



Humanist Society of New Mexico



June 2010

<http://humanistsocietyofnm.org/> fmarch@thinkwellassociates.com

Quote of the Month

Religion often gets credit for curing rascals when old age is the real medicine.

Austin O'Malley

A man's work is nothing but this slow trek to rediscover, through the detours of art, those two or three great and simple images in whose presence his heart first opened.

Albert Camus

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, June 12th

Informal Meeting

General Discussion

Visitors please contact Fred March at 505-323-6784
for details or questions.

Refreshments: Leland Franks

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Saturday, June 19th

Topical Discussion

Varieties of Humanism

Highland Senior Center, 131 Monroe NE, SW
Corner of Monroe and Copper

Saturday, June 26th

Speaker Meeting

*AHA Conference Highlight: Speakers,
Awards, AHA News*

By HSNM Attendees

Humanist Minute: ?

Refreshments: Janet Johnson

UNM Law School, Room 2406, 1117 Stanford NE

HSNM Family Co-op

Alternative Children's Sunday School

Call 505-292-4375 for meeting times

Santa Fe Humanists

Saturday, June 5th, 10:30am

Interfaith and Extrafaith

Southside Branch of the Santa Fe Public Library,
6599 Jaguar Drive

For more information contact Bill Weihofen
(505) 988-1343

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
(HSNM)**

A Membership 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

Frederic March: President

Bill Little: Vice President/Programs

Jerry Wesner: Past President

John Waldrop: Treasurer

Secretary: Open

Ron Herman: Director of Classes

Randall Wall: Newsletter Editor

Janet Johnson: Book Club

Ted Cloak: Community Liaison

Phil Smith: Webmaster

Membership Director: Open

Social Coordinator: Open

Publicity Director: Open

Family Co-op: Open

Subscription to HSNM Newsletter, published monthly, accompanies AHA/HSNM membership or can be obtained by nonmembers for \$15 annually. Send subscription and membership request to: Humanist Society of New Mexico, P.O. Box 13675, Albuquerque, NM 87192. Send Newsletter submissions to: Editor, Randall Wall at Email paragon2012@comcast.net

The deadline for Newsletter submissions is the third Saturday of each month.

ADULT EDUCATION COURSE: “INTRODUCING HUMANISM”

By Fred March

Some months ago Harry Willson had agreed to teach a short course on humanism at the UNM Division of Continuing Education’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. As his illness progressed he notified the Osher program that he was not likely to meet that commitment and suggested that I be contacted to help find a replacement. Before I accepted I talked it over with Harry. There was no way that I could be a fully satisfactory replacement for him – not because we differed about humanism, but because of our contrasting personal styles. Yet he asked me to explain my approach and then strongly encouraged me to do it.

Dr. Charles Eberle, an HSNM member and long time friend of Harry’s told me that the students are likely to be intellectually curious, challenging, and also potential HSNM members. The course is described in the Osher Catalogue as follows:

“Introducing Humanism” will distinguish between humanism as a philosophy with origins in ancient Greece, and as a modern worldwide movement that advocates for an ethical society that relies on human nature and not on God for its moral grounding.

With this in mind I prepared the course in five parts as follows.

Part I: What is Humanism?

Part II: Humanism and Democracy

Part III: Evolution of the Human Social Order

Part IV: A Very Brief History Humanist Thought

Part V: Are Science & Reason Always the Answer?

Each part begins with my presentation and ends with a set of questions for discussion. I use lots of visuals and some humor. I asked Ron Herman and Bob Bhaerman (AHA Kochhar Humanist Education Center Director) to review and comment – both provided favorable responses. Bhaerman wrote:

“If the vision of the Kochhar Humanist Education Center is, as we have stated, “educating the public about how humanism enhances our personal lives, enriches our nation’s diverse cultures, and strengthens democracy – without promoting or denying any particular religious belief”, you have developed a marvelous instruction tool for this end.”

I would like to invite our members to attend the course for two reasons. One is to socialize with the non-members who may want to learn more about the HSNM. The other is to provide me with honest feedback. In order to attend please contact the Osher Program at 277-0077 to register. There is a \$20 fee, which entitles you to Osher membership and to attend my course. The course is scheduled on two Tuesdays, June 8 & 15 from 1-3 PM. Please ask for the location and directions when you call. .

Update on Amador Publishers

By Zelda Gatuskin

Thank you HSNM! With support from the Humanist Society of New Mexico, Amador Publishers is running an ad in the current issue of *The Humanist* (pg. 34); and Zelda Gatuskin will be delivering her talk "Art & Religion & Science & Reason" at the AHA annual conference in San Jose this June.

Save the Date: Saturday afternoon October 9, 2010 - Amador Publishers Book Bash and Tribute to Harry Willson. This will be a free event for the general public featuring literary and musical performances and remembrances of Harry. Details to be announced. Community participation welcome. Contact Zelda if you have an idea.

Amador Publishers, LLC, our local humanist press founded by Harry Willson and Adela Amador, continues under the leadership of Zelda Gatuskin. Since its inception, Amador has published more than 30 titles

from over 15 authors, all touching in one way or another on humanist themes and principles important to Harry and Adela - peace, equality, respect for all cultures and preservation of the Biosphere. Zelda's goal is to bring the press into the digital age while staying true to Harry and Adela's humanist ideals and original mission - to provide a venue for authors unable or unwilling to fold themselves into the narrow slots assigned by the conglomerate of national presses and distributors.

Amador Publishers will continue to publish humanist titles. To support that effort, Zelda has opened an imprint, Worldwind Books, providing pay-to-publish services for a wider range of material. Details at www.worldwindbooks.com

All of the Amador titles remain available and can be purchased from Zelda or the website: www.amadorbooks.com. Amador Publishers' beautiful Gift Certificates can also be purchased on-line. Your purchases support the press while extending the reach of Amador's titles.

Missing Harry? Zelda continues to publish an essay by Harry on the website every month. And his entire collection of essays remains on-line.

How to contact Zelda

e-mail: zelda@amadorbooks.com

snail mail: Zelda Gatuskin, Amador Publishers, LLC, 611 Delamar NW, Albuquerque, NM, 87107

phone: 505-344-6102

website: www.amadorbooks.com

Not on-line? For print-outs of items that appear on the website (essays, order forms and info, submissions instructions, etc.) please send a note and SASE to Zelda at the address above.

What Was That Again?

Submitted by Lois Kimbrell

“Several Christians have told me personally that Christianity does not reach the wisdom of 'blind faith' but always associates faith with evidence. But then when I ask them to give me an example of such evidence, they say things like, 'Well, there was the empty tomb.'”

From *The New Atheism: Taking a Stand for Science and Reason* by Victor J. Stenger

Excerpts from Zelda Gatuskin's Lecture on The Arts and Sciences

Not so long ago Science was under attack by religious fundamentalists and losing ground fast. Scientists, educators and reasonable people of all stripes came together to defend the place of science, and the standards for science teaching, in public education. The modern attack on the arts, which had endured and survived the wrath of religionists for centuries, has been more prolonged and subtle. It has not been a separation of church and state issue in recent times, and so it has slipped by under the radar. We don't perceive the corporatization of culture as a movement or a philosophy. It just happens, right? It is the result of economic forces. And when arts education is stripped from the schools, that's just an economic necessity - because art is a luxury, right?

The language of visual communication is everywhere, so all-pervasive in both work and play that we hardly notice. We are responding to it whether we understand its dynamics or not. In this environment Arts education is more than a diversion, or a dispensable cultural romp. The teaching of visual and media literacy is as essential to the development of critical thinking skills and the improvement of social discourse as any science class. In fact, it is science. Art and science.

I would like to see the humanists rally around art in the same way they have rallied around science. We should include a thorough study of art - fine, applied, theory and history - in the humanist curriculum, and lobby for its return to the public schools. We have never needed it more. The study of art provides the ammunition rational people need to identify, challenge and counter the unhelpful myths and manipulations of mass media, corporate culture and fundamentalists of all stripes. Visual literacy, and a general understanding of the perceptual/cognitive processes involved in visual design, music, film and language, are survival skills in our technological times.

Artists have long used an intuitive understanding of perceptual and cognitive functions to manipulate audience response - that's what we do. Over the centuries we've formalized our knowledge into systems which we call the rules of design. But traditionally our intent has been to express ourselves, not to dominate others. We let the audience take away what they will. In contemporary design and mass communications, the object is for everyone to get the same message. And we

do, whether we are conscious of it or not, or aware of who's message it is, or what their true motives are. We could be more aware, if we were schooled in what to look for and how to critically evaluate what we find. And if we were more skilled in crafting our own messages, we'd do better at countering the propaganda.



Friendly Philosophers

Monday, June 7th

Open Forum

Bring a Your Own Topic for General Discussion

Monday, June 21st

War and Peace as Seen Through the Eyes of a Humanist Poet

Laverne Rison

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

The Atheists and Freethinkers of New Mexico

<http://atheists.meetup.com/75>

Sunday, June 6th, 9am

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE

Tuesday, June 22nd

Social Meeting at 6:30pm at Mimi's Cafe, 4316 The 25 Way, Near Jefferson and I-25

New Mexicans for Science and Reason

Wednesday, June 9th, 7pm

Science Toys, Business Meeting

UNM Law Building

1117 Stanford NE, Room 2402