



stone, right, founder and moderator of the philosophical forum, and Albert Johnstone have a discussion during a meeting of the group. (Photo by Jeffrey Durham)

broader
Sheets-
t really
conserva-

tive point of view. We have tried. It's too bad, with this being an open discussion."

The Philosophical Forum is reminiscent of the French salons and English coffeehouses during the Enlightenment period of the 18th century. Women had a central role in those proceedings, hosting the authors, intellectuals and grandees of the time and helping to orchestrate smooth discussions. Many of the most famous scholars, authors, philosophers and artists of the time took part.

Participants in the Yachats forum are not aristocratic grandees as in that age, but they do enjoy this outlet to explore subjects in a friendly atmosphere. Many drive from Newport, Waldport, Depoe Bay, Seal Rock and

Eugene to talk about literally anything under the sun, including probably the sun itself.

Some past forum topics include:

- What does it mean to be moral and what motivates immorality?
- The ways we describe ourselves, such as "I am," "I am an American," "I am tired," "I am in love," and "I am out of butter."
- Capitalism: Its advantages and disadvantages.
- Are values you hold universal values or simply personal commitments or both?

Other subjects in just the past three years included emotions, forgiveness, personal philosophy of life, trust, pacifism and the use of force, and death.

The Oct. 8 forum wandered many directions, while Sheets-Johnstone occasionally tried to bring conversation back around to the topic or ask pertinent questions. Comments ranged from global and planetary awareness (the official topic of the day) to provincialism, patriotism, Coca-Cola commercials to bring the world together, climate change, gun control, treatment of animals, the U.S. selling arms overseas, bureaucracies and their natural fight to survive, being a heretic to fight existing power structures, the Supreme Court and the outsourcing of jobs.

One attendee, Brian Hanna, even told a story of his youth when he dropped a frog in the bishop's wife's tea back in his home country. Any subject or old stories are possible here.

A core group of eight to 10 people are regulars at the forum. Ricki Peterson said she wanted an outlet "to feed my mind" and the forum fit the bill. "I was not disappointed," she said, adding that she tries

to make most of the sessions.

Sheets-Johnstone, 87, has written 10 books during her career. Titles include "The Primacy of Movement," "The Roots of Morality," and her first book, "The Phenomenology of Dance," re-published last year on the 50th anniversary of its first printing.

She was a visiting professor in philosophy at the University of Oregon, among other colleges. She holds a bachelor's degree in French and comparative literature, a master's in dance and a doctorate in dance and philosophy. Albert also wrote a book about the universal aspects of what it is to be human. He taught philosophy at Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College. The couple moved to Yachats from Eugene in the early 1990s.

The salons of long ago Western Europe and the Yachats forum of today enabled people from diverse backgrounds to dive into broad and esoteric subjects.

The Philosophical Forum meets every other Sunday from 2-4 p.m. Sheets-Johnstone advertises the main topic of the next forum several days before the next gathering.

"You get new ideas that cause you to think and see a new viewpoint," said Sheets-Johnstone. "This is to do something for the community and get people involved in talking, inquiry and investigation. It's a great feeling of camaraderie. We always welcome new people with a broader perspective."

Peterson agreed. "The diversity is stimulating and talking to one another, especially when we disagree, is probably our only hope for finding common ground and resolution to issues that we currently face," she said.

LAW

Probate

Port

ions

S Main St

SE 1st St

65

257

Reminder:

Georgia-Pacific

Toledo

Call-In

Phone Number,

Any Time

Day or Night

ates a 24-hour

at any time,

ut air quality

e call us at:

-8364

e Oregon

MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 11
Lincoln County Board of Commissioners, 9:30 a.m., county courthouse, Newport.

Yachats Finance Committee: 10 a.m., Yachats Com-

chats Commons.
Toledo Planning Commission: 7 p.m., council chambers, city hall.

THURSDAY, OCT. 12
Lincoln County Fair