

COLLOQUY DOWNEAST 2015 - 2016 DISCUSSIONS

More information and complete descriptions at www.colloquydowneast.org

Fall 2015

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

Environmental Issues: The Importance of Historical Perspective

Facilitators – Andrew Miller and Richard Jacoby
Wednesdays, 1-3 pm, September 9, 16, 23, 30.

This colloquy will investigate current environmental issues by reading noteworthy essays and excerpts of larger works by key western scientists and thinkers, 19th century to present. Discussion topics and readings will encourage new perspectives on concepts such as: nature, wilderness, activism, resource sustainability, energy needs, rare species, and land ownership. For example, how much is modern environmentalism based on ideas of Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Teddy Roosevelt, and Aldo Leopold? Did present concerns over social inequality originate with environmental protests of the 1960s? Could world-wide energy and water shortages cause ethnic conflict, terrorism, and state collapse?

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. **Richard Jacoby** is the other guy.

Ovid's Metamorphoses

Facilitator – Judy McGeorge
Fridays, 10-12noon, September 18, 25, October 2, 9, 16 (five sessions)

In this colloquy we will read the whole of Ovid's fifteen book epic poem, *Metamorphoses*, over five sessions. This epic poem on the themes of transformation and love begins with the creation of the world and ends with the deification of Julius Caesar. Mortals and gods, Greek and Roman myths, history and poetry intertwine in this work composed of over 250 stories. Ovid (March 20, 43 BC -17/18 AD) was born just one year after the assassination of Julius Caesar and completed his *Metamorphoses* by 8 AD, while living in exile.

Judy McGeorge completed a Master of Liberal Arts from St. John's College's Graduate Institute in 2014, after spending two delightful years reading all those books she always meant to read but had never gotten around to earlier.

The American Dream: Four Plays of Arthur Miller – Reading and Discussion

Facilitator – Michael Donahue
Mondays 7-9 pm, September 28, October 5, 12, 19, 26 (five sessions)

Arthur Miller defined American theatre in the 1950s with seminal plays such as *Death of a Salesman* (1949), *The Crucible* (1953), *All My Sons* (1947), and *A View From the Bridge* (1955). On the whole, his works concern themselves with the fading "American Dream" and the individual's struggle with an oftentimes indifferent, harsh, or irrational society—something he learned about firsthand when he stood mute against Senator Joseph McCarthy's House Committee on Un-American Activities. Before his death in 1996, Miller had also written screenplays, novels, short stories, nonfiction, and an auto-biography all based upon his own family, friends, and personal experiences. We will examine Miller's personal and professional journey of rage, love, and doubt reflected in his works that elevated him to the iconic role as one of America's greatest and most relevant authors and intellectuals.

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.

Journalism in America

Facilitator – Michael Taylor
Thursdays, 1-3 pm, October 8, 15, 22, 29.

Journalism in America: a look at the effect on all of us – on our lives, on our institutions, on our thinking -- of what we call the news media. It started with pamphlets and broadsheets in the early 18th century and by the middle of the 20th century, there were more than 1,700 daily papers. But the nation's press barons then had to start sharing the stage (and the profits) with the nascent barons of radio and television. Now, even that is becoming passé, as we tweet ourselves through a techie world of social media. Information – now called "content" – is the basic element of news and we will explore how well we have (or have not) been informed over the past 300 years.

Michael Taylor, a reporter and editor at the San Francisco Chronicle from 1973 to 2009, covered a lot of breaking crime, wrote features stories and did investigations. He is an occasional resident of Brooklin and when it gets really cold he flees back to Berkeley.

Extinction

Facilitator – David Porter
Tuesdays, 1-3 pm, October 27, November 3, 10, 17.

What does the loss of biodiversity mean for us? What is the concern about extinction? After all, it is a natural and necessary component of evolution. This colloquy will pose questions about the history of our understanding of extinction from Cuvier to the present. We will examine the major extinction events in the past history of the earth and compare them to the present situation. Is there anything to be done about the present day high rate of extinction? Can 'de-extinction' solve the problem? Our primary reading will be Elizabeth Kolbert's "*The Sixth Extinction*". Other suggested readings will be from EO Wilson, Naomi Klein, Diane Ackerman, and Arthur Barnosky.

David Porter is a Brooklin resident, retired from a teaching and research career in mycology at the University of Georgia. These days he enjoys exploring the natural history of mushroom fungi.

Marcel Duchamp: A Founder of Modern Art

Facilitator – Farnham (Mike) Blair
Mondays, 10:30 am -12:30 pm, November 16, 23, 30, December 7.

Along with Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) is widely considered a principal mover in the development of modern art. An artistic polymath, Duchamp worked in painting, sculpture, literature, music and film. He was also a world-class chess player. He was variously thought to be aligned with Cubism, Dadaism, and Surrealism, when, in actuality, he was always his own person, often creating in secret, sometimes under the pseudonym of a woman. Duchamp's strongest belief about art was that it must serve the mind. As the principal definer of conceptual art, a style that will forever be pointing towards the future, Duchamp may be the greatest single figure in the development of modernism.

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).



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Winter & Spring 2016

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The Bhagavad Gita: The Song of God?

Facilitator – David Walker

Saturdays, 10 am – 12 pm, January 9, 16, 23, 30.

The *Bhagavad Gita* is considered the holiest written expression of Divine guidance by much of India's population. The *Gita* also contains a trove of practical and esoteric Yogic practices, and inspired Thoreau, Emerson, and Whitman who praised its wisdom and cosmic perspective. Gandhi turned to the *Gita* as his primary spiritual guide, yet his assassin used it as his inspiration. The *Gita* is set in a narrative framework of a dialogue between prince Arunja and his charioteer Krishna on the eve of battle in which diverging attitudes concerning the attainment of liberation are expounded. Drawing from Richard Davis's book, "The Bhagavad Gita: A Biography", we will explore the Gita history and spiritual teachings.

David R. Walker, founder of the Blue Hill Center for Yoga and Wellness in 1990, teaches Spirituality, Ethics, and Lifestyle in Bangor. A freelance journalist David graduated from the UM in Journalism and Philosophy, and has been an Editor for the Maine Association of Handicapped People and the Arts weekly Preview!

Islam: "No god but One God": Clash of Civilizations Revisited, Islam and Christianity

Facilitator – Ron Lesko

Wednesdays 1 – 3 pm, January 20, 27, February 3, 10.

A consideration of the intertwined human experiences of religion and politics in the Middle East and how these religions relate to Islamic political order. "The Clash of Civilizations" (Samuel Huntington) seems to be present in a renewed Twenty First century form. This includes the question of cooperation or conflict between Christianity and Islam. The origin of political and religious beliefs and different interpretations of Islam will be covered as well as the question as to whether or not Islam is a major cause of violence in the Middle East. Selected countries and current political situations will serve as case studies. Readings will include the Quran and other texts.

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

Harry S. Truman

Facilitator – Tim Thomas

Thursdays, 1-3 pm, February 2, 9, 16, 23.

This colloquy will reflect upon the life of Harry S. Truman—from farm boy to plain-speaking president of the United States. Readings will include a biography of Truman and essays on various topics including the atomic bomb, the Potsdam conference, the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine and Berlin airlift and other events from the end of World War II to the beginnings of the Cold War and the Korean War. Film clips of Truman will also be seen. Also, the colloquy will consider his friends—among others Pendegast to Acheson and Marshall. At the end, participants may be asked to consider how an ordinary man could achieve such extraordinary results.

Lowell (Tim) Thomas is a retired Philadelphia lawyer who was an English major in college, but now enjoys reading and discussing American history.

Understanding Russia Today

Facilitator – Courtenay Haight

Fridays, 10 am – 12 noon, February 26, March 4, 11, 18.

What is the historical and political basis of why Russia and its leadership is presently acting on the world stage as it is? Can a look at post-Soviet era Russia and its leadership in the 1980's and 90's help explain the popularity of a leader such as Putin within his own country? There is debate about what should be our reaction to present Russian aggression. Should the West re-impose a policy of sustained "containment" as was the case with the Soviet Union OR should we adopt a more "liberal" view which acknowledges Russia's "sphere of influence" vis-à-vis its neighbors. Suggested readings will be posted on the Colloquy Downeast website.

Courtenay Haight is a retired banker, a farmer and a pan player.

Security and Privacy in the Digital Age: Practical Considerations for Everyday Users

Facilitators – Scott Miller and Mike Wolf

Thursdays, 1:30 -3:30 pm, March 17, 24, 31, April 7.

This colloquy will explore the privacy and security implications of our increasingly "networked" lives. The risk is not just with use of computers: Do you Use a smart phone? Have a car with OnStar? Considered a home with security/monitoring systems? Shop online? Shop at physical stores (think "Target")? All of these provide information about you to the "cloud". . . with attendant security and privacy implications. This will be a practical colloquy for non-technical participants, with hands-on demonstration of some of the tips, traps and best practices for accessing the Internet. Each week's session will be organized with about an hour of lecture/discussion, including "live" computer demonstration, followed by an hour of Q&A, discussion and group troubleshooting on that week's subject. Topics will include: Navigating the Internet safely; How bad guys try to get your personal information and what you can do about it; How do you really know when you are connected?

Scott Miller and **Mike Wolf** are Blue Hill "techno-weenies".

The Future of Secular Nationhood

Facilitator – Peter Sly

Tuesdays, 10 am – 12 noon, April 5, 12, 19, 26.

In reaction to Europe's religious wars, enlightenment thinkers embraced separation of church and state. Many nations now aspire to this secular model. However, perhaps secularism is an historical aberration. The United States and the UN are conflicted on the issue, supporting some sectarian governments (Saudi Arabia, Israel, Kosovo), opposing others (Iran, Serbia, Taliban) and sometimes shoring up governments structured to preserve religious divisions (India, Iraq, Ireland, Lebanon, Syria). This internet-based colloquy will consider the U.S. interests in secular nationhood abroad and its domestic implications.

Peter Sly is an attorney, secular Presbyterian and recent traveler to the Holy Land and India.

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

Questions? Email to 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.

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 wish to have your registration fee waived.