

Spring Begins: March 20, 2017

March 2017
Issue 4.03

Jefferson Humanists

Jefferson County Colorado Chapter of The American
Humanists Association

www.jeffersonhumanists.org

Our March Program

March 26 at 5pm
Jefferson Unitarian Church
14350 W. 32nd Avenue, Golden, CO

Wildlife Everyday:

Connecting to Nearby Nature in Colorado

Our March speaker, Brian Kurzel, is National Wildlife Federation's Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Region. Brian oversees NWF's work on protecting public lands, sustaining fish and wildlife populations, promoting responsible energy development, connecting people to nature, and partnering with tribal governments on education and conservation.

Brian joined NWF in 2015 after about 10 years with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, where he most recently served as a senior manager focused on policy and planning initiatives. Brian has also served as Colorado's natural areas program manager, overseeing a statewide, science-driven natural resource conservation effort focused on species and habitat protection.

Brian earned a master's degree in science from CU-Boulder, with concentrations in forest ecology and biogeography. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.



Brian Kurzel

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**RSVP to Barb Bailey for this March Meeting
Phone: 303-979-0508, barbaile@aol.com**

Upcoming Events of Interest

- ✓ **Monthly Chapter Meeting, March 26, at Jefferson Unitarian Church (JUC), 14350 W. 32nd Ave., Golden, CO 80403**
- ✓ **Monthly Social Event: Dinner on March 15 at 7:00 pm. Infinitus Restaurant located at 5807 W 38th Ave. Wheat Ridge**
- ✓ **FROG: Two days in March! Special day March 5th at 2pm. Regular meeting, March 11. See below for details.**
- ✓ **Chapter Board Meeting – March 12, 3 to 8 pm at Carmel Oaks Community Room**

Jefferson Humanists Book Discussion Group (FROG: (Freethinkers Reading Opportunity Group))

In March there will be two FROG discussions. The first is Sunday, March 5, a special discussion of *1984* by George Orwell. Read the book or see the movie or just come for the discussion of any relevance *1984* has to today's political environment.

Date and time: 2pm on Sunday, March 5

Location: Belmar Library
555 Allison Parkway
Denver, Colorado

The Blind Watchmaker

Our regular 2nd Saturday discussion will be on *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* by Richard Dawkins. This book has been "Acclaimed as the most influential work on evolution written in the last hundred years, *The Blind Watchmaker* offers an

MORE SAVE THE DATES

The American Humanist Association's 76th Annual Conference will take place **June 8-11, 2017 in Charleston, South Carolina!** Don't delay: book your discounted hotel room at the Hilton Embassy Suites today! Next month we hope to have information on registration, the conference schedule, and 2017 awardees! See: <http://conference.americanhumanist.org>

inspiring and accessible introduction to one of the most important scientific discoveries of all time. A brilliant and controversial book which demonstrates that evolution by natural selection - the unconscious, automatic, blind yet essentially non-random process discovered by Darwin - is the only answer to the biggest question of all: why do we exist?" - [Goodreads](#) synopsis

Date and time: 2 pm on Saturday, March 11

Place: Carmel Oaks Retirement Community
1811 S Harlan Circle
Lakewood, CO

We typically meet on the 2nd Saturday of the month. You can find details about our upcoming books and topics on Meetup at:

www.meetup.com/JeffcoHumanists. If you'd like to join the group and be added to our email list, contact FROG leader Matthew Elisha (mrelisha@msn.com, 303.432.8694).

Upcoming FROG schedule:

- **April 8th - Topic: Robots: What does the future hold?** Will robots be a boon to humanity or will they lead to the demise of humans? Read a book on topic which can include fiction, e.g., *I, Robot* by Asimov, or nonfiction, e.g., *Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future* by Martin Ford, or perhaps watch a movie like *Blade Runner*, *The Terminator*, or *Ex Machina*.
- May 13th - *God No! Signs You May Already be an Atheist* by Penn Jillette

Jefferson Humanist Board Actions February 2017

Submitted by Edna Miller

Ralph Hughes talked about the Political Action Task Force, which has over 50 members, and plans to participate in the "marketplace of persuasion" encouraging the electorate to vote their interests in 2018. The Group plans to educate the electorate in the five areas of health care, environment, immigration, resistance to corporate power, and reproductive rights. Ralph asked the Board to support the Action Task Force with advice and

structure to minimize the risk to those involved. The Task Force is on the web is: www.actiontaskforce.org

Membership Committee plans to contact members who have not renewed their membership to see if they are interested in rejoining. New member packets have been distributed to new members. A survey has been included in the packet. There are plans to update the survey and Matthew Elisha will then make the survey available on our web site. Barb Bailey volunteered to call those members who have not renewed their membership.

The previous nominating committee of Robin Baer, Jim Bole, Bob Hofmann and Edna Miller will be asked by Barb Bailey to continue as an ad hoc committee to find a replacement to fill the empty board position. The Nominating Committee interviews will include questions to determine what the candidate can offer to the Board and what the candidate expects from the group. If you are interested in being considered for the Board position, contact Jim Bole at randjbole@gmail.com

A special board meeting will be held Sunday, March 12, 2017 from 3:00 to 8:00 pm at Carmel Oaks in the community room. The meeting will replace the usual meeting date on the 2nd Thursday of the month for March only. Topics to be addressed include how to integrate the executive director job description with Chapter needs, the action task force, and member communication on the web.

The Board continued its membership in the Colorado Non Profit Association.

Mending Colorado's Mental Health

by Lindy Baer

Our February 26th meeting featured Andrew Romanoff presenting "Mending Colorado's Mental Health." Andrew is President and CEO of Mental Health Colorado, a non-profit affiliated with Mental Health America.

Andrew Romanoff, former Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, began his presentation with some definitions and data about the incidence of mental illness in Colorado. He explained that approximately 5% (about 250,000) of the Colorado population might be considered to suffer from severe mental illness. Considering all levels of mental illness, the number grows to 20-25% or nearly 1.5 million. A concern bigger than these numbers is the fact that

there is frequently an 8-10 year delay in receiving treatment and that of those with severe mental illness, only 40% currently receive treatment.

Andrew identified the principal barriers to getting treatment as:

- Uninsured: 65%
- Unaffordable: 57%
- Unavailable: 34%
- Unwilling: 30-40% (because others might find out or not comfortable with the stigma)

The consequences of untreated mental illness are shorter lives (as much as 25 years shorter), homelessness, possible incarceration, and suicide. Unfortunately, in Colorado (not unique to Colorado) incarceration (including local jails) without adequate or no therapy, occurs for these individuals when they should receive proper intervention.

Andrew went on to explain how these concerns have hit him close to home as a very beloved and talented cousin was affected, disguised her troubles from her wider family, and committed suicide in her early 20s. Unfortunately, the headlines we see do not represent the real story as, in the United States, one suicide occurs every 13 minutes or about 40,000 each year.

In offering possible solutions to these mental health issues, one of the first steps is to do a personal screening. Such screening tools are available from the Mental Health Colorado website at: <http://www.mentalhealthcolorado.org>

Besides screening, Andrew outlined three steps important in enabling people to take action:

1. Enforce existing laws (especially for pre-existing conditions and mental health care as an essential benefit)
2. Insuring that the mental health care network is adequate:
 - should be a provider to patient ratio of 1:1000
 - initiating treatment within seven days should not require travel beyond 100 miles
3. There should be parity of treatment; that is, mental health treatment should be no less extensive than that for physical ailments

Finally, Andrew offered two opportunities for people to get information and involvement:

- Join the Mental Health Colorado email list at: <https://act.myngp.com/Forms/6599163905684080640>

- Become a Mental Health Advocate by joining the “Wave” at:
<https://act.myngp.com/Forms/8626065212977514496?midqs=1982709735949860864>

A lively Q&A session continued after Andrew concluded his remarks. There interesting items came out of the question and answer session that merit mention here:

- When in the legislature, Andrew proposed legislation to offer incentives to private prisons if they reduced recidivism (currently 80% within 12 months)
- The costs of treatment are estimated to be cheaper than those of incarceration
- John F. Kennedy executed a signing statement that stated mental health services needed greater community support

Many of the 60 member audience remained after the program to ask questions one-on-one with Andrew.



Andrew Romanoff Taking Questions

Schedule of Regular Chapter Gatherings

Jefferson Humanists has several Chapter Gatherings each month. We hope you will join us for any and all:

Board of Directors Meetings: 2nd Thursdays 4-6

PM, Jefferson Unitarian Church

FROG Book Discussions: 2nd Saturdays 2-4

PM Various locations – see Meetup

Dinner Socials: 3rd Wednesdays 7 PM, Infinitus PIE, Wheat Ridge

Chapter Programs: 4th Sundays 5 PM Jefferson Unitarian Church

Legislative Action: Watch for location announcements or see below.

Note: Gathering details and RSVP choices may be found at meetup.com/jeffcohumanists

Humanist Perspectives

A New 3rd Saturday Morning JH Series with Refreshments

by Tom Kellogg and Jim Bole

On February 18th, a new Jefferson Humanists on-going monthly program launched and was a wonderful success. This regular explorations series is held on the 3rd Saturday of the month, 10 - Noon, at Jefferson Unitarian Church (JUC). Each session will include several segments to showcase aspects of Humanism, through presentations, videos, movies, and forums, followed by discussions. We will include time for participants to socialize and get acquainted, in keeping with our chapter goal of building community.

Fifteen persons attended the first meeting. This month’s agenda started with Jim and Tom each giving a short introduction to the program. Then, we watched short videos pertaining to aspects of humanism, each 5 to 10 minutes long, with a discussion after each one. Three of the videos were produced by Seth Andrews, who has a well-known online podcast called the Thinking Atheist. Refreshments were available and everyone seemed to really enjoy themselves.

Going forward, resources we will use include a wide choice of short video productions available through YouTube, or even secular themed movies. Denver area presenters will be invited to offer their humanist experiences and perspectives. Audience participation will include focused forums, such as stories about each person’s journey into humanism (or you can just listen). Discussions and socializing will always be included.

We plan and facilitate the series, in partnership with the Jefferson Humanists Membership Committee, chaired by Pat Nickel. We especially encourage and will reach out to visitors and new members to attend as a way of meeting others and to learn about

Humanism as well as the Jefferson Humanists. Coffee, tea, juice and a variety of breakfast sweets will be available for a small donation. The March 18th session will be held in M1/2 of the JUC Mills Building (south of the main building) and the April 15th session in the main building Religious Education wing, R3/4.

For more information visit our Meetup page (<https://www.meetup.com/JeffcoHumanists/>) or contact Jim Bole (randjbole@gmail.com) or Tom Kellogg (kellogg52@gmail.com).

AHA Report

by Grace Gamm

AHA 1980 to 2003 (Part II of AHA history)

In the 1980s, humanists and the AHA were attacked with smear campaigns by the Religious Right. In response, the AHA began its own media campaign. Thus the AHA gained media savvy, which led to an online website in 1995, and a sequence of advertisements in print, billboard, TV and radio. These programs generated further media attention including international news coverage in 2008. The Humanist Magazine concurrently raised its profile, publishing famous writers including Kurt Vonnegut, Alice Walker, Lester R. Brown, Dan Rather, and other leaders.

In 1995, the AHA participated in issuing a well received educators guide for public schools and policy makers. This primer detailed the limitations on religion in public schools. The guide influenced President Bill Clinton, schools across the country, and news coverage for years afterward. In 1998, Camp Quest was developed as an alternative to the Boy Scouts and other religiously affiliated programs for young people.

In order to be at the center of influence among politicians, the AHA moved to Washington DC in 2002. Support from a long list of individuals and AHA leadership over many years made this move successful. In 2003, a third humanist manifesto, *Humanism and its Aspirations*, promoted core Humanist values and proposed actions towards living those values. A focus on best practices for non-profit organizations followed, increasing the AHA's legitimacy and profile among charitable organizations. A plethora of programs for education, legal support, and social justice developed in the following years. These will be detailed in a future article.

Finding Balance....

by Mari Cowley

Today, there's so much unrest and uncertainty for all of us, I find it really hard to feel "balanced." So for this article I want to focus on what being "balanced" might mean. For me, it means that I have a handle on the various elements of my life and I'm not feeling pulled too hard in any one direction. Mostly, if I feel balanced, I feel grounded, clear headed and even motivated. But when that mystical "balance" is lost I feel anxious and out of sorts.

So how do we find "balance?" For most of us, at this stage of life as elders, balance means something different than when we were in our 30's, 40's and 50's. In our 30's we were focused on a career and family. It was hard balancing work, family, and time for ourselves. In our 40's and 50's our professional lives were more settled, the kids needed less physical care and maybe, just maybe, we began to discover that we needed to focus on caring for ourselves in any number of ways.

The elements in life that require the most balancing can be divided into two categories: internal and external. Most of the time, we focus on one more than the other.

When we were younger, we had a tendency to focus on external things like work, relationships, and activities. During this time we probably paid little attention to what was going on internally. On the other hand, some of us might have spent too much time being self-reflective and missed out on the experience of living. And yes, there are those, who at any age, are fairly balanced and with only one or two areas that need a little work.

While I am certain there are dozens of books on the market telling us how to find that mystical, magical state of balance, the answers aren't that complicated. What's complicated is actually doing the work.

1. Be Authentic

Stay true to yourself, no matter how bad external pressures attempt to twist you. Stay true to your values and beliefs, without bending over backwards just to please everyone. With authenticity comes the fortitude of being able to make decisions that are not influenced by the demands of others. It is freeing to

not worry about what others might think of you when making a decision that is right for you.

2. Avoid the Drama

When I say “drama” I’m not talking about a theater performance. What I am talking about is the overreaction to things that are insignificant. Drama creates an emotional rollercoaster with excessive highs and lows and saps the life out of you. Modern life can be seen as an extreme challenge with hundreds of situations of daily drama about minor or irrelevant things in life.

3. Integrating the Positive and the Negative

I’m pretty sure we’d all agree that discovering the positive side of our personality is relatively pleasant. But what about the side of us that isn’t so positive? Certainly we’d much rather think that we don’t have a dark side, but... it’s there just waiting for recognition.

Personal growth comes during disparity, and balance can only be found by understanding and incorporating the negative. Most of us don’t want to face our shadow self, but we cannot attain balance if we don’t recognize that our shadow self is still part of us and ignoring it, stops us from being a whole self.

Living a life that is in balance with your body, mind and spirit means we stand in our own power, like a rock in the surf. It means that events and happenings in the world around us do not shake our core being. Other people will not be able to manipulate us into giving up our sovereignty or influence our independence in any way. Living in balance gives us courage because we know who we are and we’re comfortable with that knowledge.

Now more than ever we need to find that place within us that allows us to step back from whatever is bothering us, take a deep breath and know that whatever comes our way we can meet head on with confidence and the sure knowledge that we will make good decisions based on what is right for us as an individual and as a society.

New Column Editor Still Needed

Meet the Member

Margaret Kellogg has done a great job helping us get to know our members through her monthly interviews but she had to step down as she has accepted other responsibilities in Jefferson Humanist. So we need a new column editor.

You pick a JH member, and ask a group of questions (we can show you what has been used so far), and write it up. Email Nancy Bolt at nancybolt@earthlink.net with questions or for more information. Column would begin with the May issue. Thanks.

Jeffco Political Action Taskforce

Monthly Report

by Ralph Hughes

The Jeffco Political Action Taskforce has powered ahead during the past month, organizing local community members along four avenues of concern: environment, healthcare, government integrity, and immigration fairness.

Our general meetings are held biweekly, and at the first one in February, we received guidance from the state lead of BarackObama.com (now called Organizing for Action). Her “five essentials for political activist groups” included a) focus on phone calls to members of Congress and letters to the editor to make your opinions known; b) get people to swarm legislators’ offices and public places when decisions are about to be made; c) always arrange for press coverage for your actions because “earned media coverage” is most effective; d) amplify the impact of your events by taking pictures and posting them on as much social media as you can; and e) use every event as an opportunity to talk with the general public and recruit fresh volunteers to keep the movement alive.

At our next meeting, we’ll have motions to a) publish a monthly voter education and persuasion tabloid, b) commit to holding three public debates during 2017, and c) print 1,000 “Who Represents You?” cards to make it easy for the average citizen to contact their member of Congress. Several of us also plan to stage street theater events. Still others of us are organizing to film testimonials regarding healthcare that can be posted to social media where they can help sway the discussion of the ACA’s future onto more reasonable grounds.

It’s easy to keep up with the Taskforce by visiting www.actiontaskforce.org or contacting JH members Carole and Ralph Hughes (ralph.hughes@yahoo.com or 720.951.2100).

Subsidies Still Available for American Humanist Conference, June 8-11

The Jefferson Humanist Board has approved six \$175 subsidies for people wanting to attend the AHA conference on June 8-11 in Charleston, South Carolina. Three of the subsidies have been claimed and three are still left. Contact Dave Beato at davebeato312@gmail.com to claim one of the three remaining subsidies of \$175.

Those of us who went last year enjoyed it immensely. You will hear inspiring and informative speakers about aspects of science, sociology, the arts, climate, politics – all from a Humanists perspective. We recommend it to you. Your intrepid JH Newsletter editors have signed up to be press representatives for all the Humanist, secular, and atheist groups in Colorado. We'll write and offer articles on what we hear and experience but it's not the same as being there. We hope you will join us in Charleston.

Celebrating Darwin Day by Nancy Bolt

On February 11, 23 Jefferson Humanist members and friends visited the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in celebration of Darwin Day. Our docent from the museum, Shelly Kneply, led us through the formation of the earth, the beginning of primitive life, moving from the sea to land, up through the dinosaurs and what followed them, all the way to the hominids that led eventually to homo sapiens. Shelly was knowledgeable and patient with all of our questions. For those of us avidly interested in evolution, Shelly recommended books for more information (see at end of article).

Following our visit to the Museum, most of us went to lunch at the Goods Restaurant at the Tattered Cover (where we shopped while we waited for our seats) and continued our discussion about Darwin and his work and what we had seen at DMNS.

Shelly recommended the following books for more information:

Lonely Planets -- David Grinspoon

Your Inner Fish -- Neil Shubin

Smithsonian Intimate Guide to Human Origins -- Carl Zimmer

The Greatest Show On Earth -- Richard Dawkins

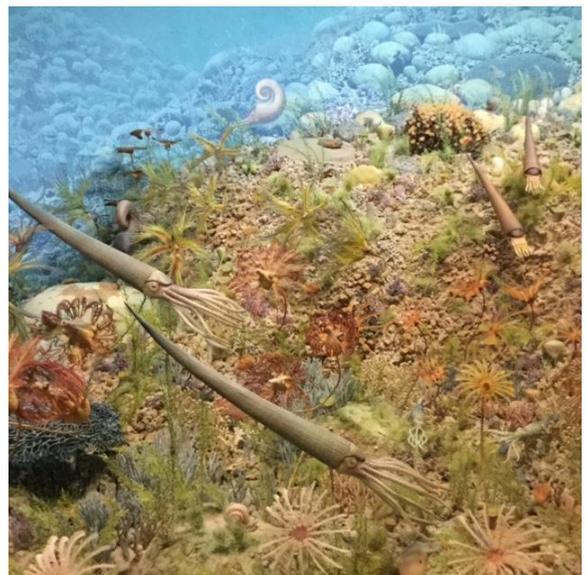
The Ancestor's Tale -- Richard Dawkins



Darwin Day Celebration at the Museum of Nature and Science



Where we saw Early Ancestor, Lucy



And Early – Early - Early Ancestors

Book Review

Notes from *American Infidel*

by Robert G. Ingersoll

Darlene Boord, Reviewer

This is a book our FROG group owns. I want to recommend this book and the study of this person and his works, as he was a freethinker, a humanist, and a very interesting person.

Robert Ingersoll lived from 1833 to 1899. His father was a preacher. His wife, Eva Parker Ingersoll, and her family were known for their unorthodox religious views, and she strongly influenced his enlightenment and his coming out as an agnostic. Ingersoll was a highly ethical man, a devoted husband and father, a kind and generous person. He became a well-respected lawyer. He was involved with politics, and he was well acquainted with many in high political office, including that of president. He was friends with many famous people. He was an outstanding orator, quite the poet, and a person with a great sense of humor.

He was immensely popular, and his speaking fees ranged as high as \$7,000. At one point, in 1896, he spoke in a huge tent in Chicago to 12,000 people who found seats, 8,000 who stood, and 3,000 who were outside. Ingersoll could meet only a small percentage of the requests that came to him from Maine to California. He was referred to as “the notorious blasphemer known as Robert G. Ingersoll.” A reputation as an atheist made no difference on the stump. His most popular speeches were the ones about religion.

I would like to read more of what he wrote and said, my appetite having been whetted by the quotes in this book. I'd like to cite some of what I read in this book that I found delightful.

On October 30 (apparently 1880) Ingersoll, the famous infidel, spoke in Brooklyn at the Academy of Music. He was introduced warmly by Henry Ward Beecher, the famous minister. There was great cheering from the audience throughout and a clasp of hands between Ingersoll and Beecher before and after the speech.

Ingersoll's philosophy of education stressed that “children should be taught to think, to investigate, to rely upon the light of reason, of observation and experiment, taught to use all their senses...”

“I had rather think of those I have loved and lost as having returned to earth, as having become a part of the elemental wealth of the world — I would rather think of them as unconscious dust, I would rather dream of them as gurgling in the streams, floating in the clouds, bursting in the foam of light upon the shores of worlds... than to have even the faintest fear that their naked souls have been clutched by an orthodox god.”

“I feel that if there must be an orthodox God in Heaven, I am in favor of electing him ourselves.”

“Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief. It came with the threat of everlasting torture on its lips... It taught some good things — the beauty of love and kindness in man. But as a torch bearer, as a bringer of joy, it has been a failure. It has given infinite consequences to the acts of finite beings, crushing the soul with a responsibility too great for mortals to bear. It has filled the future with fear and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men. Not satisfied with that, it has deprived God of the pardoning power.”

“Hell is the festival of the Presbyterian god.”

Some mean-spirited people spread rumors about Ingersoll. One rumor had it that Ingersoll's son was a drunkard and that more than once in the presence of guests he had to be carried away from the table. To this Ingersoll replied, “It is not true that intoxicating beverages are served at my table. It is not true that my son ever was drunk. It is not true that he had to be carried away from the table. Besides, I have no son.” [He had two daughters.]

“In 1893, even after a long career as an orator, his income was \$175,000 a year. Much went for the abundant life, much for charities, but not so much as to keep him in debt. It was business ventures, every one of which came to naught. The law these days brought him little or no business. The Panic of '93 and the depression that followed brought hard times, but Ingersoll was weathering the depression well.”

When speaking of the mass efforts of Christians to pray for his conversion, Ingersoll said that as far as he knew, the prayers neither harmed him nor helped him.

Anyhow, the prayers probably fell short, he said, “for lack of postage.”

At a memorial meeting in Denver, Governor Charles S. Thomas of Colorado, the principal speaker, said: “The character of Ingersoll was as nearly perfect as it is possible for the character of mortal man to be... He had the earnestness of a Luther, the genius for humor and wit and satire of a Voltaire, a wide amplitude of imagination, and a greatness of heart and brain that placed him upon an equal footing with the greatest thinkers of antiquity... He stands at the close of his career, the first great reformer of the age.”

Mark Twain wrote Ingersoll’s niece, “Except for my daughter’s, I have not grieved for any death as I have grieved for his. His was a great and beautiful spirit, he was a man — all man, from his crown to his footsoles. My reverence for him was deep and genuine...”

Clarence Darrow said, “I pay homage to Robert G. Ingersoll... His acts mark him as one of the bravest, grandest champions of human liberty the world has ever seen.”

LETTER
Submitted by Darlene Boord
Regarding
The February Article
Is It Tolerance or Is It Indifference?

Mildred Taylor is quoted as saying, "You have to demand respect in this world, ain't nobody just gonna hand it to you." But in the next paragraph William Ury is quoted as saying, “tolerance is ... showing respect for the essential humanity in every person.” Then there's a paragraph that says: "*Tolerance of Persons*, what might be called 'civility,' can be equated with the word respect.

It's hard for me to believe that nobody treats others with civility or respect unless it is demanded of them. I quoted these sentences because they demonstrate that at least William Ury and the author of the other statement obviously recognize that at least some people show respect for other people, and I think we can assume that they see this respect as being given voluntarily. It seems obvious to me that there are many decent people in this world who accord others respect by virtue of their own nature, their philosophy, their ethics, their human decency. You only have to look around you in our own group to find these people. Yes, sometimes it's necessary to wring respect out of other people, as evidenced by the need for the Civil Rights Movement. But that doesn't mean that never is respect

given automatically by decent people who believe in according respect to others. So it seems obvious to me that Mildred Taylor is quite mistaken.

Incidentally, tolerance is not freedom. The sentence at the end of that paragraph ["This is the classical definition of tolerance: the freedom to express one's ideas without fear of reprisal."] should be reworded to say that the classic definition of tolerance is the granting to others of the freedom to express their ideas without fear of reprisal. I'm not saying whether I agree or disagree with that definition; what I am saying is that the sentence needed to be reworded in order to express what the author meant to say.

IMPORTANT: If you have a change of contact information or would like to be removed from this email list, please reply via the form in the body of the email to which this newsletter was attached.

Coeditors: Nancy Bolt and Bob Hofmann



Loving Humanity

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