

# THE FORT WORTH HUMANIST QUARTERLY

A HUMANISTS OF FORT WORTH (HOFW) PUBLICATION

MARCH 31, 2017

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

## Briefs

### Adopt-A-Street Cleanup slated Saturday, April 1

Everyone is reminded that Adam will sponsor HoFW's annual Adopt-A-Street Cleanup Saturday, April 1.

The group will meet at 9 a.m. at 3750 South University Drive. This address is located on the south corner of University Drive and Granbury Road. Cleanup occurs on a stretch of Granbury Road. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

### Dues-paying members asked to offer any nominations for annual elections May 10

Our annual election for HoFW officers will be held at the May meeting, as normally scheduled each year.

Any dues-paying member is entitled to vote and to run for office or to nominate someone to run for office. Please submit any nominations before the May meeting to help us build an inclusive ballot.

All offices are up for election, including the following:

- Chair, a position currently held by Sam, who provides leadership for the board, the Planning Committee, and speakers
- Vice Chair, a position currently held by Wanda Foster, who is part of the Planning Committee, organizes monthly dinners, and serves as editor of the *Fort Worth Humanist Quarterly*
- Treasurer, a position held by Adam, who keeps track of finances, serves as newsletter assistant editor, and organizes and conducts the annual Adopt-A-Street Cleanup
- Secretary, currently held by Reed Bilz, who maintains minutes, participates in planning and special projects, and helps coordinate elections

Please be prepared to suggest nominations at the April 12 meeting.

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## Some HoFW members march with 50,000 in historical Women's March on Austin

### HoFW members join area resistance groups and protest for civil rights

by Wanda Foster

Resistance in America may seem strangely new in some corners of society, but active humanists spend much of their lives living out elements of resistance to protect their own rights and freedoms and those of others. Right now HoFW members seem to be sharpening their resistance skills as a means of dealing with challenges emanating from our new national government administration.

A method of avoiding compliance with unacceptable practices, resistance has been used successfully throughout history to overcome power abuses perpetrated by governments and other

powerful members of society. Among the most famous examples are European resisters of Nazism during World War II and of Soviets during and after World War II in Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Chechnya. In the U.S., it was successfully applied in the 1960s and 1970s to end war and promote racial and gender equality. Economic examples include labor unions active against the famous Robber Barons in the early twentieth century.

The new resistance, which started even before the November presidential election, has many members who view active protest as an essential element of checks and balances. These efforts are needed to counter those visibly poised to rob citizens of their

civil liberties and rights and to subvert democratic ideals of a free society. At the root of these concerns are historically obvious signs of fascism at a level unseen openly in the U.S. since the 1950s. Among those signs are opposition to the press and denigration of women, LGBTQ, disabled, religious, and racial minorities.

While it is not surprising that HoFW members have activated since the election, it is important to note the urgency with which human rights concerns have reached fever pitch. Inside and outside of HoFW voices seem shriller and people seem to be working harder to protect themselves, their families, and their friends from abuses.

(continued on page 5)



HoFW members are part of the throng spilling out onto the street and leaving the Capitol lawn as the historic Women's March on Austin gets underway January 21. On this unusually hot winter day some 50,000 people gathered to protest on behalf of equal rights for all people, making it the largest march ever conducted in Austin in history. (photo by Morris Meador)

## Freethinkers continue their long-term commitment to Tarrant Area Food Bank

by Robert Stone, Freethinker Guest Reporter

My first experience helping hungry people was a trip to the North Texas Food Bank in southwest Dallas in 2011 or 2012, if memory serves. The "Full On Faith" event, featuring a variety of churches putting their faith into action, also included a few dozen people from the Dallas-Fort Worth Coalition of Reason, the Fellowship of Freethought, and Metroplex Atheists.

Although it was a terrific experience and I hoped to become more involved in the future, the location was too distant for someone living in north Fort Worth to travel to regularly. Thanks to a quick Google search, I discovered

the Tarrant Area Food Bank (TAFB) just a few miles from where I worked in central Fort Worth.

Speaking from a personal level, for lack of better words, I am blessed to have two jobs and possess the financial resources to get food whenever I need or want it. As someone who is always hungry, that is precisely why the food bank's cause means so much to me.

I urge people to take a moment to think about those who cannot provide for themselves—especially our own north Texas neighbors who face difficulties as they attempt to provide for themselves and their families. This should not be, not in the United States.

What can be done for people and families living in poverty, for mothers and fathers laid off from work or unable to work as a result of a disability, serious injury, or illness, and what can be done for senior citizens and children?

On average, TAFB helps some 50,000 people a week, 53,000 households a month, and 146,000 households a year. The people need 20 million pounds of food annually, and in 2016, some 25 million meals were served, 38 percent of them comprised of fruits and vegetables to promote good health.

During my second or third appearance as a volunteer, a gentleman in a suit

(continued on page 4)



## Book Review

***The End of White Christian America* by Robert P. Jones**

by Morris Meador

We read and discussed *The End of White Christian America* by Robert P. Jones at the March meeting of the Humanist Book Club. I found the book both very interesting and somewhat disappointing.

The historical and statistical understanding it presented about the state of United States religious life continues to be valuable. The book disappoints, however, because it was published before the recent presidential election, so it does not account for important recent happenings. Jones does make predictions about life after the demise of White Christian America (WCA), but they are general and perhaps optimistic. On the other hand, his observations do open the subject for great discussion.

As founding CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute, Jones is a leading religion and political scholar and commentator. Key assets of the book are statistical data, graphs, and Jones' knowledgeable commentary.

WCA is defined in the first chapter by using three buildings to trace the history of white, mostly protestants in the U.S.—the United Methodist Building opened in 1923, The Interchurch Center opened in 1960, and the Crystal Cathedral opened in 1980. None of the buildings ultimately lived up to their potential. In telling the history of these buildings, Jones presents the story of white protestant efforts to shape the culture of our country, as they have in many ways.

Large churches with tall steeples near the centers of most county courthouses, state capitols, and Washington, DC testify to this. Also organizations like the Young Men's Christian Association and the Boy Scouts are the result

of this influence. It is important to realize also that the Catholic Church has always been an outlier of the U.S. Christian establishment. They were late comers, who were never trusted and accepted as a true part of white Christian America.

Jones traces the history of WCA divisions and developments that led to the present, a time when they comprise less than 50 percent of the country's population. The year was 1993 when the Christian population officially dropped to less than 50 percent for the first time.

A major, early division occurred during the Civil War as most protestant churches split over slavery. While mainstream churches eventually reunited, Baptists did not. Today Southern Baptists struggle to deal with racism, which strongly influences the denomination.

In the 1920s, about the time the Methodist Building was built in Washington, the Scopes Trial dealt with evolution. Also for several years during Prohibition, Methodists and many other protestants strongly opposed drinking alcohol. While Methodists were somewhat theologically and politically liberal, these conservative issues began costing them and other protestants membership and power. Catholic and Mormon church populations began rising and making a political mark.

A major division developed between mainline protestant churches headquartered mostly in the Northeastern U.S. and Southern Baptists and fundamentalist churches of the South and Midwest that remained staunchly racist and theologically conservative.

The pinnacle for mainline protestant churches came in the 1950s and early

1960s about the time the 16-story Interchurch Center was built in New York City next to Riverside Church and the Union Theological Seminary. The National Council of Churches was also housed in this building. This optimistic time for mainstream protestants was looked upon as the new "Christian Century," and this title was given to the first major, liberal Christian magazine published then.

The Christian Century vision greatly diminished as the National Council of Churches struggled with deciding which churches to admit as members. They also struggled with gay rights and women's issues. At the same time Christian evangelicals mostly from the South and Midwest also began to feel the pressure of an emerging secular culture and population shifts.

Robert Schuller, a Christian televangelist, pastor, and motivational speaker, began his ministry by preaching from the hood of a car and at a drive-in theater. Orange County was a rapidly populating bedroom community at the time, and Schuller's prosperity gospel and practice of bringing in Hollywood stars drew church members. Soon he was able to build his huge Crystal Cathedral. His church was a prototype of the mega church of today. Ultimately, a population shift brought on by large numbers of Asian immigrants, however, doomed his cathedral, and now it is owned by the Catholic Church.

Jones' book has a chapter about the family and gay marriage and another chapter about race relations. Negative positions on these issues are particularly defining for evangelical Christians, such as Southern Baptists. The battle was fought by people like Anita Bryant, an American singer, beauty queen, and antigay activist and by



those pushing the Briggs Amendment, Proposition 8, and the Supreme Court decision that allowed same-sex marriage. Evangelicals had various reactions. Some churches tried accommodating the new reality, but most doubled down on their opposition. Curiously, the issue of abortion was not so big among evangelicals until they began an alliance with Catholics on issues regarding sexuality.

The "Moral Majority" created in 1979 by Jerry Falwell exploited the atmosphere under President Reagan to push a political agenda. The Moral Majority eventually lost power but was taken up by the Tea Party, which started over economic issues but was co-opted by evangelical Christians.

As populations of nones and non-church people have increased, white protestant America has lost power. Jones brings up Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. While mainstream white protestant churches seem to be in a period of bargaining and depression, evangelicals exhibit denial and anger. I believe much support of the current political administration is a result of evangelical backlash against their losses and anxiety over the pluralistic, secular nation around them.

Many historical anecdotes were provided that offer excellent perspectives. It would have been great if the book had been published after this election to provide additional, timely insights.

	April 2017	May 2017	June 2017
<b>Key HoFW Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Adopt-A-Street cleanup event, Saturday, April 1, 9 a.m. Meet Adam and the team at 3750 South University Drive, on south corner of Granbury Road and South University Drive</li> <li>Regular Meeting, Wednesday, April 12, 7 p.m., 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth, TX; ACLU of Texas Staff Attorney Kali Cohn will discuss cyber rules for travelers crossing borders</li> <li>HoFW Book Club has discontinued. Many thanks to Morris Meador for leading it for so long. He would like a break.</li> <li>Regular Dinner Social, Thursday, April 27, 6:30 p.m. Location to be announced at <a href="http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events">http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular Meeting, Wednesday, May 10, 7 p.m., 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth, TX, speaker TCU Political Science Professor James Riddlelperger; topic to be announced at <a href="http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events">http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events</a>. Annual election also slated that evening.</li> <li>Regular Dinner Social, Thursday, May 25, 6:30 p.m. Location to be announced at <a href="http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events">http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular Meeting, Wednesday, June 14, 7 p.m., 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth, TX, be announced at <a href="http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events">http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events</a></li> <li>Regular Dinner Social, Thursday, June 22, 6:30 p.m. Location to be announced at <a href="http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events">http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events</a></li> </ul>
<b>Other Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metroplex Atheists, Wednesday Social, 6:30 p.m., Wednesdays, April 5 - 26, J. Gilligan's Bar, 400 E Abram St., Arlington, TX; check the schedule at the following link: <a href="https://www.meetup.com/Metroplex-Atheists/events/">https://www.meetup.com/Metroplex-Atheists/events/</a></li> <li>Dinner Across Fort Worth, Fridays, April 14 and 28, 7 p.m. Check the link for details: <a href="https://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events/238747098/">Calendar - Freethinkers of Fort Worth (Fort Worth, TX)   Meetup</a></li> <li>March for Science, Saturday, April 22, 2017: <a href="https://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events/238747098/">https://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events/238747098/</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metroplex Atheists, Wednesday Social, 6:30 p.m., Wednesdays, May 3 - 24, J. Gilligan's Bar, 400 E Abram St., Arlington, TX; schedule at the link: <a href="https://www.meetup.com/Metroplex-Atheists/events/">https://www.meetup.com/Metroplex-Atheists/events/</a></li> <li>Dinner Across Fort Worth, Fridays, May 12 and 26, 7 p.m. Check the link for details: <a href="https://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events/238747098/">Calendar - Freethinkers of Fort Worth (Fort Worth, TX)   Meetup</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metroplex Atheists, Wednesday Social, 6:30 p.m., Wednesdays, June 7 - 28, J. Gilligan's Bar, 400 E Abram St., Arlington, TX; check the schedule at the following link: <a href="https://www.meetup.com/Metroplex-Atheists/events/">https://www.meetup.com/Metroplex-Atheists/events/</a></li> <li>Dinner Across Fort Worth, Fridays, June 9 and 23, 7 p.m. Check the following link for details: <a href="https://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Fort-Worth/events/238747098/">Calendar - Freethinkers of Fort Worth (Fort Worth, TX)   Meetup</a></li> </ul>

**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](mailto: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.

**FORT WORTH HUMANIST QUARTERLY**

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

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

This publication has been published quarterly since 2014.

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## Opinion

### HoFW Humanist Perspectives

by Wanda Foster

Like his father, David Lotven is fairly short in stature with dark eyes and dark hair, some of it missing. At 58, he is a relaxed, often smiling or laughing retiree who loves golf and fun.

But many other, more interesting aspects of his life go unseen at a meeting or on the golf course. Lotven is a traveling man, an adventurer even, who has led a Hemingwayesque life, whether trekking across the U.S. as a sound engineer for famous rock and roll bands, feeding the homeless and operating a pet store in San Francisco, or visiting Pamplona, Spain for the running of the bulls.

Lotven also happens to be a lifelong humanist and nontheist. He became a member of HoFW around 2009, shortly after his mother, Joy Counts, became a member. His father, Jay Lotven, and his stepmother, Suzie Lotven, already were members before Lotven and his mother joined.

As a child growing up in Tulsa, OK, he remembers going to a Unitarian Universalist church once when he and his sister were very young. His father's ancestry was Jewish, but both he and his mother were humanists, so they did not push religion on them.

"I have been a freethinker my entire life," he said. "Even in junior high school I knew."

As a small child in Tulsa, all of his young friends were religious. He would say he was a nonbeliever, but they never took him seriously.

"It just didn't even enter their heads that someone would actually believe that. They thought I was just saying that," he explains.

During his early life he went to public school in Oklahoma as his parents went through marital problems, splitting up and getting back together, and later splitting again. He admits that was a bit traumatic at the time, but he also felt that it was just life. It was happening to many other children, religious and not, so he did not feel unusual in that way.

By fifth grade, he and his mother moved to Arlington, TX near where his father lived and worked.

As he matured, people began to take his beliefs more seriously, but his friends generally didn't consider religion a topic of conversation, so it was seldom discussed. Every once in a while during his junior high and high school years someone would invite him to church, and very occasionally he would go with them, primarily because he was curious about what they had to say. But going to church consistently reinforced his own freethinking views.

"It was always kind of funny to me. Just the blind faith would get to me, just logically," he said. "How old would you have to be before you stopped believing in virgin births and men living in whales or big fishes?"

Then he read stories about Sodom and Gomorrah in which Lot, the son of Abraham, offered his two virgin daughters to angels to appease them.

"Do you call that moral? He was willing to give up his own daughters to angels," he said. "Then there are all

kinds of things in Leviticus where you sell your children. No. I was always a freethinker.

"Everything to me is science. Everything is explained by science. There is nothing that is divinely inspired."

He attended public schools, where he loved history and civics classes and was most inspired by a teacher at Arlington High, Ms. Parr, who seemed to understand him. He loved life, and he wasn't so much into structure.

At the time, he remembers Arlington High as having a division between two groups known as "freaks" and "socials." Freaks were students living life on the edge, using marijuana and often opposed to social norms. Socials were those who studied, did as they were told, and followed the rules. Fights would break out between the two groups, but he chose to have friends on both sides of the divide.

"I was probably considered to be more on the freak side because I would experiment and just be kind of wild," he laughs.

Searching for freedom and independence with fewer restrictions, as many adolescents will, he decided to move in with his father. Both were bachelors at the time, so they shared an apartment. Lotven often stayed out late to socialize. Early in his senior year his father met his stepmother, Suzie, and moved out, allowing him to live alone in the bachelor apartment they had shared between ninth grade and the beginning of his senior year.

A lover of music, he was fascinated by rock and roll, as were most young people at the time. His best friend was a guitar player. Rather than playing an instrument, Lotven developed an interest in sound engineering.

#### Traveling Sound Engineer

Right after high school, he moved straight to Dallas and started working in the music business. During that time, he also took some basic freshman and sophomore classes at Tarrant County Junior College and University of Texas at Arlington, but he never declared a major. Instead, sound engineering took precedence, and he became good at it.

His friends and connections included companies like Shoko, a large Dallas company known across Texas and the U.S. for providing sound engineering services during the 1970s and 1980s music boom. He spent a lot of time socializing and working with some fairly famous people at a notorious Dallas night club called Mother Blues, which was in an old house with an upstairs and a downstairs.

"Only the privileged got to go upstairs. You know. It was the 70s—sex, drugs, and rock and roll. That's what it was," he laughs.

People jammed and partied. Blues guitarist and songwriter John Nitzinger used to sit in with him and a band he worked with at Mother Blues. He also worked for bands like Three Dog Night, Wendy Williams and the Plasmatics, and Uriah Heep. He became well-known as a sound man for all types of popular music, including rock and roll, country, jazz, and blues. He traveled nationwide as a sound engineer between the ages of 18 and

30. At a point, he and a friend decided to break off on their own. They operated their own sound engineering firm for several years. Then he sold his half to his partner and free-lanced for a while. People started asking him for his autograph, which he finds very amusing.

"People would just hire me, and that was fun because I no longer had to haul around equipment or anything. I just walked in, turned knobs, and walk out basically," he said.

He managed sound for three Texas bands participating in the College Music Marathon in New York City, where people like Blondie and the Red Hot Chili Peppers came from. The event was three days long and attracted musicians from 46 clubs.

At one point in his 20s he was married for about 2 years, but as he explains, "it turned out that being a traveling sound man is not really conducive to a good marriage." He divorced and never tried marriage again.

Finally, at the age of 30, he became disillusioned with the music industry, realizing that music is just a business like any other. He disliked corporate structure. So he sold his part of the business and moved to San Francisco to visit his father and Suzie, who were married by that time.

"I went out there just to visit and ended up staying 15 or 16 years. I enjoyed it a lot."

The liberal, open way of life there suited him. He considers himself lucky to have gotten a union job right away in the city. It paid well and gave him medical benefits, something he never had when he worked in Texas. He worked there for the first 8 years.

Lotven first started getting involved in altruistic pursuits in San Francisco. He became interested in feeding the homeless who lived everywhere in the parks. It was a hippy place at the time.

At first he helped the homeless by working with a famous local church, Glide Memorial. He has no objection to working with a religious organization for the common good even if he disagrees with their doctrine.

Next he helped feed the people through a group known as Bread Not Bombs. He made friends with the homeless and learned that they did not like the Bread Not Bombs group, so he and the street people prepared meals themselves. He said he had no idea why they didn't like Bread Not Bombs.

"You know some people are just contrarians. They are their own boss," he said. "Sometimes I just felt drawn to these people on the darker, riskier side. There are a lot of things about my life that I think are really neat stories that I just can't really tell."

#### Europe and Running with the Bulls

At 35, in 1994, he took his first vacation abroad, meandering through Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, and many other countries. He spent 3 months.

"It was storybook," he said. Winging it as usual, he stayed in pensionen (German word for guest houses or inns) and hostels, which he describes

From the Editor:

Most HoFW members favor science and rationalism over religion, magic, and dogma. Within the realms of secularism and nontheism, we remain very diverse with different perspectives and ways of arriving at our beliefs. A commonality we share is the sense of exclusion and unfriendliness we often experience from those who oppose our right to freedom of and from religion. This column presents our stories. Many of the names have been changed or limited to first names to protect the innocent.

as being like fraternity houses. He flew into Amsterdam, spent several days there, went to Paris, then to Italy and all over. His favorite place was France. He was in Nice three times because of its location at the crossroads of other countries he visited.

Along the way, he met both American and foreign women he enjoyed. His best memory was a female friend he already had met who invited him to join her in San Sebastian, Spain by the picturesque Bay of Biscay. He expected her to be accompanied by a crowd of others, but instead they had the apartment to themselves.

"At night, it wasn't cold, you didn't have to wear a jacket but it was kind of misty in the air. They had this hill on the side of old town with a statue of Jesus up there that was lit," he laughed. "And so there is Jesus floating in the mist, and whether you are religious or not, it was just cool."

He did run with the bulls in Pamplona. He said he could run fast when he was 35. "I spent 4 or 5 days in Pamplona. Talk about 24 hours around the clock nonstop. I mean nonstop," he said.

Mostly he loved meeting different people from everywhere. He spent time in Paris, which he loves. He particularly enjoyed parties with Germans in Berlin, where he met a woman named Zilka with whom he wishes he had maintained contact.

"I thought she was a skinhead or something. She was wearing Doc Marten-like boots and a shaved head and everything. It turns out she was totally opposite of that—Zilka from Düsseldorf. Oh man," he said.

"I met some really cool Australian girls and guys and Canadians, and English. I never met a Norwegian I didn't like. Norwegians are cool."

#### Pet Store and Travel

After 8 years of union work, he and his father went into business together operating J&G Pet Store in the Sunset area, where they did very well and loved liberal life. When his father and Suzie joined the Peace Corps, he sold his portion of the store and went to Florida briefly. He didn't really like it, so he moved back to Arlington. He had health issues and was told to medically retire, which he did. So he engaged with the Humanists of Fort Worth, golf, and reuniting with his mother and family here.

Nowadays, he frequently takes ocean cruises, including trips with his mother, who reports very much enjoying his friendship and companionship. When asked what his plans for the future are, he just says "I think I'll keep on traveling."



## Tarrant Area Food Bank feeds people and partners with a range of companies and agencies to supply child nutrition and social services, including chef training and student mentoring

(continued from Page 1)

and tie walked past me, and we each did a double-take.

“Hi, what are you doing here?” I asked the man who had been visiting the store where I worked for years.

“I run this place!” was his ebullient response.

In a nutshell, Director Bo Soderbergh has devoted his life to fighting hunger. It is a social problem he hopes to eliminate.

The strategy is to face the issue on multiple levels. According to the organization’s mission statement, since 1982 TAFB has worked to empower local communities by educating them and making food resources available. These efforts are based on the principle that a person’s access to healthy food on a regular basis is a fundamental human right rather than a privilege.

Soderbergh’s enthusiasm and relentless drive to take action for those in need inspired me to do more.

As an event host for Freethinkers of Fort Worth, I decided to start scheduling semiregular trips to the food bank for 3-hour blocks of volunteer work. It goes without saying that every food bank is always in need of people who will spend time or money to help.

In 2016, TAFB recorded a staggering total of 68,000 volunteer hours.

As for financial contributions, a single dollar given to TAFB provides five meals. A mere 4 percent of the food bank’s income goes toward fundraising and administrative costs. The rest is applied to nearly a dozen programs aimed to stop hunger.

For volunteer activities, the standard turnout for our group is three to five people. Understandably, most people are not available for shifts Monday through Friday, and unfortunately most Saturdays do not work for me.

But when we do volunteer, time flies as we typically help with Quality Control (QC). The staff takes whatever time necessary to greet everyone in the volunteer waiting room and give them a few key facts regarding the food bank’s efforts. Often they tack on a story about a person they have met, which highlights the personal nature of the food issue.

Before getting to work in QC, volunteers receive a brief tutorial on the types of foods and sorting food by types or putting together boxes for families, children, or the elderly.

Sometimes it gets dirty.

Surgical masks were offered one night before we dug into bags of potatoes, many of which were anything but edible.

“Clean the ones that are still okay, toss the others out—and, seriously, get a mask before you start. You’ll need it!” the staff member advised.

Somehow we all managed to hold down our dinners, but I ended up with bits of rotten potato in my hair before we were finished. I doubt I will ever forget that.

Much of what is given to the food bank comes from the Kroger Company. Individuals or organizations who want to help with food donations should be aware that items most in demand are canned meats, canned fruit and vegetables, dried beans, cereal, rice, peanut butter (not accepted in glass jars), boxed pastas, boxed or canned soups, and boxed or canned juices.

TAFB annually distributes roughly 1 million pounds of food thanks to community food drives.

Besides food drives, another TAFB pillar of service is education, which is made possible under the umbrella of Hunger Awareness Nutrition Education.

Cooking Matters teaches people with limited budgets to prepare healthy recipes. The upcoming session will offer 2-hour classes once each week at six locations. Three of these locations provide cooking classes in Spanish. Participants can take groceries home after each class to give their families fruits and vegetables.

### Community Garden and Kitchen

The Community Garden uses two locations to “plant seeds and grow change.” Volunteers and residents in affected neighborhoods learn gardening skills to boost self-sufficiency and maintain commitment to healthy eating habits.

The Community Kitchen, a 16-week course, is led by a professional chef who trains students for employment in the food service industry. The program began 10 years ago and boasts 273 graduates.

### Distribution

Another vital aspect of the fight against hunger is, of course, distribution. Each month, TAFB gives out more than 2 million meals in the 13 counties it serves.



*Freethinkers Elizabeth Dierdorf, left; Robert Stone, Freethinkers of Fort Worth organizer; Debi Bletko (also an HoFW member); and Rich Latta pause after packing snacks for children at Tarrant Area Food Bank in August 2016. They post periodic TAFB and other volunteer opportunities on their calendar at [www.meetup.com/FWFreethinkers/events](http://www.meetup.com/FWFreethinkers/events).*

### Pantries

The Mobile Pantry service feeds hundreds of families at 13 sites in Arlington, Fort Worth, Hurst, Denton, and White Settlement. Each of these locations opens once a month for this program. A TAFB 18 wheeler loaded with fresh food travels to the sites, where it usually takes from 1 to 3 hours to deliver the food to people waiting in line. The events are hosted by TAFB partner agencies or community organizations. Food includes produce, dairy, and other nutritious items.

Pantry Express uses smaller trucks to make monthly deliveries of fresh foods to seven counties. Host organizations distribute goods the same day.

Senior Share Pantry Express brings food to locations where seniors learn about nutrition and how to manage chronic health issues. The only requirements are that participants be 60 or older and reside inside the serviced zip codes.

### Children’s Programs and Nutrition

At the other end of the age spectrum, children receive service from a half-dozen programs. They make up about 35 percent of the total number of people who benefit from TAFB’s work.

The food bank began providing special children’s food programs and caring for the physical and mental health of youth as it became evident that young people often fail to concentrate during classes or perform poorly at school when they have insufficient or unhealthy diets.

(The correlation between diet and

school performance was brought to light in the Children Nutrition Act of 1966.)

Three programs are available to children throughout the school year. BackPacks for Kids provides food on weekends. Monday through Friday, children can obtain food from In-School Snacks and After-School Meals programs. Partner agencies combine meals with tutoring, mentoring, and physical education services in a structured environment.

During the summer, Meals and BackPacks work continues. The former program is free to any child under 18, and no income requirements or registration is necessary.

The Farmers Market Nutrition Program allows low-income mothers to receive \$30 in vouchers for locally grown fruits and vegetables offered at five clinics in Tarrant County. To be eligible for this program, mothers must be enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

TAFB is unrelenting in its desire to end hunger, but the fight would be lost without constant help from local grocers, vendors, cooks, farmers, and tremendous volunteer efforts.

Starvation and malnourishment are very real and pressing issues, right here, right now. We can all do something to change the situation by giving as little as \$1 or 3 hours of time, a jar of peanut butter, a few cans of fruit. Making a difference is easy.

Will you help?



*Volunteers help with Community Garden, which teaches gardening as a means of stretching food budgets while having access to fresh produce. (photo courtesy TAFB)*



## Retired HoFW members between 65 and 83 work hard to protect human rights and civil society

(continued from page 1)

Many HoFW members are retired, yet they stay concerned and active. Besides participating in marches, town halls, and other resistance measures, many humanist households interact with government officials and resisters several times a week over the internet or through telephone calls.

Resistance upticked in January as HoFW members joined other groups actively organizing against anti-American philosophies, human rights abuses, and civil rights violations. Many essentials of civil society seemed under siege, including health care, freedom of movement, free press, and rights to assemble.

Resistance planning began in earnest Jan. 15 when a crowd completely filled the sanctuary of First Jefferson Unitarian-Universalist Church in east Fort Worth. Ninety-six people were invited, but the leader, Harry Reedy, reported that 101 people attended that day. Among them were several HoFW members or friends, including Louanne Rice, Linda McDowell, Bob Vann, John Barnes, and others.

The larger group broke up into smaller action groups formed to support the Affordable Care Act, oppose immigration policies and harassment, and actively protest and resist on behalf of vulnerable populations.

On Jan. 21, several members also participated in the historic March on Austin, which drew more than 50,000 people protesting for women's rights and against hatred and discrimination. Surprisingly, temperatures reached 80°F, but they braved the sun. Police handed out stickers to count attendees, but they ran out at 30,000 stickers. Police estimated another 20,000 joined after that.

No counter protestors were spotted, and many supporters stood on walkways and balconies to watch as marchers passed by. Photos of marchers are supplied on page 6.

HoFW is not affiliated with a political party, but humanists have a long history of protecting human rights, which is a key mission of the American Humanists Association (AHA) with which we are affiliated.

Humanist philosophy, as outlined by the AHA, supports and defends a progressive society that protects civil liberties and secular governance. We provide a community for people with no religious beliefs or preference, and we continuously refine and advance the humanist worldview. This view incorporates a vision of secular government, scientific integrity, rational thinking, peace, and equal rights and freedom of all people as guaranteed in the U.S. constitution.

Members increasingly voice their concerns individually and collectively.

### Member Views: Joy Counts

A member since 2009, Counts describes most things going on in the new White House as working against or violating the U.S. Constitution. Among her concerns are the Russia connection and Chairman Devin Nunes in charge of the committee investigating the Russia connection. She said she watched in total disbelief as he violated the apolitical, bipartisan spirit of the investigation by taking

information about the work to the White House directly without sharing the same information with other members of the committee.

She also is deeply bothered by the nepotism of having the president's son-in-law and daughter working in the White House and by the president's own communications in which he has spoken against minorities.

"When the president speaks, he shows no empathy," she said.

During the healthcare debate she pointed out that Trump did not seem to understand the topic of healthcare enough to talk about it.

"He can't even discuss it. He doesn't understand anything about insurance--nothing," she said. "He is a violation, period. He is one big violation."

Her personal life has not been upset in the sense that her rights have been violated, she said.

"I am privileged. But it doesn't keep me from thinking of those who are not privileged. I don't know what I would do if I had someone who was on Medicaid today, the fear that it would instill in me. I don't understand the attitude of the American public today when they do not think about their brothers, I've got mine, too bad for you, that attitude," she said.

In her opinion, the current White House administration damages us both in the world order and internally.

"I think it damages us as a people. I think we are being damaged. It is so difficult. There are so many things. As we have seen the 1 percent grow, and the rest of us marginalized to the degree that we have been, intellectually and in every other way, we have just seen a tremendous, whopping smack at the United States," she said.

She believes the U.S. is less safe than it was before, but she is not as afraid of "outside forces as much as of what we are doing to ourselves."

Poor families making minimum wage, their children, and the elderly need the greatest protection right now," she said. "Lower-income families are struggling and desperately need the most help."

She feels for coal miners, but said we have known for years that the industry is diminishing. Yet we have done nothing to replace it. Now, she agrees we are paying the price for that.

National security is not a huge concern to her. She is more worried about the White House.

"I don't think good leadership is here for us right now," she said.

As a humanist, she believes this administration will not protect the rights people have to freedom of and from religion. But she is comforted by the way people are working so hard to protect human values. Counts said she especially likes how Democrats have gone to work organizing actions and pushing to get more people into politics locally, which she views as critical to develop better leadership. She loves people going to town halls.

"I think they are one reason the Republican health care bill did not pass," she said.

An octogenarian, Counts resists by sending postcards for resistance efforts and participating in three Democratic Party groups: Stonewall Democrats, Tarrant County Democratic Woman's Club, and Southwest Tarrant County Democrats.

Humanists are part of these efforts, she said. They participate in actions and inform people. The things already accomplished with keeping Obama health policies in place hearten her for the moment, but she says she is less optimistic about the future as long as the president is in office.

"I have never seen anything in my entire life like this," she said. "When they call for rallies, go to the rally. When they ask to mail postcards do it. Support the people. Get out and vote. Be sure you help in every way you can considering your age."

### Member Views: John Fisher

Member John Fisher says he has not personally experienced an uptick in discrimination since the new president was elected. But he is disturbed by many current events, including the new president's campaign actions in which he mocked a disabled person at a rally. As a person with disabilities, he is not a stranger to these issues.

"What I have witnessed most personally in my lifetime is ableism from denial of employment opportunities, to harassment in school, in public, and on the roads, to vandalism of property. I guess I am speculating when I assign ableism or a hatred toward physically different people to these acts, but I feel fairly confident that that is indeed the case. It has been ongoing since grade school," he said.

"What I have learned through media reports since this past January 20 is about ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids, unconcern for the rights of differently gendered persons, workers, unions, progressives, and dissidents frightens and at times disheartens me."

Fisher says he has experienced anger about ableism throughout his life, and he is angry about the current intolerant atmosphere.

"I have always been cautious in society, giving a wide berth to those who condemn, harass, and bully. Since January I am more that way than ever," he says.

He feels that human rights violations and negativity have damaged the U.S. at home and abroad.

As a public-transit rider, he said he noticed that the atmosphere among bus passengers became angrier as November 8 approached. People hurled insults and spoke loudly. He has decided to ride the bus less frequently this year and instead uses his bike, especially in warm weather.

"I read in media that other countries are incredulous or derisive of the results of our 2016 election, but the part that disturbs me is that those same countries are dealing with right-wing, nationalist, anti-immigrant movements of their own," he said.

He feels that LGBTQ people, liberals, progressives, the disabled, people of color, nontheists, and possibly women all have become less safe since the 2016 election. Fisher said he knows

many good-old-boy harassers live in this part of the country.

"If they feel encouraged, they will act out in more-awful ways," he said.

He is troubled by the fact that "conservative-reactionary elements of society have always taken violations of Constitutional rights as normal and even necessary on purportedly 'moral' grounds."

He worries that the nation's safety is in jeopardy because we have a president who is a bully by nature and wants to institute a policy of fighting wars only to win.

"I am concerned that this policy may lead to further proliferation of little, clandestine, 'dirty' wars, threatening not only U.S. security but world security as well," he said.

Fisher relies on groups like the Freedom From Religion Foundation to help protect rights of both nonreligious and religious people. Many people fail to realize that humanists strongly support any person's religious freedom and favor complete separation of church and state for the purpose of maintaining freedoms.

Fisher describes himself as a "clicktivist," who works online regularly to counter human rights abuses, constitutional violations, and ignorance. He particularly worries about education and science in the current environment.

"The new Secretary of Education, I keep hearing, wants to defund public education in favor of vouchers for private and religious schools. There is an anti-intellectual, antiscience, anti-arts and humanities, and probusiness and trade education attitude that I think amounts to a dumbing-down of society a la 1984," he said.

### Member Views: Reed Bilz

HoFW Secretary Reed Bilz said she has personally seen discrimination against the LGBTQ community. Currently, she considers the Texas Legislature the worst offender. She said civil rights violations have affected her friends and family. Under the present president, she believes her friends are less safe than before the election.

Bilz said LGBTQ people, especially transgender people, need special protection at this time.

"Republicans see it as normal. Democrats are pushing back at the grassroots level," she said.

While she does not feel the basic security of the nation is in jeopardy, she does feel nontheists may not be protected in the current environment.

"Nontheists have always been targets she said. "The only way to address these issues is through the ballot box."

Bilz also fights back through her activism in Democratic clubs, including the Tarrant County Democratic Woman's Club, the Southwest Democrats, and the Stonewall Democrats. She also is a member of the Fort Worth Human Rights Commission.

Bilz added that she is less hopeful for society in the current situation. In her opinion, the best way for HoFW to counter this situation is to continue educating members and others about humanism and human rights.





HoFW Book Club organizer Morris Meador, left, and his spouse, Keith Miller, support Planned Parenthood and oppose hate as participants in the Women's March on Austin January 21. Many men showed up in solidarity for women's rights and equality for all.



Members Mick and Claudia Zaunbrecher joined their son, Michael, left, in showing solidarity with women and supporting equal rights and equality.



Marchers carry signs on the Austin Capitol grounds responding to the demeaning rhetoric against women during the presidential campaign. (photo by Wanda Foster)



Members Wanda Foster, left, and Sharon Dobias carry their signs supporting equality for women and resistance of hateful ideology.



Innovative signs flourish as people express their opposition to human rights abuses, including misogynist behavior against women in society. (photo by Morris Meador)



Protesters create a huge parade using colorful protest signs. (photo by Morris Meador)