



Humanist Society of New Mexico



August 2007

www.humanists.net/nm/ fmarch@thinkwellassociates.com

Successful Pilot Class

The Teacher Committee held its second Pilot Class on the History of Science and Religion on July 15 with eight Nones (friends and family) and seven HSNM members attending in a local College of Santa Fe classroom. Phil Smith presented short reviews of two historical periods - Early humans and the Classical Greek and Romans - and by all accounts did an excellent job. The class was very successful in terms of reviewing Phil's capabilities, his lesson plans, and other preparations, as well as introducing a few more people to our program, which were the limited goals of this phase. Key to his success was his own enthusiasm for the events and people of history. He did a simple science experiment to help convey one lesson point, and he was open to questions from the class. The abbreviated nature of the Pilot Class did allow much time for discussions.

The Pilot Class represents real progress by our Subcommittee, providing lesson plans for 4 hours of class time. We will continue to work on the plans for the full course and will initiate new fund raising for that effort. Our focus for the course content will be on why each selected event and personality in history is important to our understanding of the current conflicts between religion and Humanism.

Unfortunately, Phil will be leaving Albuquerque in August to take a new job in Boulder, Colorado. He may continue to work with us long distance, but the selection of a teacher for the full course may be in doubt, if communications and travel for him become too difficult and expensive.

The next School Subcommittee will be at noon on Sunday, July 29, to plan our next phase, so call me if you would like to participate. We thank everyone for their support to date.

Ron Herman
Director of Classes

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, August 11, 2007

Informal Meeting

General Discussion

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School, NE

Saturday, August 18, 2007

Topical Discussion

To be Determined

Note: No Food or Drink

Meet at Special Collections Library, 423 Central Ave. NE
(NW corner Edith and Central - parking on the street.)

Saturday, August 25, 2007

Weapons Labs and the Future of New Mexico

Greg Mello

UNM Law School, Room 2406, 1117 Stanford NE

HSNM Book Club

The Book Club will be on hiatus for the summer and will resume in September.

Santa Fe Humanists

Saturday, August 4, 10:00am

(note different time)

Current Consciousness

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

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.

Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, Founder of Humanistic Judaism, Killed in Car Crash

Press Release from the Society for Humanistic Judaism

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

President: Frederic March

Vice President/Programs: Harry Willson

Treasurer: Ed Root

Secretary: John Waldrop

Membership: Frederic March

Public Information: Phil Smith

Director of Classes: Ron Herman

Social Activities:xxxxxxxxxx

Newsletter Editor: Randall Wall

Website: Phil Smith

Subscription to HSNM Newsletter, published monthly, accompanies AHA/HSNM membership or can be obtained by nonmembers for \$12 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.

Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, founder of Humanistic Judaism, was killed in a car crash on July 21, 2007, while vacationing in Morocco. He was 79. Wine and Richard McMains were returning from dinner Saturday evening in Essaouira when their taxi was hit by another driver. Rabbi Wine and the taxi driver were killed instantly. Mr. McMains survived the collision and was hospitalized in stable condition.

Details regarding a memorial service will be forthcoming. Contact the Society for Humanistic Judaism, www.shj.org, or the Ira Kaufman Chapel, www.irakaufman.com, for updates. Former *Detroit Free Press* religion editor Harry Cook will deliver a tribute lecture for the Center for New Thinking at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, July 26, 2007, at the Birmingham Unitarian Church. Admission will be waived.

As the founder of Humanistic Judaism, Rabbi Wine laid out the intellectual foundations of this bold Jewish alternative, creating many of its celebrations, rituals, and educational materials. Sherwin Wine was born in Detroit on January 25, 1928. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan (A.B., A.M.) and Hebrew Union College. In 1963, he founded the Birmingham Temple in suburban Detroit.

Dubbed the "Rebel Rabbi," Sherwin Wine created a sensation back in 1965 when *Time* magazine wrote about the young maverick **atheist** rabbi and his fledgling congregation. In 1969 Rabbi Wine established the Society for Humanistic Judaism, the worldwide voice for Humanistic Judaism. The Movement was denounced by Jewish leaders as a fleeting, 1960s wild-child craze. In the next two decades, however, Rabbi Wine helped to found several other related organizations including the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews and the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism in North America—the rabbinic seminary and academic arm of the Movement, for which he was currently serving as provost and dean in North America. Rabbi Wine was instrumental in organizing the Leadership Conference of Secular and Humanistic Jews, the Center for New Thinking, the North American Committee for Humanism, the Humanist Institute, and the Conference of Liberal Religion

In 2003, Rabbi Wine was named Humanist of the Year by the American Humanist Association, joining such notables as Stephen Jay Gould, Betty Friedan, Carl Sagan, Richard Dawkins, Barbara Ehrenreich, and Margaret Sanger, among others.

Rabbi Wine is the author of *Humanistic Judaism, Judaism Beyond God, Celebration and Staying Sane in a Crazy World*. He was a principal contributor to *Judaism in a Secular Age: An Anthology of Secular Humanistic Jewish Thought*. In 2003 the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism published the biographical tribute, *A Life of Courage*, in which Rabbi Wine contributed a reflective essay on choosing a life of dignity, a life of courage.

“Rabbi Wine was a visionary who created a Jewish home for so many of us who would have been lost to Judaism. He taught us that human dignity is the highest moral value. We will live our lives reflecting that value to honor his memory,” said Rabbi Miriam S. Jerris, Community Development Director, Society for Humanistic Judaism and President of the Association of Humanistic Rabbis.

“As a tribute to Rabbi Wine and his memory, we will further commit ourselves to the values and philosophy of Humanistic Judaism. Rabbi Wine was a brilliant mentor, a dynamic guide, and a true friend to countless people around the world. The Movement is his legacy,” said M. Bonnie Cousens, Executive Director, Society for Humanistic Judaism.

“Rabbi Wine died doing what he loved—traveling. He left us at the height of his power. He deserved more time. We will remember him as an optimistic, maverick genius and a lover of life,” said Rabbi Tamara Kolton, Birmingham Temple.

“The loss of Sherwin Wine is a terrible blow to the Movement of Secular Humanistic Judaism and to American Judaism. Rabbi Wine always promised a natural immortality. He lives on in the lives he touched, the rabbis and leaders he trained, the communities he inspired, and the ideas and institutions he created. We who knew him and loved him will miss him terribly, and we are that much more grateful for what he gave us,” said Rabbi Adam Chalom, Associate Dean of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism and rabbi of Kol Hadash Humanistic Congregation, Highland Park, Illinois.

ABQ Man Drowns in Hawaii

Written by Bruce Daniels - ABQnewsSeeker
Monday, 23 July 2007

UNM history professor Timothy Moy, 44, died Sunday trying to help his 12-year-old son.

A Honolulu newspaper reported this morning that a 44-year-old Albuquerque man drowned Sunday in the surf at Kailua Beach while trying to help his 12-year-old son who was having difficulties in the water.

The Honolulu Advertiser later today identified the man as Timothy Moi, but the University of New Mexico history department confirmed that the drowning victim was Timothy Moy, an associate professor of the History of Science and Technology.

The identification in Hawaii was made this morning by the Honolulu Medical Examiner's Office, the Advertiser reported in its online edition.

His 12-year-old son remained in serious condition Sunday night at Castle Medical Center in Honolulu, where Moy was pronounced dead after rescuers pulled him to the beach and tried to revive him, the Advertiser reported.

According to the paper, the Visitor Aloha Society of Hawai'i was offering assistance to the family, who were in Honolulu visiting friends.

The incident occurred around 2:30 p.m. Sunday when the father went into the water to help his son and ended up struggling himself, the Advertiser reported.

Surf conditions were 2 to 4 feet with trade winds, said the Advertiser, which said there are no lifeguards on the stretch of beach where the drowning occurred, north of Kalama Beach State Park.

Moy, who received his bachelor's degree from Harvard in 1985 and his doctorate from the University of California at Berkeley in 1992, taught courses in the history of science in the modern world, of science and technology in the United States and of science and technology for national security during the Cold War, according to the UNM History Department's Web site.

He also was engaged in the study of emerging national security threats in the aftermath of the Cold War and in efforts to improve science education in New Mexico and in the country as a whole, according to the Web site.

Editor's Note: Professor Moy spoke to HSNM on March 24, 2007 on the topic “The Surprising Relationship between Science and Religion in the Age of Galileo” His intellect and passion will be sorely missed.

NEED A RIDE?

We would love to see you at HSNM events! Call any of the following, whoever seems closest, and she or he will arrange a ride for you.

- From far NE heights, Academy & San Mateo area: Jerry Wesner, 821-8614
- From NE, SE heights Tramway & Central area: Carolyn Glen Kaye 323-5288
- From SW, downtown: Harry Willson & Adela Amador: 877-4395

Letter to the Editor

“American Fascists”

A primary goal of fascist ideology is to destroy our capacity to think. The leaders want an orderly, regimented, obedient mass but fail to realize that when all criticism is squelched they are, themselves, trapped in their own self-validating delusions. Christopher Hedges in “American Fascists” makes that much clear. Unfortunately, some of his proposed antidotes are examples of muddled thought. He clings to his childhood “faith in the mystery, the unknown before us.” I would suggest that it is better to have faith that mystery, the unknown, is not an insurmountable barrier to human well-being.

Elsewhere (p.9) he says, “Faith presupposes that we cannot know.” Those who agree with that concept often reject “faith” altogether. I reject the idea that we cannot know. Where many of “the faithful” go wrong is in thinking that they know something when they don't. Bits of valuable knowledge are not easy to obtain. Neither the authority of revelation nor the intuitive appeal of an idea is enough to make it count as knowledge. Hedges' description of America's form of totalitarian Christianity has the ring of true knowledge to me because it is extensively documented, others are reporting similar observations and it is consistent with my understanding based on fifty years of first hand experience.

Dale L. Berry

Signs of Hope

This writer has become weary of his own awareness of the negative. There is a lot going on, near and far, to

cause a body to have negative thoughts and to speak and write a discouraging word. There is ample evidence, piling up higher and deeper, that we have advanced far into decadence, as a people, and that the final collapse of the First American Republic is pending. We may in fact already be past it and into the Empire Period, which classically follows that collapse. We do seem to be dealing with an unchecked and uncheckable Emperor, who reminds us more and more of Caligula. He is uninformed and uninformable, and seriously deranged.

Add to that the advancing collapse of planetary life-support systems, including potable water, breathable air, fertile topsoil, fertile oceans and declining biodiversity generally. Keep your eye on the exponentially multiplying population pressure everywhere. Negative thinking comes easy – there's a lot to feel negative about.

So, I had to take another look and see what signs of hope I could find, and lift them higher into my awareness. Perhaps it will be a good exercise for my readers, also. Try these:

[1] The Will of the People will yet be taken into account. The acting president's approval rating in all the polls being taken these days is a hopeful sign. Seventy-two percent of America's sovereign citizens DO NOT APPROVE of him.

[2] The media shows signs of awakening, after years of sycophancy, and that is hopeful. I note three recent instances.

[a] Frontline on PBS ran a story, entitled “Endgame in Iraq,” which gave detailed evidence that the American presence in Iraq is now the problem and must come to an end. Some of us have seen clearly that the American presence in Iraq was a disaster from the beginning. More and more suggestions, in one mainstream outlet after another, leak that signal in spite of all administration attempts to prevent it. “Support the Troops” has become a cynical joke instead of a mouth-stopping slogan, given the way this administration DOES NOT SUPPORT THEM, especially those that are injured physically or psychologically.

[b] Michael Moore's new documentary film, “Sicko,” deals with the health care crisis in this country in a clear and straightforward way. The problem is that insurance companies remove one-third of the money from the system, providing no care at all. “Coverage” is not “health care.” And “coverage” is totally undependable, given all those legions of insurance agents whose function is to deny care. The solution to the problem will be very simple, when it happens, and a vast majority of Americans want it to happen. Simply remove the insurance companies from the system. This movie will make it harder for the parasites to get away with their

chicanery by squealing “socialized medicine!” Socialized medicine is exactly what we want – a single-payer system, which declares plainly at the outset that health care is one of those “inalienable rights.” I am more hopeful about this topic now than I have been in decades.

[c] A locally-made documentary, called COMMITTING POETRY IN TIME OF WAR, is ready for marketing. We saw the world premier here in Albuquerque last week-end. An English teacher at Rio Rancho High School, who was coach of the Poetry Slam team, which competed interscholastically, was fired in the spring of 2003 because his students wouldn't quit writing and performing anti-war poems. This movie documents the fall-out from that – the gentleman sued, won a settlement, invested that settlement in the making of the film. Included is a great deal of footage of the Albuquerque Police riot on the day and evening of the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003. We see unprovoked police beatings of peaceful citizens, tear gas, dogs, horses – it is quite disgusting, but the fact that it is on the screen is a hopeful sign. Watch for this film – the marketing techniques may be somewhat unconventional. For more information, see www.committingpoetry.com.

[3] There is an awakening environmental movement. Some businesses are becoming involved, and others are at the point of offering lip-service at least. Even fundamentalist Christians are joining in, with the belief that “the Creator” doesn't want the humans to destroy what he created. Let's be hopeful. The alternative attitude, which entails hopelessly doing nothing, will have extremely dire consequences.

[4] There is an awakening Anti-war Movement. The scope is widening – not just this aggressive, pre-emptive “war of choice,” as some call it, but all war, war itself, that obscene Pentagon budget itself. Women are still leading the way. Let's all of us follow!

Harry Willson

Harry's library of old rants can be seen at www.amadorbooks.com

Robert Ingersoll – Why I am an Agnostic (excerpt)

When I became convinced that the Universe is natural – that all the ghosts and gods are myths, there entered into my brain, into my soul, into every drop of my blood, the sense, the feeling, the joy of freedom. The walls of my prison crumbled and fell, the dungeon was flooded with light and all the bolts, and bars, and manacles became

dust. I was no longer a servant, a serf or a slave. There was for me no master in all the wide world -- not even in infinite space. I was free -- free to think, to express my thoughts -- free to live to my own ideal -- free to live for myself and those I loved -- free to use all my faculties, all my senses -- free to spread imagination's wings -- free to investigate, to guess and dream and hope -- free to judge and determine for myself -- free to reject all ignorant and cruel creeds, all the "inspired" books that savages have produced, and all the barbarous legends of the past -- free from popes and priests -- free from all the "called" and "set apart" -- free from sanctified mistakes and holy lies -- free from the fear of eternal pain -- free from the winged monsters of the night -- free from devils, ghosts and gods. For the first time I was free. There were no prohibited places in all the realms of thought -- no air, no space, where fancy could not spread her painted wings -- no chains for my limbs -- no lashes for my back -- no fires for my flesh -- no master's frown or threat -- no following another's steps -- no need to bow, or cringe, or crawl, or utter lying words. I was free. I stood erect and fearlessly, joyously, faced all worlds.

And then my heart was filled with gratitude, with thankfulness, and went out in love to all the heroes, the thinkers who gave their lives for the liberty of hand and brain -- for the freedom of labor and thought -- to those who fell on the fierce fields of war, to those who died in dungeons bound with chains -- to those who proudly mounted scaffold's stairs -- to those whose bones were crushed, whose flesh was scarred and torn -- to those by fire consumed -- to all the wise, the good, the brave of every land, whose thoughts and deeds have given freedom to the sons of men. And then I vowed to grasp the torch that they had held, and hold it high, that light might conquer darkness still.

Let us be true to ourselves -- true to the facts we know, and let us, above all things, preserve the veracity of our souls.

If there be gods we cannot help them, but we can assist our fellow-men. We cannot love the inconceivable, but we can love wife and child and friend.

We can be as honest as we are ignorant. If we are, when asked what is beyond the horizon of the known, we must say that we do not know. We can tell the truth, and we can enjoy the blessed freedom that the brave have won. We can destroy the monsters of superstition, the hissing snakes of ignorance and fear. We can drive from our minds the frightful things that tear and wound with beak and fang. We can civilize our fellow-men. We can fill our lives with generous deeds, with loving words, with art and song, and all the ecstasies of love. We can flood our years with sunshine -- with the

divine climate of kindness, and we can drain to the last drop the golden cup of joy.

Thanks to Marcia and Sidney Stone their submission of this excerpt.

Santa Fe Humanists Contact Information

If any HSNM members are asked by persons interested in the Santa Fe Humanists, the proper person to refer them is Bill Weihofen at (505) 988-1343. It is no longer appropriate to refer inquires to Peter Schanck or Karen Ushman. Thank you.

Disruption Of Hindu Chaplain's Senate Prayer Shows Religious Right's Intolerance, Says Americans United

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Press Release from Americans United for Separation of Church and State

www.au.org

Religious Right Activists Want Government To Reflect Only Their Faith, Says AU's Lynn

Americans United for Separation of Church and State today deplored the disruption by Religious Right activists of a Hindu chaplain's prayer to open the U.S. Senate.

"This shows the intolerance of many Religious Right activists," said the Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Americans United executive director. "They say they want more religion in the public square, but it's clear they mean only *their* religion.

"America is a land of extraordinary religious diversity, and the Religious Right just can't seem to accept that fact," Lynn continued. "I don't think the Senate should open with prayers, but if it's going to happen, the invocations ought to reflect the diversity of the American people."

Hindu Chaplain Rajan Zed, a Nevada resident, gave the opening prayer in the Senate at the invitation of U.S. Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.). As he began his remarks, two protestors interrupted the proceedings, asking for forgiveness from Jesus Christ for the "abomination" of failing to pray to the "one true God." (The sergeant-at-arms had to restore order.)

Religious Right groups have been agitating against the Hindu leader's prayer since it was announced. The Rev.

Donald Wildmon's American Family Association has asked his members to complain to their senators about the invitation. The group's news service reported that "Christian nation" activist David Barton said that Hinduism has few followers in the United States and that prayer to a "non-monotheistic god" is "outside the American paradigm."

Said AU's Lynn, "The Religious Right promotes a deeply skewed version of American history. Our founders wanted separation of church and state and full religious liberty for all faith traditions. The episode today shows we still have a ways to go to achieve that goal."

MEMBER NEWS:

If you know of a member who is ill or going through a bad patch or who would like a visitor, please send information to the editor (with the member's permission.)



Friendly Philosophers

Monday, August 6, 2007

Open Forum

Bring Your Own Topic for a General Discussion

Monday, August 20, 2007

Influence of Eastern Philosophy in Rafael's Paintings

Georgio I. Spadaro

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

Atheists/Freethinkers Meetup Group

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

August 5th, 9am, viewing of Richard Dawkins "Root of All Evil", Part Two. Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE

Social Meeting on third Tuesday at 7pm at Mimi's Cafe, 4316 The 25 Way, Near Jefferson and I-25