

THE FORT WORTH HUMANIST QUARTERLY

A HUMANISTS OF FORT WORTH (HOFW) PUBLICATION

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Briefs

Dues support HoFW

Some people may not know that dues pay for HoFW activities. At a recent event, we were surprised to hear from a long-time participant who had no idea that HoFW has membership dues. She cast a suspicious eye, waiting for the punch line. But this is not a joke. Members really do willingly contribute a small amount of money each year to keep us going. We are especially grateful for this since the group would be unable to exist without these funds.

Membership dues are voluntary. We welcome visitors, and no one is required to pay to participate. We know people dislike being pestered for money, and we have no desire to do so. If you would like to become an official dues-paying member, talk to an officer at our monthly meetings or send an email to treasurer@hofw.org.

Annual membership dues are affordable: \$25 for an individual or \$40 for a couple. Dues can be paid in person at our meetings or online with PayPal using the link in the top-left corner of www.hofw.org.

Dues are necessary. It costs about \$1,000 annually to keep the group going. Our expenses include an annual donation to Westside UU, our way of saying thank you for the generous use of their facility. Our second major expense is the cost of Web services, including our sites at <http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth.org> and <http://www.hofw.org>.

Nearly every visitor finds us online, so these sites are a crucial link to others in the secular community. Other costs are outlined in our annual budget on page 4.

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In Memoriam

HoFW celebrates life of Claude Richard Trice

By Elva Roy

Humanists of Fort Worth lost a friend and beloved mentor with the death of Claude Richard (Dick) Trice on May 7, 2015. Most everyone who knew him will miss his gentle spirit and soft voice, even when he was railing against one injustice or another.

Following is an interview I conducted with him on Sunday, May 3, 2015 at his apartment at Brookdale Broadway Cityview, an independent living center on Bryant Irvin Road in south Fort Worth. Dick was in good spirits and answered every question I asked. Due to lack of space, only a small portion of the interview can be shared here.

Elva: What is your full name and why were you named that?

Dick: Claude Richard Trice, after my mother's brother, Claude Blair. I never knew I had any name other than Dick Trice until I started first grade. The teacher called my name, and I didn't know who she was talking to.

Elva: Where and when were you born?

Dick: I was born in Fort Worth on November 11, 1932. Since that is Veteran's Day ("Armistice Day"), I never had to go to school on my birthday because it was a national holiday.

Elva: Happy childhood?

Dick: Not really. I had a good mother but my father was 20 years older, and he wasn't a very good man. None of us, including my mother, ever received



Dick Trice, Humanists of Fort Worth chair for many years, frequently spoke at HoFW and Westside Unitarian Universalist Forum meetings. (Photo by Elva Roy)

a birthday or Christmas gift from him.

That was one of the great pleasures of earning my own money was that I could buy my mother a Christmas present. I had four older brothers, and one was mean to me. For instance, he made me ride on the crossbar of his bike as he drove me around forcing me to go into office buildings to sell packs of chewing gum, and he would ride in the street and steer the bike right up against cars so that I would have to jerk my knees up to get my feet out of the way.

One time when this happened my feet got caught in the bicycle chain, and my foot and leg got chewed up. I lay on the sidewalk crying and bleeding as my brother sped away on his bike.

A man came out of a building and put me in his car to take me home. I begged him to let me out because I didn't want him to see where I lived. I was embarrassed for anyone to see my house. I was also embarrassed about the clothes I had to wear to school.

The welfare department provided coats to children who had no coat, but

all the coats were yellow, so everybody knew you were one of the welfare children. Same thing with free lunch passes. The "free" kids had to line up first so everybody knew who the poor kids were.

Elva: When did you realize that you were no longer a believer?

Dick: When I was 17 or 18 years old. I stopped believing long before I ever discovered anything else. I got married when I was 21 to a gal I met at TCU in freshman English class. She was from Borger, Texas. She was majoring in religion and sociology. She was twice as smart as I was.

Barbara Alexander and I married in 1954. I had been in the Army for 10 weeks when we married. We moved to Baltimore and I had every weekend off. When we had been married for about 6 months, she wanted to start looking around at churches and she wanted me to go with her. I told her I'd go with her, but "you'll never get me to believe in god again."

We went around to a bunch of different brands of (continued on page 4)

Leading local Freethinker motivated by desire to build community

By Wanda Foster

(This is the third article in a series about other atheists and agnostics in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.)

The Freethinkers of Fort Worth, a well-known local atheist group, in many ways mimics the desires of Rob Stone, lead organizer, who resists any form of formal organizational structures and titles. He simply wants to build a community where like-minded people can enjoy each other's company and associate freely without focusing on religion or spending time on it.

"We have all heard it. We have heard enough, and we want to do something different with our time," Stone said.

As discussed in previous articles, local humanists seek rationalism, tolerance, education, and a progressive agenda, while Metroplex Atheists try to protect the rights and interests of nonbelievers

to build a free society. As the lead organizer for Freethinkers, Stone's passion is to build social situations designed to encourage friendships and fun time in which atheists can feel comfortable being themselves.

He says he heard all about religion growing up because he attended an Assembly of God church and Christian school. Later he earned two degrees at Baylor University, including a Bachelor of Arts degree in music and a Master of Journalism degree.

He considers Baylor a great school and feels he received an excellent education, but admits he did not make many friends at Baylor. As soon as his friends discovered he was having doubts about his religion, they began deserting him. He recalls the difficulties of trying to get over a sense of betrayal.

When Stone told a couple of friends

about his doubts regarding the existence of god, he made it clear to his friends that he did not want this fact to negatively affect the friendship. Rob recalls one of these friends saying, "Oh Rob, don't worry about it. That's not going to happen."

"But it did," Stone said. "They quit talking to me, and they never talked to me again. It took forever to get over it. It was very, very tough."

Stone said his family was very different thankfully. The first person he told was his brother, who eventually told his mother. While she was upset, she accepted him "without going crazy about it. I still love her," he said. "We just have a different opinion, and we still have mutual respect."

"She sees that I am a stable, rational, independent adult who has a normal life... It is important for me to stress (continued on page 5)

Book Review: *The Age of Reason* by Thomas Paine

by Morris Meador

The Humanist Book Club read *The Age of Reason* by Thomas Paine as our June selection. This book stands out as one of the greatest freethought books of all time. Neil deGrasse Tyson, American astrophysicist, cosmologist, author, and science communicator, places Paine's book on his list of "the eight books every intelligent person on the planet should read."

The Age of Reason was a bestseller in the United States when it was originally published as three separate parts in 1794, 1795, and 1807. At the time, these publications caused a brief revival of deism.

Paine challenged institutional religion and the legitimacy of the bible. He used common deist criticisms of corruption in the institutional church and

its lust for power. In the book, he argues for reason rather than revelation and rejects miracles. He also advocates for a natural religion and a creator god.

Paine (1737 – 1809) was born in England and came to the American colonies in 1774 with the help of Benjamin Franklin. He immediately became involved in the American Revolution, and his pamphlets were a major force rousing the colonists to rebel. Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* was so widely read and influential that John Adams said, "Without the pen of the author of *Common Sense*, the sword of Washington would have been raised in vain."

For much of the 1790s Paine lived in France, where he also became very involved in the French Revolution. He wrote another book in 1791, *The Rights of Man*, defending the French Revolution in response to the writings of Irish protestant Edmund Burke, who had written a pamphlet known as *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, a publication opposing the Revolution. He and Burke sparred in pamphlet wars that ensued.

Paine was elected to the National Convention (Convention Nationale), an assembly that governed France from September 20, 1792, until October 26, 1795, but in 1793 he was arrested and imprisoned in Paris.

At one point he narrowly escaped execution and was for a time abandoned by American leaders because of his involvement in the French Revolution.

The Age of Reason has three sections coinciding with the three original, separate pamphlets. In the first section Paine presents his personal creed and major arguments. He writes of belief in a deistic creator-god, skepticism of the supernatural, and virtue, which he describes as thinking of others rather than oneself. He also expresses anger at corrupt religious institutions and belief in the individual's right of conscience.

The second and third sections of the book contain Paine's demonstration that the bible is not divine, but rather is a book made up of contradiction and error. The bible's words are used against itself, and the bible is tested for internal consistency much as biblical criticism would be presented in the eighteenth century.

Arguing against revelation, Paine says "it is revelation to the first person only, and hearsay to every other, and consequently they are not obliged to believe it."

Paine's irreverent tone and plain language of the people helped make his book so powerful. This tone is part of what most angered Christians about his writings. Many of his arguments



were not original but were contained in intellectual journals where they had no effect. Paine's writing was done for the people and stirred great controversy.

Reading *The Age of Reason* has been a revelation to me. This great man was certainly in the thick of things during American and French Revolutions and came very close to losing his head at one point. His writing literally changed the course of events in the American Revolution.

It is ironic that Paine has not been appreciated to nearly the extent he deserves. Only six people attended his funeral, and his writings in this book caused his near banishment from history. Thanks to the great Robert G. Ingersoll who made it his mission to revive Paine's place among our country's founding fathers, we can now appreciate this man of great reason and patriotism.

HoFW Book Club selects two new books for review

HoFW Book Club attendees selected two new books to review for upcoming meetings, including *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins for the July meeting and *The End of Faith* by Sam Harris for the August meeting.

Everyone is invited to attend these sessions every fourth Saturday at 3 p.m. at 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth.

	July 2015	August 2015	September 2015
Key HoFW Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Meeting, Wednesday, July 8, 7 p.m., 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth, TX Thursday, July 23 dinner social to be announced http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/#calendar HoFW Book Club, Saturday, July 25, 3 to 4:30 p.m. 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Meeting, Wednesday, August 12, 7 p.m., 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth, TX HoFW Book Club, Saturday, August 22, 3 to 4:30 p.m., 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth, TX Thursday, August 27 dinner social to be announced (Pamela Hughes will host.) http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/#calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Meeting, Wednesday, September 9, 7 p.m., 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth Thursday, September 25 dinner social to be announced http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/#calendar HoFW Book Club, Saturday, September 26, 3 to 4:30 p.m., 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth, TX
Other Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence Day, July 4 - Metroplex Atheists Invitation to all Humanists, Atheists, Agnostics, and Freethinkers to march in the July 4th parade in Arlington, TX; 8 a.m. parade assembly at the University of Texas at Arlington parking lot, South East Corner of Cooper and Mitchell. Please RSVP on the MA Web site at http://www.meetup.com/Metroplex-Atheists/events/223336991/ If you are a member of the American Humanist Association (AHA), please consider wearing your pin to the parade. Bible & Beer Consortium Debate: Sunday, July 12, Live Oak Lounge, 7 to 10 p.m. 1311 Lipscomb St, Fort Worth, TX "The Resurrection of Jesus: Fact or Fiction" Freethinkers of Fort Worth go to Dallas for the "The Compleat Wrks of Wllm Shkspr (abridged) [revised]," a fact-paced, entertaining version of 37 Shakspeare plays condensed into one. Friday, July 17, 7 p.m. at the Samuell-Grand Ampitheatre. Tickets can be purchased at the following link: http://www.shakespearedallas.org/productions/the-complete-works-william-shakespeare-abridged-revised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camp Quest, TX, Hunt, TX, August 1 – 8, Hunt, TX secular camp for children; registration is now full, but if you want to support the camp as a volunteer, applications are now being accepted at the following link: http://campquesttexas.org/volunteer/ Bible & Beer Consortium Debate: Sunday, August 9, Live Oak Lounge, 7 to 10 p.m. 1311 Lipscomb St, Fort Worth, TX "How Can God Be Good When There is so Much Evil?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apostacon 2015, September 18 - 20 at the DFW Marriott, 8440 Freeport Parkway, Irving TX 75063; billed as "The Sauciest Freethought Conference in the Noodleverse. Tickets will be on sale until Sep 12, 2015. More information is provided at the following link: http://www.apostacon.org/

Letters to the Editor

All HoFW members and other readers who wish to write Letters to the Editor responding to articles that appear in this publication are invited to express their own views and provide feedback.

Our newsletter policy requires letters to reference a specific article that has appeared in one of the two most recent issues. We do not publish open letters or third-party letters.

Responders should limit their letters

to 150 or 175 words and provide the writer's email address. In addition, for those who require anonymity, please provide the name you would like published with the letter.

All letters should be exclusive to *The Fort Worth Humanist Quarterly* and should not be published in any other publication.

Anyone who would like to submit a letter can do so by emailing the

editor at the following address: vice-chair@hofw.org.

Space is limited, so we make no guarantee that all letters will be published. Letters may be edited or shortened to fit the space.

We request that all content show a respectful tone, even when the viewpoints expressed differ from those of *The Fort Worth Humanist Quarterly* or any other party.

THE FORT WORTH HUMANIST QUARTERLY

Chair: Sam
Editor and Vice Chair: Wanda Foster
Assistant Editor: Adam
Secretary: Reed Bilz
Treasurer: Adam

<http://www.hofw.org/>

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Opinion

Parents, corporations complicit in slow progress of equal rights for women

By Wanda Foster

Humanists today at a national level work for diverse purposes and causes. Why? Because we know god will not help us. Only humans can improve human society.

A quick glance at the American Humanist Association (AHA) Web site, <http://americanhumanist.org/>, reveals a plethora of causes humanists support, among them separation of church and state and equal rights for all including nonbelievers and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) community, all very worthy causes. The AHA also discusses the "reinvigorated" American Humanist Association Feminist Caucus and has occasional articles about roles of women in society and equal rights.

The need to reinvigorate women's rights seems heightened at this time in my view. While society has made tremendous inroads on most AHA causes since the 1960s, women seem to lack some basic rights to be full citizens of the world. In fairness, we have seen some changes, but observation of daily life in 2015 continues to reveal large gaps in equality.

Sure, women have the right to work and to get paid 77 cents on the dollar compared to the fellow who sits next

to her surfing the Web. While surfing on the job is not a universal male trait, it happens often enough. Sitting in an office, we notice that the professional, knowledgeable, overtime-for-free, hardworking female gets to do more of the work too—for less money. I have many times watched as some of them seemed to work themselves to death for the right to stand in place.

That is not to say all men have short hours, and not all companies are alike. On this matter I am speaking anecdotally from personal experience in the defense industry. In a work group seeking volunteers or requiring extra work, the easiest target often seems to be an ambitious female with actual skills trying desperately to stake out a place in a male-run executive club.

Women on their own with children to feed know they are over a barrel. They must be plucky and offer to work extra to make extra money or, if salaried, to gain favor needed to retain their positions or get a promotion. These women often live in a Catch 22. Everyone knows it, including the corporate boss who may be more than willing to take advantage and who seldom is female.

Women's retro, 1960s rights also appear in politics. First, we have the obligatory statements about Hillary

Clinton's clothing and now even a Web site <http://www.racked.com/2015/4/21/8433603/hillary-clinton-fashion-clothes-suits> with an article devoted to denial that sexism is a factor in comments about a female candidate's style. Yet in reality the style discussions imply that she needs to be impeccable. But what about Donald Trump's hair? For him, it is a trademark. Inherently he seems to have the right to be imperfect.

The Washington Post now reports that even the Republican female candidate for president, Carly Fiorina, has gotten into the act of style bullying by quipping that Senator Barbara Boxer's hair is "so yesterday."

As a society, we still seem to expect men to be the thinkers, negotiators, and strategic planners and the women to handle the children, the social graces and calendars, the housekeeping, and the second job of the family.

Young women are still trained to be demure, socially graceful, agreeable, and beautiful before all else. Both mothers and fathers are complicit in this. Daughters and sons are parented differently. Sons are expected to be opinionated, less agreeable, boisterous, and thinking. In this way, each side learns expectations. Basically, girls learn to expect less and give up

more, while boys know it is their station to say no and make decisions others will follow. They are entitled.

Changing the world starts at home. Until parents learn to empower their children equally, children will continue to learn life patterns that keep women in roles considered less-than male roles. Gender roles are as old as the world and are not easily modified.

The data tell the story. The Center for American Progress has collected a wide range of data on women's issues and ranked U.S. states. Texas gets a well-deserved F and ranks somewhere between 41 and 50 in women's economics, leadership, and health.

The bright spot is our rank as 27th in women's economic security even though 20 percent are in poverty and women hold 55.8 percent of Texas minimum wage jobs. No one mentions how many of these 1.6 million women are single mothers. We rank 37th in women's leadership and 47th in women's health.

Given this data, we all need to ask ourselves how we hold back our children, male or female. Children learn life patterns subtly in daily activities. The question is who gets to give and who gets to take at home and at work. Our actions teach children far more than our words.

HoFW Humanist Perspectives

(Reed Bilz, current secretary of HoFW, is a former U.S. Air Force officer who once served as administrator of a flying squadron. She also is mother of six. As a member since the early days of the organization, she also previously served as secretary for many years.)

By Reed Bilz

The question is how did I become a humanist. I cannot think of a single spiritual event or moment that happened to me nor any act that convinced me there was a god keeping his eye on me. Not that I did not try. Ever since I learned that the majority believed in a "greater power" who (or that) talked to them and answered their prayers, I have attempted to attain such communication.

My mother told me that, as a child, she read in the Bible that "faith could move mountains." She spent the large part of one summer in Maine trying to move Mount Monadnock with no success. Her comment to this was "if God wanted me to believe, he should have moved that mountain or given me the impression that it moved."

Throughout my life, I have given "God" many chances to prove himself or herself. I grew up in the Episcopal church attending Sunday School from preschool age through confirmation at age 13 and singing in the church youth choir. During my teen years I attended two churches and one youth group, the second church and youth group because of members of the opposite sex who also attended.

College years were basically churchless, although I had a roommate who was a Unitarian and I dated a Universalist from Harvard. I also taught Sunday School for one year at a Congregational church and attended my Episcopal church when I was home for the holidays.

The following 15 years were spent in the military while I was bearing and raising six children. My parents had forgotten to have me baptized as a baby and, as a consequence, I had not been able to be confirmed with my class. This oversight offended me greatly, and I was determined not to do the same to my children.

In the mobile society of the Air Force, it was difficult to achieve this goal, but I managed to have each of my six children christened before they reached 1 year old. I chose god parents who were believers and, therefore, willing to answer any religious questions I pretended to be fussing to with the baby. By the time my youngest was born, we were here in Fort Worth and the nearest church that was both geographically and theologically Episcopalian was the Wedgwood Methodist Church.

For the first time in my adult life, I found a church home. That is not to say I got religion. My faith remained skeptical, but I discovered Christian fellowship in my Sunday School class and women's groups. Members of these groups offered emotional support at the time of my divorce and

during the following years as I struggled to raise six kids alone. The Sunday School lessons were peripheral, a foundation for intelligent discussion and continuing questions.

As a newly single mother in the late 70s, I discovered the need for advocacy for women. I adopted causes and issues that affect single women, their children, pregnant women who did not want to be pregnant, women with AIDS, lesbians, victims of domestic violence. If a woman's rights were being violated, I was there.

My role as advocate started locally with the Fort Worth Independent School District and moved to the state level where I testified before committees against domestic violence and for freedom of reproductive choice.

Modern technology enables me to e-mail members of Congress or the state legislature at the drop of an ill-conceived bill. If my spiritual journey had a direction, I think fighting for the rights of others was—and is—the focal point.

Because justice has become my creed, the Unitarian-Universalist church and humanism are a natural fit. I discovered the Jefferson church soon after starting to reside in Fort Worth and vowed to my UU friends that, once my kids were launched, I would join if it had a west side location and if the Methodists continued moving to the right. I was loathe to give up my old church—not the Methodists but my

From the Editor:

Most HoFW members favor science and rationalism over religion, magic, and dogma. Within that realm, we remain a very diverse group, however, with different thoughts, perspectives, and ways of arriving at our beliefs in a world often unfriendly to secular thought. This column presents our stories. Many of the names have been changed or limited to first names to

Sunday School class. When Genesis changed the Sunday School hour to 9 a.m., I was able to have my cake and eat it too.

When we moved to Page Avenue, I could no longer commute between the churches. I enjoyed the religious discussions though I never agreed with the class members theologically and I never revealed my own nonbelief.

Humanists of Fort Worth started at Westside UU with Russell Elleven at the helm. I joined enthusiastically and was the secretary for many years. I loved meeting and talking with a group of like-minded, intelligent people. We had interesting speakers for the most part, and I felt free to ask questions with no fear of censure or strange looks.

I have again found a church home with Westside and the Humanists, this time without having to hide my true creed. I have even found a discussion group with the Humanist Book Group headed by Morris Meador. I recommend this group to all of you.

Trice served in U.S. Army Counterintelligence and enjoyed job at Bell Helicopter

(continued from page 1)

churches and at the end of that exercise, she came to believe as I did—that it was all nonsense.

Elva: Were your parents religious?

Dick: Yeah, they were Baptists. We went to Sunday school and all that. My mother would go to various churches, and for a time she joined J. Frank Norris' Baptist Church. He was infamous—biggest church in Fort Worth and had the reputation of cleaning up "Hell's Half Acre" (whore houses and beer joints) in Fort Worth, 10th Street down to Lancaster.

Then a new little church started just two blocks from our house, and I started going to that church. This neighborhood church was a Southern Baptist Church, whereas J. Frank Norris' church was a part of the World Baptist Fellowship, a more fundamentalist denomination.

I had friends in the neighborhood who were Catholic, but my minister preached how Catholics were going to hell. I didn't believe it because these were nice kids. My brother was in WWII and, when I learned that Hitler killed 6 million Jews I began to think how could god let 6 million of his chosen people be slaughtered. That was the first time I went to the minister and said, "How could he let that happen?"

Then my mother sicced the minister on me because she knew my belief in God was waning. The minister appeared one afternoon after I'd gotten off work. When he came the first time, I wasn't ready for him. When he came the next week, I was ready for him. He couldn't answer my questions and I stopped believing in any god.

Elva: Did you go to college?

Dick: I graduated from high school and wasn't planning to go to college, but I happened to work for Charles Tandy. I had a part-time job at his company, Hinckley-Tandy Leather. My job was filling orders, sweeping the floor, doing whatever I was asked to do.

When Mr. Tandy figured out that I was no longer in school because I had graduated, he told me to get my behind over to TCU or "I'll kick you in the you-know-what." Tandy offered to pay for every "A" and "B" that I made. I majored in business because I wanted to be like Charles Tandy, and I completed the first 2 years at TCU.

Elva: Did you have military service?

Dick: The lottery for the military draft was looming, and my number could have come up at any time. I didn't want to go to boot camp in the winter, plus I learned that if I volunteered I would only have to stay in the Army for 24 months, but if I were to be drafted I would have to be in for 48 months. So I enlisted, was sent to infantry training, but they switched me to Army counterintelligence and sent me to Baltimore. I hated every minute of the military.

While I was in the Army, the G.I. Bill of Rights was passed, so when I completed my service I went back to TCU and graduated a year early by working extra hard.

Elva: What was your favorite job?

Dick: I guess it would be at Bell Helicopter. At that time, I was President of the Unitarian Church of Fort Worth. One of the members was a bigwig at Bell, and he got me a job there. My

job was to keep track of spare parts. Eventually, I was one of the designers of the spare parts automation system at Bell. I really liked that job.

Elva: What was your last job?

Dick: Well, after failing at a lot of things, I bought a frame shop and went into business for myself. I learned the hard way that nobody can make any money running a frame shop. So that was another failure.

Elva: Tell us about your marriage.

Dick: I married Barbara Alexander in 1954 when I was 21. When we got back to Fort Worth after living in Baltimore in the service, I was finishing up at TCU, and we invited various old friends over to our apartment, but we ended up distancing ourselves from them because they were so prejudiced against Jews, blacks, and anyone else who wasn't just like them. We didn't know where to find friends. Then I read in the newspaper that one of my favorite professors was going to give a talk at the Unitarian Church of Fort Worth. So we decided to go hear what he had to say. We arrived at 10 a.m., and by noon we were the happiest couple on the earth because we found where we belonged.

We moved from Unitarian Church of Fort Worth to Jefferson Unitarian Church and finally to Westside. I was president of the Board at each one of those churches for at least a couple of years. At one point, Barbara and I dropped out of Unitarianism for 15 years due to lack of effective ministers, but we eventually came back. At Westside, I was the Forum leader for about 15 years and really enjoyed that. I delivered a lot of talks to the Humanist of Fort Worth and quite a few

Sunday sermons too.

Elva: Where do you see Unitarianism going?

Dick: I don't have much hope. Christians have taken over the UUA [Unitarian Universalist Association]. Every year the number of non-believers in the U.S. is growing. UUA is going the opposite way and becoming more Christian, which is the wrong direction.

Elva: Would you like to share comments?

Dick: After Barbara died, I met Joy Counts (a widow). We had lots in common, became great friends, and after a time realized we cared deeply for each other, so we moved in together for 6 or 7 years. During this time, I was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Three years after diagnosis, I decided to move into Brookdale Broadway Cityview's independent living community while I contemplated exactly what to do next.

Final Note from Elva: Dick took his life 4 days after this interview. He made no secret of his rational decision not to spend years in a nursing home, completely dependent, not recognizing family or friends and lacking quality of life. He lived a life full of rich experiences and was ready to go.

I am happy for Dick that he took control of his own life up to the very moment it ended. He believed, as do I, that a rational person who is suffering and who has been diagnosed with an irremediable, terminal condition has a basic human right to die painlessly and peacefully, which is what Dick managed to accomplish.

Rest in peace, Dick Trice.

Humanists of Fort Worth Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Chair Sam Baker at Westside Unitarian Universalist Church at 7:10 p.m.

Present: Twenty-one were in attendance.

Minutes: There were no minutes of previous meetings.

Remembering Dick Trice was the topic. Joy Counts began the discussion by telling us about Dick's life. Others followed with their memories of Dick who was instrumental in forming our organization and in keeping it vital through the years.

Treasurer's Report: We have approximately \$800 in our account.

Elections: Sixteen ballots were cast, and the following members were elected unanimously:

Sam Baker, President

Wanda Foster, Vice-President

Reed Bilz, Secretary

Adam, Treasurer

Goals: Following is a summary of suggestions for meeting our stated

goals from a meeting in 2002. Taking secretarial privilege, I thought this was interesting:

- Offer thought-provoking programs
- Discussion of American Humanists vs. Secular Humanists
- Discussion of the Humanist Manifestos I, II and III
- Variety of speakers, discussion, or both educational forums or formal debates
- Videos
- Engage in Social Activities
- Dinner before the meeting
- Dinner meeting such as pot luck at the church
- Field trips
- Breakfast after trash pick-up

Next Meeting: June 10, 2015, Westside, Fort Worth.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Reed K. Bilz, Secretary

Annual Budget Report for 2015

The past 12 months has been somewhat lean given that HoFW lost some long-standing contributors as a result of illness or death. Even though we have added many new attendees who joined on the Meetup Web site, many are not yet dues-paying supporters. At this time, we have 33 dues-paying members. Our Meetup Web site shows we have 283 people who have joined us online.

During the past 12-month period HoFW has collected a total of \$700 from a combination of dues and donations. During the same time period, we paid out \$688.69 in expenses to cover standard operating costs.

We also have worked to reduce our budget as a means of ensuring continuation of our programs. Much of this has been done by ceasing to pay honoraria for speakers in most cases. On the rare occasion that we have paid an honorarium it has been \$25 or less, which is below average for many speakers.

At this time, HoFW has a balance of \$967.22, including \$746.63 in our bank account and \$220.59 in our PayPal account. These funds defray the

normal costs of operating the organization and cover the rising costs of Web services, including Meetup fees which increased from \$144 annually in 2014 to \$179.88 in 2015.

Besides paying Web fees, we now have an official mailing address, a Post Office box. Following is a table of our annual expenses for a standard calendar year. We encourage all participants to help financially support our educational programs.

Annual Expenses	Budgeted
Meetup Fees	\$ 180.00
Westside Donation	\$ 300.00
Cookies	\$ 55.00
Coffee and cups	\$ 100.00
Charitable Donations	\$ 100.00
hofw.org	\$ 73.00
Office Supplies	\$ 50.00
PO Box (\$65 paid semiannually)	\$ 130.00
Total	\$ 988.00

Freethinkers donate time to Tarrant Food Bank and attend Shakespeare events

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that because so many people think that without god you're not grounded, you're not centered, and that is not really true."

As a nonbeliever, Stone first began to branch out into the atheist community in 2007. While the Freethinker Web site says the group was founded August 7, 2007, little formal history is recorded about the group.

Initially a woman named Meredith (last name withheld) may have led the group for about a year before Stone joined. She has since become a teacher and left the group.

The first Freethinker event Stone attended was a social gathering at Central Market for one of the musical events held there. The arrangements had been made by another Freethinker organizing when he Stone joined.

"I had a great time. It was my first time to go out with a group of nonbelievers, and I wanted to see what it was like. I gave it a shot, and I just had a blast. Everyone was cordial, intelligent, fun to be around, and I was comfortable immediately. It was great. It was exactly what I was looking for," he said.

Stone first started organizing events in 2011 and has three primary pillars he considers important to building an atheist-agnostic social community: dinners, cultural events, and charity.

He schedules a night called Dinners across Fort Worth about once every two weeks. Originally he scheduled the dinners to be near his house in Watauga, but traffic was having an impact on the ability of attendees to arrive at the events on time. As a result, he has moved the dinner venues to other locations across the city, which is helping his membership

branch out so that he has attendees from every where in and around the City, he said.

On-line he has nearly 900 Meet-up members, but he said the dinners consistently draw about 20 to 25 people.

"I don't know where the other 857 are," he quipped.

Since the organization has no official meeting place, it would be difficult to accommodate them all at a restaurant if they did show up.

Cultural events the Freethinkers attend often occur in Dallas. Some recent examples of these social gatherings include multiple get-togethers at the Dallas Film Festival in April and May and a European rock metal concert in May at the Bomb Factory. Occasionally someone will also schedule a trek to a comedy event or Shakespeare Dallas.

July 17, Stone plans a group outing to "The Compleat Wrks of Wllm Shkspr (abridged) [revised]" at Samuell-Grand Amphitheatre in Dallas. Promoters say that three brave actors will "blaze a trail through all 37 of the Bard's works in a 90-minute performance that will leave you falling out of your seat with laughter."

The venue is located outdoors in Samuell-Grand Park next to the Tenison golf course at 1500 Tenison Parkway in Dallas. People can bring their own blankets, sand chairs, and lawn chairs, while enjoying the summer evening with a picnic. Coolers of food, beer, and wine are permitted. In addition, for those who prefer not to bring their own, chairs can be rented or food can be purchased on the site at the concession stand.

Stone tries to arrive early so the group can stake out territory on the lawn by 6:30 or 7 p.m. and help ensure they



Rob Stone, lead organizer of Freethinkers of Fort Worth, left, works in the Tarrant County Food Bank warehouse. (Photo by Libba Murphey)

have room to relax from the drive and socialize before the 8:15 p.m. showing.

Besides supporting cultural events, Stone also serves as a part-time soccer coach, who revels in watching the sport. I caught up with him at a World Cup, big-screen viewing of the women's futbol match between Australia and the U.S. June 8th at a small pub known as the Upper 90 on West Magnolia at College. His sister and members of a local, semiprofessional soccer team also were present, some of them decked out in red, white, and blue for the occasion. This was the opening match of the season, which the U.S. won 3 to 1.

While these events are important to help atheists and agnostics have other like-minded people to socialize with, Stone said the group is largely insular in those environments. That is, they may not necessarily interact with oth-

ers in the community in these circumstances.

To increase outreach and interaction with the larger community of the City, Stone started organizing Freethinker volunteer events at the Tarrant County Food Bank. He said this effort requires people to work together and interact, while helping support the needs of the charity.

"It doesn't matter if you are Hindu, Muslim, Christian, or Jewish," he said. "I don't care. As long as you are there helping other people, that is great."

While turnout has been somewhat less than he wanted for the initial events, he continues to hold them to encourage greater participation in community. He said the Tarrant County Food Bank always needs help and some of his most supportive members do participate. The group performs various tasks in cooperation with others for about 3 hours at a time.

Freethinkers also participate in other charity events, such as the Crosspost: CureSearch Walk for Children's Cancer at Texas Motor Speedway in April.

Stone said he feels truly fortunate to have the job he has working at the Barnes & Noble book store, because it is a place where he is allowed to enjoy the free flow of ideas. Unlike many of his atheist and agnostic friends who fear reprisals in the workplace—such as being fired for their beliefs—he said he is free to politely have and express his own views.

The group has six other organizers besides Stone, but he schedules most of the regularly recurring events.

During July, he has slated dinners across Fort Worth at two locations:

- Greenwood's German & European Restaurant at 3522 Bluebonnet Circle, Fort Worth, on Friday, July 10 at 7 p.m.
- Asian King Buffet, 953 Melbourne Road, Hurst, TX, Friday, July 24 at 7 p.m.



Freethinkers support many Dallas cultural events and look forward to attending "The Compleat Wrks of Wllm Shkspr (abridged) [revised]," Friday, July 17 at the Samuell-Grand Amphitheatre in Dallas. Written by Adam Long, Daniel Singer, and Jess Winfield, the comedy event will be held Wednesdays – Fridays, July 1-July 24, 2015 at 8:15 p.m.

Humanists of Fort Worth celebrate Earth Day 2015 by viewing Lone Star Film Society advance screening of award-winning environmental documentary, “Racing Extinction”

By Wanda Foster

Members of HoFW, the Sierra Club, and others celebrated Earth Day, April 22nd, by attending a free, advance screening of the award-winning film “Racing Extinction” at the Modern. Sponsored by the Lone Star Film Society, the film was also attended by Director Louie Psihoyos, the Academy Award winner of the environmental documentary “The Cove.” “Racing Extinction” is considered a prequel or companion work to “The Cove,” and he directed both films.

Psihoyos was joined by Coproducer Gina Papabeis, who appeared at the opening of the film, and by others who participated in a question-and-

ous extinction events in Earth’s history, the film shows that high levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂) were present in the atmosphere and that our current levels exceed the CO₂ present in all preceding cases of extinction recorded.

The film team traveled under the sea with humpback whales and other endangered species and explained the cycle of life and the importance of unseen sea life, such as plankton, which help create oxygen and support a healthy carbon cycle in the oceans. Some 40 percent have died off in the past century, he said. While these creatures are largely ignored and unseen, the film points out that the planet, including people and whales, need

while showing the problems with overfishing. Some of this fishing occurs because humans have demand for folklore medicines offering benefits not based on science.

Much of the initial film research was performed with the support of the Oceanic Preservation Society (OPS), which also supported the work done in “The Cove” documentary about dolphin killing in Japan.

The cast applied many of the same covert tactics used in “The Cove” to gather information about overfishing and fishing of endangered species. The movie shows heavy human demand for shark fin soup in the east that has led to out-of-control overfish-

duction of demand for beef products. The film crew used a military grade camera, including forward-looking infrared (FLIR) technology, to film CO₂ emissions, enabling viewers to see the extent of emissions in progress. In this process, they filmed emissions from cars, people, oil tanks, and other sources and projected them onto the sides of buildings to expand public viewing and understanding.

Besides filing CO₂ emissions, the documentary also shows the major effects of another gas, methane or CH₄, which many consider one of the greatest contributors to greenhouse gases and climate change. Two key sources of methane are melting glaciers uncovering large volumes of dead sea animals hidden for centuries, thereby releasing the methane produced as they decay, and the proliferation of cattle in response to rising human demand for beef and dairy products. The product team demonstrated the effects of releasing methane into the atmosphere by punching a large hole in sea ice and showing the explosive sights and sounds it produces as it escapes.

They also went to cattle farms and used large bags to collect the gas from cattle and show how much each cow produces. Historically this methane was not such a problem because people ate less meat than we do today. Currently the world has an estimated 1 billion to 1.5 billion cows. In the U.S. alone, cows contribute some 10 percent to greenhouse emissions from human activities.

The chief result of both CO₂ and methane emissions is to trap radiant energy inside the atmosphere and increase global warming. Scientists say methane’s life in the atmosphere is shorter than that of CO₂, but it actually traps radiation more efficiently than CO₂. The film advocates changes in human behavior, such as reducing consumption of beef and dairy products to achieve major greenhouse gas reductions and other changes.

After the film, the production team showed the film crew’s specially equipped Tesla S, an electric car equipped with the 16,000-lumen projector used to project images onto skyscrapers.

Psihoyos said the group hopes to be able to show an outdoor projection on the Empire State building in New York City if all of the necessary permits can be obtained. If not, they will attempt a similar project in Asia. The film has attracted some key backing from one of the wealthiest people in Asia, he said.

“Racing Extinction” also was viewed in Dallas at Fair Park on April 25th and 26th, as part of a giant Earth Day Texas celebration. The film was shown twice each day.

The Dallas event has become known as the largest annual, public green exhibition in the world. Founded by Trammel Crow, Earth Day Texas celebrated its fifth anniversary this year.



After the movie, Director Psihoyos’ team projected creatures onto the face of the Fort Worth Modern Art Museum to make publicly visible those that are nearly extinct. Among the creatures displayed are plankton essential to creation of oxygen, 40 percent of which he says have died as part of a massive, global extinction event. (photo by Wanda Foster)

answer session after the showing, along with Lisa Gowan, a member of the Sierra Club Executive Committee.

“Racing Extinction” previously was shown at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival in January, where it was nominated for a Grand Jury prize. By February, the Discovery Channel had purchased all rights to the film and planned to screen it to 1 billion people worldwide, Psihoyos said.

The film’s impact on audiences appears to stem from a unique combination of attributes, including giving voice and vision to creatures large and small that humans have exploited to the point of extinction. It also presents a worldwide view of the vastness of the planet’s environmental issues and uses massive, building-sized projections to ensure people visualize the message.

The primary message of the film is that earth is in the midst of a sixth mass extinction. During the five previ-

ous extinction events on earth.

Scientists suggest the most recent extinction happened 66 million years ago during the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction event. Paleontologists have offered theories, such as the possibility that one or many large asteroids may have struck the planet. In these circumstances, the strength of an impact is thought to have been so great that it created a thermal shock in the ocean and forced high quantities of CO₂ into the atmosphere. Because CO₂ is a heavy gas, it spreads quickly around the world in high concentrations that suffocate animals and people in large numbers. Scientists estimate that some 75 percent of all species became extinct.

The film suggests that we currently are in the midst of a new extinction era known as the Anthropocene Era or the Age of Man. The film crew provided underwater footage of huge whales and amplified their songs,

ing of sharks for commercial purposes. The film also shows inhumane practices in which fins are removed from live sharks leaving them to die defenseless. Some of these practices have been filmed in the water. When the crew’s projections were shown at restaurants many clientele reduced consumption of shark fin soup.

Hidden, button-style cameras were taken into illegal markets and fisheries to photograph extensive stockpiles of shark fins and killing of endangered species to meet the needs of wealthy clients. Warehouses of fins were filmed in this manner, along with mistreatment of animals. Some statistics suggest that crucial shark populations have declined 90 percent in less than two decades.

Air pollution, including CO₂ and methane, were presented as key problems that humans have the power to reduce through changes in lifestyle, including increased use of renewables and re-