

Meetings

Roundtable

Managing the Cost of Health

Pellissippi State
Aug. 5, 2007 4:00 p.m.

Patty McCaffrey will continue the discussion started earlier this year.

This presentation will include discussions on managed care, provider networks, the new trend toward consumer driven health care and universal coverage. We will also look at strategies presented by the AMA and in NIH reports, as well as demographic data on health and health care.

Book Club

Aug. 12, 2007 Beth Cooper
Barnes & Noble Books
4:00 PM (new time)

Omnivore's Delima
by Michael Pollan

Pollan examines what he calls "our national eating disorder" (the Atkins craze, the precipitous rise in obesity) in this remarkably clearheaded book. It's a fascinating journey up and down the food chain, one that might change the way you read the label on a frozen dinner, dig into a steak or decide whether to buy organic eggs. You'll certainly never look at a Chicken McNugget the same way again. Pollan approaches his mission not as an activist but as a naturalist: "The way we eat represents our most profound engagement with the natural world."

Philosophy

August 19, 2007
Pellissippi State
4:00 PM (new time)

Acute Inflammatory Response is the least known of the major pathological processes – cancer, heart disease, genetic disease, etc – and yet the most important process in all of pathophysiology [medical students spend the better part of a semester in the second year looking at it...]; few of us would live out the month if we were not able to mount such a response; many of the complications of modern therapy result from the inadvertent diminution of the response; the path to all healing – whatever the initiation – must go through the acute inflammatory process. And..., many of the drugs coming on the market modify the response in one way or another.

Dr. Neff is Dean of Pathology at UT medical and will lead our discussion of this most important biological phenomenon.

Dr. Neff asks those attending to read some background material prior to his talk.

Chuck Norris for President?

In keeping with his simplistic anti-intellectual TV show and solving problems by kicking people, Chuck Norris added this bit of "Amurican" thinking when he said: "I was wondering the other day, if I ran for president, what would be my campaign promises.

If I am elected president, I will ...

Tattoo an American flag with the words, 'In God we trust,' on the forehead of every atheist."

Whoa, that's a lot rougher than a Scarlet A. Let's see, who else tattooed those who held to an unpopular religious view?

This quote was from Freethought Today, originally found in Worldnetdaily column, June 11, 2007.

So much for Norris, how about Sam Brownback? The same FFRF publication quotes him making this intellectually confused statement.

"Those aspects of evolutionary theory compatible with truth (creationism) are a welcome addition to human knowledge. Aspects of these theories that undermine this truth, however, should be firmly rejected as an atheistic theology posing as science."

(New Your Times op-ed, May 31, 2007)

Huckabee just thinks that God is in "the miracle business" and therefore the Biblical creation story isn't really preposterous.

Hey, it may be crazy but you have got to love a god who can make a person from dust, condemn you to pain, suffering and shame over an apple, later drown virtually every living thing and then torture and kill himself while posing as his own son. It's not preposterous, it's a miracle!

Of course there was the guy from Liberty University who had multiple napalm-like bombs that he was plotting to use on the anti-gay Westboro Baptist church who had accused Falwell of being a friend of gays.

I am not sure what that was.

Of course, the Democratic presidential candidates are making sure that everyone knows that they too are also devoted to religion positions.

Nova and the Dover Decision

On November 13 Nova (PBS) will present a two hour special on the Dover trial. It will feature re-enactments and interviews with witnesses.

The judge, John E. Jones III has mixed feelings about not having television coverage of the trial. He said, "I thought in retrospect that the lawyering was so good and the witnesses were so impactful, positive and negative, that the public should have seen it."

Encouraging news

Paul Kurtz of the Council for Secular Humanism mentions a recent survey conducted by the Financial Times/Harris poll at the end of 2006. In this poll 14 percent of Americans said that they were agnostics but not atheists. Four percent said that they were atheists and six percent said that they would rather not reply while another three percent said that they were not sure. That is twenty -seven percent of the population!

In the same magazine Tom Flynn writes that despite a rough time in the recent past secularism is surging ahead. There is even a "wave of research" showing that "Hispanics are just as likely as other Americans to identify themselves as having 'no religion' and not affiliate with a church." Also noted in the same issue, New York Times reporter Laurie Goodstein states that one fifth of Hispanics changed religion and half were likely to abandon religion verses joining evangelical Protestantism. Also in another article, college freshman are attending religious activities at a decreasing rate.

Parade Magazine and Ken Ham's creation "museum"

A recent Parade magazine article discusses The Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky. This "museum" has dinosaurs and humans coexisting and dinosaurs on the ark (babies). The dino's are all vegetarians despite the presence of carnivore teeth on many.

The reason for dinosaurs being included has more to do with a ploy than any Biblical source. Ken Ham has stated that science has had use of the dinosaurs too long and that it is time that the creationists use them to attract children. He also states that evolution should be obvious and if it isn't then that says that science is wrong. One of the attendees at the opening back in May actually stated that position to me, Carl, while I was protesting outside. He seemed to be a bit less aggressive when it was pointed out that much of human knowledge was not and is not obvious. It has been learned by generations of effort and objective study of complex processes.

So, Parade wants reader responses to The Creation Museum's positions. Contact them at Parade.com.

Christopher Hitchens

Noting the "implosion of faith-based Republicanism," attempts to impose pseudoscience and other factors he says the following in an op-ed in the August/September issue of Free Inquiry: "'Now's the time and now's the hour,' as Robert Burns once wrote. Let the rollback of the lazy and corrupt and authoritarian religious now begin. They will soon know that they are in a real fight and that they have had things their own way for far too long."

Dawkins has been a bit timid compared to Ingersoll. Try this quote from a debate on the Limitations of Tolerance, 1888.

I say to you to-night, ladies and gentlemen, that I feel more interest in the freedom of thought and speech than in all other questions, knowing, as I do, that it is the condition of great and splendid progress for the race; remembering, as I do, that the opposite idea has covered the cheek of the world with tears; remembering, and knowing, as I do, that the enemies of free thought and free speech have covered this world with blood. These men have filled the heavens with an infinite monster; they have filled the future with fire and flame, and they have made the present, when they have had the power, a perdition. These men, these doctrines, have carried fag-ots to the feet of philosophy. These men, these doctrines, have hated to see the dawn of an intellectual day. These men, these doctrines, have denied every science, and denounced and killed every philosopher they could lay their bloody, cruel, ignorant hands upon.

Sam Harris

Try this link for a good Sam Harris talk. He answers many questions that have come up about his positions.

http://www.aifestival.org/index2.php?menu=3&sub=1&title=172&action=full_info

Needed: A new Roundtable coordinator. Anyone interested in organizing new roundtable topics?

RET Newsletter submissions

Feel free to submit news of interest. Submissions are welcomed but may be limited by space and topic relevance. The format may vary depending on the amount of information submitted. Short submissions are preferred but longer ones may be accepted if they can be published as a series over two or more issues. Text or Word format are best for submission. Text may also be included in an E-mail.

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