



THE

HUMANIST SOCIETY

OF NEW MEXICO

NEWSLETTER

August 2017

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/> <http://hsnm.wordpress.com> [president@humanistsocietyofnm.org](mailto:president@humanistsocietyofnm.org)

### HSNM Meetings in Albuquerque

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

#### Saturday, August 12th

HSNM Informal Meeting 10am – 12pm  
Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

#### Saturday, August 19th

HSNM Topical Discussion 10:00AM – Noon  
Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE  
*Privacy: Are You Being Watched?*

#### Saturday, August 26th

HSNM Speaker Meeting 10am – Noon  
Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE  
*The 2017 American Humanist Conference Highlights*  
*Presented by Helen Fuller and Carolyn Jo Glen*

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

Freedom From Religion, Albuquerque  
([www.meetup.com/FFRABQ](http://www.meetup.com/FFRABQ))

New Mexicans for Science and Reason ([www.nmsr.org](http://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

A few months back, if you remember, I wrote about Ken Ham and his Ark Encounter creationist museum. Some interesting developments have taken place since that article and I thought you might like to hear about them. First, some background. The Ark Encounter project was made possible by some very generous, and for some, very controversial financial tax breaks and incentives, reduced priced land, road upgrades and more. All of this was done in the hopes that the Ark Encounter would bring tourism to the area and bolster the failing economy the area has been suffering through. Unfortunately, this has not been realized. Nearby Williamstown, KY has seen very little increased economic activity due to the Ark.

Fast forward to recently. Williamstown has decided to impose a 50-cent tax on each ticket sold at the Ark Encounter and other local attractions. The Ark Encounter charges \$40 for each person, so 50 cents isn't a whole lot. The purpose of the tax is to finance emergency services for the area. Ark Encounter is owned by a for-profit corporation so it would seem they would

## **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

A subscription to the 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 requests to: Humanist Society of New Mexico, P.O. Box 27293, Albuquerque, NM 87125-7293.

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.

Send Newsletter submissions to: Editor, Randall Wall, [Paragon2012@comcast.net](mailto:Paragon2012@comcast.net). Send Website submissions to [president@humanistsocietyofnm.org](mailto:president@humanistsocietyofnm.org). The deadline for Newsletter submissions is the third Friday of each month.

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.

be subject to the tax. But Ken Ham and friends have taken it like a rainy day that would last for far more than forty days and nights. Instead of accepting the tax, they have chosen to sell the Ark Encounter to their non-profit Crosswater Canyon for \$10.

But that hasn't been the last word. An attorney with the Kentucky Arts, Heritage and Tourism Cabinet sent a letter which informed Mr. Ham and company that the state is freezing the \$18 million in sales tax rebates the ark would have received. All of this to save them from paying around \$700,000 a year in taxes. We'll see how this story develops, but for now it's best to render unto Caesar!

### **Next Speaker Meeting**

This year's AHA Conference was held in Charleston, South Carolina and Helen and Carolyn were there! Both of these ladies have attended several AHA conferences, so you can believe they're pros by now. A lot of really great speakers were on hand at this years convention – Greta Christina, Rob Boston, Carl Coon, Fred Edwards, David Niose, and Sincere Kirabo – just to name a few! The awardees this year were:

Adam Savage – Kentucky arts Humanist of the Year

Susie Bright – Feminist Humanist Award

Martin Castro – Religious Liberty Award

Staceyann Chin – LGBTQ Humanist Award

Sylvia Earle – Isaac Asimov Science Award

Dot Scott – Keynote Speaker

Herb Silverman – Lifetime Achievement Award

There was a lot going on at the conference. Come and hear Helen and Carolyn tell us all about it!

## **Speaker Bios**

*Helen Fuller*

My history of being non-religious started after college when Jack and I got married. We moved to Los Alamos after Jack finished graduate school and taught for a couple of years. We went back to church for a few years when our girls were little, but then we discovered skiing and that was the end of church going for us. We retired from Los Alamos and moved to Albuquerque in 1988. After Jack had a few discussions with Jerry Wesner, Jerry invited us to join HSNM. At this time the informal meeting was taking place at the home of Sid and Marcia Stone whom we knew from Los Alamos days. We joined HSNM in 2001 and have been members ever since. We have gone to a number of American Humanist Association Conventions over the years. Usually the Albuquerque chapter has several attendees. This was one of the smallest conferences that I have attended. There were interesting talks. Carolyn Kaye and I enjoyed it, and wished others had attended.

*Carolyn Kaye*

Raised as a Jehovah's Witness in an exceptionally well-designed trailer by nice blue-collar parents, I was not permitted to attend college as "the wisdom of the world is as foolishness with God." Nevertheless, I attended a college class in my late 20's on the scientific method, which began the long road that radically changed my personal philosophy to one of Humanism. Two husbands, three kids and several careers, including one as a DC-3 stewardess, one in Systems Training Development, one in Compensation Management for the airlines, and later a consultancy with Xerox, I finally earned a Master's degree in Industrial Psychology and Management Science at the tender age of 50. A life interest in social justice and political psychology, particularly in the areas of racism, feminism, and anti-Semitism, directed me to work as a lobbyist, lecturer, and rabble-rouser for the American Association of University Women on Capitol Hill in D.C. and later in the Virginia and New Mexico state legislatures.

In later years, I joined the Humanist Society of New Mexico, where I have served as Treasurer, two terms as Secretary, occasionally as NM Registered Lobbyist, and Co-Chair of the American Humanist Society's annual convention in Albuquerque with my excellent friend Leland Franks. That was the most fun I've ever had in any volunteer position! It has been fairly rumored from national that it was the best convention ever. Probably so. That is due to our then-president, Jerry Wesner, holding a two-hour open member discussion, followed by our unanimous vote to do it. Now that's management science at its best. Everyone bought in and everyone in the branch worked to pull it off. Later years have calmed a bit as my son and I have owned and managed several apartment properties and I have indulged my passions for modern architecture, reading, and a bit of travel. Favorite thing to do? Attending AHA conventions.

## **New Meeting Room for Informal Meeting**

Due to problems with acoustics, the Informal Meetings will now be held in the New Mexicana Room at the Special Collections Library instead of the Center for the Book Room.

## **HSNM Board Meeting in August**

I'd like to call for a board meeting following the speaker meeting on Saturday, August 26th. All HSNM members are invited to attend.

## **A History of the Humanist Society of New Mexico** by *Laverne Rison*

*(continued from July issue)*

Back to our problems with the board. I told Sid that we needed to write up some by-laws in which people were elected to definite offices with definite duties. The board could not dispute the fact that any organization needs by-laws; so we formed a committee for that purpose. I was on the committee, along with Sid, Lois, Cora, and John. John preferred to stay with the old looser arrangement, but after that fiasco with Gordon McClure the others agreed with me. We would elect four officers: a president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. The president would then appoint three chairmen of standing committees, each with full voting privileges of those elected.

We have amended those by-laws a couple of times; but the governing board arrangement has worked so well that we've kept it ever since. Under the new rules, the vice-president would be in charge of programs. We did limit terms to one year so we'd be able to get rid of anybody we didn't like.

As it happened, our first elected officers served just half a year. For some reason we decided that October was a better month for electing officers than March. The real reason was probably that those wary of the new by-laws wanted a chance to bail out early in case of disaster.

The first officers elected by the full membership were: President: Kent Langsteiner, Vice-president: Lois Kimbrell; Treasurer: Peter Manchester; Secretary: Laverne Rison. As we became an established organization, people at the university took notice of us. (We were meeting once a month at the school of law.) We had no difficulty finding prominent people for speakers, although we paid them nothing more than a cookie and a cup of coffee. We were a small group, but a speaker likes nothing more than facing a group of intelligent listeners who understand what he has to say and is in sympathy with his position.

By November third, 1986, our numbers had doubled! (That's from eight to sixteen.) By the beginning of 1987, it had doubled again.

These are some of the speakers we heard that year:

Kang Zeng from China joined me in presenting a program on "The Morality of Population Control."

Joan Gibbon, of UNM Law and Medicine, and ethicist for St. Joseph's Health Care, along with Gaynor Wild of the UNM Department of Biochemistry, presented a program on medical ethics. (Dr. Wild would become a member of our society the following month.)

Ken Couch, who teaches at Del Norte High School, spoke on moral education in the schools.

Kendrick Frazier, editor of *Skeptical Enquirer*, spoke about science and pseudo-science.

Fred Strum, Professor and Dean of Arts and Sciences at UNM, spoke about Indian Pueblo Philosophy.

UNM Professor Paul Jones, who was imprisoned by the Gestapo in 1944 and the Stalinists in 1948, spoke on the status of democracy in the world.

Sally Alice Thompson, (a charter member of our group) and Liane Adams, who participated in The Great Peace March from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., told of their adventure.

Jane Slaughter, UNM Professor in Women's History and Modern Italian History, spoke on "Feminism Faces Post-Feminism: Ethics, Issues, and Tactics."

I could go on listing our speakers for another 13 years; but you get the idea.

In our growing membership, we picked up Sidney and Marcia Stone. Sidney is an astrophysicist, recently retired from Los Alamos. These two offered the use of their home for our once-a-month informal meetings, thus relieving Sidney and Ethel Teller of one of their many duties. We also picked up Henry Weihofen, retired professor of law at UNM (and later to become president of our Humanist Society of New Mexico). Henry introduced us to Leland Franks, a practicing attorney at law who would serve as our president when we needed him most.

### **Member's Corner**

A space for members to present, in 100 words or less, whatever they like- brag about a new grandchild- recommend a book- rant about a favorite cause or bete noire- tell a joke- suggest activities or projects for HSNM, or ask for help... getting a ride, finding a handyman or a dentist- whatever!

Send to [severinlattier@gmail.com](mailto:severinlattier@gmail.com) or leave on voice mail at 410-2998.

We'll put in what fits in the space available each month.

*By Cynthia*