

# COLLOQUY DOWNEAST 2014 - 2015 DISCUSSIONS

More information and complete descriptions at [www.colloquydowneast.org](http://www.colloquydowneast.org)

*Fall 2014*

(All Colloquies will be held in the Howard Room at the Blue Hill Public Library unless otherwise noted)

## Darwin's Theory of Evolution. Is it Really So Controversial?

Facilitator – Andrew Miller

Thursdays, 3-5pm, September 18, 25, October 2, 9.

More than 150 years have passed since publication of *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, yet Charles Darwin's theory still polarizes many Americans. Do those who question evolution by natural selection perceive gaps in the theory, or do they lack a basic understanding of the overall concept? The purpose of this colloquy is to provide a deeper understanding of evolution, its importance to living systems and its implications for society. We will investigate development of evolutionary theory before, during, and after Darwin, various mechanisms to explain the origin of life, as well as recent developments in sociobiology and epigenetics. In this process, we will discuss methods for presenting evolutionary theory to the public and the controversy over teaching evolution in the public schools. Recommended Readings: Sean Carroll. 2009. *Remarkable Creatures: Epic Adventures in the Search for the Origins of Species*. Francis Collins. 2006. *The Language of God*.

*Andrew Miller* is an aquatic biologist who spent the majority of his career at the US Army Engineer Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Mississippi, studying endangered and invasive species and environmental impacts of water resource projects. After retiring, he taught biology at Thomas University, Thomasville, GA. He is a Deer Isle summer resident.

## The Evolution of Comedy

Facilitator – Michael Donahue

Mondays 7-9 pm, September 22, 29, October 6, 13, 20 (five sessions)

Dramatic comedy grew up out of the boisterous choruses and dialogue of the fertility rites of the Greek God Dionysus. From the time our ancestors told stories of the hunt, vaudevillians made pratfalls part of the lexicon of entertainment, and television prompters told us when to laugh; the comic and the tragic have become intertwined by almost imperceptible gradations of character, situation and solution. Be it on the stage, in film, television, or even a simple stand-up comedian telling a joke, –comedy provides us with both realization of and relief from tension and conflict. Why, for example, does Shakespeare use comedy in *Hamlet*, one of his great tragedies? It is the role that comedy plays in our story telling that will be the focus of this colloquy.

*Michael Donahue*, was an actor, director, designer, producer and teacher in Philadelphia area and is now a Blue Hill resident. He also founded The Theatre School, Inc. which offered accredited training in the theatre arts.

## Politics and Persuasion: the Use of Language to Influence Public Opinion

Facilitators – Scott Miller and Margery Irvine

Wednesdays, 3-5 pm, September 24, October 1, 8, 15

Political rhetoric, particularly in this election year, is ubiquitous. This colloquy will discuss the rhetoric (in the sense of language and logical argument) used to influence public opinion and, ultimately, election outcomes. Each week, colloquy members will identify editorials, op-ed pieces or news articles, of which four to six will be selected for critical review and analysis. In addition to the review of current pieces, we also expect to spend a portion of each meeting refreshing our memories on the principles and techniques of rhetorical argument.

*Margery Irvine* is a writer and editor and University of Maine English Department faculty member with expertise in composition, creative writing and the literature of Maine. Scott Miller is a retired banker and avid consumer of, and participant in, political discourse. He is a founder and leader of the Blue Hill Library's Beyond Labels discussion group.

## Feminist Activism in the Arts

Facilitators – Posie Cowan, Audrey Le, Pat Wheeler and Allison Brown

Mondays, 3-5 pm, October 13, 20, 27, Nov 3.

This colloquy will be concerned with writing, films and art as means of feminist activism. For two weeks we will focus on how writing was (and is) associated with political protest and agitation, civil disobedience, and passing future legislation. Sources include Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and *The Declaration of Sentiments* with contributions by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony and others (1848), and then 2nd and 3rd wave feminist writers from the 1960s to the present. Week 3 will be a close examination of films by 20th and 21<sup>st</sup> century feminist filmmakers. Week 4 will include the history of feminist artists starting with Judy Chicago in the 1970's and the guerrilla girls in the 1980's. Two local artists will discuss their work as a form of activism.

*Audrey Le* is on the faculty at the University of Maine in the English Department and in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. *Pat Wheeler* is an artist who lives on Deer Isle. *Allison Brown* is an artist with a summer residence on Little Deer Isle. *Posie Cowan* is interested in Women's Rights.

## MacArthur!

Facilitator - Bob Slaven

Tuesdays, 1-3 pm, October 14, 21, 28, November 4.

Douglas MacArthur is recognized by historians as one of the towering leaders of the American involvement in World War II, and with Harry Truman, probably the most important figure in the Korean War. He was also one of the most baffling men ever to wear the American uniform. Using MacArthur's autobiography "Reminiscences" (McGraw Hill, 1964) to trace his career, and a variety of other sources to critique his strategic and political decisions, the colloquy will attempt to analyze his generalship in the light of his well-known vanity and the world challenges he faced.

*Bob Slaven* is a Blue Hill native, retired Navy Captain and wannabe historian.

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**SPECIAL EVENT for Fall 2014 - No Registration Fee**

## Political Roundtable: Thoughtful Discussion of the 2014 Election Issues

Facilitators – Scott Miller and Ron Lesko

Thursdays, 1-3 pm, October 23 and 30 (two sessions)

A non-partisan discussion of the important national and state issues on the ballot or distinguishing the candidates in the 2014 election. Facilitators will moderate a discussion of the issues and election implications.

*Scott Miller*, facilitator, is a retired banker and avid consumer of, and participant in, political discourse. He is a founder and leader of the Blue Hill Library's Beyond Labels discussion group. *Ron Lesko* is a retired Professor of Political Science and Philosophy, State University of New York.



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## Winter & Spring 2014

(All Colloquies will be held in the Howard Room at the Blue Hill Public Library unless otherwise noted)

### Examining Public Discourse in the Age of Technology

Facilitator – Margery Irvine  
Mondays, 3-5 pm, January 5, 12, 19, 26.

When Neil Postman wrote *Amusing Ourselves to Death* in 1985, he not only brilliantly analyzed the change in western culture as electronic media prevailed over the printed word but also proved remarkably prescient. The trends he described have spread and multiplied, our reliance on technology having become almost absolute. In his book, Postman first discusses different ways of thinking and how the medium of communication determines the content of it. He goes on to describe how show business and entertainment now dominate the fields of news reporting, religion, political discourse and education. In this colloquy we will attempt to update Postman's observations and address the following: Has entertainment become the prevailing means of delivering information vital to the citizenry? What, if anything, can be done to improve the quality of the information delivered? Has the increased ubiquity of "electronic media" exaggerated the damage that Postman envisioned? Or are we more and better informed in this technological age?

*Margery Irvine* is a writer and editor and University of Maine English Department faculty member with expertise in composition, creative writing and the literature of Maine.

### Science, Religion and Faith: Quest for Understanding and Meaning

Facilitator – Ron Lesko  
Wednesdays 12:30 – 2:30 pm, January 14, 21, 28, February 4.

Science, religion and faith are often perceived and portrayed in our culture as mutually exclusive and necessarily oppositional. Ignorance, indifference and heated hostility frequently characterize public discussion. Yet, many religion and science scholars have opened progressive dialogue and understanding in these fields in light of the scientific and technological developments in the study of the cosmos, evolution, genetics, molecular biology and microbiology, mind and body, undreamed of fifty years ago. In our quest for understanding and wisdom, we will engage in open-minded conversation, avoiding ideological closure. Readings will be balanced and accessible in order to widen and deepen our knowledge and appreciation of the practical, intellectual questions (including political and moral) that these fundamental areas require. See website for further information and readings.

*Ronald J.P. Lesko* is a retired Professor of Political Science and Philosophy, State University of New York.

### Bach: the Man and the Music

Facilitator – Marcia Gronewold Sly  
Thursdays, 1-3 pm, January 29, February 5, 12, 19.

Join Blue Hill Bach founder and Executive Director Marcia Gronewold Sly in an exploration of the life and music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Readings, recordings, and documentaries about the incomparable musician will inform a discussion about Bach's personal history and about the historical context that shaped not only his works, but the course of western classical music. An informal performance by musicians who specialize in Baroque music, with an opportunity to engage with the performers, will help participants gain an understanding of the differences between early music performance and later techniques, as well as the instruments used.

*Marcia Gronewold Sly* is a mezzo-soprano, teacher, and arts administrator who founded Blue Hill Bach in 2011 to bring historically informed vocal and instrumental music of the Baroque, performed on original instruments, to Downeast Maine.

### Forest Ecology and Economics

Facilitator – Si Balch  
Dates and Time – Wednesdays, 1 -3 pm, February 18, 25, March 4, 11.

Forests surround us and provide so many pleasures, including spiritual and monetary. Focused on northeastern forests, this discussion will explore the forces that effect both ecology and economics. The forests we now enjoy have been shaped by many events. These include glaciers, weather, humans, wildlife, fire and insects. How do they respond? We will explore their past, present and possible futures. What is sustainability? What is conservation? Come prepared with your questions. Hopefully, weather will permit one field session. Background – read Wikipedia information on Gifford Pinchot and John Muir. Recommended books: 1. *The Forest Trees of Maine* – Maine Forest Service, 2. *Sand County Almanac* – Aldo Leopold.

*Si Balch* is a forester now assisting the Manomet Center for Conservation Science in developing its Climate Smart Land Network. Formerly he was forest director of New England Forestry Foundation. Before that he worked 33 years with forest industry in New England holding the position of Chief Forester and Silviculturalist.

### Poetry of the English Renaissance

Facilitators – Farnham (Mike) Blair and Tony Newton  
Tuesdays, 1-3 pm, March 3, 10, 17, 24.

In England, during the reign of the Tudors, a vast and diverse collection of remarkable songs, plays and especially poems was written in the vernacular. It takes very little effort to discover that much of what was written speaks directly and vigorously to us today. Our colloquy will focus primarily on the richest talents of the period: William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser and John Donne. Printed selections of their poetry will be supplied to colloquy participants prior to our first meeting.

*Farnham (Mike) Blair*, a graduate of Yale and Georgetown, is a retired educator who is the author of five books (two of essays on art, two of poetry and a childhood memoir). *Tony Newton* is a retired banker who graduated from Harvard and Johns Hopkins's School of Advanced International Studies.

### Liberty, Government and the Pursuit of Happiness

Facilitator – David Snow  
Thursdays, 10:30 am -12:30 pm, April 2, 9, 16, 23

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.* These words of Thomas Jefferson appear to imply a natural harmony among liberty, the pursuit of happiness and the role of government. But as is now the case, government has often been viewed as a threat to liberty and there have been bitter conflicts over the proper role of government in the lives of our people. Although this Colloquy will focus on our present plight, it will explore these issues from the Founders' intent to ... establish Justice, ... promote the General Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty... through the Country's evolution from an agrarian society of less than 3 million to a post-industrial state of over 300 million, during which the positions of the Supreme Court on the Constitution's bearing on these issues have changed profoundly and important new views on these issues have been put forward.

*David Snow*, a retired lawyer and judge, has more recently indulged his interest in constitutional law and political philosophy by teaching several courses at the U of M and facilitating several colloquies.

### Poetry in the Bible

Facilitator – Vesta Kowalski  
Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30 pm, April 7, 14, 21, 28  
**Note Different Location** – St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church

The Bible is, although often not thought of as, a library of literary materials in a variety of genres. Many of those genres use poetry to convey their diverse kinds of messages to a generally pre-literate society. After a brief introduction to the mechanics of Hebrew poetry, participants in this colloquy will read and discuss samples of poetry from a number of genres, with a focus on how poetry makes the messages more memorable. Passages to be discussed will include liturgical poetry (Psalms); erotic poetry (Song of Songs); aphorisms and moral instruction (Proverbs); sermons and theological teachings (Prophets); philosophical reflection (Job); and epic poetry (Psalms and Wisdom of Solomon).

*Vesta Kowalski* is a more-or-less retired Episcopal priest whose Ph.D. is from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Her chief delight in life is discussing Biblical topics with interested adults.

## Registration

For participants to enjoy maximum involvement, the size of each colloquy is limited to the first 15 who register. If there is a waiting list, you will be notified. To register, sign up online at [www.colloquydowneast.org](http://www.colloquydowneast.org) or tear off this form and send it with your registration fee of \$50 per colloquy to

**Colloquy Downeast  
PO Box 394  
Blue Hill, Maine 04614**

When registering online, please note that your registration is not complete until the registration fee is mailed and received.

Questions? Email to [info@colloquydowneast.org](mailto:info@colloquydowneast.org)

**Please Note** - Colloquy Downeast is committed to making its discussions available to all who are interested. Registration should not be a financial burden. If you wish to have your registration fee waived, check the box to the right.

I would like to register for the following colloquy(s)

Your First Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Second Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Third Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Your Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Your email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please remember to include a check for \$50 per colloquy**  
or

check here if you wish to have your registration fee waived.

