakers. Recently she sent me a copy of her book, *The Good News Club*. I read it with alarm. It is a well researched and engagingly written account of a strategic, determined effort to insert one particular religious view into public schools, and it specifically targets the lower grades. The well funded Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) has a sort of soul-saving franchise known as The Good News Club, which local churches are urged to sponsor. The package comes with training, branding and a portfolio of legal strategies for allowing activities on public property under free speech rights that had once been forbidden on church-state separation grounds.

It boils down to this: If a church club or Bible study group can use school property when school is not in session in the same way secular clubs may; and if impressionable children happen to construe a religious "class" to bear the same weight of authority as the lessons taught during school hours; and if the children then repeat something they learned from the church group during their school classes, to their peers... well, they are only exercising their right to free speech and that should be (and has been judged to be) permissible!

Are you turning purple yet? There is so much wrong here, I'll touch on only two aspects that trouble me - and they are not the obvious constitutional issues.

My first concern has to do with the well-meaning, devout adults who are drawn into these Good News Club start-ups that inevitably split their communities (hence the arsenal of legal strategies). They are not blind to the strife they cause or unfeeling toward those neighbors, teachers and school officials who oppose them (and do sometimes win). But, they have surrendered their personal authority and common sense to a Higher Power whose earthly intermediaries have a ready answer for every twinge of conscience. "God will take care of it," troubled trainees are told. And so they answer Katherine's hard questions with, "God will take care of it."

What a cop out! Of course people have the right to their religion and the right to believe and voice such assertions, but how sad for them personally to forgo the use of their (God-given?) capacities for empathy and reason. Clearly CEF's mind-molding is not limited to the children.

Which brings me to my second point. When are we going to liberate our children? I mean, in concept, when do we acknowledge that children deserve to be given the truth, as best we can figure it, so that they can grow up to grapple with reality - and maybe figure it out better than we have? The objective of childrearing (this is the humanist view) is to produce free, functional, creative, confident, caring, rational adults capable of surviving in a changing world and eager to explore their full potential. Children are not chips to be pre-programmed with fears, guilt, insecurity and a weird combination of self-loathing and entitled superiority. "Our children are our future," we say (as though that weren't obvious), but we raise them to be slaves to the past or, worse, slaves to some authoritarian agenda of the day.

One is tempted to want to counter The Good News Club mission with a project to organize kids into unions to help them protect their own interests, or a movement to win children their suffrage. (If they can have free speech, why not an actual say in their own lives?) But wouldn't it be enough to simply let kids be themselves, and find themselves, while providing them with a fact-based, fun-filled, thorough education?

### **HSNM Election Results**

Total votes cast: 25

President: Zelda Gatuskin 25

Vice President: Bill Kimbrough 25

Treasurer: Eric Pax 25

Secretary: Jerry Gilbert 25

Member-at-Large: Jay Lee Evans 17

Member-at-Large: Ashley Jordan 15

Member-at-Large: Richard Grady 10

Ballot question on dues increase: Yes 22 No 2

### **A Peaceful Transition**

The new HSNM Governing Board will take office for a two-year term on November 1, 2012. The newly elected GB members will meet shortly after that date, as which time the President will submit her additional GB appointments for approval. These will be Leland Franks for the Past President position (Leland served as HSNM President 1994-1996) and Richard Grady and Randy Wall for Member-at-Large positions. Your new GB of nine will pick up where the exiting GB leaves off. My

thanks to outgoing GB members Fred March, Roy Moody and Carolyn Glen Kaye; my thanks to returning GB members Jerry Gilbert, Randy Wall and Leland Franks (in his new capacity); and a big welcome to new GB members Bill, Eric, Ashley, Jay Lee and Richard. (Wow, what a team!) And many thanks to you, the membership, for your trust and support.

### **Dues are Due for Some of You**

Here is where we stand with dues and membership renewals: Not great. Close to half of our 137 members have not yet paid 2012-2013 dues for the membership year that started September 1, 2012 and goes through August 31, 2013. If you have not paid your dues for 2012-2013, please do so by the end of the year so you can renew at the old rate. The approved dues increase goes into effect January 1, 2013: Individual dues will go from \$15.00 to \$20.00 and couple's dues will go from \$20.00 to \$30.00. Our renewal/enrollment form is online here:

[www.humanistsocietyofnm.org/HSNM-form.pdf](http://www.humanistsocietyofnm.org/HSNM-form.pdf)

or contact [president@humanistsocietyofnm.org](mailto:president@humanistsocietyofnm.org).

*Note to prospective members: We welcome new enrollments throughout the year!*

### **Schedule and Venue Changes**

Please note that our second Saturday meeting is moving to the UU church in November and that our November and December speaker meetings (which would otherwise fall on holiday weekends) have been combined into one very special presentation by Fred Edwords on December 1 at the UNM Law School. Read on...

### **Speaker Topic and Bio**

Over the past few years, with the rise of the "New Atheism," interest in freethought and humanism is growing. And the more recent billboard and bus ad campaigns have stoked the fires of enthusiasm. So how can local humanist groups benefit from this secular "coming out?" And how can they capture this interest to help their memberships grow? "Sailing the Rising Tide of Reason," a lecture and PowerPoint presentation, provides an illustrated history of the exciting, stunningly successful advertising and media campaigns of various organizations in the community of reason.

**Fred Edwords**, a former executive director of the American Humanist Association, is now the national director of the United Coalition of Reason. Over his thirty-year career as a humanist leader he has lectured, debated, and taught on humanist philosophical issues and effective outreach techniques. He has appeared on

national and local television in the United States and Canada, has been interviewed on radio and for newspapers around the world, and has lectured in North America, Europe, and India.

### **Fred Edwards brings United Coalition of Reason to New Mexico**

**Training Session, 1:30 to 4:30 on December 1**

**Acoma A & B, Student Union Building, UNM Campus**

HSNM is proud to be a participating group in UnitedCoR's NM effort. There will be a 3-hour PR training session on the afternoon of December 1. Interested HSNM members are invited to attend. The seminar is free, but it is a serious training program and people should come prepared to learn and take notes. The purpose is to train us to deal with the media in connection with the public launch of a UnitedCoR billboard campaign. It's also to train us to run our own group media campaigns afterwards. Our HSNM liaison to UnitedCoR is Randy Wall. Please contact Randy if you plan to attend or would like more information.

### **Members – Get Involved**

Everyone is encouraged to attend our November 10 membership meeting. We will have reports on our committees and projects and discussion of our goals and plans for the future. One of the items on the agenda is to gather volunteers and ideas for a community service project we can do on November 24 in lieu of the speaker meeting (which is moving to Dec. 1).

### **The Humanist Minute**

by Jerry Gilbert, September 22, 2012

I grew up in a Jewish family. Although religion was rarely discussed, some typical stereotypes were passed down. One that stood out was “**goyesha kop.**” Literally this translated as “non-Jewish head.” What it really meant was that non-Jews had inferior intelligence or engaged in foolish thinking.

An example of the flip side of that by non-Jews was: “If you need someone to handle finances and help you get rich, find a Jew.”

Of course, ethnicity and religion are not the only bases for **stereotype competition**.

Education is another category. For example:

a. “They are so illiterate they think ‘grammar’ is the woman married to their grandfather.”

b. The flip side is: “Just because you re(a)d a lot of books doesn't mean you have common sense.”

Politics is another example. So,

a. If you are a **non-compassionate Conservative** you say “47% of the country doesn't take responsibility for themselves.”

b. If you are **one** of the 47%, you say “Those politicians **ONLY** take care of themselves.”

There are many other examples of people using **stereotypes** and supposed humor to try and raise their own self-esteem by putting others down—kind of like a hardcore see-saw game. As I am sure Trey will point out, many people love to debate, just to win an argument, and feel a boost to their ego, rather than to learn anything from the discussion.

But as the old expression goes “**You can't get there from here.**” Raising self-esteem at the expense of others, is a false goal that can only provide someone with a temporary “**feel good,**” without actually raising self-esteem, so they feel the need to keep doing it.

As Humanists, we understand the psychology of stereotyping, and how people try to think of themselves as superior to others. It is a practice that contributes to endless conflict, rather than the harmony among people that we cherish.

**So remember: Those people who think they are superior, only irritate those of us who really are!**

### **First Unitarian HUumanist Group, 7pm**

November 13th, 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

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### **Roswatheists**

Saturday, November 10th, 2:45pm

Saturday, November 24th, 2:45pm

Starbucks, 1309 N. Main Street, Roswell, NM