



THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

June 2015

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/>

<http://hsnm.wordpress.com>

president@humanistsocietyofnm.org

HSNM Meetings in Albuquerque

HSNM meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

Saturday, June 13th

HSNM Informal Meeting 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

For HSNM members and their guests. For invitation or questions,
please contact Ananda Parnell at 505-480-6377.

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE.

Refreshments provided.

Saturday, June 20th

HSNM Topical Discussion 10:00 AM - Noon

Interacting Positively with Ideologies

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, June 27th

HSNM Speaker Meeting 10:00 AM - Noon

The Albuquerque BioPark

By Barry Bitzer

Free and open to the public

Botts Hall, Special Collections Library

423 Central Ave. NE, Albuquerque

Meetings by HSNM Affiliates are held throughout the month.
For more information please visit their websites.

New Mexicans for Science and Reason (www.nmsr.org)

Freedom from Religion Albuquerque

(<http://www.meetup.com/FFRABQ/>)

Santa Fe Atheist Community

(<http://www.meetup.com/Santa-Fe-Atheist-Community>)

Roswatheists (<http://www.meetup.com/Roswatheists>)

President's Message

by Ananda Parnell

With Father's Day fast approaching and Mother's Day now a small blip on our rear view mirror as we hurdle toward the onslaught of all things summer, it fascinates me that there are many who don't know the origin of these holidays. Mother's Day was actually a day proclaimed by Julia Ward Howe—feminist, abolitionist, and suffragist who wrote the Battle Hymn for the Republic. She stated that if husbands and sons could be called away to war, then mothers and wives should be called together in a council for peace.

The origin of Father's Day is not so clear. Some say it began with a church service in West Virginia in 1908. Others say the first Father's Day ceremony was held in Vancouver, Washington. Regardless of when or where the first true Father's Day occurred, the strongest promoter of the holiday was a Mrs. Bruce John Dodd of Spokane, Washington. She thought of the idea for Father's Day while listening to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909. She wanted a special day to honor her father, William Smart,

The Humanist Society of New Mexico
A Nonprofit Corporation

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.

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Send Newsletter submissions to:
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net. The deadline for Newsletter submissions
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submissions may be sent to president@hu-
manistsocietyofnm.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 ev-
ery 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.

a Civil War veteran who was widowed when his wife
died while giving birth to their sixth child. Mr. Smart
was left to raise the six children by himself on a rural
farm in eastern Washington state.

In 1909, Mrs. Dodd approached her own minister
and others in Spokane about having a church service
dedicated to fathers on June 5, her father's birthday. That
date was too soon for her minister to prepare the service,
so he spoke a few weeks later on June 19th. From then on,
the state of Washington celebrated the third Sunday in
June as Father's Day. In early times, wearing flowers was
a traditional way of celebrating Father's Day. According
to the tradition, a red rose honors a father still living,
while a white flower honors a deceased dad.

As a humanist, I admit that I have never appreciated
any kind of service dedicated to either fathers or
mothers. In many ways such actions detract from the
initial purpose behind Mother's Day, and also trivialize
a great deal about the experiences faced by so many that
are far from idyllic when speaking about their families.
What about those of us who have been the victims of
parental abuse or gross misconduct? What about those
of us for whom Mother's Day and Father's Day painfully
reminds us that we were not blessed with loving or
caring parents? What about those of us whose parents
are incarcerated, or those of us who are parents and are
incarcerated, or under intensive psychiatric care?

What about this other side of the coin—the negative
connotations of the image of God as parent? In our
current social cultural structure, it's both sad and
uncommon for both young and adult children of abusive
parents to receive any guidance, sympathy, or even
awareness of their situation from so-called "religious
leaders," who talk as though every family is "whole" and
"normal," or else use the language of family diversity, but
leave out any mention of the pain or fear felt by children
of dysfunctional families.

The poet, Anne Sexton, once said that "It doesn't
matter who my father was; it matters who I remember he
was." There are many fathers who lead two lives -- the
one he shows to the rest of the world, and the one he
leads with his family.

Sylvia Plath was born in Boston. Her father, who taught
German at Boston University and who published a noted
study of bees, died in 1940 when Plath was just eight
years old. She attended Smith College, won a fellowship
to Cambridge University in England, and married the
English Poet Ted Hughes in 1956. She separated from
Hughes in October of 1962 and committed suicide
on February 11, 1963. The posthumous publication

of Ariel in 1965 cemented her reputation and made her a feminist icon and a martyr in the eyes of her fans.

Her poem, “Daddy,” from the Ariel collection, paints a vividly disturbing and dark portrait of her father. “Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through” captures the raw anger and angst of a child who has been victimized and traumatized by this particular man. Of course, the real ambiguity of the poem emerges when we become unsure of whether Plath is speaking of her father or of the other abusive man in her life, her husband.

Now, let me make something clear. I have no problem whatsoever with our society holding up examples of good, wholesome parenting for us to follow. What I do have a problem with is our society’s—and indeed the church’s disregard for the victims of child abuse.

Humanity must always, always err on the side of the poor, the less fortunate, the victims of abuse and other crimes, the downtrodden and the sick. Always! In this vein, Father’s Day needs to not only honor those fathers who did everything they could to be supportive and positive role models, but also recognize the need for action to support those families who did not—or do not—have positive guidance from either parent.

When President Coolidge established a national Father’s Day to “promote more intimate relations between fathers and their children and to impress upon fathers the full measure of their obligations,” I think he was closer to the spirit of what the day should be than its present willy-nilly one way party or festival which places no burden on fathers whatsoever than to be honored in some way by their children. How about if we turned things around and used this day for reflecting on how we might become better parents, and indeed, better stewards of humanity?

Next Speaker Meeting: Barry Bitzer from the New Mexico BioPark Society will present a presentation about the goings on at the New Mexico BioPark. His talk will include a BioPark History, the current situation, BioDiversity and conservation work, the education component, cultural resource for the Arts, economic development engine, and the planned trajectory going forward. Following will be a discussion period.

Barry Bitzer is the Development Director for the NM BioPark Society, a 501(c) 3 non-profit dedicated to the development of, procurement for and capital improvement of the ABQ BioPark (Zoo, Aquarium, Botanic Garden, Tingley Beach) and to providing a quality facility through the support of related

conservation, education and recreation programs.

Barry served as Chief of Staff for Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chávez. He has worked as senior aide to both the late Congressman Steve Schiff and U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, and served as Deputy Superintendent of New Mexico’s Regulation and Licensing Department as well as the Director for the state’s Child Support Enforcement Division and Deputy Secretary for the Human Services Department. He has also been the administrator of a specialty psychiatric facility and ran the Southwest’s largest Public Relations firm (then known as DW Turner) for 3 plus years.

In addition to a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of California, Barry continued his graduate studies at the American University in Washington, D.C.

ERA Task Force Spring 2015 Report and Calls to Action

by Sylvia Ramos, MD

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is as relevant now as it was when first written by Alice Paul 92 years ago and much work is going on nationally to have women’s rights (which are Human Rights) written into our US Constitution. Only a Constitutional amendment will guarantee women “Equal Justice under Law”.

Laws, Judicial Decisions and Executive Acts are temporary remedies to legislative attacks on women’s rights. However, no matter how well-intentioned, all these measures may be overturned, repealed, ignored and chipped away whenever a group of legislators decides women’s rights are politically expedient and expendable.

The ERA is introduced every year in Congress. Work is needed in every state to ratify it and have it inscribed in our Constitution. A new national organization, the ERA Coalition, has been joined in this effort by many other national organizations. Find out all about them, the ERA, the campaign, who’s in and who’s out at this site <http://www.eracoalition.org/>.

Representative Jackie Speier introduced <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hjres51> (H. J. Res. 51) on May 13 and Senator Ben Cardin introduced S. J. Res. 15 on May 7 <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/sjres15>. Both seek to remove the deadline for ratification so we can get 3 more states to ratify it. That will bring us to the 38 states needed for ERA to be added to the Constitution. This is the path we favor.

There are other resolutions that ask for the ERA to

be sent to all the states for ratification. That means that even states that ratified it previously would need to do it again (43 years later!). Sen Menendez introduced S.J.Res. 16 <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/sjres16> and Rep. Carolyn Maloney introduced H.J.Res. 52. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hjres52>.

Even though NM ratified the ERA in 1973, we need to continue working to ensure that ERA is ratified nationally. We need YOU to get this done!

Ongoing and Specific Activities to get ERA ratified:

1. Build awareness about the ERA among the general public and our elected officials.

~ Act NOW! ~ Sign the ERA Petition to our US Senators and Representatives at: http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/take-the-equal-rights.fb48?source=c.fb&r_by=13077225

a) Legislature event- We had a well-attended program at the NM State Capitol Rotunda on March 2nd to celebrate International Woman Day, highlight legislation addressing women's rights and need for the ERA. We were joined by several local professional and community organizations. Participants were: Deborah Blanche (Emcee, Abq-NOW), Martha Burk, Ph. D. (Political Psychologist, Women's Issues Expert), NM State Senator Jacob Candelaria, Carolyn Glen (HSNM, AAUW-Activist for Equal Pay), Pamela Herndon, J.D.(Executive Director, SWLC), Sylvia M. Ramos, M.D Abq-NOW) and Ghada Zribi – (UNM Student and women's rights activist)

b) Participate in and distribute literature at local events such as Earth Day and Bees and Seeds

c) Plan and Present local programs about women's rights and the ERA, especially on relevant dates such as Women's Equality Day

2. Get our elected officials in Congress to sign on as co-sponsors of the resolutions to do away with the deadline for ratification- S.J.Res. 15 and H.J.Res. 51.

~ Act Now! ~ Contact your Congress members.

Here is how: Keep this info for future reference:

***Find Congress members, upcoming bills and other info: <https://www.govtrack.us/>

***For more information on all our Congress members.

<http://www.contactingthecongress.org/cgi-bin/>

newseek.cgi?site=ctc2011&state=nm

-As of 5/16/15 Senator Udall, Representative Steve Pearce and Representative Ben Ray Lujan have not signed on to any ERA bill. Urge them (or their Legislative Director) to support women by signing on as co-sponsors.

*Sen. Tom Udall-- 202-224-6621 Legis. Director: Andrew.Wallace@mail.senate.gov

**Rep. Ben Ray Lujan – 202 225-6190 Legis. Director: Monica.Sanchez@mail.senate.gov

***Rep. Steve Pearce – 202-225-2356 Legis. Director: Andrew.Aragon.mail.senate.gov

- Senator Martin Heinrich and Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham have signed on. Thank them.

*Sen. Martin Heinrich – 202-224-5521 ----Legis. Dir.: Jude.McCartin@mail.sen.gov

**Rep Michelle Lujan Grisham—202-225-6316---Legis .Dir. Alma.Acosta@mail.house.gov

3. Help our allies- Sign petitions, pass on their messages and calls for action, tweets, etc.

~ Act Now! ~ Sign up (no obligation to do anything else) on the Equal Means Equal Website to help build interest, momentum and support for the FILM to get shown across the country at:

http://equalmeansequal.com/messaging/EME1/EME_Join_EME.html

4. Build coalitions and networks with other organizations that move the cause of women's rights forward. Tell them about us and Let us know who they are.

5. Spread the word about our work on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, etc.

6. Help us do this! The ERA Task Force is an ad hoc group made up of people who volunteer at different times to help with specific events. We welcome your ideas and help.

Contact: Sylvia Ramos, ERA Task Force Chair for Albuquerque NOW (ERA Liaison for Feminist Caucus-Humanist Society of NM and Santa Fe-NOW) phone: 505 401-0601 email: smrcmd@hotmail.com Twitter: @smrcmd

Food For Thought Quote

“It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets.”

Voltaire