



Humanist Society of New Mexico



October 2008

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

HSNM Family Co-op

Alternative Children's Sunday School

October 5th & 19th, 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, October 4th, 10:30am

A New Path for Humanism

Guest Speaker: Ron Herman

Southside Branch Library
6599 Jaguar Drive

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

Grants Humanists

Saturday, October 4th, 10:00 to noon

Round Table Meeting

For more information contact Henry Bulger
(505) 287-4465

NMSU, Grants Campus

Upcoming HSNM Meetings

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

Saturday, October 11th

Informal Meeting

General Discussion

Refreshments: Carolyn Kaye

Summit Apartments, 3901 Indian School NE

Saturday, October 18th

Topical Discussion

Truth

Special Collections Library, 423 Central Ave. NE

Saturday, October 25th

Speaker Meeting

The Witch Craze of the Middle Ages

Joan Ludeke

Refreshments: Bill Lind

UNM Law School, Room 2406, 1117 Stanford NE

Sunday, November 16th

HSNM Book Club

2:00-4:00pm

*Rock of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness
of Life*

by Stephen Jay Gould

Title Wave Books, 1408 Eubank 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.

You are a Detective

Let's say you're a detective and you have a mystery to solve. A crime occurred in Mongolia, and the clue you have to work with is the Y-chromosome of the criminal who did the dastardly deed. The Y-chromosome is the male sex chromosome, passed on down from father to

son, and all you have to do is find the fellow who carries that distinctive Y-chromosome. He will be, beyond of shadow of a doubt, the perpetrator of the crime. In TV detective language, "the perp."

Unfortunately, far too many men carry the same Y-chromosome, which might be useful in solving a crime, but not decisive.

By the time of his death in 1227, Genghis Khan's empire stretched from the China Sea to the Persian Gulf, and Khan's legitimate sons were expanding it more. Both Genghis Khan and his sons were also determined to propagate the Khan Y-chromosome. After each conquest, they gathered all of the beautiful women among the conquered people for insemination by the either Khan himself or by his boys. The present geographical distribution of the Khan Y-chromosomes fits neatly within the limits of the old Mongol Empire. Oxford geneticist Bryan Sykes estimates that 8 percent of all the men in that region or a total of 16 million men now carry the same Khan Y-chromosome.

Well, that record is unusual. But Oriental. Surely, we don't have situation like that in the West!

Would you be interested in the Macdonald, MacDougall and MacAlister clans? Many of the men are directly descended through unbroken father-to-son lines. Sykes estimates that copies of the Y-chromosome for male Macdonalds have reached about two million, and the Y-chromosome for the MacAlisters and MacDoughalls have reached half a million.

How about the Jefferson family? They say that Thomas Jefferson fathered an illegitimate child, named Eston, by his slave, Sally Hemings, and that can be proved by means of Thomas' Y-chromosome. So says the British scientific publication, *Nature*.

Even *Nature* makes a mistake now and then. At the time Sally conceived Eston, at least 24 Jefferson men were milling around in Virginia, and eight of them were habitues of Monticello. For example, Thomas Jefferson's younger brother, Randolph, who was a widower, and his five sons, in the late teens and early twenties, lived just 20 miles from Monticello and were often on the Monticello premises.

Whenever the sixty-four-year-old President of the United States returned to Monticello for a vacation, there would be a gathering of the clan. In August of 1807, President Jefferson wrote a letter to Randolph

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

Harry Willson: Vice President/Programs

Jerry Wesner: Past President

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Randall Wall: Newsletter Editor

Janet Johnson: Book Club

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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.

telling him that his (Randolph's) twin sister, Anna, planned to attend the next gathering. The twins would be happy to see one another again.

Jefferson's slave, Isaac, had this to say about Randolph: "Old Master's brother, Mass Randall was a mighty simple man: used to come out among black people, play the fiddle and dance half the night; hadn't much more sense than Isaac." Also, it was said that Randolph taught the Hemings boys to play the fiddle. For years, local gossip associated Randolph with Sally.

Sally gave birth to Eston on May 21, 1808. Six days after the baby's birth, Randolph returned to Monticello to sign his will. He re-married the next year. Sally Hemings had no more children. Thomas Jefferson retired to live out the rest of his life in and around Monticello.

Thomas Jefferson's political enemies, the Northern Federalists, had begun nasty rumors about Thomas back in 1802. They charged that Thomas Jefferson, Oliver Wendell Holmes and George Washington impregnated beautiful but helpless slave girls and then sold their own children. "I saw a daughter of Thomas Jefferson being sold for a thousand dollars! I saw with with my own eyes!"

It got worse. There was a freed-slave community in southern Ohio. Sally's sons, Madison and Eston, lived there after they and their mother has been freed and their mother had passed away. It was in Pike County, Ohio, where preparations were made for the last, big surge of gossip about Sally and her children, which led eventually to Fawn Brodie's otherwise excellent biography of Thomas Jefferson, the Merchant and Ivory film about Thomas, and a seemingly endless line of sensational bodice-rippers.

Madison told a census taker that he was the son of Thomas Jefferson, which inspired a series of interviews that appeared in the *Pike County Republican* in March of 1873 entitled "Life Among the Lowly." Samuel Wetmore, the author, admitted that he "paraphrased" Madison, because the ex-slave couldn't express himself well enough. Wetmore paraphrased all right. He had Madison watching Thomas Jefferson leave Monticello to become the nation's next president before Madison himself was born! Subsequent newsmen were disappointed to report that "Madison changed his story." Even so, Fawn Brodie based her book on the Samuel Wetmore interviews.

The trouble with all of this lying is that it blots out the truth, which is that Thomas Jefferson's real mistress was Maria Cosway. She founded a girl's school in Lodi, Italy, where she educated girls in the same courses taught to boys in fine schools like Eton. The girls had no particular trouble with what had been considered

boys' subjects. However, Maria's students were the children of nobility and royalty, and so Maria gathered orphan girls from the streets of Milan and proved that they could learn boys' subjects, too.

The Italians called Maria Cosway "the Abbess," thinking she must be religious. She explained that her inspiration was not God. Her inspiration was Thomas Jefferson.

Recommended -

Adam's Curse by Bryan Sykes, W. W. Norton, New York, 2004 – on the Y-chromosome.

The Jefferson-Hemings Myth, Editor Eyer Robert Coates, Sr., The Thomas Jefferson Heritage Society, 2001. - on Randolph Jefferson.

Lois Reisz Kimbrell

Change Is in the Air

I can smell it. Besides the approach of autumn, I sense change in the socio-political air. For one thing more people seem to care about the outcome of pending elections than was true before.

A man, half of whose genes came from Africa, has been nominated by the Democrats for president. For millions it feels like a giant step toward the freedom they've been singing about for more than fifty years. Others, including people we know personally, state, "I could never vote for a black man." Slavery and all the guilt that goes with it are still with us, left over from a century and a half ago.

A woman, who was unheard of by most Americans until yesterday, has been nominated by the Republicans for vice-president. She is a hard-core fundamentalist. For some of us it seems very risky to put such a one a heartbeat away from almost unlimited power. Try to imagine her nominations to the Supreme Court. But she is so inexperienced, especially in foreign policy, we have to assume that she'll be a figurehead, as the current Acting President has been.

Either way, things will change. Perhaps for a little better, perhaps for a little worse, perhaps for a very great deal worse. What concerns me just now are three topics that aren't being discussed at all amid all this potential change. These are matters in which drastic change is needed and soon. They are: water, over-population and war.

[1] The world is fussed about oil, but water will become a much more urgent "natural resource" very shortly. They are already fighting over it in Palestine, Africa and Bolivia. Yet here in this southwest desert, the vast majority still take water quite for granted and see no need for much change. "Nature bats last," our friend Jay Evans is fond of saying, and water may become the end

of the matter, for millions, unless we change our attitude and our behavior.

[2] Population can be controlled in the following ways: famine, disease, war or “other.” So far “other” is a tabu topic. Humans and human institutions are governed by myths, whenever this matter is raised. The Roman Catholic doctrine of sex [“Maximize suffering”], Muslim machismo, and animistic superstition all refuse to permit modern scientific methods of population control to be implemented on a global scale. But there are too many humans on this planet. Almost every problem facing humanity has over-population at its root. We saw the young emaciated woman in the African refugee camp. Famine seemed to be the problem. We gasped when the commentator said she was mother of nine. Something must change and on a large scale, or the quantity of human suffering will be enormous.

[3] War has become an obscene human activity. It is also extremely unwise. The chief offender, world-wide, is the government of the United States. The budget provides the clue. The U.S. spends more on war than the next ten countries taken together. The waste of resources is staggering.

The war mentality leads to complete moral decay. Lying, torturing, false imprisonment, terrorism – dropping bombs on children from 30,000 feet [which is what the war-hero candidate did in the service of his country forty years ago] is terrorism.

The attitude toward weapons of mass destruction is rooted in militarism. We have thousands, but our leaders think that no one else is allowed to have any. We have signed a treaty promising to get rid of ours, but instead we “upgrade” them and prepare the necessary parts for new ones.

Many of the weapons, including the nuclear warheads, have little or no use. The Pentagon doesn’t even want many of them. The weapons systems have turned into pork barrel projects, scattered all across the country. What can a military general do with an atomic bomb that won’t endanger his own troops, and finally, the very homeland? Such weapons are only good for threatening people with, and you can’t frighten or influence crazy people with threats.

So, it is time to renounce war as a means of enhancing national policy. It does no good. It can only function well as defense, and we haven’t been on defense since the Battle of Gettysburg. Our very attitude toward war must change. Some of our policies will need changing, too, such as the one which says we can simply take other people’s natural resources. Just now that means oil. Soon it will mean water. And to say that war will take care of over-population is the height of cynicism. There are better ways.

Let’s be glad for the pending changes for the better, and work hard to bring them about, and keep pressing for more change.

Harry Willson

Letter to the Editor

September 6th Hank Bulger led a stimulating discussion of mythology. Among the many afterthoughts that occurred to me was the following guess about what really happened nearly two thousand years ago in the Middle East.

A great teacher acted as a distraction in order to save his students from annihilation. Later, when the movement became confident of its survival, the resurrection myth (a familiar story in the Greco-Roman world) was adopted as a gesture of defiance to the Roman imperial order.

Dale L. Berry, Grants, NM

Friendly Philosophers

Monday, October 6th

Open Forum

Bring a Your Own Topic for General Discussion

Monday, October 20th

Pantheism – Patty DeRose

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, October 5th, 9am

Bill Maher video interview with Larry King on his new movie “Religulous”

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE

Tuesday, October 21st

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, October 15th, 7pm

Albuquerque's KiMo Ghost: The True Story

Benjamin Radford

UNM Law Building

1117 Stanford NE, Room 2402