

Announcements and Reminders

Welcome to the new
e x p a n d e d
RET Newsletter.

This year we will attempt to provide a bit more in the newsletter. Besides the basic information about upcoming events look for short articles, quotes and general news of interest. Submissions are welcomed but may be limited by space and topic relevance. See Carl Ledendecker for submissions. (ledendecker@earthlink.net)

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.

DUES

It's that time of year again, dues are due.

\$25 for annual membership

\$15 low income and student

\$300 for lifetime

Contributions

All contributions are tax deductible. Please support RET, East Tennessee's defender of reason and a secular society.

One way to help is to take items to the EBay shop at Turkey Creek and designate that the sales proceeds go to RET.

ANNUAL MEETING

4TH Sunday !!!
January 28, 2007
10:30 AM
Pellissippi State

At this meeting we elect officers and address any by-laws issues. If you are interested in being nominated to the Board or an officer position contact any board member. Lorrie Lance is the nominations chairperson. (We especially need a new secretary.)

You must be a member who has paid this year's dues to vote or hold office. Officers must have been a member at least one year.

Regular Meetings

Roundtable

January 7, 2007
Pellissippi State
10:30 AM

This month is bring your own topic.

Come with an issue, idea or thought to discuss. Just don't expect to get into great depth at this meeting. If there is enough interest we can expand discussed topics into a full round table at a later date.

This type of meeting tends to generate new topics and more discussion than we will have time for and is always very interesting and fun.

Book Club

January 14, 2007
Barnes & Noble Books
5:00 PM

This month's selection is Meditations by Marcus Aurelius - philosopher and emperor of Rome from circa 161-180 CE

FEBRUARY - The Caged Virgin
by Ayaan Hirsi Ali

MARCH - Sprawl
by Robert Breugmann

APRIL - The Chalice and the Blade by Riane Eisler

MAY - TBD (either Our Inner Ape or What's your life worth)

JUNE - The Ethical Brain
by Gazzaniga

JULY - TBD (either Our Inner Ape by DeWaal or What's your life worth by)

Philosophy

January 21, 2007
Pellissippi State
10:30 AM

Speaker:
Dr. David Reidy.

Topic:
Morality and Moral

The speaker is a professor at UT and in this talk defines moral philosophy, and explains why all people need it regardless of the resources and authorities to which they are accustomed to turning when pressed with challenging moral questions.

Those who have heard him before have been impressed.

Web Links of Interest

Recent Sam Harris Articles

10 Truths and 10 Myths about Atheists

http://www.samharris.org/site/full_text/10-myths-and-10-truths-about-atheism1/

God's Enemies are More Honest than His Friends

http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/sam_harris/2006/12/gods_enemies_are_more_honest_t_1.html
truths-about-atheism1/

More Sam Harris at samharris.org

Scientists Debate Religion: <http://beyondbelief2006.org/Watch/>

A New Book By Carl Sagan

The Varieties of Scientific Experience

Ann Druyan has just published Carl Sagan's 1985 Gifford Lectures as The Varieties of Scientific Experience.

Ingersoll Quotes

Who can over estimate the progress of the world if all the money wasted in superstition could be used to enlighten, elevate and civilize mankind?
-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Some Mistakes of Moses"

The notion that faith in Christ is to be rewarded by an eternity of bliss, while a dependence upon reason, observation and experience merits everlasting pain, is too absurd for refutation, and can be relieved only by that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance, called "faith."

-- Robert Green Ingersoll,
The Gods

We have already compared the benefits of theology and science. When the theologian governed the world, it was covered with huts and hovels for the many, palaces and cathedrals for the few. To nearly all the children of men, reading and writing were unknown arts. The poor were clad in rags and skins -- they devoured crusts, and gnawed bones. The day of Science dawned, and the luxuries of a century ago are the necessities of to-day. Men in the middle ranks of life have more of the conveniences and elegancies than the princes and kings of the theological times. But above and over all this, is the development of mind. There is more of value in the brain of an average man of to-day -- of a master-mechanic, of a chemist, of a naturalist, of an inventor, than there was in the brain of the world four hundred years ago.

These blessings did not fall from the skies. These benefits did not drop from the outstretched hands of priests. They were not found in cathedrals or behind altars -- neither were they searched for with holy candles. They were not discovered by the closed eyes of prayer, nor did they come in answer to superstitious supplication. They are the children of freedom, the gifts of reason, observation and experience -- and for them all, man is indebted to man.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "God In The Constitution"

The Newsletter can also be found online at our Web site: www.rationalists.org. Scheduling: Philosophy (Michael Lance) lancem@ornl.gov; Round tables (Aleta Ledendecker) aletaledendecker@earthlink.net, 982-8687; Book Club (John McCaffrey) jkmccaffreytn@yahoo.com Newsletter: (Carl Ledendecker) ledendecker@earthlink.net, 982-8687 Material published in The RET Newsletter represents the views of the individual authors. Publication does not constitute an endorsement by the Rationalists of East Tennessee or its members.