



Humanists Of ID, ID Atheists, BUUF  
Sages, BUUF Humanists, BSU SSA, West  
Valley Freethinkers, ID Society of Reason,  
Cosmos Coffee Club., HumanKind,  
south central Idaho groups

Free Thought   Treasure Valley Coalition of Reason   [www.tvcor.com](http://www.tvcor.com).

December 2015   [www.tvcor.org](http://www.tvcor.org)

## *New Normal for our Coalition of Reason*

Dustin Williams

This has been a busy year for the Treasure Valley Coalition of Reason. The first event of the year was the National Day of Reason on the Capital Steps. Gary Mitchell from Idaho Atheists deserves the credit for securing the space, getting Richard Carrier to fly out as our keynote, and making it happen. It was an awesome experience with about 40 people gathered in the rain in the middle of a workday while the semi-state sponsored prayer had to take place inside.

Next up was three consecutive weekends with parades and/or booths: the Pride Parade and Festival, a booth at Community Progressive, and the Fourth of July Parade, complete with a float. For Hyde Park, we tried something different, rather than having the booth be under TVCoR, Humanists of Idaho and Idaho Atheists each had a booth, but more on that later.

It was also a year of restructuring.

We had a major event in May and then three other events within three weeks of each other. This pointed out a flaw in how TVCoR was handling events. The changes we made at that time was to convert the Coordinator role to an Executive Director, add a Secretary, and require Project Managers for each event. This will allow clearer duties, better control, and more accountability.

We also found that the purpose of booths is to attract members, the purpose of TVCoR in that regard is to attract members for all member groups, and this results in a cluttered presentation anyway you

look at it. As a result, TVCoR will be taking care of the parades and other events to increase our visibility in the greater community and the individual organizations will handle the booths to increase their own membership. We are now completing the restructuring and formalizing how we work together in bylaws.

Finally, one thing that was interesting to see this year was how little anyone cared that we were there.

No one from the National Day of Prayer seemed bothered that we got the capitol steps and the media didn't even bother to check it out, and yes, we did give them a heads up. Also no one seemed bothered by seeing godless types in the parades.

One of our goals has been to normalize our place in the community and it seems that this has worked. As we look to 2016, it's time to have a look at what we can do to maintain this place in the community and how to put it to good work.

**Each year the Humanists of Idaho lead us all in agreeing upon a local worthy cause. Contact Aria at [drf.oleander@hotmail.com](mailto:drf.oleander@hotmail.com) for pick-up or bring to the December 5 holiday party, details inside.**

This year our WCA adopt-a-family consists of a 27 year old mother with a 6 year old daughter. We will be collecting gifts for the family at the Holiday Party, so bring them with. Each gift will need the ID # - Mom is ID# X15-032M. Daughter is ID# X15-032G. Mom is asking for hygiene products, scarfs, socks, board games, cups, bowls, and family movies. Favorite color: Pink. Daughter would like toys, Hello Kitty, headbands, bows, ballet shoes (12-13), clothes (8/10 pant). Gift cards are also nice, to help with living expense



**Humanists of Idaho**, a chapter of American Humanist Association & Council for Secular Humanism, is a nonprofit corporation promoting ethical, democratic, and naturalistic Humanism through public awareness, education and community involvement. We have met 3rd Mondays, Jan-Nov, in upper room of the Flicks, Boise. Open discussion and dining at 6:30pm; business 7pm; program 7:30pm. Our next meeting will be January 18. **More at meetup page, address below.**

### *Officers for Humanists of Idaho*

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## President's Message:

As usual, HOI will not have a December meeting. The holidays are for social gatherings; the annual Freethought Holiday Party (too early for a Solstice Party) is December 5<sup>th</sup>, 6PM to whenever. This is an All-Freethought party, so check the Meetup/Facebook pages of your favorite group for details. At the party, we will be collecting gifts for the Women and Children's Alliance family that we adopted for the holidays, as well food items for the Idaho Food Bank. Hope to see you all there.

New Approach Idaho presented at HOI's November meeting. Their purpose is to promote the legalization of cannabis in Idaho, especially oils used in medical treatments. Given that polls show a majority of Idahoans favor legalizing medical Marijuana, it is difficult to understand why our legislature, and governor, are so opposed. Another goal of New Approach is to at least decriminalize recreational use, so that we can stop filling our prisons with non-violent marijuana users. For more information on their efforts, visit their website at: <http://www.legalize208.org/>.

Our next scheduled speaker – January 18<sup>th</sup> meeting – is Ken Kohlman. His Pastor to Atheist talk will be on his personal journey from Minister to Atheist. This should be somewhat similar to FFRF co-President Dan Barker's transition story. Personal journey stories are often insightful as to how the devout believer transitions over time to non-believer, with a combination of knowledge and personal experience at the core of the transition. Mark your calendars, and check in with our Meetup/Facebook pages for details as time grows closer.

January also means planning for next year's events. We will be talking about past events and taking suggestions for future events at our January meeting. It is our goal to get more people involved in our outreach efforts, and organizational planning. HOI elections are in May, and anyone looking to make a difference in the freethought community is encouraged to step up to the plate and join our leadership team.

D G Van Curen President, Humanists of Idaho.

**Secular Idaho News** is published monthly by HOI. Individual yearly membership (\$25) and family memberships (\$45) include SI News, paper or e copies. Contact Paul Rolig roligpd@spro.net Newsletter subscriptions \$15/year by post. humanistsofidoaho.org PO Box 44913 Boise ID 83711-0913. No charge for electronic copies; contact roligpd@spro.net

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### *Gifts from the Natural World*

In "The New Nature Movement," Richard Louv starts with one of our nation's gifts to much of the rest of the world—public parks. Says Louv, "Frederick Law Olmsted, the great landscape architect, who created or co-designed America's great urban parks did not have a stack of studies to argue for the benefits of natural environments for increasingly urban people.

Lately, studies are demonstrating what Olmstead and many others understood.. One suggests that urban parks with the greatest biodiversity—the most species of other animals, in addition to humans—are the parks that have the greatest beneficial effects on psychological health and well-being.

Studies also suggest that when we interact with animals, the neurochemicals and hormones associated with social bonding are elevated. People who spend time in more natural environments in cities tend to nurture closer relationships with fellow human beings and to value community. Encounters with other species can help children develop empathy. Nature, as it turns out, can be a civilizing force.

**West Valley Freethinkers, Nampa** Contact Charlie B deep-bluesigh@gmail.com [wvfreethinkers@gmail.com](mailto:wvfreethinkers@gmail.com)

**C of Southern Idaho Secular group** see Facebook "Secular Student Alliance at CSI". For Freethinkers Twin Falls Contact is Erica, [erical@eaglemail.csi.edu](mailto:erical@eaglemail.csi.edu)

**COSMOS COFFEE CLUB conversation** v begins at 6:30pm 1st & 3rd Mondays at Papa Joe's. Contact Sander Karas at <http://www.meetup.com/CosmosCoffeeClub>

**Humanists in Idaho Falls** meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Ask Doug at [gerstner\\_doug@yahoo.com](mailto:gerstner_doug@yahoo.com)

## "The Unbelievers" by S. T. Joshi

S.T. Joshi's bio on the back of this Prometheus Books publication is a disappointing single rambling sentence that states that Joshi is a freelance writer, scholar and editor, and provides several titles of works related to atheism. Quick surfing of Joshi's Wikipedia page reveals our author is an East Indian-American male named Sunand Tryambak Joshi, and we find details about his life, education, competence, and productivity in his chosen field. This Internet step confirms that Joshi is fully competent to research and write this work subtitled "The Evolution of Modern Atheism".

The author's intent as reflected in the book's subtitle is fulfilled through a series of 14 chapters, each covering a noted atheist. These individuals influenced western culture from the late 1800s to current times. Each chapter provides biographical information and a condensation of the individual's philosophy including key quotations from their publications. The chapters are arranged in chronological order based upon each atheist's active years. This provides the reader a logical view of the evolution of modern atheism. And Joshi has skillfully chosen his candidates to accomplish his objective.

Each candidate fueled the evolution in atheism using the impacts of advances in science and society. The big scientific impact that begins the book is that of Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution that became prominent in the second half of the Nineteenth Century. Darwin's evolution scuttled the Biblical myth of creation and the idea of a 6000 year-old earth. Later scientific breakthroughs such as the theories of Albert Einstein on general relativity and the findings of Hubble proving the vast and expanding nature of the cosmos continued the

**Idaho Society of Reason** is part of Treasure Valley Coalition of Reason. <http://meetup.com/nontheist/events>

**Local Objectivists** meet monthly, last Wed 6pm at varying restaurants. Ask Tim Scharff at [scharffdesignworks@icloud.com](mailto:scharffdesignworks@icloud.com)

**Meet An Atheist** or several, socialize 2nd Tuesdays, typically at The Reef. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IdahoAtheist/>

**Human KIND project** <http://www.human-kind-project.com/>, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/humankindproject2014>

replacement of Biblical lore by strong science. The chapters on Thomas Huxley, Bertrand Russell and Richard Dawkins are examples of those who used scientific advances to further the cause of atheism.

Advances in philosophy were the tools of John Stuart Mill and Friedrich Nietzsche to expand upon atheism. Others of Joshi's subjects affected atheism through their talents to absorb information and repackage it after liberal applications of their intellect. Leslie Stephen and Gore Vidal seem to belong in this category. Some of Joshi's unbelievers used the podia of their personal circumstances to advance atheism. Examples include Mark Twain and his pen, Clarence Darrow as an attorney at the Scopes Monkey Trial, and Madalyn Murray O'Hair with her withering onslaught of our domestic culture of the 1960s. Sam Harris and the late Christopher Hitchens are two current assertive activists who write and lecture as atheism's Jesuits.

A valuable facet to Joshi's book is his critical analysis of several of his subjects. Some appear to be agnostic or theist in their personal theologies, rather than "pure" atheists. Mark Twain had such traits. Others make wild claims unsubstantiated by fact. A number of examples of this are cited for H. L. Mencken, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens. Richard Dawkins, however, fared well under Joshi's microscope and his book "The God Delusion" survived relatively unscathed. Joshi's analyses provide the reader with one competent assessor's conclusions of his 14 sample atheist's work and credibility.

Joshi provides the reader with a full set of notes with references to the key works of his 14 subjects. There is a detailed index as well. "The Unbelievers" is an easy way to sample key activists and advocates for atheism and can serve to direct future reading and other research for the curious. It is well written and understandable, and this reader recommends it without reservation.

Wally Keltner



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## "We Shall Not Be Moved" by Joan Dash

Our country has a speckled history, but our media and school systems tend to accentuate the white part and hide the darker speckles. That's really too bad, because it deprives us of a proper foundation of knowledge to use as citizens. Understanding those speckles will assist in our choosing our leaders and in being advocates for those things that might yield a better United States. Joan Dash offers an informative view of some American speckles from the early Twentieth Century. Its focus is in its subtitle, "The Women's Factory Strike of 1909", but it reaches beyond this to touch upon industrial safety, women's suffrage, the American culture of the times, and immigration.

The author did a thorough job of researching and provides a comprehensive bibliography and a detailed index. It was intended as an educational tool for middle or high school students, but it is valuable for the adult reader as well. It is well written, easy to read, with messages clear on the topics of ethics, greed, the seamy side of capitalism, and compromised human rights. Dash belongs on a broad selection of reading lists and in the contents of history, civics and ethics courses.

The book covers a period in the early 1900s when young immigrant women, primarily Italians and Jews from a number of countries, were cruelly exploited by the shirt waist business of New York City's Lower East Side. Joan Dash provides detailed pictures and accounts of the multifaceted misogyny of the era.

At work, the women were treated every bit as badly as those of today in Southeast Asian 's sweat shops. Pay was abysmal, oversight on the job was smothering, petty charges for job support items such as electricity, chairs, sewing machine needles and oil ate into what little pay was available, and personal freedoms were very few in the shirtwaist blouse factories.

At home the women were treated like chattel by their families who still practiced the customs of their Old World cultures and of their Jewish or Catholic religions. When attempting to assert their rights as citizens, the women were mistreated by the corrupt politicians of the city's Tammany Hall and their minions, the police. And even the labor unions from which they sought support sometimes offered inconsistent or token recognition, even at the level of leaders like Samuel Gompers.

From this dismal world emerged a few leaders from among the downtrodden who were determined to better their lot and to be treated fairly. Interestingly, to their aid came full support from a number of wealthy educated women from families like the Astors, Morgans and Vanderbilts. Other support came from the young female college students from the gender segregated colleges like Vassar. And a few feminist activists also joined the fray. A couple of historical highlights of these efforts include the founding of a labor union to give the women a voice and representation in their industry, and tragically, the famous Triangle Fire of February 1911 that killed 146 workers by incineration and from leaping from the building's upper floors. The slow progress of the women's rights meant that even though their efforts yielded a union and contracts for the workers, in 1911, working conditions were still primitive. The fire was so deadly because there were no sprinkler systems, and the factory doors were kept locked to prevent workers from leaving during production hours.

The victories of the women's labor movement are still being won over a century later. Today, working conditions are much improved, the Federal OSHA Program provides safety standards and oversight, and harassment in all forms is being suppressed. Equal pay for equal work is still an issue in many areas and industries, however. Much remains to be done, but the movement begun so long ago in the sweatshops and ghettos of the Lower East Side of New York City is strengthened today by the impacts of the founders of the women's shirtwaist labor union.

This book should be in American History courses for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of our culture, our economic system, and our government. It can offer information overlooked in our public school textbooks. It can be a starting point to study of our Great Depression, the Franklin Roosevelt years, and people like Ralph Nader and Francis Perkins. *From Wally Keltner*

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# Boise State

# SECULAR STUDENT ALLIANCE

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advisor Robin W Allen

## ***A Faith Embracing Human Experience***

Rev. Sara LaWall

There was a time in my life when I resisted all things church. Although I had grown up around religion in my family, both Jewish and Protestant, I felt frustrated by the rigid dogma and conservative politics that underpinned religious rhetoric. I felt like there was no room for me and my justice oriented, liberal, feminist views of the world.

At the same time, I craved spirituality and started exploring a variety of spiritual practices and alternative communities from yoga & meditation to neo-paganism. While I nurtured a deeper connection to my own inner life, I found I missed the connection and community—not merely the social connection but the communal worship and ritual among people who shared my values and wanted to make a difference in the world.

When I found Unitarian Universalism (UU), I was skeptical at first. I could not conceive of a church that could encompass all that I was seeking, but it has indeed. I have found a faith that encourages questions and doubts (even among our children).

I feel at home in this religion that honors theological diversity whether it includes God, no-god, or something in between. I have found a faith that calls me to nurture my own inner spiritual life, to serve the world, working for justice, equity, and compassion.

Now that I am a minister in the UU tradition, devoted to inclusion beyond belief, I see my role as creating the container to hold the wide variety of beliefs and practices. In many respects, we claim the ideals of inclusion and radical hospitality as our shared theology.

Certainly one of our biggest gifts is that we do not claim any single theological truth. We open ourselves up to an expansive theological diversity with wisdom coming from many sources. Some find this confounding, I find it invigorating.

BSU SSA is a home for secular students., encouraging critical thought, open, rational, scientific examinations of the universe and our place in it. We believe ethics and morality can be based on humanistic and rational values. We present a positive view of various -isms and non-religious worldviews through debates, workshops, speakers, movies, book club, discussion, and social gatherings.

### ***Fall 2015 officers***

Lindee Neumeier - President, Colin Fenello - Treasurer  
Kendra Sanford - Secretary

During the holiday season, many people are looking for connection; feeling the pull of tradition while resisting it at the same time. I believe we are hardwired to seek connection, love and belonging and the rituals and traditions of our lives, our families and religious upbringings tug at us more at this time of year. Perhaps that need for community and being in touch with our shared humanity is why many people find themselves in church, temple or synagogue during the holidays. We are longing to feel connected to something deeper within ourselves, among the people in our lives, and beyond our individual lives out in the wider world.

At the UU Fellowship this month we will hear holiday music and celebrate winter traditions from around the world, we will host our annual pagan Winter Solstice service on December 21<sup>st</sup> and we will light candles while singing, "Silent Night," Christmas eve, because that is as much a part of our practice of faith as our worship.

I know that church is not for everyone. We all search for meaning and connection in many different ways. As Unitarian Universalists, we seek to honor the many paths—most especially the atheist, humanist, and secularist paths—of our community and around the world. We are a big tent religion where we work to welcome all. And it is work. We do not always get it right, this kind of commitment to radical inclusion takes work on both an individual and a communal level. And, it is sacred work worth doing as we continually remind ourselves that there is room, there is room for all of us and more. May your holiday season be full of light, love, laughter and joy.

Shalom, Salaam, Namaste, Blessed Be.



*BUUF Humanists meet 3rd Sunday, 11:15:am, Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship library, next on Dec 20. Sages meet December 10, 9:30am for no-host breakfast and program, at Kopper Kitchen, near the Boise airport.*

#### Sages in Translation Tom von Alten

If you made a New Year's resolution to join the BUUF Sages for one of our Thursday morning breakfast meetings and haven't done it yet, this is your last chance for 2015. Join us! Our speaker this time will be Julie Hoefnagels, telling us about the work that she does as a translator, for hospitals, schools, and courts. We meet at the Kopper Kitchen, 2661 Airport Way, 9:30 am, Thursday, December 10, for friendly conversation and a no-host breakfast. Newcomers are always welcome! Contact Tom von Alten at 208 378-1217 or [tva@fortboise.org](mailto:tva@fortboise.org) for more information. On the fourth Thursday of this month, have a Merry Christmas Eve.

**BUUF Humanists** meet in the BUUF library 11:15 Dec. 20. Bring a treat to share or share ours; also, bring the spirit of a personal hero or heroine— Be ready to introduce your 'guest' to the rest of us!

### What does "prayer" mean to us?

**That was the question at our November meeting. Woody Weyerman started by** sorting out that which considers causes and that based upon correlation. Looking for causes, understandings of past events that may might predict future outcomes, has led us to scientific understandings. Basing our ruminations on comparisons leads to the doctrine of similarities in healing and to begging favors of the storm god who doesn't seem to care for us—is the ancient pre-science base still very common. His sense of worship is to consider the menu of choices and that expands as he has learned from experience. Which can lead to wisdom. He learned to reconsider pain and prayer from sitting in sweat lodges with native men. Old men/elders, who led prayer, sat on the north side of the lodge and smoked the pipe, prayed in his own native language, which may not be intelligible to the young men, who sat facing elders on the south side—awaiting life lessons from the elder. Woody was told the north end corresponds with the north star that never moves and so is a place to orient oneself from. **One elder** showed Woody how to build his pipe; one end is female, the other male, and both must be joined for smoke/ wisdom to come out. **After** one man was out of prison and invited Woody to a sundance, Woody was told to place his pipe in the place with other elders. He was given a family to stay with as honorary family member. He saw a man who needed healing allow his shoulder muscles to be pierced, a rope strung through and tied to a buffalo hide on which one, two, then three boys sat to attempt to tear the rope through the muscles. But the muscles held as the man danced four days with little rest or water and no food. This was serious prayer. And pain. Woody asks, considering the respect a former convict gained in the community of his origin, what was causal, what correlation here?

Asked for a definition of prayer, Woody offered "Prayer is the soul's desires." Okay, what is the soul?? Woody: We have an internal menu to pick from; we add to this as we go on in life.

The benefits of faith and related prayer may be time-limited: Karen showed the print with an angel standing over a girl who sits protectively by her younger brother, a Presbyterian image that hung over Karen's bed her entire childhood and allowed her to believe, for many years, she was protected by that angel.

Ariel: gratitude can transform us, like singing and ceremonies and rituals that make our intentions come alive and encourage self-evaluation that moves us toward connections to others and finding a purpose. Prayer is like singing: you can do it for Someone or just do it! She shared a comparison between prayer for a nontheist to a child's approach life. Children aren't trying to analyze or fit what they do, or learn, into an existing system. Children can pray out of belief or free of belief. They don't require a duality between sacred (experienced without words) and profane.

For Robert, prayer is directed to Someone. Then how explain why Buddhists (billions of them..) can or do pray? And read from Earth Prayers, prologue, Chang Tsai's inscription on his office wall: "Heaven is my father and earth my mother and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in its midst. That which extends throughout the universe, I regard as my body and that which directs the universe, I regard as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters and all things are my companion." From circa 1100 ade.

Words have power. Saying something aloud, alone or in company of other believers, makes it more real. **Pat:** It's self comforting, elicited from others in order to feel better, what we say to let a friend know we care. Saying "I'll pray for you" has a small efficacy, a sense of shared burden and it doesn't cost the prayer-promiser anything, either. Is it intentional thought, a small act? How is it like sharing a poem, music? **Travis:** Sam Harris says we can train ourselves to direct our consciousness. He appreciates both the philosophy of Stoicism and the words of the Lord's Prayer. **Pat:** It's self comforting, what we elicit from others in order to feel better, what we say to the burdened friend to let them know we care. Saying "I'll pray for you" has a small efficacy, a sense of shared burden and it doesn't cost the prayer-promiser anything, either. Is it intentional thought, a small act? How is it like sharing a poem, music? **Travis:** Sam Harris says we can train ourselves to direct our consciousness. Rick agreed— he's a long-time practitioner of mindfulness meditation. We ended thoughtfully and without conclusion, once again.

## December 2015

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### TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS and planetary needs

Jeanette Ross

*When I was a child I loved drawing maps, then read and tried to visualize those ocean edges, faraway climates. Now I read Arc News, with its tools for understanding and picturing not just places but also systems, the how of geography and with that, a future we can grasp and then change.*

*The fall 2015 is especially satisfying, with snapshots of how Poland is building nation-wide internet access, and how smart irrigation systems help Californians cope with their drought. GIS can help Idaho fieldworkers mark problem areas and then immediately access information that names the problem, prescribes a treatment, and saves money on over-large pesticide applications. The areas of need are programmed into the tractor and delivered with pinpoint accuracy.*

*Down in ocean depths, where humans venture at great risk, underwater videos can be paired with information that directs exploratory vehicles that identify species, helps explore habitats, all controlled by scientists on surface ships. Continuous video tapes can be 'bookmarked' to select special concerns for further investigation— all without putting a diver in a suit.*

*Weather data will marshal snow removal equipment this winter. Long distance truck drivers can program the bridges and other obstructions ahead, to adjust routes.*

*Most interesting to me, though, was an interview with Mark Sorenson, a consultant with his own GIS Planning business. Sorenson is a trained land use planner who uses geographic information systems to assist governments from San Diego to the United Arab Emirates.*

*He begins with a deep layering of information, 800 separate kinds of information in one study. Before college, he worked in construction and read Ian McHarg's seminal book, Design With Nature. He studies each area from its geological layers to history of land use.*

*This requires more than book learning. As his biography summarizes, "He 's been shipwrecked on a desert island; he once climbed two of Southern California's mountains in one day. In Baghdad the armored vehicle in which he was riding was hit by an improvised bomb.*

*Too much planning is top-down. Sorenson looks not just for weather and water and frequency of earthquake; he also looks at the interdependencies between land and culture.*

*His goal is to consider land planning from a perspective used by environmentalists. This is a challenge working for governments in the developing world. The plans developed for Libya, for instance, must sit in a drawer until that country has a semblance of governance. And underwater monitors let us know the changing temperatures of those most essential and neglected places, our deep waters.*

## Coping with the new World Crises from the editor J Ross

**Yasmin Aguilar** spoke this month at a World Community Day event, where she described the task ahead to provide for the expansion of refugee settlements. She came from Afghanistan 15 years ago (trained as a medical doctor and was doing that, working with Afghan women when the Taliban took offense. ) She has been assigned by Agency for New Americans to coordinating services and resources for the expected increase in refugees, especially those from Syria and DR Congo. They are not sponsored by the usual refugee settlement agencies; an entire set of services, including food, housing acclimation, language and job-hunting help—and funders, sponsors? All must be organized, if not invented.

Yasmin's usual responsibility, marketing and working with Immigration offices, will help her. The determination of how many refugees is made by the US President. Since January 1, 80,000 have been admitted this year, 10,000 of these from Syria. Those coming from a crisis have very different needs from those who have been living in refugee camps (sometimes for many years) awaiting the opportunity to apply for resettlement consideration. Millions apply, a few thousand are admitted to the US, Canada, Australia with hopes for gaining permanent residency and a way to gain citizenship. (Equador now accepts some refugees.) What they have in common: all left their home country involuntarily.

Humanists of Idaho

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The recent III Percenters and objections to admitting refugees among some candidates for public office has traumatized many refugees, even those who have been in this country for years. Nearly all have family at risk back home. A crisis interferes with communication as dangers escalate. Yasmin finds herself reassuring others even as her own traumatic memories are triggered. She is especially vigilant and caring for those with 'fresh trauma.' They may have experienced personal violence, witnessed it while protecting children who are the result of rape. Imagine raising children that are the result of violence, Yasmin says.

I participated in the rally in support of refugees, Saturday November 21. Many speakers spoke movingly of horrors endured, years of moving across countries and continents, more years in refugee camps where conditions are barely endurable, all with hope to go through the multi-year process of being allowed to come here. It wasn't easy to listen to the invited speakers. Across the street, about a hundred noisy protesters chanted into bullhorns, doing their best into provoking conflict or at the least interrupt the rally. One observer, author David Neiwart, was there on assignment for the Southern Poverty Law Center. His report of the rally includes depth analysis of the two nation-wide organizations, ACT for America and the III Percenters, who recruit armed militia members to join them, traveling across the West to do this. I crossed the street twice to engage with the protesters and listen to them while they drew close enough behind me to read my notes over my shoulder. It wasn't meant to be a fair exchange. The III Percenters have a website selling 'calling cards' for 'night letters.' No pointy-headed sheets, though Instead they sell insignia backed by Velcro, so you can remove it if stopped by authorities.