



Humanist Society of New Mexico



September 2010

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

Quote of the Month

It is better to suffer wrong than to do it, and happier to be sometimes cheated than not to trust.

Samuel Johnson

One who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; one who does not ask a question remains a fool forever.

Chinese Proverb

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, September 11th

Informal Meeting

General Discussion

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

Refreshments: Janet Johnson

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Saturday, September 18th

Topical Discussion

HSNM Proposed Bylaws

Erna Fergusson Library, 3700 San Mateo Blvd. NE

Saturday, September 25th

Speaker Meeting

Would You Mind Repeating That? - A Cognitive Evolutionary Approach to Cultural Transmission.

By Dr. Jerry Gilbert

Humanist Minute: ?

Refreshments: None

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, September 4th, 10:30am

Acting Against Our Best Interests

Community Room, La Farge Branch of the Santa Fe Public Library, 1730 Llano St.

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

Friendly Philosopher Director : Attila Csanyi

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.

President's Election Message

By Frederic March

After two terms or four years as HSNM President I will not be a candidate for another term. However I will serve as the Ex Officio Board member. I am actively supporting a revised election process that your Board has approved to encourage more members to volunteer for Board service. We will continue to have four members voted in by the membership every two years. Previously, only members who attended the election meeting would get to vote. This year you will be able to vote by e-mail, snail mail, or by attending the election meeting. Our AHA charter requires that only AHA members may actually vote. While nominating instructions are included with this issue of the Newsletter, certain details about how members will actually cast their ballots are still pending. These will be detailed in the October newsletter, in time for voting.

As in the past your President appointed a nominating committee that solicited members to run for the elected offices: President, VP, Treasurer & Secretary. Bill Little chairs the committee that includes Attila Csanyi, Leland Franks and Shirley Little. That process has not changed. However, beginning this year we are reminding members that the nominating process for these offices has always been open to all members to self-nominate, or to nominate others for elected offices – and we have provided a specific procedure to better enable it. Accordingly there is the possibility of competition for one or more offices. This procedure has a nominations deadline described in instructions elsewhere in this Newsletter.

We will also continue the tradition of the President appointing to the Board members who take leadership initiatives, or who wish to fill several defined and currently vacant positions that enable the HSNM to function and to grow. We currently lack Board representation for Publicity, Membership, Social Events and Family Coop. Anyone interested in these or other non elective Board positions is most welcome to contact me.

The following members have offered to constitute an Election Committee to manage the balloting process under my chairmanship: Jerry Gilbert, Jerry Wesner and Leland Franks. I am very grateful for their support.

This year your Board has also spent considerable effort to review and revise the HSNM By-Laws to better serve our changing needs. A committee consisting of Ron Herman, Ted Cloak and Jerry Gilbert submitted a draft of the revised By-Laws and the Board accepted them as input for consideration and action. Specifically, the outgoing Board plans to discuss the proposed By-Laws at its meeting on August 28. Current Board candidates will continue to participate in this discussion. Accordingly their views will be heard and considered, but they will not vote.

Depending on the discussion there will be two possible outcomes: (1) The Board may resolve to seek membership approval per our current by-laws; or (2) The Board may resolve an alternative path forward to deal with outstanding issues, with the possibility that the new Board will bring final closure to the process.

I will work with the new Board to expand our membership, to educate the New Mexico community to humanism, and to help us become a more vital organization. I want to especially thank Ron Herman for his invaluable proactive contributions to our efforts. The Board depends on you the members to help make HSNM membership a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. The necessity of some formal rules and elections should in no way change the fact that above all we are community of friends and not an organizational bureaucracy.

Nominations for Board Offices

Board action:

At the August 14th Board meeting, The HSNM Governing Board (the Board) approved a motion that, for this election, the September newsletter should contain: a list of the names of people recommended for office by the Nominating Committee; a solicitation of additional candidates for office (including self-nominations); that nominations should be closed on September 17th; and ballots should be placed in the October newsletter for membership voting.

Instructions for nominations by the membership:

1. Be sure that your nominee agrees to serve in the office if elected.

2. Verify that s/he is a member of AHA.

3. Have your nominee compose a biographical statement (no more than 300 words) which demonstrates his/her suitability and desire for the office.

4. Write your own brief statement about your nominee, including his/her name, which office is being sought, and his/her suitability and desire for the office.

5. Forward this information to the Board by regular mail, e-mail, or by fax so that it is received no later than September 17, 2010.

U.S. mail to the Board: HSNM, P.O. Box 13675, Albuquerque, NM 87192.

E-mail to www.humanistsocietyofnm.org.

Fax to 505-323-6785.

Bios for nominees by the Nominating Committee:

1. President: Zelda Gatuskin

I was born and grew up in Wilmington, Delaware, and attended Emerson College in Boston, where I received a B.S. degree in Visual Communications. I have lived in Albuquerque since 1983. My husband and I own and operate Studio Z, multi-media arts. In addition to my work as a freelance artist, I have held jobs in retail sales and office administration, and worked as a volunteer for a variety of community organizations and progressive causes. In 1991 my first book was published by Amador Publishers. I learned every aspect of the publishing business, and published several more books of my own. Harry Willson, Adela Amador, and I became partners and we declared Amador Publishers, LLC a humanist press. I officially joined the AHA and HSNM last spring. A talk I gave on the arts and humanism to our local group resulted in an invitation to speak at the AHA 2010 conference in San Jose. Since attending the conference in June, I have also joined the Feminist Caucus of the AHA.

I would like to see HSNM engage in activities that heighten our visibility and impact within the wider community, encourage member participation, expand membership, and open the door to discussion of the humanist philosophy. For example, a multi-generational project in which younger members (or prospective members) would be paired with senior HSNM members to record their life stories and examine how they came to be humanists. We need to document and honor the lives of our elder members. Combining their life experience with the energy and creativity of our younger set would increase the cohesion and continuity of HSNM, while generating a variety of media products that can be offered to community groups and educators, locally and nationally. I look forward to sharing more ideas for new HSNM initiatives and to facilitating HSNM projects and

activities already underway.

2. Vice President: Roy Moody

Roy Ellis Moody, M.Ed., has been facilitating groups of people in creating passion for their work and igniting natural teamwork, motivation, and performance for the past 27 years. Roy grew up on a small family farm in Alabama, and it was there that he learned the valuable skills of cooperation, teamwork and producing results, while keeping a sense of humor. He participated in high school and college athletics and went on to coach championship basketball teams. It was in his capacity as a winning coach and later as an association executive that he fine-tuned his abilities to lead, develop, and coach organizations. During his career Roy has traveled coast-to-coast presenting keynote speeches and seminars for more than 350,000 people. He has given presentations to state and national conventions, major corporations, and hundreds of professional associations. He has a humorous way of presenting important information that leaves people passionate and ready to take action. His credentials include a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Alabama's Troy State University, a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from the University of West Florida, and post-graduate work at The University of New Mexico.

Roy first joined the American Humanist Association in 1973, and his mission is to clarify and integrate the ideas and principles of Humanism in life and work and to communicate them to the general public. Roy is an active community leader. He served on a committee for the New Mexico Society of Association Executives, was Chairperson of the Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, President of the Kiwanis Club of Albuquerque, President of the New Mexico chapter of the National Speakers Association, and a founding member and President of the Day Breakers Toastmasters club.

3. Treasurer: Leland Franks

Born May 11, 1928, in Huntington, WV, raised by my mother, Nora, and her parents until 1940. Then my mother and I moved to Logan, WV, where I attended Junior and Senior High Schools. Graduated WV University in 1946 with a BS in Accounting. Graduated from Univ. of Kentucky Law School in 1953. Was admitted to practice law in Ky, WV. & later, NM. Drafted into the Army spending two years at the base law office of old Sandia Base in Albuquerque. On release from the Army, began working in the tax department of local accounting firm for three years, and became a CPA. In 1958 I opened a law office in Albuquerque and have practiced law until partially

retiring in 2001 by moving my office to my home, and I continue to be partially retired to date. Married to Judith Vernam for 28 years, have a son and two daughters, and 5 grandkids from prior marriage. Joined HSNM in late '80's, became vice president, then president in early '90's. Have been active, but not in an official capacity since that time. Based on the talents of my fellow nominees, I'm looking forward to a productive two years.

4. Secretary: Jerrold (Jerry) Gilbert

I had been an active clinical psychologist for about 30 years until I retired almost 10 years ago. I have been a strong believer in a professional's responsibility to keep the public educated and informed, sharing information that people could use to enrich their lives. That is why I participated in many organizations and projects that made education their primary mission.

I received my B.A. from Northeastern University in Boston, MA, my M.A. from the University of Mississippi, and my Ph.D. at the University of Alabama. I served as psychologist at Alabama State prisons for eight years and conducted a private practice for nineteen years. I offered individual, marriage, and family counseling at a family guidance center for 23 years. Some of my special projects included writing television public service announcements for a Mental Health Association and for a Victims of Crime and Leniency advocacy group. I was coordinator for the Alzheimer's Disease Support Group and trainer for the Latchkey Warmline and telephone crisis volunteers. I was also a leader for parenting, divorce adjustment, self-esteem, and assertiveness learning groups, and a leader of a support group for families of Gulf War military.

For most of my adult life I have acted on Humanist principles without being aware of the label. My experience with political activism includes membership in the National Organization for Women, which included marches and protests. I am a staunch advocate for human rights. This viewpoint is also evidenced in my work for the Alabama Prison Project on behalf of inmate mothers and for Victims of Crime and Leniency on behalf of survivors of crimes and the families of victims who did not survive. These two programs helped me to see both sides of a tragic reality.

I am married and have four grown children and one granddaughter.

Amador Books Book Bash!!

Mark Your Calendars: Amador Publishers Book Bash and Tribute to Harry Willson

When: Saturday, October 9, 2010, 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Where: First Unitarian Church at Comanche and Carlisle

What: This will be a free event for the general public featuring literary and musical performances and remembrances of Harry.

How to participate: Join us! Bring your friends! Spread the word!

HSNM Outreach: We will have a table for distributing information about humanism and our organizations. Please contact Zelda if you would like to help staff this table.

Authors: There will be some tables for books sales. If you would like to have your humanist titles for sale at the event, and/or if you would like a 5-10 minute slot on the program to talk about your work, contact Zelda.

Friends of Harry: There will be an informal "open mic" period for brief remembrances of Harry. If you have a special tribute or presentation which should be slotted into the agenda, contact Zelda.

Contact: Zelda Gatuskin, Amador Publishers, LLC, 505-344-6102, zelda@amadorbooks.com

Updates will be posted at www.amadorbooks.com.

FFR-ABQ Meetings

By Ron Herman

A local chapter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF, Inc.) has formed here, inspired by the ten billboards that an anonymous donor placed around Albuquerque last December. We call ourselves FFR-ABQ, and although we are not yet officially chartered, FFRF is supporting our formation. What is FFRF? It was founded in 1978 as a national organization of freethinkers (atheists, agnostics, deists), and it works to keep state and church separate and to educate the public about the views of non-theists. (Sounds a lot like HSNM, doesn't it?) Our local goal is to encourage freethinkers to gradually "come out of the closet," speaking truth to power as non-believers opposing religious influences.

We meet on the third Saturday of each month at 10:00 AM in Room 2531 of the UNM Law School. You can find that by entering through either of the east doors and going left to the new south wing. You can join at the meetings or through www.Meetup.com.

On our agenda for September 18 will be the "God Pod" at the Metro Detention Center, repeating billboards around town, maybe for Constitution Day (Sept 17), monitoring City and County Commission meetings, the

religious graphics on the cover of the NM Bar Association newsletter, the Safe Surrender program in a church in Las Cruces, the Hobby Lobby founders ads in the Albuquerque Journal (we might counter that with a copy-cat from our perspective, maybe on Constitution Day). Come to the meeting to see what activities YOU might like to participate in.

Still more excerpts from Zelda Gatuskin's Lecture "Art & Religion & Science & Reason"

(American Humanist Association Annual Conference, June 5, 2010, San Jose, CA)

Part 3 *The Current Fantasy*

Here you have religious truth - dogma. It may come across to nonbelievers, and even to some practitioners, as outrageous flight of fantasy, but once it has been institutionalized, it is the prescribed fantasy, not to be diverged from or disputed. If it doesn't suit, then go start your own sect. It has always seemed obvious to me that formalized religion - combining theater, music, arts and crafts, poetry, storytelling and dance - is a necessary (though some might argue, misdirected) response to our human capacity and desire for artistic expression. What never fails to astonish me is how we can make stuff up, and then believe it!

...True, I do it to myself all the time, and it is the stock and trade of the artist, what we call the suspension of disbelief - but here in the context of Art & Religion, there is a compulsory element that can negate the liberating and therapeutic value of creative activity. Over here in Religion we don't just make stuff up and trick ourselves into believing it for a time, we may base decisions on it and impose it on others. Whether a religious myth began as a playful flight of fantasy or an insightful metaphor about human nature, once it has hardened into dogma, it blocks the way of anything new, and becomes a dead end for the true artistic temperament. This is why I say that artists are humanists by nature, because we must constantly re-observe and re-interpret everything. We are not content with other people's answers.

That will sometimes put us at odds with science. Even though we appreciate the scientific method and apply it in our work, we are no more interested in a scientific authority than we are in a religious one. Science has its myths and fictions too. But the imaginative side of science is self-critical, even eager to find and examine new evidence, re-examine old evidence, and revise "the

current fantasy " accordingly. Truth, in science, is based on evidence and is, as such, revisable, and is often revised.

In science, something is true or not true, until proven otherwise. In religion, something is true whether you like it or not. Art is true and real of the moment. It does not demand your total allegiance. The fate of the world or the fate of my soul does not rest on the work of art.

Art can feel extraordinarily dangerous for this very reason: It doesn't have any apparent unified agenda. It smacks of anarchy. It is a threat to capitalism because it is not concerned with money. It is a threat to religion because it is not concerned with god. It is a threat to science because it is not concerned with reason. It is out there on the frontier of human consciousness looking for a way to break through to the language we haven't invented yet - the language that will make us one, or make us free, or make us sane.

Yet, definitions of humanism seem loathe to give art its due. Instead we have Science and Reason. As you can tell, this phrase doesn't win me over. It's not that I want to be unreasonable, or to be around unreasonable people, or to dispose of reason as a value. But I object to the implication that science has the corner on reason. I also object to conflating reason with morality. For example, our chapter, the HSNM, publishes a short definition of humanism in each monthly newsletter which begins with this statement: "Humanism is an ethical philosophy that derives its principles from science and reason rather than from theology." (To be concluded next issue)

Internet Users: Did You Know?

By Ron Herman

... that we have an Internet "blog" for members and friends of HSNM in the form of a Yahoo! Group? If you join, you can send e-mail to many members of HSNM all at once. Just go to www.groups.yahoo.com and type Humanist Society of New Mexico (or HumSocNewMex) in the search field. Then click on the blue field to "join this group." Create a user ID and password, and you are now "in the loop" to receive or send news about HSNM members, activities, and Humanist issues. It can be used for items of general interest to humanists and occasionally for HSNM announcements and other business, pending their publication in the newsletter. (Be careful about replying, though, because replies go to everyone in the group.) We currently have about 80 members in this group and would certainly like to have you involved.

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, September 6th

Open Forum

Bring a Your Own Topic for General Discussion

Monday, September 20th

Democracy by Lottery

Paul Deal

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, September 5th, 9am

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE

Tuesday, September 21st

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, September 8th, 7pm

Free Will and Merit

James Thiel

UNM Law Building

1117 Stanford NE, Room 2402

Freedom From Religion

Saturday, September 18th, 2pm

Discussion of Projects

UNM Law School, Room 2406

Albuquerque Philosophy Meetup Group

Wednesday, September 8th, 7pm

Wednesday, September 22nd, 7pm

Varied Topics

For location see: www.meetup.com/philosophy-229