



Humanist Society of New Mexico



December 2007

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

President's Message

In early November I launched our Humanist Community Outreach program with two lectures at OASIS. The first was "What Every Thinking Person Should Know About the Bible" followed by "The Bible as an Instrument of Political Terror." In a nutshell, everyone should know that the Bible is a record of the history of a Middle East Temple State from its tribal origins circa 1200 BCE to its destruction and rebirth as a vassal of ancient Persia circa 400 BCE. I talked about how Temple-State traditions continue to dominate much of the world today, and threaten to reverse the global trends to separate Church from State. In the second talk I cited several of the many examples of political terror used by the Hebrew Temple-State to prepare the nation for a series of rebellions against mighty Assyria and Babylon by annihilating worshipers of gods other than Jehovah, and dissenters who objected to the exclusive nature of priestly political authority.

I am grateful to OASIS for the very warm reception I received, for inviting me to distribute HSNM literature, and to sell copies of my book "The Bible Through the Eyes of Its Authors." I would welcome suggestions about other public venues at which HSNM lecturers could explore community outreach opportunities.

HSNM member Dawn Lieberman is an active supporter of OASIS and had suggested that they contact me. So here is what everyone should know about OASIS.

OASIS is a national educational organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for mature adults. OASIS, the older adult enrichment program, has scheduled over 90 classes and trips for the winter trimester. Walk-in registration is on Friday, January 4th; however, registration is on-going. Through the recently received grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities *The Immigrant Experience: A Journey to*

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, December 8, 2007

Informal Meeting

General Discussion

Refreshments: Randall Wall

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School, NE

Saturday, December 15, 2007

Topical Discussion

The Many Faces of Forgiveness

Note: No Food or Drink

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

Saturday, December 15, 2007

Holiday Party

Pot Luck

At the home of Sam & Marilyn Brownstein

5273 Balsa Ct. NE,

Albuquerque, NM

Santa Fe Humanists

Saturday, December 1, 10:30am

Physics

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.

HSNM Book Club

“The God Delusion” by Richard Dawkins
Sunday, December 2nd, 2:00-4:00pm
Title Wave Books, 1408 Eubank NE

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: Salem Smith

Director of Classes: Ron Herman

Social Activities:xxxxxxxxxx

Newsletter Editor: Randall Wall

Website: Phil Smith

Ex Officio: Jerry Wesner

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.

Becoming American., this term’s program focuses on the reality of the waves of immigration in America, with classes on immigration history, music, culture and changing face of our state. In addition OASIS employs volunteers to tutor children in reading skills to promote self-esteem and positive attitudes towards learning.. To learn more about adult learning or tutoring opportunities please contact Michele Boccia, 889-0927; Cell: 850-2523, or go to www.oasisnet.org.

Grants Humanists

Saturday, December 1st

10:00am to noon

Defending Humanism

Ron Herman

Grants First Presbyterian Church

400 Nimitz Dr., Grants, NM

The Shock Doctrine:

The Rise of Disaster Capitalism (2007)

By Naomi Klein

Book Review by Peter Schanck

Shock Doctrine is quite simply an extraordinary, brilliant book. “SusanG,” a regular book reviewer for DailyKos.org calls it a masterpiece and I wouldn’t disagree. On the book cover, the British novelist John Le Carre describes this work – accurately, in my view -- as “impassioned, hugely informative, wonderfully controversial, and scary as hell.”

Klein’s central thesis is that corporations and their political sympathizers have used disasters and crises of various kinds to introduce laissez-faire capitalism -- specifically in the form of University of Chicago Professor Milton Friedman’s libertarian economic doctrines -- in previously social democratic or mixed economy countries. The new economic policies are imposed swiftly and sweepingly – hence, the concept of “shock doctrine.” Because these kinds of reforms inevitably produce highly negative consequences for most citizens (e.g., lower wages, a diminution or elimination of the social safety net) and would thus be unpopular, they can be carried out only by highly

repressive regimes.

The most straight-forward way this is done is through a military coup, which then gives political and business leaders and their economic advisers an unrestrained opportunity for revolutionary economic measures, generally consisting of extensive privatization, deregulation, and elimination of social services and benefits. Examples of this include Chile under Pinochet, Argentina under its generals, Indonesia under Suharto, and Iraq under the Coalition Provisional Authority (where an invasion and occupation, rather than coup, occurred).

Another common situation occurred in Poland, Russia and other former Communist countries when leaders of purportedly democratic revolutions took advantage of temporary political crises (e.g., the Parliamentary revolt against Yeltsin in Russia) to institute temporary dictatorial controls, giving those leaders an opportunity to impose draconian libertarian economic policies.

Perhaps the most prevalent practice, however, involves the economic power of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). When an economic crisis arises in developing countries, the government typically has difficulty paying off its debts and needs financial support in the form of debt forgiveness and new loans. To receive this debt relief the IMF requires the otherwise reluctant governments to impose harsh laissez-faire economic measures, inevitably providing a boon to foreign investors and wealthy local interests, but resulting in a decline in the standard of living for most citizens.

Most disheartening – and surprising – to me is the fact that South Africa has suffered these same problems. Rather than instituting social democratic reforms promised by its African National Congress leaders, it submitted to IMF demands and joined the laissez-faire bandwagon. Consequently, the already wretchedly poor majority black population is now even more impoverished, while corporate interests thrive.

Even those who follow international politics and economics closely may be surprised by a number of frightening historical facts reported by Klein that have not been well covered by the mainstream media. One horrific situation was apparently common in several Latin American countries in the 1970s and '80s, especially Chile and Argentina. These repressive regimes carried out measures that are eerily reminiscent of Soviet collectivist social controls – except that their goal was exactly the opposite of the Soviets. Along with the imposition of extreme free enterprise reforms, these

governments prohibited collective citizen action in order to instill individualistic attitudes and habits in the populous. An absurd example occurred in Chile where high school students were arrested for organizing to oppose a raise in bus fares; individual complaints, on the other hand, would supposedly have been tolerated.

For the first 430 pages or so Klein is so relentlessly negative in portraying instance after instance of undemocratic imposition of unpopular and economically unjust policies that this reader suffered occasional bouts of profound discouragement. She concludes, however, on a more upbeat note pointing out a number of countries in South America (e.g., Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, and Uruguay) that were recently able to bring themselves to reject IMF loan offers and debt relief, along with its quid pro quo of laissez-faire reforms.

AMADOR PUBLISHERS BOOK BASH -- FREE

Saturday afternoon, December 1, 2007, 3 - 6 p.m.

Come celebrate the richness of our creative arts community with books, art and song, and of course, refreshments! WILLSON & MCKEE, The Jigheads, will offer a concert of their unique 'Rocky Mountain Celtic' music and storytelling. The complete line of Amador books will be on sale, with authors, editors and artists on hand to greet the public.

Find us at: ART IS... OK & COMPANY GALLERY & SCULPTURE PLAZA, 3301 Menaul NE, Suite 28, phone 883-7368.

More info on-line: www.amadorbooks.com or at 505-877-4395

["Willson" is Ken Willson, cousin of Harry Willson, editor-in-chief of Amador Publishers.]

Working the Crap-Detector

I watch the presidential debates and have to ask myself, "How did I figure out the un-wisdom and immorality of the U.S. invasion of Iraq so much more quickly than Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, John Edwards, Christopher Dodd and Joe Biden? Now they say they voted wrong in 2003, that they lacked information then, and if they had known then what they know now they would not have voted to give the acting president authority to invade.

How is it that I did not lack information in 2003? I did not regard what Colin Powell told the U.N. in 2003 as information at all. I could tell it was disinformation. How could that be? How did I know? I'm not the only one, I realize, but how could we be so far ahead of five Democratic Senators?

It's deja vu all over again. I remember being accosted at the door of the church, where I had preached on peace, and had announced the availability of a SANE petition which asked for the cessation of the bombing of civilians in North Vietnam – that was 1965. A hawk/parishioner asked me, "Do you really think you understand the politics of Southeast Asia better than the Secretary of State of the United States?" That was Dean Rusk. I replied, without thinking, "My Lord, yes!"

Others wanted to know how I found out things, how I formed my beliefs about geopolitics.

In those days I read I.F.STONE'S WEEKLY, and RAMPARTS MAGAZINE, and THE WASHINGTON SPECTATOR. I tended not to believe anything that LBJ said, or what the NEW YORK TIMES wrote. That was before the TIMES figured it out and published "The Pentagon Papers." I wondered why it took them twenty years to figure out what an immoral and unconstitutional disaster that war really was.

So how did some of us figure out this war and occupation so much sooner than leaders in the U.S. Senate? Maybe it's simply a superior crap detector. The acting president is a liar, and if he says something, you'll get an inkling of the truth, if you insert "not" or "does not" in front of his verbs. Sometimes that will make a double negative, but you can figure that out.

"America does not [NOT] torture."

"Saddam [DOES NOT] possess nuclear weapons."

"Saddam is [NOT] in league with Al Caida."

"The invasion will [NOT] make us safer."

"Whoever leaked the name of that CIA agent will [NOT] be fired."

And so on.

There are things to read, too. Not the NEW YORK TIMES. They're slow again, to figure it out, not as slow as before, but slow enough to buffalo Senators evidently. Read THE NATION, MOTHER JONES, THE PROGRESSIVE, THE HIGHTOWER LOWDOWN, THE AMERICAN PROSPECT, THE WASHINGTON SPECTATOR. It's not a question of being smarter – smarter than Hillary Clinton or Joe Biden? It's the old crap-detector, and the freedom that comes from knowing that we Americans are not better than other people. I'd like to live long enough to see the day when we have leaders who will quit invading other people's countries with a view to taking their oil or their copper or their turnips, or whatever it is they have.

Harry Willson

[Harry's rant appears every month at www.amadorbooks.com along with a complete library of old rants.]

Charitable Giving on the Web

Humanists -- Here are places where you who have computer access can make daily donations, at no cost! The Hunger Site provides food for the needy (<http://www.thehungersite.com/clickToGive/home.faces?siteId=1> or just google "Hungersite") Also, along the top of the screen are connections to five other free donation sites: child health, breast cancer, literacy, rain forest, and animal rescue. The entire operation takes about a minute, and can be done daily, one donor per computer. Then a new site with a twist has opened: <http://www.freerice.com/>. It gives ten grain of rice (it really does build up) for each correct answer to a vocabulary question! Try it -- it's fun -- but allow some time if you like being challenged!

Jerry Wesner



Friendly Philosophers

Monday, December 3, 2007

Open Forum

Bring Your Own Topic for a General Discussion

Monday, December 17, 2007

Christmas Traditions in New Mexico

Adela Amador

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>

Sunday, December 2, 2007

Part 1 of "A History of Disbelief" Sunday, 9am.,
Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202
Harvard SE

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

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