



THE
HUMANIST SOCIETY
OF NEW MEXICO
NEWSLETTER

July 2017

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, July 8th

HSNM Informal Meeting 10am – 12pm

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, July 15th

HSNM Topical Discussion 10:00AM – Noon

How Media Shapes Perception

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, July 22nd

HSNM Speaker Meeting 10am – 12noon

New Dangers to Reproductive Health Care

Marshall Martinez

Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

Meetings by HSNM Affiliates are held throughout the month.

For more information please visit their websites.

Atheist Skeptical Kingdom of Albuquerque (www.meetup.com/ASK-Atheist-Skeptical-Kingdom-of-Albuquerque)

Freedom From Religion, Albuquerque (www.meetup.com/FFRABQ)

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

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

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

President's Message

by Randall Wall

It's getting harder and harder to watch the news. Everytime I do, I hear something so discouraging. The media is being talked about again! Is it the truth? Is it accurate? Fair and balanced? Distorted? How much of what we hear reported is slanted or sensationalized? Or is it fake, as some put it? Well, that's something we'll be talking about at our topical meeting this month and we'd like to hear your views on it. Come and participate!

Back by popular demand, Marshall Martinez from Planned Parenthood joins us to bring us up to date on how the current political climate has and will affect reproductive health for women AND men in New Mexico. Marshall spoke to us last year and was one of our favorite speakers!

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.

Officer/Committees

Randall Wall: President

Tara McCaughin: Vice President/Speaker Programs

Cynthianne Yabut: Secretary

Richard Grady: Treasurer

Cheryl Gatner: Member-at-Large

Jeanette Smith: Member-at-Large

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 submission to: Editor, Randall Wall, Paragon2012@comcast.net. The deadline for Newsletter submission is the third Friday of each month. Website submission may be send 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 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 humanist responsible for its own affairs.

Marshall is a pleasure to listen to so make sure not to miss this one.

Speaker's Bio

Marshall Martinez is the Public Affairs Manager in New Mexico, for Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains. A Native New Mexican, Marshall has spent a majority of his life as an organizer, even when he didn't know what that was. Working in HIV/AIDS Prevention and Awareness as a teenager in Alamogordo New Mexico, Marshall learned at a young age how important comprehensive and responsible sexuality education is, and in this work was able to draw the connection beyond sexual health to emotional and mental health for teenagers. After moving to Albuquerque in 2001 he began a formal career in political and community organizing, working for organizations like the League of Conservation Voters, AFSCME Public Employees Labor Union, and serving multiple years on the board of Equality New Mexico. Marshall's passions have always been strong on the issues of Reproductive Healthcare Access, being raised by a strong mother and having two younger sisters he sees the sacredness of Women's Bodies and destinies and works hard to ensure their choices about them are respected.

Thank You Letter to the Family of Barbara White

I am writing on behalf of myself and the Humanist Society of New

Mexico to express our deep gratitude for Barbara White's bequeathal of \$5,000.00, and your diligence in conveying the gift to our organization. Barbara was ever a loyal and vital member of HSNM, and her gifts extended far beyond financial generosity. She pitched in in every way, and long after she might have excused herself by virtue of her age. She remained well versed in current events and outspoken in her opinions, delighting and challenging her humanist friends, always contributing to our discussions and activities. It is hard to imagine HSNM without Barbara. We will honor her memory through the conscientious application of these funds. And we will just plain miss her.

A History of the Humanist Society of New Mexico

by Laverne Rison

(continued from last issue)

The Failed Humanist Society Of New Mexico

That first Humanist Society of New Mexico began after UNM Professor of Philosophy Archie Bahm was named Humanist Pioneer of the Year by the AHA. He declined to travel to New York to accept the award as his wife was ill and he didn't wish to leave her even for a little while.

They said, "Fine. We'll honor you on your own turf." Another problem. There was no local AHA chapter in which to present the award. The AHA got in touch with long-time activist Cora Cooper, who was asked to organize the event. In so doing she brought together the rudiments of a brand new Humanist Society of New Mexico. Cora was aided by Beth Fennel, who was active in both the AHA and The Humanists of Arizona. Beth and Cora became fast friends; and later, when Beth became the second wife of internationally famed Humanist, Corliss Lamont, Cora became his friend as well.

But this is about Archie Bahm and the budding Humanist Society of New Mexico. Archie later became a member of our newer group; and because he's one of the important Humanists with whom we've been associated. Let me tell you a bit about him.

From 1948 to 1973, Archie taught in the Department of Philosophy at the University of New Mexico. In 1949, he organized a Humanist Society of Albuquerque which lasted four or five years till it merged with the Unitarian Church. Archie published twenty-two books on Philosophy and/or Religion. His main academic interest was in comparative philosophy, particularly concerning similarities and differences among the religions of the West and the ancient religions of India and China. In pursuing that interest, Archie made many trips to India and China, where he spoke and submitted papers at many of the leading Universities in those countries.

So it happened that, because the AHA wished to honor one of its outstanding philosophers in 1977, a like-minded group of New Mexicans came together, and in April of 1978, a charter was issued making them an affiliate of AHA.

There was from the beginning a pull between the atheists in the group, whose main order of business is always to keep religion from stepping on people's toes and interfering with their civil rights; and the Humanists, whose concerns cover a lot more territory than that. That pull finally caused the atheists to break away and form a separate group, leaving the Humanists with too few active members to keep their organization alive. The Humanists gave up and turned their treasury over to AHA in 1981.

An interesting sidelight came with one of their last meetings as a combined organization when their speaker was the infamous Madilyn Murray O'Hare. A small group of born again Christians took the front seats; and one of them stood up in the middle of her presentation and threw a pie in her face.

An arrest was made and there was a lot of anger that those good people should be arrested for doing what any God-fearing Christian has a duty to do: Stand up and confront the devil's advocate.

I was new to Albuquerque at the time and not yet acquainted with Cora or any other Humanists; but the controversy struck me as something I could shed some light on. That's when I wrote my first

letter to the editor of the Albuquerque Journal.

"If a Catholic Bishop came to town," I argued, "And somebody threw a pie in his face, would there then be an arrest?"

Four years later, it was another letter to the editor, "Dr. Reagan, the Charming Quack," which made Sid Teller think I was in my heart a Humanist, even though I didn't know it at the time.

Feeling Our Way; Just Getting Started

We were a group of strangers; each not sure what the others' priorities might be; so we decided to begin with a loose organization with a board of directors and nobody with the sole authority to do much of anything. The board of five would be elected from a slate of seven. I agreed to have my name put in nomination; but when I discovered on the day of the vote that five would be chosen from a slate of six; I changed my mind. "This amounts to rejecting the one rather than electing the five," I argued. "I therefore withdraw my name from the list and move that we accept the remaining nominees by acclamation."

Those elected to the board were Sidney Teller, Eric Schluter, and Feerovz Jafari, John Geohegan, and Lois Kimbrell. That was July 26, 1986. That governing board met later to elect John Geohegan their chairman and Lois Kimbrell (as she recalls because she was the only woman present) secretary. Eric Schluter would serve as treasurer and Feerovz Jafari as newsletter editor. Sidney Teller had no definite duties but being the prime mover of the entire operation, he assumed he'd go on as before and see that speakers were lined up, meetings were held, and refreshments were served.

Cora Cooper, who was our AHA advocate, had this to say, "Sid is not permitted to take on all the chores himself, which he will try to do. The old chapter tried to use a program chairman, but learned that each member of the committee was eager to help with programs; so we did it by the whole committee."

True to her concerns, Sid did try to arrange for a program (getting me involved in the act) without

first consulting the entire committee; and so began our first major disagreement.

Sid asked me to line up a speaker for the next meeting. I contacted Gordon McClure, who agreed to be our speaker. Then John Geohegan called Gordon telling him I had no authority to arrange for speakers without going ahead from the committee. Gordon called me, saying the deal was off. I called Sid and said, "If you ask me to do a job, you either let me do it, or find somebody else." The committee did want Gordon for a speaker. We'd heard him before and he always had something interesting for us to think about. They just didn't want Sid telling me to set up the talk.

Gordon McClure is a retired physicist from Sandia Laboratories, whose main job was designing nuclear weapons. He worked there for many years without thinking the project through to its final phase. If one of those weapons should be used, a city would be destroyed, most of its people either maimed for life or killed in an instant. The workers at Sandia each have a little piece of the puzzle to think about. Not only that, they're not allowed to talk with the other employees or anybody else about what they're working on. Then one day, Gordon's grown son confronted him with a question, "What do we need with 1000 nuclear bombs?"

Gordon gave it some thought, took an early retirement; and began writing letters to Congressmen, the President, Newspapers; and he began giving speeches (free of charge) to anybody who would hear him out. We were a small group, but an ideal audience. We were intelligent, eager to listen, and much in agreement with his newfound distrust of the atom bomb. I tell you this about Gordon because after coming back for talk after talk, he decided to join our group; and a few years later to serve as president.