

Colloquy Downeast 2013 -2014 Discussions

Fall 2013

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

Theatre of the Absurd

Facilitator -- Michael Donahue
Thursdays, 7-9 pm, September 19, 26 (in Bass Room), October 3, 10, 17, 24 (six sessions)

We will examine the period and the plays of “absurdist theatre”. Rooted in the post war world of the 1940’s and 50’s, elements of the movement still present themselves in today’s theatre. “Absurdist” playwrights believe that the unshakable basic assumptions of the past have become discredited as childish illusions revealing our nature and actions to be devoid of purpose. These plays can feature comedy mixed with tragedy, characters caught in hopeless situations forced to do repetitive or meaningless actions, dialogue full of clichés and wordplay, all within nonsensical or even nonexistent plots. Playwrights of this genre include Sartre, Beckett, Ionesco, Pinter, Albee, Stoppard and others.

Michael Donahue, an actor, director, designer, producer and teacher in Philadelphia since the 1960’s is presently a Blue Hill resident. He is also the founder of The Theatre School giving accredited training in the theatre arts.

Implications of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act for Our Communities

Facilitator – Richard Freeman, MD
Tuesdays, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, Sept 24 and October 1 (two sessions – registration fee is \$25)

The Affordable Care Act is the most significant health care legislation since Medicare and Medicaid were created in 1965. It promises to be a turning point in access, coverage, quality and cost of health care in our nation. Although the majority of the Act is focused on insurance reform, the Act also significantly and directly influences health care providers and patients. This two-session discussion will focus on key themes of the PPACA that are new and noteworthy and how they affect us here in the Blue Hill area.

South Blue Hill resident, *Dr. Richard Freeman*, is chief transformation officer for EMHS with the charge of shifting the system from volume to value-based service. Previously he has been on the faculties of Johns Hopkins and New York University Schools of Medicine.

Women’s Rights: the Successes, the Setbacks and the Future

Facilitators – Posie Cowan, Kathy Bonk, Deborah DeWitt and Audrey Le
Mondays 3 - 5 pm, October 14, 21, 28, November 4.

We will focus on the last hundred years of Women’s Rights in the United States starting with the 75-year campaign for a federal suffrage amendment started by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1848 that culminated in winning the vote in 1920 - thanks to the combined efforts of what is now the League of Women Voters and the brilliant strategies of Alice Paul and the National Women’s Party. Topics will include the efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment and the influence of Betty Freidan’s many books especially *The Feminine Mystique*. We will conclude with women’s reproductive rights and health care access and the current status of feminism.

The facilitators are each informed advocates of women’s rights. *Posie Cowan* is interested in the Suffrage Movement. *Kathy Bonk* was media director for NOW legal defense fund. *Deborah DeWitt* was a board member of Planned Parenthood and the Guttmacher Institute. *Audrey Le* is on the faculty at UMO in English and Women and Gender Studies.

E Pluribus Unum?

Facilitator – Peter Sly
Tuesdays, 3-5 pm, October 22, 29, November 5, 12

We often think of the United States as a “melting pot,” but we are frustrated by polarization in our civil discourse. We have a hard time talking about gun violence, same sex marriage, race, abortion, and the balance between individual liberty and the public good. To what extent are these seemingly intractable differences rooted in social history? Could the divisiveness in our society be explained by historic settlement patterns? Where do Blue Hill Yankees fit in this chunky stew? This discussion will use Colin Woodard’s 2011 *American Nations* and short weekly emails to examine the origins of our different cultures.

Peter Sly, a transplanted left coast attorney, has taught courses on American Indians, water and land use at Colby and COA. A long time ago, his college thesis was on myth and symbol as expressed in social thought and institutions. He longs to continue discussion on these subjects.

Origins of Political Beliefs

Facilitator – Ron Lesko
Wednesdays, 12:30 – 2:30 pm, October 30, November 6, 13, 20.

Where do our political and religious beliefs come from? How are they formed? In every society they are institutionalized, formed into ideologies and government-party programs. Some are divinized into an absolute truth claim. In the form of government programs and bundles of social beliefs they organize individuals across the ages who then project power as a nation or a local social group towards those who are different from themselves. In this human experience, neurophysiological realities affect people, along with traditions, social structures that control the media of a society, and geopolitical factors. Personal character, moral development, concepts of good and evil, and one’s horizon of social and conceptual realities are controlled by this human experience.

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

Creativity: How Does that Happen?

Facilitator -- Paul B. Perkinson
Mondays, 3 - 5 pm, November 11, 18, (skip November 25), December 2, 9.

This colloquy will explore the nature and sources of creativity and how it can be nurtured. As the new economy is changing how we work, Daniel Pink argues in *A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers will Rule the Future (2005)* that there are six sympathies that we should encourage in our schools, our businesses, and our self-improvement programs because of three significant changes in our economy. Pink’s book will serve as the basic text for the colloquy. Additionally, we will consider Daniel Kahneman’s *Thinking, Fast and Slow (2011)* to explore the relationship between creativity and decision-making.

Paul Perkinson is Head of School, George Stevens Academy in Blue Hill.

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. If circumstances make it impossible for you to attend, please let us know as early as possible, but no later than 30 days prior to the beginning of a series. It is our policy not to return registration fees after that date. Most colloquies are fully subscribed, so to insure a seat at the table, please register as early as possible.

To register, sign up online at 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.

NEW ! Colloquy Downeast offers a limited number of fee-waiver ‘scholarships’. Please indicate in the space provided if you wish to be considered for a fee waiver.

Registration

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 want to be considered for a fee waiver scholarship

Winter & Spring 2014

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

Greek Tragedies: Family Feuds and Dastardly Deeds

Facilitators -- Jane Garfield and Ruth Davis
Wednesdays, 1 – 3 pm, January 8, 15, 22, 29.

What would you do if your father murdered your sister and his own daughter in order to propitiate the gods? How would you act if your mother, in revenge, killed your father? Would you then feel it necessary to kill your mother? Greek tragedy deals with dilemmas such as these. In this Colloquy we discuss *The Oresteia*, *Medea*, and *Oedipus Rex*.

Ruth Davis is a retired archivist and perennial student. This will be the fourth colloquy that she has helped facilitate. **Jane Garfield** has been interested in all things Greek since her undergraduate days at Bryn Mawr.

African-American Poetry

Facilitator – Farnham ‘Mike’ Blair
Tuesdays, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, January 21, 28, Feb 4, 11.

For the first time, there are African-American writers, including recent Poet Laureate Robert Hayden, who insist that there is no such thing as Black literature--that there is only good writing or bad writing. Other African-American artists, equally talented, strongly object to this view, arguing that centuries of slavery and discrimination have raised a distinct Black culture that cannot be ignored and, in fact, must be celebrated. In this colloquy, we'll consider poetry that represents both sides of this powerful issue, concentrating on contemporary work, including that of current Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey.

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).

Global Politics of Food and Water

Facilitators – Ron Lesko and David Porter
Thursdays, 1 -3 pm, January 23, 30, Feb 6, 13.

Are nations, especially America, blinded to the fundamental threat to human and state existence presented by one of the most critical global crises of our time? Food and water limitations, climate change and demographic pressures challenge the belief in the myth of unbounded material progress. Do we have the technologies and/or the political will to alleviate the impending crises? Can unrestricted market-driven capitalism and technology provide the needed political balances in and between countries? Politics is ultimately about who has the power to make and enforce binding decisions about public policies related to resources. What sort of multilateral cooperation must be implemented to establish policies to resolve these challenges?

This colloquy is a preview of the topic to be covered by the Camden Conference in February of 2014

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

United States Entry into World War One

Facilitators -- Tony Newton and Tim Thomas
Fridays, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, February 7, 14, 21, 28.

President Woodrow Wilson and a majority of Americans saw every aspect of World War I as a dreadful European mistake and were determined not to allow the United States to become involved. Yet, within four months of Wilson's reelection in 1916 he and public opinion had come to regard America's direct participation as both necessary and wise. We will examine how American moralism and self-interest, skillful British diplomacy and espionage and German blunders brought about this change in attitude. We will look at naval blockade theories and submarine warfare. We will review the history of the astounding Zimmerman Telegram and political, economic and social factors in the US at the time.

Lowell (Tim) Thomas is a retired Philadelphia lawyer who was an English major in college but now enjoys reading and discussing American History. **Tony Newton** is a retired commercial banker. He attended school in China, Singapore and the Philippines before graduating from Harvard and Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Symbiosis and the Evolution of Cooperation

Facilitator -- David Porter
Wednesdays, 1-3 pm, February 19, 26, March 5, 12.

In this colloquy we will explore how cooperation is essential for biological evolution. We will discuss well-documented examples of symbiosis such as coral reefs, farming ants and the human microbiome. We will consider how the biological origins of living cells, multicellular organisms and the origin of land plants were each a product of cooperation. We will discuss how we humans are a surprising component in cooperative biological systems and finally we will consider how cooperation vs. competition plays out in human society.

David Porter is a retired professor of Plant Biology at the University of Georgia where he was on the faculty for 37 years. His particular interest is the biology of fungi.

“In Flanders Fields the Poppies Blow”: Literature and Art during the WWI Period

Facilitator – Margery Irvine
Mondays, 3-5 pm, March 3, 10, 17, 24.

The “Great War” that shook Europe, from 1914-18, left behind both devastation and a fertile ground for new growth. This new growth can be seen in culture, in politics, in society—and most definitely in the art, literature, and music that followed the war. We will investigate the ways in which writers responded to the events of World War I by considering three novels (Barker's *Regeneration*, Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, and Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*) and a wide selection of poetry. Week 3 (with Bill Irvine) will be devoted to the art of the 1910s, including the Armory show (1913), and war artists, who interpreted the war through the lens of the many revolutionary ideas at the time.

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.



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