



# THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO NEWSLETTER

September 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, September 9th

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

### Saturday, September 16th

HSNM Topical Discussion 10:00AM – Noon  
Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE

*Emotion or Reason?*

### Saturday, September 23rd

HSNM Speaker Meeting 10am – Noon  
Special Collections Library 423 Central Ave. NE  
*What is Classical Music, and Why Do I Love It?*

*Presented by Richard Grady*

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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

We've all read the news and seen the pictures of the devastation to the City of Houston and other parts of Texas and Louisiana affected by Hurricane Harvey. The toll is unimaginable and it will take years for recovery.

Our hearts go out to those affected by the storm. One way humanists have chosen to support others in the area is by sending a contribution to *Foundation Beyond Belief*. This is the suggested way the AHA would like its members to help. Please go to [FBBgive.org](http://FBBgive.org) and donate.

## Speaker's Bio

Richard is a former music professor and trumpet player who has loved classical music since he was a teenager. He was a professor at Arkansas Tech University, where he taught trumpet and music history. He has played in many community symphony orchestras, most notably the Tulsa Philharmonic.

He has 3.9 college degrees, one in accounting and 2.9 in music. The 0.9 is an almost doctor of musical arts degree from the University of North Texas, which he didn't finish because his life

## **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). Youth/student membership (24 years or under) is \$5.00 per year.

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

To join or renew membership on line, go to the website at <http://humanistic/join.html>.

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.

took a turn in a different direction, which led to a second career counting beans for an oil company. His favorite composers, in no particular order, are Beethoven, Mozart and Stravinsky.

### **Minutes-HSNM Board Meeting of August 27, 2017**

by Cynthianne Yabut

Financial Report:

General Fund: \$8,346.95

Scholarship fund: \$2,495.00

In order to simplify record keeping, the board voted to change the HSNM membership year from September-August to January-December. Anyone joining after June will be considered to be paid through the following year. Renewals for the following year will be sent out in October.

The enrollment/renewal form is being revised to reflect the changes.

Several members have proposed more social events, such as game nights or movie nights. Any member who wants to host an event is invited to submit them to Randy, Cynthianne, or David ([gstelle@gmail.com](mailto:gstelle@gmail.com)). These will be put on Meetup as they are scheduled. [Note: The HSNM Holiday "Humanist Light" party is scheduled for December 10, from 1 to 3 PM at the Unitarian Church on 3701 Carlisle NE.]

Scholarship – Cynthianne to work on getting this started.

Managing the website: David Stelle has volunteered to manage the HSNM website. Randy will work with Zelda to get David set up.

Ananda has resigned from the Board. We need to appoint at least one director to the board in order to meet the state requirements for our corporation. The duties of a director are to attend board meetings four times a year and vote on issues brought before the board. (Nothing resembling work at all.)

## **A History of the Humanist Society of New Mexico**

by Laverne Rison

*(continued from August issue)*

Under Lois Kimbrell's presidency, in 1991, we decided to present an award to an individual in the community who had done something the past year which we Humanists consider a benefit to society, (much as the AHA presents its Humanist of the Year Award to people within or outside its organization). That year we chose a high school student, Josh Finkenberg, for challenging the Boys State requirement that he take an oath that he is not an Atheist; or be barred from participating in that event. Josh and his parents filed suit against The American Legion and the Albuquerque School System, and won.

In January, 1992, Cora Cooper hosted a fiftieth anniversary party for Sidney and Ethel Teller. That was one of the best attended parties in our history; and we made it a gala event. I tell you this because I want you to know we loved Sidney and Ethel and could never understand how they came to distrust us later.

In August of 1992, we elected Henry Weihofen as our president. Henry was a long time professor at the UNM School of Law, for awhile the dean there, and probably the most distinguished of our many presidents. He was known for several books on the law; and in 1973, he was named outstanding educator in America. He was in office about six weeks when he landed in the hospital with a heart attack. When I visited him there, he offered to resign. "We can keep things going," I said, "Till you're well enough to take over again. And my philosophy is, you do things when you can." He smiled and said, "That's my philosophy, too." So we muddled through till Henry was again able to take charge. He finished his year as our leader, then he died, exactly when his term of office ended, October, 1993. It was as if he could not leave us without first finishing the job he had agreed to do.

Things seemed to be moving along swimmingly, but we were soon to meet the serpent in our little Garden of Eden.

## *Disowned By Our Founding Father*

Sidney Teller met Sally Alice and Don Thompson through the Peace Center. In the beginning he was quite proud of them. On July 5, 1986, he wrote a letter to *Free Mind*.

"One of our members, new to Humanism, is on the Great Peace March. Written from Iowa, after walking all the way from Los Angeles, she hopes to be in Washington in November. She is Sally Thompson, who also went to Nicaragua to help rebuild a health clinic destroyed by Reagan's Contras."

That march was in favor of a thawing of the cold war between this nation and those of the Communist bloc. On the way to Washington, people not in sympathy with the walkers would yell, "Why not try walking through Russia?" They decided to do just that. Somehow they secured permission from both nations, and took their walk to Russia. Sally returned home a heroine (at least to us). We held a meeting where she told us all about her big adventure.

So long as the discussion centered on a thawing of relations between this nation and the Communists, Sidney and the Thompsons saw things eye to eye. But once their attention shifted from communists versus capitalists to Muslims versus Jews, the peace talks came to a grinding halt. Sidney sided with Israel and the Thompsons chose to sympathize with the Palestinians. The disagreement became so heated that Sidney gave us a choice. We could oust the Thompsons from our group; or he would go.

Most of us sided with Sidney, so far as the argument went, but we could not, in good conscience, oust people from our Humanist Society because they didn't see things our way. The Thompsons were charter members. They had always behaved in an orderly and non-threatening manner when they came to meetings, which wasn't often. We tried to talk Sidney into changing his mind; but he felt he was in a war. His people had let him down by aiding and abetting the enemy. We were anti-Semitic; and he was having nothing more to do with us.

In October of 1994, nine years after he founded The Humanist Society of New Mexico, Sidney Teller wrote three letters to the editor of our Humanist Letter. In one he explained why he was leaving us: "The presence of supporters in our Humanist Society of a Moslem Theocratic State." He was speaking of Sally and Don Thompson of course. In another, he quotes somebody as saying, "I attend every group that I can to promote an Arafat State as a means of achieving peace in the Near East."

Losing Sidney was a blow which came close to destroying our fledgling organization. A number of other members left us as well; some for their own reasons, some because they felt that when Sidney left he took with him the heart and soul of our organization. But we few hardy souls took the cards which were dealt us, and played the hands as best we could.

The following month, November of 1994, we elected officers, but it wasn't easy. I was appointed nominating committee chairman by our president: Gordon McClure. I contacted just about everybody in our group and could find nobody willing to run for any of the offices. On the day of decision, I stood before the assembled members and gave them the low-down. Nobody would run for anything; and a group which can't find four people to fill its offices has no business calling itself an organization. I volunteered to stand as vice-president, providing three good citizens would volunteer to serve with me. Otherwise, we could close our books and remit what remained in our treasury to the American Humanist Association as had happened with the short-lived group whose charter we revived. There was a silence, then Jean Atkins raised her hand. She volunteered for secretary. Cathy Burt volunteered to act as treasurer. Then nothing. I shrugged my shoulders. Without a president, we couldn't continue. After too long a pause, Leland Franks (I told you he came through when we needed him most) said, "I don't want to see this group go under. I'll serve."

One of our first acts, as newly elected officers, was to amend our by-laws so that future officers would serve a term of two years rather than one. As it happened our next president served a full four years, but that's another story I'll tell later.

Among the more interesting things we did under Leland's presidency was this: We met Kaz Dziarka, an immigrant from Poland who introduced a class in The American Humanist Tradition at the Technical Vocational Institute of Albuquerque. Kaz came to us as a speaker in February of 1996. He later joined our group. We awarded Kaz our Human Achievement Award for New Mexico in 1997. He would host workshops at the National Conference that year. He was also editor of the *American Rationalist*.

Kaz was dismissed from his teaching position after local religious zealots kicked up a fuss. A lawsuit was filed by Kas and others who suffered wrongful termination. He was afterward reinstated as a TVI professor (but not of Humanism, popular as the course may have been to the students at TVI). Meanwhile, he had a family to support. He applied for and was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship at Tronso, Norway.

*To be continued*

### **Member's Corner**

#### ***HSNM Director Needed***

The duties of a director are to attend board meetings four times a year and vote on issues brought before the board. (Nothing resembling work at all.)

If you would like to serve, or nominate someone to serve on the board for 2017/18 please talk to Cynthianne at one of the meetings or email [Humanistworks@gmail.com](mailto:Humanistworks@gmail.com).

#### ***Rental Recommendations Requested***

I'd like to move to a more central location in ABQ when my current lease is up next summer- would appreciate recommendations about complexes and areas to check out. Email: [severinlattier@gmail.com](mailto:severinlattier@gmail.com), or phone 505-410-2998. Thanks!

#### ***This space available***

Want to suggest a social event- book club, discussion group- or ask for help? Let me know!

*-Cynthianne*