

IMPORTANT: Venue for January 24th changed! See Page 2

January 2016
Issue 3.1

Jefferson Humanists

Jefferson County Colorado Chapter of The American Humanist Association www.jeffersonhumanists.org

Jefferson Humanists Begin Third year of Operations with a timely and informative presentation on the Middle East

Nader Hashemi: “The ISIS Crisis and the Broken Politics of the Middle East: How Should the World Respond?”

Nader Hashemi is the Director of the Center for Middle East Studies and an Associate Professor of Middle East and Islamic Politics at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. Dr. Hashemi describes his presentation by saying: “The Paris and San Bernadino massacres are widely viewed as a turning point in the war against ISIS. Global attention is now focused on this extremist group and further attacks in major Western cities are expected. Before a coherent strategy against ISIS can be devised, however, a clear understanding of the roots of this organization is required.”

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Dr. Hashemi’s presentation will be followed by an opportunity to network with friends, explore the Jefferson Humanists library, and share a light supper with us

January Menu

In honor of our guest speaker, I have chosen a Middle Eastern theme for our dinner.

Middle Eastern Chickpea & Rice Stew
(Vegetarian, Gluten Free)

Cucumbers in Yogurt

Basbousa (Semolina Cakes with Syrup)

Whole Wheat Pita Bread

Suggested donation: \$7 -\$10

If you plan to join us for the buffet supper please RSVP to Mari Cowley 303-420-4139 or celticmyst2007@yahoo.com

Due to a scheduling conflict with JUC our meeting for January 24th only at 5pm will be held at Maple Grove Park/Arbor House just 100 yards west of JUC at 14600 West 32nd Ave.

Meeting Venue Changed

Social Action Activities

Jefferson Humanists has chosen the Family Tree Women's Shelter as its Social Action project this year. **We collect items such as:**

Toiletries, Bath and bed linens

Games and Books

Clothes for the women and children who reside at the shelter

Family Tree says: "By taking the first steps and leaving a violent situations, they begin

the long journey of breaking the chain of violence."

Please Help

DID YOU KNOW?

By Mari Cowley

"Domestic violence is a serious problem around the world. It violates the fundamental human rights of women and often results in serious injury or death."

World Health Organization

One in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.

An estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner each year.

Boys who witness domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults.

Domestic violence is a community problem, not just a family problem. Domestic violence affects us all. Domestic violence perpetuates itself by raising children who will use force against others. It leaves victims and abusers in isolation. It fills family, friends and neighbors with fear. It costs our communities money, like any other disaster.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

To prevent domestic violence, we can reach out to victims:

– To stop violence, we must recognize and label abusive behavior when it's witnessed.

This creates awareness and lets the victim and perpetrator know we're conscious of what's occurring.

--To stop violence, we must interrupt the abuser's control of his victim. We need to let her know she doesn't deserve abuse and that help is available. We must also support her while she decides what to do next. It may take several attempts before she is able to decide what to do.

IS SOMEONE YOU KNOW BEING ABUSED?

Here are 10 warning signs:

- Seems to have more “accidents” than most people you know.
- Is frequently late to work or often calls in sick.
- Receives harassing phone calls.
- Is expected to be home at a certain time and appears fearful of missing that deadline.
- Has no money to spend as she chooses, even though she works; is expected to turn over her paycheck to her spouse.
- Has decreased or dropped contact with family and friends.
- Abuses alcohol or drugs.
- Is either frequently timid and retiring or aggressive and angry.
- Frequently disparages her own abilities, calling herself names like dumb, stupid, clumsy and worthless.
- Has a number of physical complaints, such as stomach pains, fatigue, migraine or psychological complaints like anxiety or depression.

Don't ignore the warning signs. Reach out with concern and remind the person that help is available.

Your donations to the Family Tree help provide a safe place for women and children who have made the decision to leave an unhealthy and violent environment. Your donations help by providing some of the things they had to leave behind and donations for the kids provide things to do when their world is in chaos. During the last quarter of 2015 your donations reached over \$617.00 in supplies and food. **THANK YOU!! Mari**

MEMBER TO MEMBER (M2M)

By Evelyn Simpson

The first exploratory meeting of the JH Member to Member (M2M) support group was October 29, 2015, with four members attending. The name was approved and goals were explored.

The purpose of M2M is to foster connectivity within the Jefferson Humanist Association (JHA) by encouraging voluntary, non-professional help from members to members when specific, temporary needs arise. M2M volunteer services are not regarded as professional services, nor long-term solutions to chronic problems, but rather limited friend to friend assistance.

“Everybody needs some help sometimes!”

A variety of services may be available depending on the talents and schedules of our volunteers. These personal services will be donated without the expectation of monetary compensation. However, recipients of services are expected to reciprocate in whatever manner they can. For example, a person with limited mobility can make valuable phone calls.

The help given will be regarded as “mutual assistance” rather than “charitable giving”. As such, it will not be available to the Public, but only to JH members. All services and ideas are evolving so it is possible that in the future we might decide to expand the services to include non-JH folks. While the needs of older members, caregivers and people with temporary medical conditions have been discussed, the needs of younger singles, families, parents and children should also be included so that they too feel connected to JH.

The January meeting will be on Saturday, January 30, 2016, at 11:00 am at the home of Nancy Bolt in Arvada. Please contact Eve Simpson or Nancy Bolt for the address:

Eve: GiveAHoot7@Outlook.com
303-233-5609

Nancy: NancyBolt@earthlink.net

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The January meeting will allow us to start organizing. If you cannot attend, but wish to be informed about the group, please send an email or phone message to Eve. Let us know what services you would like to provide. You might be able to chat on the phone or help us make up a services referral list or provide computer tech help or give caretaker respite for elders or for children with special needs. You might help by driving a member to an appointment or by pet sitting or ... You name it. Also, let us know what services you think you will need.

The group will need help setting up a database of volunteers and services. We will need some legal advice to keep us out of trouble! Bring your concerns, opinion and ideas to the January meeting. We are evolving!

I get by with a little help from my friends

**Join the FROGs
(Freethinkers Reading
Opportunity Group)
By Matthew Elisha**

If you enjoy reading and discussing books, we invite you to join the Jefferson Humanists reading group known as the Freethinkers Reading Opportunity Group (or FROG for short). We meet the 2nd Saturday of every month from 2-4 pm to discuss interesting, thought-provoking books and examine their humanist themes. Past books have included, *The God Delusion*, *Prodigal Summer*, *The Martian*, *Good without God* and *The Tipping Point*.

Join us in January for discussion of *The Sixth Extinction* by Elizabeth Kolbert, an award-winning staff writer with the New Yorker. RSVP on Meetup (<http://meetu.ps/2Rk6cD>) or

email Matthew Elisha if you'd like to attend. Here is our schedule for the next several months:

- **February 13th** - *Doomsday Book* by Connie Willis
- **April 9th** - *Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith and Love* by Dava Sobel
- **May 14th** - *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason and the Gap Between Us and Them* by Joshua Greene
- **July 9th** - *The Strange Case of the Rickety Cossack and other Cautionary Tales from Human Evolution* by Ian Tattersall
- **August 13th** - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon

In March and June, we will try something new. Each participant will read a book of their choice on the month's theme and will then share the book with the rest of the group. We hope this variation will lead to a lively discussion. Our topic for March will be Islam and the Middle East and for June, Thomas Jefferson.

Contact Matthew Elisha to join the group and be added to the FROG email list: mrelisha@msn.com, 303.432.8694.

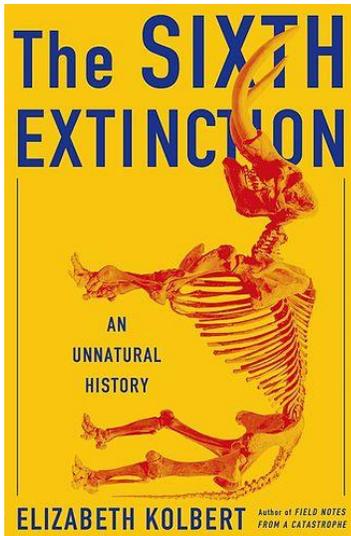
January FROG meeting

January 9th Meeting: *The Sixth Extinction* by Elizabeth Kolbert

Location: Eve Simpson's home

Facilitator: Matthew Elisha

RSVP on Meetup (<http://meetu.ps/2Rk6cD>) or email Matthew Elisha if you'd like to attend.



There have been five separate mass extinction events in the earth's history, and we may be in the middle of a sixth event. Though it is speculated that some were created by otherworldly events, such as an asteroid smashing

into the earth, and others by severe volcanic eruptions or massive glaciation, the current event is almost wholly the work of humans. Author Elizabeth Kolbert examines these past events, as well as recent extinctions of species by human hands, to help us better understand this current extinction event. Kolbert looks at the many ways we are destroying our environment, from the acidification of oceans, the clear cutting of forests, excessive carbon dioxide levels to the transfer of invasive species from one part of the globe to another. As species after species die off, can humans survive? Will we go the way of the dinosaurs, or can we do anything to stop the progress of this mass extinction and retain a viable environment on earth that includes a wide variety of species?

Doomsday Book by Connie Willis (FROG book for February 2016)

In the world of 2048, historians study history by traveling back in time as observers. History student Kivrin Engle is transported back into an English village in the 14th century, only to discover that she's mistakenly arrived just before the beginning of the Black Plague. Meanwhile, in her time, her colleagues at Oxford are striving to bring Kivrin home, while dealing with their own deadly outbreak of a strain of influenza. Falling ill soon after

arriving in the past, how can Kivrin survive the deadly plague that wiped out half the population of Europe? Can she be brought back to her own time without carrying the deadly Plague with her? Connie Willis's Hugo and Nebula award-winning novel creates a suspenseful science fiction scenario that examines differences in how humans of the past and the future deal with epidemics, yet retain the same fears and feelings of helplessness when faced with a tidal wave of sickness and death.

Jefferson Humanists Library

The Jefferson Humanists has a growing library of books on humanist issues like science, evolution, history, religion, philosophy, sociology, nature and much more. Our library has over 200 books with works by Dawkins, Hitchens, Sagan, Vonnegut and other many other humanist writers. A selection of the library's books are brought to monthly meetings for members to check out. The full collection is cataloged online at <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/mrelisha/jeffersonhumanists>.

If you see books in the catalog that you'd like to check out, contact Matthew Elisha (mrelisha@msn.com, 303.432.8694), and he will bring the books to the next monthly meeting.

REMINDER: If you currently have books checked out from the library and are through with them, please remember to return them at the next monthly meeting.

Overdevelopment, Overpopulation, Overshoot

The Jefferson Humanists library recently added a copy of *Overdevelopment, Overpopulation, Overshoot*, a large bound book from and donated by Global Population Speak Out. This organization is dedicated to bringing international attention to the crisis posed by overdevelopment and unchecked human population growth.

This book illustrates with impressive photography the ways the human population has adversely affected our planet, through overt consumption and expansion that threatens both our world and our species. To view the whole book online, go to <https://populationspeakout.org/the-book/view-book/>. The library's print copy will be available to checkout at the next monthly meeting.

Flight and Rescue:

A Viewpoint of Then and Now

Editorial by Nancy Bolt

“It is a fantastic commentary on the inhumanity of our times that for thousands and thousands of people, a piece of paper with a stamp on it is the difference between life and death.”

No, that quote does not describe refugees from Syria trying to escape the violence in their war-torn country. It was written by American journalist Dorothy Thompson in 1938, referring to Jews trying to escape Nazi Germany. The quote is from *Flight and Rescue* published by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and about a little known route of escape of Jews from Germany, first to Lithuania, then across Russia, and finally to Japan.

Two heroic lower level consulate officials, Jan Zwartendijk from the Dutch consulate, and Chiune Sugihara from the Japanese consulate, signed the papers that allowed Jews to travel east. Zwartendijk, a business man in a temporary position at the Dutch consulate, provided hundreds of declarations with a Dutch seal that declared that no visa was required to go to the Dutch West Indies. (This is actually false, but nobody asked the Dutch West Indies.)

With this “authorized” destination, Sugihara at the Japanese consulate issued exit visas to go to this fantasy destination. Jewish refugees had to come up with \$40 American dollars (no idea why US\$) which was difficult for some. But when they had the dollars, they took the Trans-Siberian Express through Russia to Vladivostok on the Russian coast and from there a boat to Japan.

These courageous men signed their respective documents against the orders of their superiors in the home country and until the end of the day when the consulates were closed by the Russian invasion of Lithuania.

From there, Jewish refugees had to find somewhere else to go since Japan never intended for them to stay. The problem that the refugees faced sounds very familiar today. Susan Bachrach, curator of the exhibit on which the book is based, put it this way:

Although American public opinion condemned Nazi persecution, popular attitudes as well as official policies opposed large-scale immigration of Jews. Such views were shaped by the Great Depression, when anti-Semitic, xenophobic, and nativist prejudices thrived in a time of high unemployment. After WWII began, the state department's fear of spies entering the US led to even more stringent policies that adversely affected the visa applications of many refugees arriving in Japan in 1941. As a consequence, the number of Jewish refugees stranded in Kobe grew, a phenomenon that occurred in Western Europe on a larger scale at the port of Lisbon, Portugal.

Todeusz Romer, Poland's ambassador to Japan, appealed to colleagues in Great Britain, Australia, and Canada to let refugees in.

He wrote: “It is... not fitting to enquire whether this or that Polish refugee is Jew or Christian, but only whether or not he is a faithful and devoted servant of his country and thereby of the common cause of the Allies.” Romer’s efforts proved decisive in securing more than 300 visas that enabled Polish Jews to reach safe havens.

Bachrach goes on to say:

There were specific bureaucratic obstacles that hindered thousands of Jews from reaching the safety of American shores between 1938 and 1941. The Immigration Act of 1924, which its congressional sponsors described as “an act to limit the immigration of aliens into the United States,” set fixed numerical quotas. Working within the framework of U.S. Law and State Department policies, American consuls abroad all too often used their discretionary powers to reject applications for visas—the vitally important stamps placed in passports that permitted passage across international borders.

Some of the refugees managed to obtain legal visas to the US or Canada. Most did not. They were either stranded in Kobe, Japan, or sent to Shanghai, where no visa was required. The Japanese did not harbor the negative (basically hatred) toward the Jews. In fact, they were mystified why the Germans felt that way. Their initial welcome was based on anticipation that the Jewish people would bring economic development to Japan, and when that didn’t work, they wanted them to leave because they had become an economic burden.

Bachrach says, “local Japanese became accustomed to the refugees, extending generous hospitality.” However, Japanese

bureaucrats required that the Jewish refugee support groups guarantee that basic food and lodging could be paid for.

Moses Beckleman, European director of the American joint distribution committee of relief to refugees, described the plight of the Jewish refugees trying to find a way out of Japan: “Five thousand refugees wander aimlessly today in Kobe, Japan, awaiting precious papers for entrance to America. Twice that number are in Portugal, awaiting accommodations aboard the one American passenger line still maintaining service there. And in Shanghai ‘port of last resort’ are 20,000 uprooted souls – without hope of escape or means of livelihood, dependent upon international relief organizations.”

All of this sounds very familiar – the reluctance of the U.S. and European countries to take refugees; the fear of spies (then) or terrorists (now); the need for “paper” to allow refugees to get from one place to another; the discrimination based on religion; the desperate attempt to find a safe haven; the difficulty in finding support for food or shelter; the support groups raising funds and trying to help in the face of politicians closing borders (mostly for political gain); the denigration of a whole group of people based on their religion. Just as was the case in the 1940’s, we are today letting our fear replace common sense.

Film Review

by Bob Hofmann

The movie, **Trumbo**, stars Bryan Cranston as Dalton Trumbo and Alan Tudyk as Ian McLellan Hunter, who fronted for Trumbo during his black-list days. The film, adapted from a play by Trumbo’s son, Christopher, and skillfully directed by Jay Roach, dramatizes a footnote to a dark period of American history, called McCarthyism, when congress attempts

to ferret out and disgrace prominent members of the entertainment industry who may have ties to the Communist party.

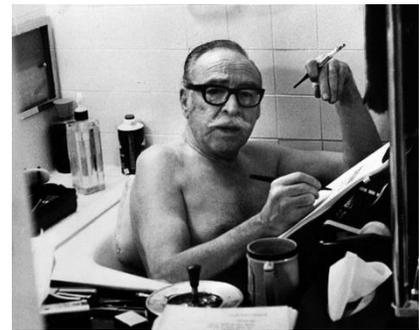
By way of background, the Korean War is in full swing and the Cold War is heating up. Congress attempts to instill deep fear of “the godless Communists” in the minds of the American public. This is also a period during the 1950s when: the National Day of Prayer was declared, the phrase, *under God*, was added to the Pledge of Allegiance, and “In God We Trust” was decreed the national motto. Dalton Trumbo is the most successful film writer of the period, and is a leader of a small clique of, successful Hollywood talents attempting to unionize the film production industry.

Then, along comes the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) who try to whip up hysteria in the American public by going after public figures with the question: “are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party”. The HUAC has subpoena powers and when their targets refuse to answer the question they are cited with contempt of congress and thrown into jail. In addition, the targets are black-listed to prevent them from working. Many of Hollywood top talents, including Trumbo, fall into the HUAC net and spend time in prison as a result.

Much of the film is about how Trumbo deals with the issue of continuing his career under the black-list handicap and how his family deals with his mad rush to succeed. One of the funny highlights of the film covers a period when he organizes other black-list writers to create movies under assumed names for King Brothers Productions, a small studio producing B-grade movies at lightning speed. One of the brothers, Frank King, is played by John Goodman with his usual hilarious gusto. Both Kirk Douglas (Spartacus) played by Dean O’Gorman, and film director/producer, Otto

Preminger (Exodus) played by Christian Berkel approached Trumbo to write films based on these successful books. Preminger and Douglas had the courage and power to demand that writer Trumbo is officially credited. The film Spartacus is awarded best picture in 1960 and breaks 15 years of black-list persecution with Dalton Trumbo’s name rolling with the credits.

In my opinion, this is not just a remarkable film for its design or overall quality.



Trumbo at Work in his Bathtub

It has excellent technical attributes for costumes, scenery, and the acting is compelling. What really sets this film apart are the obvious parallels between then and now. In the late 1940s through early 60s, shady politicians used half-truths and out and out lies to convince highly patriotic Americans that Russia was intent on taking over the country; that “Commie Agents” were hiding around every corner and attempting to influence our youth through the power of movie propaganda. Then, it was preservation of the US Constitution and the “American Way”. Today, 2016, the same ilk of politicians attempt to make us believe that Muslims are eager to enter our country for similar reasons. Except now the Muslims are all terrorists’ intent on destroying our “Christian based Nation” and forcing people to give up their Christian churches in favor of worshiping Muhammad. It is frightening to see that many conservative Evangelical Christians are falling for the lies just as the ultra-patriots did in the 1940s. I give this movie 3 out of 4 stars.

***Jefferson Humanists Seasonal Celebration
Caroling Caroling off we go into 2016
Tasty Food, Hearty Drinks and Fun Folks
Always Glistening***



And a good time was had by all