



Humanist Society of New Mexico



March 2007

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our members will soon see the results of some important changes that we have been discussing that are aimed as helping us become a more vital organization, and to attract new members:

- Ron Herman helped the Humanist Society at UNM to put on an outstanding Darwin Day event. Several of our members showed up to show support for their efforts. A talk I gave on what every humanist should know about the Bible was well received.
- Phil Smith has taken on the Board position of publicity subcommittee chairman and has jump-started the campaign to publicize our Sunday lecture series, beginning with last month's lecture by Harry Willson and this month's Science and Religion lecture by UNM Professor Moy.
- The education committee led by Ron Herman is interviewing teacher candidates for our first public offering of a series of humanist classes, the first one being on science and religion.
- Our web page will be getting a jazzy new look thanks to the efforts of Phil Smith and the Wesner family.
- Several new faces showed up at our book club discussion of Harris' *Letter to a Christian Nation*, and a few have now joined our organization.
- We have benefited from a significant increase in donations to the HSNM, largely as a result of our plans to increase our educational outreach to the community, and we have pledges for more.

So those who can, please lend whatever form of support you can to these efforts. We still lack a membership chairman for our Board. So please contact me if you want to participate in these exciting developments. Also, please reach out to any one you don't know who turns up at our events. If they are already members, get to know them. If not, engage them and refer them to me

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

Meetings run from 10:00 to noon and are free and open to the public.

Saturday, March 10, 2007

Informal Meeting

General Discussion

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School, NE

Saturday, March 17, 2007

Topical Discussion

Humanism and Nature

Note: No Food or Drink

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

Saturday, March 24, 2007

The Surprising Relationship between Science and Religion in the Age of Galileo

Timothy Moy

UNM Law School, Room 2406, 1117 Stanford NE

HSNM Book Club

Sunday, March 4

February selection, E.O. Wilson's *On Human Nature*

**Title Wave Books, 1408 Eubank, 2-4PM
Santa Fe Humanists**

Saturday, March 3, 10:30 am

The Brain, Mind and Soul

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.

or any Board member to learn about the benefits of membership.

Also we extend our warmest welcome to our newest members: Henry and Marjorie Gulgaer of Grants, and to Ken and Cecilia Simmons of Tijeras!

Fred March

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

Special Projects: Ron Herman

Social Activities:xxxxxxxxxx

Newsletter Editor: Randall Wall

Website: David & Beverly 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.

Kansas Evolves – Again: State School Board Approves New Science Standards

By Lauren Smith - Americans United for Separation of Church and State Website - www.au.org, Feb 15, 2007

Kansas school children have been caught in a virulent volley over the meaning of science, and how (or whether) they'll be taught about evolution, since 1999. For the fourth time in eight years, the Kansas State Board of Education has again revised its science standards.

This time, science won. According to the *Wichita Eagle*, the school board on Tuesday voted 6-4 in favor of new guidelines "reflecting the scientific consensus that evolution is a foundation of modern biology and a critical component" of sound science education.

The newest standards replace those passed in Oct. 2005, also by a vote of 6-4, which downplayed evolution's credibility and significance and did "not prohibit" the teaching of religious ideas like Intelligent Design (ID), the belief that life is so complex that it must have been created supernaturally rather than evolved through natural selection. The old standards also distorted by omission the definition of "science" so students could be taught that natural phenomena (i.e.: human evolution) have a supernatural explanation (i.e.: an "intelligent designer").

ID proponent John Calvert was not pleased. "The issue is never going to go away," he said. The *Eagle* reported that advocates like Calvert "would continue efforts to convince the public that schools are indoctrinating students with a flawed, anti-religious theory."

But religion didn't "lose" this contest. Indeed, religion and science don't need to compete for believers; they can coexist peacefully in American culture. In many minds, they do.

According to the *Mercury News*, more than 500 churches last weekend celebrated "Evolution Sunday," an effort to add a moderate religious voice to a debate that too often turns the faithful against science. This year it fell on the day before Charles Darwin's 198th birthday.

The Rev. Jeffery Spencer of Niles Congregational

United Church of Christ in Fremont, California used his Sunday sermon to celebrate the "harmonious mix of faith and science."

Spencer is one of over 10,500 Christian clergy who has signed an open letter stating their belief in the Bible, but also their acceptance of evolution. They point out that "Religious truth is of a different order from scientific truth. Its purpose is not to convey scientific information but to transform hearts." The letter asks school boards across the county to ensure that "science remains science and that religion remains religion."

We applaud the Kansas Board of Education for honoring that request and hope its members resist future pressure to meld religion and science.

Supreme Court to Hear Case on Separation of Church and State

People for the American Way Website www.pfaw.org

On February 2, 2007, People for the American Way Foundation joined four of the country's other leading religious liberty organizations -- Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation, the Anti-defamation League, and the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty -- in filing a friend-of-the-court brief in the United States Supreme Court in *Hein v. Freedom From Religion Foundation*, a case involving the standing (or legal right) of taxpayers to bring a lawsuit challenging federal government expenditures in violation of the Establishment Clause.

The brief was written with the generous pro bono assistance of the law firm of Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, LLP, and is focused on the importance of preserving judicial precedent protecting taxpayer standing in Establishment Clause cases.

The case is a critical one for church-state separation, as the religious right is using it as a vehicle to urge the Court to eliminate taxpayer standing in Establishment Clause cases, which would significantly undermine the ability of Americans to obtain access to the court to vindicate their constitutional right to religious liberty. In fact, Pat Robertson's ACLJ has taken direct aim at taxpayer standing in Establishment Clause cases, announcing that it has filed its own "friend-of-the-court brief asking the Supreme Court to put an end to federal taxpayer lawsuits by church-state separationists." According to the ACLJ, "separationists enjoy special privileges by being able to file lawsuits simply because they are 'taxpayers' without having to show they are

actually injured in some way by a law or government activity." This of course is not true, as a fundamental purpose of the Establishment Clause is to protect Americans from the injury of being coerced or required, financially or otherwise, to support religious belief with which they may not agree.

Perhaps even more radical is the position of former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, who violated the Constitution by placing a huge monument of the Ten Commandments in the rotunda of the state Judicial Building and was kicked off the bench when he refused to comply with a federal court order to remove it. Moore and the Foundation for Moral Law has filed a brief in *Hein* taking the extreme-and-extremely erroneous-position that the Establishment Clause does not even "protect an individual right and cannot be the basis for an individual lawsuit."

People for the American Way Foundation is participating in this case as part of our core mission to protect and defend freedom of conscience and the right of every American to worship or not as he or she sees fit, as well as the right to challenge government action that violates these basic constitutional principles.

The case will be argued on February 28, and a decision is expected by July.

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

Letters to the Editor

I'm sick of these politicians and ad-visors saddling our English language with an Orwellian twist so that bad means good and freedom means slavery. My latest ire is directed at all those journalists who assumed that when Biden said Barack Obama and articulate and clean, he really meant that every other black who thought he was good enough to run for President was illiterate and dirty.

I'm a big supporter of Obama and one good reason

for my admiration is that the man is both intelligent and articulate. He says what he means and he means what he says and he puts those idea into worlds that anybody who is fluent in the English language can understand. It was that mastery of the language which propelled the first term senator in the spotlight when he displayed it at the Democratic National Convention.

Now take the word "clean". Politically speaking that word means more than not being physically covered with dirt. When the auto insurance sales person said I have a clean record, she meant I've never been convicted of any serious violation of our traffic laws. I think in politics clean has the same general meaning: "law abiding".

I'm taking Biden at his word. Obama is articulate and clean and good looking, and how do I run against a guy like that?

Call me articulate and clean and good looking and I'll be delighted with the compliment. Sorry if some among you take that as meaning you are illiterate and dirty and physically unattractive; but I don't think Obama will feel you're insulting him by complimenting me.

Laverne Rison

In response to Peter Schanck's article, "Democrats Disappoint American Voters" I wish to point out that the damage done to American democracy by the criminal conspiracy led by people still in power is far too massive to be addressed by the impeachment process. Even if two thirds of the Senate voted to convict, an extremely unlikely outcome, most of the criminal gang will still occupy the White House and crucial positions of powers. In the last months of 2001 and during the following years only one Senator and about 40 members of the House (a body of 435 members) stood up to protest against the seizure of absolute power by the White House. Last I heard over 800 "signing statements", in which the administration thumbs its nose at the will of a Congress controlled by their own party, had reduced Congress to a doormat of the White House. I have suggested to some leading Democrats that they thoroughly investigate and document crimes committed by the current administration. Given the pervasiveness of criminal behavior at all levels, two years is a short time for adequate investigation. In parallel with investigation the groundwork should be laid for ratification of the International Criminal Court treaty and a valid election (unlike 2000 and 2004) of a President who is not inclined to pardon his or her predecessor.

Dale L. Berry

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.)

WebWatch: Good Things to Try on the Web

Beyond Belief 2006 - A discussion of Religion and Science (video)

<http://beyondbelief2006.org/>

The Scientists - 24 Videos featuring scientists discussing Evolution vs. Intelligent Design Creationism

www.evolutionvscreationism.info

Understanding Evolution - detailed and illustrated lessons on the Theory of Evolution

<http://evolution.berkeley.edu/>

Religious Tolerance.org - Science and Religion - Conflict and Agreement

http://www.religioustolerance.org/sci_rel.htm

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, March 5

Open Forum

Bring Your Own Topic for a General Discussion

Monday, March 19

Fred March

The Bible Through the Eyes of its Authors

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>

Business Meeting on first Sunday, 9am,
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

