

September 2016
Issue 3.9

Jefferson Humanists

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

Our September Speakers

Should voters approve Colorado Care Amendment 69?

Amendment 69 would transform the way we pay for health care in Colorado.

Supporters say it would assure every Colorado resident excellent affordable health care similar to the way Medicare covers seniors.

Those opposed believe that it will cost more in the long run and/or are oppose to the action as an amendment due to the difficulty to make future changes.

Former State Senator Jeanne Nicholson will present the pro side of the issue. She is a registered nurse, holds a Masters degree in Community Health Nursing, and has long been a strong advocate for universal healthcare.

Freddie Gaudet will make the con argument. Freddie was born and raised in the Denver area. He has multiple years of campaign and policy experience including a year in the State Capital. In 2014, he worked as a Deputy Field Director in Jefferson County for Senator Gardner's campaign.



Jeanne Nicholson, RN



Freddie Gaudet

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THIRD ANNUAL RETREAT FOR JEFFERSON HUMANISTS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1ST.

If you are interested in a leadership position at JH,
please contact Jim Bole at: randjbole@gmail.com

Everyone in our chapter is invited to beautiful Mount Vernon Country Club, just a 20 minute drive from our meeting place at Jefferson Unitarian Church on October 1st. We will start at 9 a.m. with a light breakfast. At 9:30 a.m. our keynote speaker Chuck Mowry will help us to focus on Social Justice as our major thrust for the year. Chuck has a rich background. He is a retired Methodist minister, was a business consultant for Head Start, and the first Interfaith Alliance Executive Director in Denver.

The retreat will include other workshops after lunch and there will be time for short hikes, relaxing enjoying the mountain views, and getting better acquainted with other members.

There will be **NO CHARGE** for members. Please RSVP to Barb Bailey at 720-289-1117 or barbaile@aol.com. Call with any questions.

The Jefferson Humanists Board Activities/Decisions in August By Edna Miller

- The JH Annual Planning Retreat will be Saturday, October 1, 2016, at the Mt Vernon Country Club. Jim Bole suggested that members read Roy Speckhardt's book **Creating Change through Humanism** before attending. **See above.**
- The new Chair of the Information Technology (IT) Committee is Traci Bickell
- The next date for the Jefferson Humanists Fundraising Musical is tentatively set for March 12, 2017
- The Executive Committee agreed to include introductions and the welcoming of visitors and new members during our Chapter Meetings.
- A big thank you was given to Matthew Elisha and Traci Bickell and all who helped with organizing the picnic. Positive comments were received. Matthew has kept a list of expenses and notes to help with further picnic planning.



Jefferson Humanists
Book Discussion Group
(Freethinkers Reading Opportunity
Group)

In September, we'll be discussing *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon. Haddon tells the tale of Christopher John Francis Boone, a young boy with Asperger's Syndrome, who knows all the capitals and countries of the world, can recite every prime number to 7,057, but has difficulty understanding human emotions. When a neighbor's dog is killed, Christopher sets out to solve the mystery, forcing him to venture beyond his comfort zone and face his fears. Told from Christopher's unique point of view, Haddon gives us insights into the mind of his protagonist and the struggles he endures when faced by a world that overwhelms him with too many sensations and with no personal filter to screen them out. For more information see www.amazon.com/Curious-Incident-Dog-Night-Time/dp/1400032717.

We invite you to join us on Saturday, September 17th from 2-4 pm at the Belmar Library located at 555 S. Allison Parkway (Wadsworth and Alameda) in Lakewood. Please RSVP on Meetup at <http://meetu.ps/2ZGFgV> or by contacting Matthew Elisha (mrelisha@msn.com, 303.432.8694).

Upcoming schedule:

- **September 17th, 2 – 4 pm:** *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*

Location: Belmar Library, 555 South Allison Parkway, Lakewood

Facilitator: Carole Hughes

RSVP: Meetup (<http://meetu.ps/2ZGFgV>) or email Matthew Elisha (mrelisha@msn.com)

- **October 8, 2016 - Topic:** Political Movements, Populism and Extremism - Read *It Can't Happen Here* by Sinclair Lewis, *American Hysteria: The Untold Story of Mass Political Extremism in the United States* by Andrew Burt and/or another book on topic.

- **November 12, 2016** - *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman
- **December 10, 2016** - *A Man without a Country* by Kurt Vonnegut
- **January 14, 2017** – **Topic:** Famous Humanists - Read a book about or by a famous humanist (e.g. Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Bertrand Russell, etc.)
- **February 11, 2017** - *The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu: And Their Race to Save the World's Most Precious Manuscripts* by Joshua Hammer

For a complete reading list and more about the Freethinkers Reading Opportunity Group (FROG), see the Jefferson Humanists website at www.jeffersonhumanist.org.

Review FROG Discussion Group Meeting on August 13, 2016

Creating Change Through Humanism by Roy Speckhardt
Reviewed by Darlene Boord

Reading the book seems to have been a positive experience for this group. Several participants in the discussion cited various parts of the book that they had benefitted from reading. I think this group is keen on community involvement and activism, because a lot of the references had to do with the last part of the book, where suggestions were made about things one can do as a humanist.

Some discussion centered on how people had come to humanism in the course of their lives. We also discussed the ramifications of “coming out” as an atheist, an agnostic, a humanist, etc. People have been killed for admitting to not being religious or not believing in god or not following the party line. The risk is probably not as extreme today in the United States as elsewhere in the world, but there are still risks of various types. Prejudice against freethinkers is still pretty strong. Witness this quote from George H. W. Bush in the book: “No, I don’t know that atheists should be considered as citizens, nor should they be considered patriots. This is one nation under God.” I think this demonstrates the attitude of a lot of people

toward citizens that are not religious.

There are a couple of things I wanted to comment on that were not discussed.

Page 91. The author says we must recognize and respect nature and the animal kingdom of which we are part. But do we? We enslave and torture and murder the nonhuman animals. Is this the morally correct thing to be doing? People always seem to overlook this aspect when they want to respect nature and believe they are doing so. Why do they overlook this? I believe we are so insensitive to the other animal nations because we have a mindset of *Us vs. Them*. This ties in with our book from last month, *Moral Tribes*, which talked extensively about *Us vs. Them* and how we need to get past this mindset. That book didn’t talk about this concept with respect to the other animal nations, but it’s the same principle.

Thinking about the other animal nations as “them” is so ingrained in the human psyche that what we’re doing doesn’t even occur to us when it comes to thinking about them.

Page 133. The author says, “Some thoughtful Humanists still debate this, but it certainly appears that free will doesn’t actually exist.” What?! No free will? Then he says we should act as if there were free will. All this I did not understand at all. Perhaps this topic could be brought up and discussed at the upcoming events where the author will be present. That would make for an interesting discussion.

Added by Nancy Bolt

At the end of his book, Speckhardt lists ten “commandments” of Humanism. Here they are in brief form.

- Altruism – the unselfish concern for the welfare of others without expectation of reward, recognition, or return.
- Caring for the world around us – everyone can and ought to play a role in caring for the Earth and its inhabitants.
- Critical thinking – we gain unreliable knowledge because we are able to observe, report, experiment, and analyze what goes on around us.
- Empathy – the ability to understand and enter imaginatively into another living being’s feelings.

- Ethical development – questions of fairness, cooperation, and sharing are among the first moral issues we encounter in our ethical development as human beings.
- Global awareness – We live in a diverse social and cultural world, with interdependence so that events anywhere can have consequences everywhere. The next generation needs to be taught global citizenship.
- Humility – we must remember how much we don't know and still need to learn.
- Peace and social justice – we need a curriculum that values and fosters peace education, promote the human rights of all people, and understanding among all nations, cultural, and religious groups.
- Responsibility – moral responsibility to tell the truth helps someone in trouble, and live up to the promises we've made.
- Service and participation – fulfillment from an individual's participation in the service of humane ideals.

Looks Can be Deceiving.....

by Mari Cowley

Last month I talked about how “old age isn't for sissies” and this month I'm going to continue with that same line of thought.

Have you ever noticed that folks who don't really know us think we haven't a care in the world. Our institutional education is complete; our kids are raised, and for many of us, we're not chained to a job five (5) days a week. On the surface it looks like we're free to pursue our leisure interests and generally enjoy life free of responsibility and aggravation. While this may be true to some degree, there's still hidden stresses. Stress we may not be comfortable talking about.

For example, retiring means we don't have to fight the traffic in good or bad weather, but it also means we may lose a part of who we think we are. Having grown children might mean we're free of having to wrestle the kids to bed or help them with their homework, but it also means our kids no longer rely on us for their care and support. As we age, we have to accept that our role in life has changed and we need to find new routines and relationships.

Many of us are struggling with anxiety over:

- Does my life have meaning if I'm no longer getting a paycheck or cooking dinner for the family?

- As I get older will I lose my mental faculties? If my physical health deteriorates, will I have to give up the activities I enjoy?
- Can I cope with losing loved ones and friends?
- While there are no clear cut answers and there's no “one answer fits all” scenario, there are things we can do.

“My memory isn't what it used to be.” There seems to be a widespread belief that as the brain grows older, a person's capacity for reasoning begins to decline. In actuality, there is very little truth to this. As seniors, our intellectual capacity remains the same well into old age. While we are just as intelligent as younger people, we process information more slowly and we learn differently.

For some, we go from being a visual learner (you read the instructions once and you've got it!) to kinetic learners (we have to repeat a new skill several times before we get it). Is one way of learning better than another? Of course not, it is just different.

If you feel your forgetfulness is interfering significantly with your ability to function, see your doctor. There are many **treatable** conditions that can affect our memory:

- Lack of sleep
- Side effects of medication
- Depression or apathy
- High stress
- Health conditions such as thyroid problems or a vitamin B-12 deficiency

“I read the obituaries to see if I died.” Many of us have heard this line or used it ourselves and we laugh. However, there is an underlying concern. The longer we live, the more friends and family may pass away ahead of us. Losing people we care about can leave us with feelings of abandonment and vulnerability.

“I really would like to work, but no one will hire an old dog like me.”

Sadly, in our society there's a lot of truth in that statement. Many of us struggle with the stigma placed on us by a youth-oriented society. Because we have gray hair and wrinkles, we are often thought to be

unsuitable employees and we're part of a demographic that is not worth advertising to because we're already "set in our ways."

Between discrimination in the workplace and the media (ageism) there are widespread misconceptions about just how much we can contribute. Ageism is damaging to all people exposed to this mindset. People buy into these untrue representations of who we are. As individuals, we are at risk of believing these false images because they are everywhere!

Alliance for Aging research suggests that "the perception of older Americans as frail, dependent and isolated may be a self-fulfilling prophecy."

There are things we can do to keep our brains actively engaged and our bodies moving:

Play games that challenge your mind. If you use the computer there's a wonderful series of games you might enjoy.

Explore new hobby or crafting possibilities. I've met men and women who discovered a whole new side to themselves through photography, painting or other similar activities.

Take a class that you've always wanted to. Many places offer reduced tuition or no tuition once you've reached a certain age.

Work as a volunteer as a way to learn new things and to support the community you live in.

If you're adventurous visit a new place or organize an activity for a group of friends or family.

Here are a few aging myths versus aging facts:

MYTH:

Most older people are pretty much alike.

FACT:

We are a very diverse age group.

MYTH:

Seniors are generally alone and lonely.

FACT:

Most of us maintain close contact with friends and family.

MYTH:

The elderly are sick, frail, and dependent on others.

FACT:

Most of us live independently and fully engaged in our lives.

MYTH:

Old folks are often cognitively impaired.

FACT:

For many of us, if there is a decline in some of our intellectual abilities, it is not severe enough to cause problems in daily living.

MYTH:

The elderly are depressed.

FACT:

While we have good days and bad, research shows that living in communities, we are more likely to have lower rates of diagnosable depression than younger adults.

MYTH:

Old folks become more difficult and rigid with advancing years.

FACT:

Surprise! Our personalities remain relatively consistent throughout our lifespan.

MYTH:

Old people can barely cope with the inevitable declines associated with aging.

FACT:

As we age, we successfully adjust to the challenges of aging.

We need to regularly do mood and memory checkups, just like we should be proactive in getting regularly scheduled physicals. There is no doubt in my mind that the biggest obstacle to living well at any age is our **ATTITUDE**. Do you feel old? Worn down? Ancient? Fossilized? OUCH! Seriously, our own personal attitudes and how we view ourselves, gets communicated non-verbally to those around us.

While everyday isn't always a good day, make everyday the best you can.

Please let me know what you think of these social awareness articles.

MEET THE MEMBER

This month, column editor Margaret A. Marquez Kellogg interviews Edna Miller, JH Secretary.



1. What do you enjoy doing in your leisure time?

Getting together with friends is important to me. I read mysteries and non-fiction. I enjoy quilting and tap dancing. I love to travel and plan trips each year with family and friends.

2. What is your one favorite book, movie, work of art, or music and why?

My favorite book is The Name of the Rose by Umberto Eco. It is a 14th century mystery that deals with tolerance, dogmatic thinking and the questioning of “truth”. I love the paintings and sketches of Fred Machetanz, an Alaskan artist. He has captured the essence of the polar bear like no one else.

3. What do you consider the major milestones or achievements in your life?

One achievement was raising two confident, unique, self sufficient and caring adults who are a lot of fun. I am proud of my teaching career. I have taught regular and special education students and enjoy seeing and hearing how they have progressed.

4. If you could witness any event past, present, or future what would it be?

I am not sure about listing one event. I just returned from my first visit to Washington, DC. The first 100 years of our country were amazing. I would love to have seen Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln give their famous speeches. How interesting it would be to go back and listen to the debate and see the struggles of those 100 years.

5. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained one quality or ability, what would it be?

A quality that I work on and would love to develop well is that of an attentive, compassionate listener. Listening is a skill that always needs improving.

6. What are you most passionate about and why?

I am passionate about the opportunity for all students to have a quality education. A good education is important to individual lives and necessary for our country to prosper. Responsible thinking and decision making skills should be encouraged and taught. Imagine a world where children are learning, succeeding and are positive about themselves. It would be a better place.

7. What qualities do you value in people?

I value honesty, humor, empathy and good friendship.

8. What is your favorite time of the day and why?

Mornings, not too early, are my favorite time of day, especially when there is time for coffee and a newspaper.

9. If you could make one major change in the world, what would you change?

I would like to see a world where decisions are made on their merits, on their value to people, not made through hate, greed and power.

10. If you could have dinner with anyone, living, or dead, who would it be and why?

I would love to have dinner with my father. I have missed our discussions on many topics. His ability to discuss without dominating the exchange of ideas is something we could use in many situations today. It would be a thrill to talk now, to hear his ideas and impressions of the last 46 years.

11. Why Humanism in your life?

Humanism fits with how I view the world. I believe people are good. We can work together to solve human problems. Critical thinking is preferable to the acceptance of dogma and superstition. This belief requires that we take responsibility for our decisions and behavior, that we gain knowledge to understand our world, and we help others in our world community. I prefer to look at others as having value because of what they think and do, not because of their belief in a supreme being.

12. Is there anything else you'd like people to know about you?

I love being outdoors, to walk and to tent camp. I love to joke and laugh. I think quiet alone time is very important.

Over the last two months we have been reviewing the presentations at the American Humanists Association Conference in Chicago, Illinois in May. This is the last of this series. Mel Lipmann, AHA Past President, delivered this speech and gave us permission to print it.

Comments by Mel Lipman for American Humanist Association Annual Conference Chicago, Ill., May 27, 2016

The American Humanist Association's booth at the Parliament of World Religions had a large banner that read, "Good without a God". This was enough to get a large number of attendees to stop by the booth to find out who we were and what were we doing at a gathering of religions. It provided us with a great opportunity to communicate with like-minded people who completely agreed with us on issues such as climate change and world peace and general goodness.

At our booth and on the panel in which we participated, we explained that interfaith work did not mean relinquishing the distinctiveness of one's own tradition of faith or belief to reach a "common denominator". We spoke of how people of most religious faiths or none can engage in creating a civil society through cooperation as well as critical and self-critical encounter with one another. And we made the point that if we stand for the same values, we will be stronger together than apart.

Groups such as ISIS or the Westboro Baptist Church were, of course, not represented at the Parliament and they would be opposed to any "interfaith" cooperation. Similarly, there are atheist groups who would oppose any interfaith involvement.

Just as some religious individuals make it their sole mission to convert others to their faith, many atheists engage with people of faith solely in the hopes of convincing them to abandon their beliefs. But there are also atheists who are willing to listen and to share. To dialog and to learn. They are part of a growing population of people who don't believe in gods, but still want the same things everybody else wants: meaning community and a better world.

Many of the core beliefs of the various faiths centers around moral living, basically putting good out into the world as opposed to evil or bad. We may not all agree on each and every issue or cause, but there is plenty in the name of good, moral living that we could all come together and work on.

The more the atheist community moves beyond purely philosophical debates to embrace the practical pursuit of justice, the more we can establish a reputation for ourselves as a force for good in the world.

The religious and the secular communities have to get rid of the ridiculous idea that we are inherently antagonistic. I probably have more shared beliefs with a liberal religionist than I do with many militant atheists. We must listen to each other in a cooperative rather than an adversarial atmosphere. An emphasis on "values and ethics" could focus attention away from doctrine and dogma to shared vision. Instead of "faith", humanists can have "hope" that things will get better based upon human capacity for change and improvement.

Focusing only on our differences serves only to separate and polarize people. If we are to solve global problems such as climate change and wars, we must shift from a paradigm of separateness to one of unity—by evolving from an emphasis on doctrines that separate to values that unite.

The lack of engagement between religious and non-religious communities must be remedied to prevent deeper divide between both. Presumptions and prejudices across both communities need to be addressed. The extremes in each community do not represent most of the community. Just as ISIS does not represent Islam, neither do some far right atheist extremists represent atheism in general.

Ben Zoma, a second century Jewish sage, reminds us, "Who is wise? The person who learns from all people." When we are willing to open ourselves up to others, we open ourselves up to new ideas and different perspectives.

If people from different backgrounds know each other and have listened carefully enough to understand where the other person is coming from and perhaps worked together for a common cause---then it becomes almost impossible to demonize "the Other". That doesn't mean they will agree on everything. But once trust has been established, it is possible to articulate conflicting views on controversial issues while maintaining mutual respect.

Coming together to pursue peace, equality and all other values we hold together is essential if we don't want to dismiss friends and allies on a wide variety of

issues simply because of theistic beliefs.

In Las Vegas, Nevada, I'm a long-time board member of the Interfaith Council---and I agree that "Interfaith" may not be the best description. Groups around the country have been changing the name to "interbelief" and other such more inclusive terms. In Las Vegas we have recently amended our bylaws to change our description from "various faith communities" to "various faith, philosophical and cultural communities".

The fundamental misunderstanding that many atheists have is that they imagine the interfaith movement as uninterested in combating religious totalitarianism and solely existing to maintain religious privilege—as an excuse to show that religion has a monopoly on morality. But that couldn't be further from the truth.

Interfaith work exists to bring diverse religious and non-religious people into common work to build relationships that might deconstruct the kind of "us vs. them" thinking. It is a place to challenge and question, but to do so constructively.

Gard Jameson, current Chair of the Interfaith Council of Southern Nevada, wrote, "In a world in which we have technologically gained the capacity to destroy the planet many times over, the expansion of interfaith understanding becomes not only a privilege but a duty to every person of this beleaguered planet. No longer can we afford the exclusive attitudes of medieval times, in which other traditions were viewed with not only suspicion, but disdain. There is great confusion about our diverse spiritual perspectives. It is a goal of interfaith understanding to break down all barriers of prejudice, bias and bigotry, in order to promote universal appreciation and celebration of our diversity."

As a Humanist, I believe that we can learn from people who have different experiences and beliefs. Interfaith cooperation not only harmonizes our differences and lessens suspicions between communities---it teaches us that we are better together. I don't believe any supernatural force will solve our problems and it will be up to all of us to work together to address human problems.

We may not agree on the existence of a god or an afterlife, but surely we can agree that life in the here and now requires that we create peaceful collaborative ways to work and live together.

I call on all those in Humanist communities to join interfaith movements "back home" and to feel free to contact me if you desire any advice or help.

In conclusion, we need to stop focusing on what makes us different—like beliefs-- and start focusing on what makes us the same. As one human community, we can search together for ways to make this a better world.

Roy Speckhardt Speaks at Chapter Meeting

JH was privileged to have AHA Executive Director visit our chapter and present his thoughts on *Creating Change through Humanism*, also the title of this book. Below are some selected comments from his presentation. We recommend you read the entire book and it's available from the JH Library.

Roy began by indicating why he wrote the book. "After working in the humanist movement for over a decade I want humanism to **mean** something, something everyone can understand. I want humanists to **stand** for something, something that makes a difference in people's lives, and I want humanism to **grow**, so that it can have an increasing impact.

So I wrote *Creating Change Through Humanism* with a description of humanism that I hope will spur discussion and debate, and will prompt us to work together to evolve this ever evolving philosophy so that we can make it better and better."

Speckhardt defined humanism as not "a religion in the traditional sense as there are no unchanging rules, no set of beliefs one must follow, no higher power one must give over to, and no requirement to attend services or pray at bedtime. It's not just a philosophy in the common sense as it informs beyond the boundaries of the pursuit of knowledge into daily living. It's not a political dogma because it doesn't dictate a specific platform of unchanging positions. Some call it a worldview or lifestance because it's intended to address all the realms traditionally associated with philosophy, religion, and simply living a good life.

He went on to mention three pillars of Humanism; three of the ten taken from his book.

- The first pillar of humanism is the unflinching dedication to the **scientific method** as our

source for knowledge, relied upon because experience has proven it reliable.

- Science isn't just something done by PhD's in lab coats in some ivory tower institutions, it's what we do every day. When a young child in a high chair, takes some of his food and tosses it on the ground to see what happens, that's practicing science.
- Another pillar of humanism is **empathy**, which links science with what distinguishes humanism as a positive philosophy. Empathy is the capacity to recognize and share feelings experienced by others. In 1933, Albert Einstein wrote: "There is one thing we do know: that we are here for the sake of others—above all for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends."
- This principle of **egalitarianism** is the conviction that humans are basically equal despite differences in aptitude, and that each person should be treated as having inherent worth. There's plenty of room for differing outcomes based on intellect, ability, and hard work. But acceptance of inequality between ethnic, cultural or other groups as grounds for discrimination is insupportable.

Speckhardt addressed the need for a Humanist approach to our world.

"We face a threat, Religious Right leaders continue to get their supporters in federal and state governments to advance their extreme conservative, sectarian agenda. They are working publicly and behind the scenes to push the appointment of far right judges and regressive legislation, and they are also directly espousing their narrow religious views. As the government public embraces religious beliefs, it inhibits academic freedom, compromises civil liberties, and tears down the wall of separation between religion and government. A new embrace of humanistic reason is needed to hold back this assault on our protections and prevent us from going down a path of theocratic despotism."

Speckhardt ended his presentation by indicating the legal success AHA has had recently, particularly in the area of the separation of church and state.

A lively discussion ensued after his presentation and throughout the dinner hour.

Captain Fantastic, Starring Viggo Mortensen, Directed by Matt Ross

Movie Review

by Bob Hofmann

The recent movie, *Captain Fantastic*, by director Matt Ross, is a story about a family of eight people and one of them is dead. A married couple that we used to call hippies raise their six kids in the wilds of a mountain range in Washington State. The kids have virtually no contact with the outside modern world, but are home schooled and receive a wonderful classic education. In the opening scene the Father and six kids are stalking a five point buck. The oldest son kills the animal in a kind of right-of-passage ceremony. Following scenes demonstrate how the six children, ranging in age from about 6 to 18, don't just survive, but thrive in the wild. They are taught survival skills, debate skills along with a healthy dose of music and dance.

The father, Ben, played by Viggo Mortensen, drives to a nearby village where he learns that his wife, Leslie, who is suffering from a severe depression, has committed suicide. From this point the movie is propelled by the depiction of a road trip by the family in a large "Hippy like" bus called "Steve." They travel from their primitive life in remote mountains to a modern day culture of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and absorb the shocking differences they discover at all the points along the way.

One of the funniest scenes is of the family stopping for dinner at a Denny's like restaurant. The kids are astonished at the fatness of the other diners and intrigued by the unhealthy items on the menu. Ben quickly whisks them out of the restaurant and plays a scam at a super market that allows the kids to steal enough healthy food for their road trip. In another scene Ben's sister, with whom they spend a night, derides him for not allowing his kids to obtain a proper education. Ben's response is to demonstrate how little his sister's teen age kids know about the US Bill of rights and prompts his six year old daughter to begin reciting the document word for word and then interpreting what it really means.

The children have been taught about, and to respect, all religious thinking except Christianity, which is soundly rejected. They celebrate philosopher-activist Noam Chomsky Day in protest against Christmas, and Ben gifts the kids with lethal looking hunting knives, expensive hunting style bows and arrows, and to an older daughter a copy of the book *Lolita*. He then asks her to provide a verbal review of the book that turns

out to be the beginning of graphic sex education for the six year old.

Tension builds when the family arrives at Leslie's traditional Christian funeral and burial. She had specifically directed in her will that she be cremated and that her ashes be flushed down a toilet. Ben, who had been disinvited from attending the event by Leslie's wealthy father, Fred, interrupts the funeral service to read her wishes to the audience. Ben is escorted out the church by security, but manages to get Steve into the funeral procession so he and the kids watch the burial process in dismay.

They all stay at Fred's mansion where he begins to turn the children against Ben. It is here that the children, and the audience, are asked to place values on Ben's life stance versus that of modern America. You will need to watch this movie to see the outcome. The mountain setting is spectacular, the acting, by adults and kids, is excellent and the plot is one that all Humanists would enjoy.

New Events Are Under Way for the JH, Starting with a Monthly Dinner Social

by Tom Kellogg

Friday, September 9th at 7:00 pm, kicks off a new regular monthly event for the Jefferson Humanists. This is a dinner social at a favorite restaurant, which can change each month. The first dinner will be held at the School House Kitchen & Libations in Olde Town Arvada. To see the details and RSVP, visit the Jefferson Humanists Meetup page at: <http://www.meetup.com/JeffcoHumanists/>

There, you can browse event details, and sign up as a member of Meetup, which allows you to RSVP for our Meetup events, and receive email notifications of upcoming JH events. Please RSVP right away for the first dinner at the School House, because space is limited. We have a private room reserved that only holds 14 persons. You may bring a guest, and each person is responsible for their own check. It should be a lot of fun.

Then, watch out for other upcoming events, including our monthly meetings. Most all JH activities will be listed on our Meetup page.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Really enjoyed all the articles! Kudos to Margaret for her interview with Dave. Your interesting comments on the AHA Conference inspire me to attend next year. Mari's thoughts on aging resonated with some of

mine. Great job overall!!

Jim Bole

I enjoyed reading your commentary on the book, "Moral Tribes". While I haven't read the book, the commentaries gave me pause.... while it's true we (as a species) do tend to gather with those who are similar to us in thinking, culture, etc. there are more instances of "moving" from one family group to another, yet there are far more examples than most are willing to admit because it might weaken their stated theories. I can see where a book like this would stir some enthusiastic/heated conversations.

I also read Part 2 of the AHA conference and being a "trekkie" I found Q's character quite interesting. There are certainly times when I know I'm not logical nor do I use critical thinking perhaps as much as I should. When I worked, I used left brain thinking because I used numbers and schedules and results as a measure of my success. When I retired, I chose to use and explore my emotional IQ which is certainly more interesting and less predictable.. Maybe that's why I'm not a true humanist. I know (without current empirical data) that there's a whole lot more to this amazing world we live in than what our five senses tell us. I really do look forward to reading more of your writings.

Mari Cowley

More Feedback Please

We are pleased that so many of our members are interested in and willing to write articles for our newsletter. And these authors want to know that you read them and what you think. Send your thoughts and opinions about articles in the JH Newsletter and JH activities that you participate in, and we can get a conversation going.

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Preview for the JH October Meeting

Ever wondered where those election polling numbers and forecasts really come from? Here is your chance to find out. Our October program will feature:

Dr. Michael Berry, Associate Prof

Department of Political Science

University of Colorado-Denver

Dr. Berry will present on election forecasting, including the 2016 forecast from the American Political Science Assn.

Finally in this edition we have a few more pictures to share about Roy's reception



Margaret, Robert and Barb in deep discussion at Roy's reception



Roy and Margaret



Roy tells Ken May and Martin Voelker about the Humanists facts of life



Roy, Jim and Rosalie share a humorous humanist moment



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