



# Humanist Society of New Mexico



May 2007

[www.humanists.net/nm/](http://www.humanists.net/nm/) [fmarch@thinkwellassociates.com](mailto:fmarch@thinkwellassociates.com)

## Annual Spring Picnic Buffet

Our annual picnic will be on Saturday May 19 at the home of Fred and Joan March from 5 - 8 PM. This year we have the choice of paying \$15 per person to provide a balanced choice of good foods and drink, or to bring a dish from home. Please RSVP no later than May 12. Those with e-mail please respond to [fmarch@thinkwellassociates.com](mailto:fmarch@thinkwellassociates.com) and those without please call (and leave message) at 323-6784. Please indicate your choice to pay or bring, and state what you plan to bring (appetizer, main dish, dessert). Location is 1023 Tramway Lane. From Tramway Boulevard turn east onto San Bernardino which ends at Tramway Lane, and turn right. Proceed approximately a half mile. After the first stop sign the house is on the right immediately after the second 15 mph sign. Please observe the 10-15mph speed limits as there are humps on the road, no sidewalks, and people strolling. Money collected in excess of actual food expense will go the HSNM account.

## President's Message

The March/April issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review* features a team interview with four leading biblical archaeology scholars. Two are outspoken atheists and two are... well not quite atheists but very clear that they do not believe that God had anything to do with writing the Bible. I had become somewhat familiar with their work, and even the so-called "religious" ones in no way thought of their research as a search for truth of the supernatural Bible's claims. The article includes an inset about belief in God by higher education, from a survey conducted from a couple of professors at Harvard & George Mason..

(continued next page)

## Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

**Saturday, May 12, 2007**

### Informal Meeting

*General Discussion*

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School, NE

**Saturday, May 19, 2007**

### Topical Discussion

*Origins and Foundations of Moral and Ethical  
Behavior*

Note: No Food or Drink

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

**Saturday, May 26, 2007**

*Science as Religion: Gaia and the Soul*

Jay Lee Evans

UNM Law School, Room 2406, 1117 Stanford NE

### HSNM Book Club

**Sunday, May 6**

*The Fundamentals of Extremism: The Christian  
Right in America*

Title Wave Books, 1408 Eubank, 2-4PM

### Santa Fe Humanists

**Saturday, May 5, 10:30 am**

*Open Discussion*

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

**H**umanism 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.

(see table, next column)

Only 6% of these believed that the Bible is the actual word of God. This tells me that the world of educated people has many more candidates for humanism than I thought there were. Incidentally, my talk to the Friendly Philosophers in March titled “Ten Things Every Humanist Should Know About the Hebrew Bible” was very well received.

*Fred March*

	<b>% Atheist</b>	<b>% Belief in Higher Power</b>	<b>% Belief in God</b>
Community College	14	30	56
Four Year BA	22	19	59
Non-Elite Doctoral	24	24	52
Elite Doctoral	37	29	34

**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: 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](mailto:paragon2012@comcast.net)

The deadline for Newsletter submissions is the third Saturday of each month.

**Read “Free Inquiry,” Too**

The Chair of the Council for Secular Humanism, Professor Paul Kurtz, will be honored at “Blazing a Humanist Trail,” the annual conference of the American Humanist Association starting June 6<sup>th</sup> in Portland, OR. This is a new milestone in the progress of world Humanism, showing a spirit of cooperation and mutual support between the two major Humanist organizations.

Prof. Kurtz is also Editor in Chief of Free Inquiry, a magazine similar to AHA’s The Humanist, but with different contributing authors and generally a difference in perspectives. Since some HSNM members may not be familiar with Free Inquiry, I thought I might provide summaries of some of the FI articles each month for this Newsletter to honor this spirit of ecumenism. However, I found the task too daunting, because most of the articles were just so pithy and weighty that I would have taken 5 pages to do them justice. So, I will just say that every bimonthly Free Inquiry has about 20 articles plus book reviews and news, all of which are all top quality, insightful, and provocative, and I recommend that you seek it out for yourself. It is available on most book-seller racks, or you can choose to subscribe. The latest issue describes the promising “Jesus Project.” A limited number of FI articles and news items are available free online at [www.secularhumanism.org](http://www.secularhumanism.org); find the “Free Inquiry” link at the top.

We can broaden our understanding of Humanist views and current events by reading both *The Humanist* and *Free Inquiry*.

*Ron Herman*

## **HSNM Science and Religion Classes Getting Started!**

The first course offering from the Humanist Society of New Mexico will be a seven-session workshop entitled *The History of Science and Religion*. The classes will be 90 minutes in duration and will be held on seven consecutive Sundays at the College of Santa Fe building on Indian School Blvd. NE.

The purpose of this series is to explore these two essential and often misunderstood aspects of human development from prehistoric times to the present day. Students will discover the fundamental similarities and differences between scientific and religious inquiry over time and review their conflicting and sometimes hostile relationship. Each course session will include a short lecture on the period in question, but a substantial proportion of every class will be devoted to imaginative "thought experiments" and discussions to help participants feel personally connected to the material. The final class will be devoted entirely to discussion of the complicated and high-stakes contest of science and religion in the present-day world.

The instructor for the course will be Jefferson Voorhees, who has a B.A. Columbia University, M.A., University of New Mexico. Jefferson had a life-long interest in the history of science and religion.

This series is intended for those who would answer a survey of religious affiliation with "none" and who are generally unfamiliar with this subject matter. It will also provide an opportunity for students to meet others who question the claims of religions and purveyors of pseudo-science. The starting date and registration information will be provided in the next newsletter. There will be no charge for the course.

*Ron Herman*  
*Director of Classes*

### **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.)

## **How Forum Speaker Andy Dawkins brought Atheism and Civic Action Full Circle**

From *Atheists for Human Rights Newsletter*, April 2007  
Thanks go to Dale Berry for this suggestion.

It was easily the best speech we have heard on atheism in relation to our role in the community. On 25 March, public forum speaker Andy Dawkins laid out what it really means to be an atheist by showing the power and value of community involvement carried out without reference to religious beliefs. As an attorney and former state legislator, Dawkins talked about laws he got enacted that were developed by his constituents in response to their personal experience with problems that made life difficult in their neighborhoods. Out of his own reality-based atheist values, he encouraged people to come together to make positive changes. Dawkins' speech was an hour of atheist morality exemplified. You see a problem, you get together with your neighbors, and you solve it. It's what you do when you know relying on a god is a waste of time, but working with people isn't. Religions divide. Solutions come easier in a religion-free environment.

The entire context of Dawkins' speech was community-based, cooperative problem-solving that relies on working things out in a peaceful, non-adversarial way. He talked of self-help housing programs that made home ownership affordable for the working poor. He talked of changing child-custody laws to remove the forced adversarial relationship from divorcing couples. He talked about being raised by parents who instilled solid, human-centered, religion-free values in him, and of grandparents who did the same.

He brought one of his sons, Jack, 9, to the meeting so Jack could hear his dad speak (and then he set his cell phone so his own father could listen in). Jack is clearly carrying on the family tradition of being self-confident and speaking up for one's principles. He is obviously very intelligent, is openly and proudly atheist, and understands the concept. His younger brother, Nick, 7, who came to our happy hour the next day with his dad and brother, showed the same intelligence, confidence and clear thinking. Dawkins' wife, Sen. Ellen Anderson, was mired in legislative hearings at the Capitol, so could not be there. We hope to see more of this family.

For a video of Andy's speech go to [www.AtheistsForHumanRights.org](http://www.AtheistsForHumanRights.org).

## 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

## Humanist Education Course Available on the Web

As we get underway with our Science and Religion classes, it seems appropriate to take note of an educational opportunity available on the web. The Institute for Humanist Studies has launched *The Continuum of Humanist Education*. According to the website, "COHE is the Internet's first website offering interactive courses in humanist thought. COHE is a service of the Institute for Humanist Studies, a non-profit U.S. organization promoting nonreligious perspectives on social, political, and ethical issues and serving as a resource for and about the humanist community."

How to get started, you ask? Just logon to [www.HumanistEducation.com](http://www.HumanistEducation.com). First, you can try out the free course *Introduction to Humanism: A Primer on the History, Philosophy, and Goals of Humanism*. If it's to your liking, then after taking a short time to register, you're ready to try the many topics the website has to offer. Six main topics are available: Humanist Activism and Organization, Science and Humanism, Psychology and Humanism, Law and Politics, Religion and Spirituality and finally Ethics. Each subject offers an overview and introductory course which are both free. The second course is \$10, followed by the third and final course which is \$25.

The faculty includes Matt Cherry, Steven Goldberg Ph.D., Massimo Pigliucci Ph.D., Reid Johnson Ph.D., Timothy Gordiner, Ph.D., Jeaneane Fowler Ph.D. and Lewis Vaughn.

The courses appear to be high quality, highly informative and will provoke much thought in any willing student and are highly recommended.

*Randall Wall*

## Letters

[The following has been submitted to the Editor of the Albuquerque Tribune]

The Albuquerque Tribune is to be congratulated for running the cartoon by their own cartoonist, Glasgow, published on Thursday, April 19. Uncle Sam is stunned at the headlines, "Bloodbath" -- and Iraq says, comforting him with an arm on his shoulder, "Now you know how I feel every day. Perhaps it is time for you to go home."

I can't erase my memories of the Vietnam War. I wasn't in it over there; I was opposing it as best I could from here. And I never got over how callous most Americans were then about the amount of suffering, destruction and death our forces were inflicting on the people of Vietnam.

Sometimes I think that lack of feeling must be the result of the slavery and genocide with which this country began. Then I remember how Colin Powell responded to a news reporter's question about Iraqi casualties. "That's a number that doesn't interest me," he answered. It's a sad commentary on the sensitivity and awareness of our brightest and best.

And it's no different in this war than in the last one. We don't feel the pain of our victims. One can only hope that maybe someday we'll get to the point where we can quit invading other people's countries and getting whipped for our trouble.

*Harry Willson*

### Friendly Philosophers

**Monday, May 7, 2007**

Open Forum

*Bring Your Own Topic for a General Discussion*

**Monday, May 21, 2007**

*Remembering Mark Twain, with Hal Holbrook's  
"Mark Twain Tonite"*

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, May 6, 9 am, the film *Friends of God: A Road Trip with Alexandra Pelosi* will be shown.

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

