



Humanist Society of New Mexico



January 2009

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

Family Co-Op Receives Grant

HSNM has been honored with one of two grants to AHA chapters from the Kochhar Humanist Education Center (KHEC). Ron Herman, our Director of Classes, submitted a budget proposal in November and received the amount of \$6,530 for the HSNM Family Co-Op. The other grant went to an Oregon chapter. The Family Co-Op is our alternative Sunday school class for children. The funds received will support roughly two-thirds of our program budget for teacher's salaries, resource materials, lesson plans, rental space, and advertising. Jeff Cornelius, chair of the Co-Op subcommittee, said
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HSNM Family Co-op

Alternative Children's Sunday School

January 4th & 18st, 11:00 am

Regular Meetings

Ground Level, College of Santa Fe, Albuquerque
Campus, Pinetree Corporate Center

4501 Indian School Rd. NE

Santa Fe Humanists

Saturday, January 3rd, 10:30am

Holiday Mentality

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

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

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

HSNM Book Club

Discontinued until further notice

Saturday, January 10th

Informal Meeting

General Discussion

This Meeting is for Members Only or Special
Invitation Only – For invitation please call Fred
March - 323-6784

Refreshments: Salem Smith

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Saturday, January 17th

Topical Discussion

Should Humanists Proselytize?

Special Collections Library, 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, January 24th

Speaker Meeting

*Grand Strategy, Challenges and Choices
for the New Administration*

Dr. Andrew L. Ross

Refreshments: Jerry Wesner

UNM Law School, Room 2406, 1117 Stanford NE

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.

“With this grant, the Family Co-op expects to see significant growth and will provide a valuable educational experience for our children and their parents”

The first expenditure of the HSNM grant funds is expected to be the compilation of lesson plan summaries

that were used by parents in their classes over the past six months. These will be collected and edited to produce a booklet that will grow as other lessons are prepared over the next year. This lesson booklet will provide a guide for future classes for our younger school-age children. We will also share this guide with other AHA chapter school programs through the KHEC. Michelle Watson, the mother of two boys in the program, will be the first editor of this publication. Call Jeff at 615-9751 for more information on the Family Co-Op.

The KHEC is funded primarily by New York City businessman Pritpal Kochhar, a humanist Sikh. "Religious organizations have long had educational programs and institutions for passing on their values to each new generation, " said Dr. Bob Bhaerman, education coordinator of the KHEC. "Now it's time for non-theistic people--whether they call themselves humanists, atheists, agnostics or even identify with a more traditionally religious label--to more effectively share their values with future generations and deepen the understanding of those values among adults." More information on the Center can be found at www.americanhumanist.org/khec/.

*Ron Herman
Director of Classes*

**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*
- Carolyn Kaye: Secretary*
- Ron Herman: Director of Classes*
- Jeff Cornelius: Family Co-op*
- Randall Wall: Newsletter Editor*
- Janet Johnson: Book Club*
- Ted Cloak: Community Liaison*
- Phil Smith: Webmaster*
- Membership Director: Open*
- Social Coordinator: Open*
- Publicity Director: Open*

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.

Year-End Financial Statement

Account Summary 12/11/2008

Code	Account title	Balance
Assets		\$0.00
	Wells Fargo Checking	\$17,623.46
Income		\$0.00
	AdultEdu	\$6,441.22
	Advertising	\$122.01
	COTG/AHA_Grant	\$663.69
	FamilyCoop	\$2,663.90
	General	\$1,202.64
	Kochhar School Fund	\$6,530.00
Expenses		\$0.00
	Equity	\$0.00
	Opening Balances	\$0.00
	Imbalance-USD	\$0.00

Orphan-USD

\$0.00

John Waldrop

Treasurer

On Leadership

After twenty-eight years the American people have figured out that we need a president who is more intelligent than the vast majority of citizens. Since 1980 intelligence has been mocked and downgraded as a bad thing, elitist or snobbish, and somehow unAmerican. But now we're going to have a president who is very smart, sharp as can be, aware and informed.

It's not so much that the next president is a great orator, but rather that he can put English sentences together -- subject, verb, object -- one following another sensibly. We don't see that half-scared look which says, "I wonder what this next word I'm supposed to say really means. How long can I keep this up? How does this prompter-thing work? I liked the microphone strapped to my back. Will this smirk hide my inadequacy?"

In contrast President-elect Obama knows what he's talking about, and when he's finished talking, we know what he meant. We've watched him give monosyllabic answers to reporters' questions. "Yes." And even, "No!" What a change! What a relief!

The current acting president reached his position by being selected by a handful of oil magnates as their guy, their sock puppet. Those oil executives then foisted him onto the Republican Party, and then they stole two elections in a row. One of their ploys was to imply, and even state openly, that Gore, and then Kerry, were too smart to be president of us common [moderately dumb to extremely dumb] mere persons. "Nuance" was the word they loved to make fun of. But the real world is full of nuance, and one doesn't handle it well by mocking it.

In contrast, over a period of many months, Obama was selected by dozens, and then hundreds and then thousands and finally millions of ordinary people who wanted change, even drastic change. A large number of those millions were young, and not super-rich. This is something the American people can be proud of. His selection and subsequent election means that we are indeed a little better than we used to be. Slavery, Jim Crow, segregation north and south -- we will yet get past all that. The young are ahead of the old in this, and that's hopeful.

The current acting president cannot lead, and a huge majority of citizens now recognize the fact. It is irrelevant that he'd be fun to go out drinking with. I

frankly doubt that anyway, since he's heavily into insults and pretense. Stating petulantly that he's the decider doesn't make him a leader and doesn't constitute leadership. He claims to be the war president, but displays no awareness at all of what war really is and how it affects human beings. He doesn't understand enough history or geography to be able to lead at all. How can a person who is AWOL lead? His handlers [those same oil guys] do what incompetent leading there has been. It is good to imagine how all that will change with a new administration.

We have been badly lacking in leadership for a long time. The predecessor of the acting president was intelligent enough, in some senses, but lacked a kind of common sense, and was not allowed to lead. He was constantly harassed and distracted by law suits and subpoenas that had to do with his wife's investments and his own sexual activities. The result was at best distracted leadership, and lots of disappointment. He threw his intelligence away, and many chances to use it were lost.

The first president named Bush could have been a leader, but was badly flawed. When he said he was "out of the loop," meaning lacking any awareness at all of Iran/contra, many of us found that utterly unbelievable. The U.S. sold missiles to the ayatollah of Iran, in spite of the embargo against it, and used the money to buy arms and supplies for the illegal Somocista rebels in Nicaragua, which Congress had forbidden specifically. They set up a special office right in the White House for Colonel North to direct the contra war. It is impossible to believe that the Vice-President didn't know what many of us knew. He could never be much of a leader, because he was such a liar.

The denigrating of intelligence and expertise goes back to Ronald Reagan, who play-acted as a kindly, folksy grandpa-type, but often displayed ignorance of what was really going on. He appointed non-experts to high positions in the government. Serious deregulation went into high gear with him supposedly in charge. Top levels of federal agencies, like the FDA, the EPA and the FCC, were taken over by persons who believed that government can't do anything right, that business can do whatever needs doing best and without government interference, that experts in their fields are unnecessary bureaucrats. The result of those beliefs and hands-off actions are now out in the open where we can all see and feel them. Lost jobs, lost pensions, lost homes -- where there is no leadership, the "invisible hand of the market" does not do well. The invisible hand isn't there at all, and thieves move in and steal.

Now there is hope that new leaders, and new and old experts, and new and old regulators, can together reverse

this process. Let me congratulate and encourage our Leader-in-chief.

Harry Willson

Recent Books of Interest

Why We're Liberal: A Political Handbook for Post-Bush America by Eric Alterman

Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions by Dan Ariely

So Help Me God: The Founding Fathers and the First Great Battle Over Church and State by Forrest Church

The Secular Conscience by Austin Dacey

Science and Nonbelief by Taner Edis

50 Reasons People Give for Believing in a God by Guy P. Harrison

God and the New Atheism by John F. Haught

The Portable Atheist: Essential Readings for the Nonbeliever selected and introduced by Christopher Hitchens

The Age of American Unreason by Susan Jacoby

Free Lunch: How the Wealthiest Americans Enrich Themselves at Government Expense (and Stick You with the Bill) by David Cay Johnston

The Savage Humanists by Fiona Kelleghan

The Court and the Cross: The Religious Right's Crusade to Reshape the Supreme Court by Frederick S. Lane

Only a Theory: Evolution and the Battle for America's

Soul by Kenneth R. Miller

Irreligion: A Mathematician Explains Why the Arguments for God Just Don't Add Up by John Allen Paulos

Evolution: What the Fossils Say and Why It Matters by Donald R. Prothero

Charles Fort: The Man Who Invented the Supernatural by Jim Steinmeyer

So Help Me God by Larry D. Thompson

Myth and Mortality: Testing the Stories by Harry Willson

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, January 5th

Open Forum

Bring a Your Own Topic for General Discussion

Monday, January 19th

TBA

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, January 4th, 9am

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE

Tuesday, January 20th

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, January 14th, 7pm

TBA

UNM Law Building

1117 Stanford NE, Room 2402