

Meetings

Roundtable

June 3, 2007
Pellissippi State
10:30 AM

Presenter:
Howard Box

Topic:
What Rationalists Need to Know: How to Oppose the Biblicalists
Howard Box will lead this discussion. He will help illuminate the Bible as a historical document that reveals typical human knowledge of its time congruent with contemporary religious documents of other cultures.

Come learn from one of our venerable Biblical scholars.

Book Club

June 10, 2007
Barnes & Noble Books
5:00 PM

This month's selection is

The Ethical Brain
by Michael Gazzaniga

JULY - Our Inner Ape
by DeWaal

Philosophy

June 17, 2007
Pellissippi State
10:30 AM

Presenter: Dr. Rick Weinstein

Topic:
An Inconvenient Truth (Cont.)

Dr. Richard Weinstein will give a talk on the evidence for Global Warming and what to do about it. He is associated with the folks who made Al Gore's recent documentary, An Inconvenient Truth.



The greatest test of courage on earth is to bear defeat without losing heart.

New Summer Schedule for RET meetings

All of RET's Sunday meetings will be changed to 4:00 - 6:00 p.m., beginning on July 1st. Remember, that there is no Roundtable on July 1st.

Responding to input received during our recent survey, The RET Board of Directors has instituted summer' and 'winter' meeting times for Roundtable, Philosophy Sunday and the Skeptic Book Club.

BEGINNING JULY 1st and lasting until
SEPTEMBER 30th

All three of these meetings will convene at 4:00 p.m. and last until 6:00 p.m. In the future, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. will be the Summer schedule. (April 1 - September 30).

The Winter schedule (October 1 - March 31) will be 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. for all three meetings. The locations of all the meetings will remain unchanged.

The Board of Directors chose these schedules in order to:

- 1) Accommodate a broader segment of members and potential members,
- 2) Be finished at a reasonable time in the evening (for those with children),
- 3) Minimize driving after nightfall, and
- 4) Reduce confusion by having all meetings at the same time on Sunday.

It is hoped that this decision will permit everyone to find at least some of our meetings that are compatible with their calendars. These decisions will be re-evaluated at the end of September.

Phil King, President

New Distribution Method for the RET Newsletter

Beginning with the next issue of the RET newsletter we will send it out as a PDF document to your E-mail address, unless you request otherwise. The distribution list is around a hundred a month so that ends up being a lot of paper and postage cost (not to mention labor). Those resources are donated but can be put to other uses if electronic distribution methods are used

Obviously, if we don't have your E-mail address you will get the newsletter via the regular mail. So if you get a paper copy and want a PDF version please contact Carl Ledendecker at ledendecker@earthlink.net, or call 865 982-8687. If you don't have Adobe's free PDF file reader just go to their site and download it. (<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>)

Summer Solstice Party

This year's solstice party will be at the Ledendecker's on Saturday, June 16 from 5:00 PM until whenever. It will be a covered dish event and BYOB. Some basic refreshments will be provided.

There will be swimming, badminton, bocce, and any other game one wishes to bring as well good conversation.

If you can't Map Quest the location just call or e-mail for directions (865 982-8687 or aletaledendecker@earthlink.net) 2123 Stonybrook Road, Louisville, TN 37777.

Buzz Thomas of Maryville attacks the “new atheists.”

Buzz Thomas has written a handbook for the ACLU and is an executive director of the First Amendment Center. He has many liberal views and is a Baptist minister and lawyer of the State/Church separation variety. He has appeared before congress as an expert witness numerous times.

He also wrote a poorly reasoned attack on “the new atheists” in the Knoxville News Sentinel on May 26. His “logic’ points out some of the problems with “liberal Christians.” First he uses an old scientific defense of moral tendencies as a straw man to claim that science can’t explain morality. He follows this uninformed position with the old “dogs can’t grasp much about the universe” and we are just dogs with slightly larger brains and therefore can grasp geometry but not the cosmos. In short, is he saying that we are dogs to God?

He then states “the best things in life have always been impervious to the probing finger of science. Beauty. Romantic love. Sacrifice. How dreary the world would be if the only things that mattered were those we could test, categorize and quantify. I bet that these new atheists don’t even believe in Santa Claus or the tooth fairy.” I will leave it to the reader to deconstruct that one .

He continues that the thing that “galls” him the most is the new atheists’ “inability to distinguish between good religion and bad religion.” Well what part of believing in supernatural forces is good? Basically any authoritarian system is anti freedom and open inquiry.

He concludes with the amazing claim that “The best evidence of God, of course, has never been empirical. It’s experiential. ...As one New Testament figure put it after being cross-examined about his own encounter with Jesus, ‘Once I was blind, but now I can see!’ Argue with that.”

My response is, please do.

Billy Graham reveals God’s plan

In response to a letter writer’s question as to whether he will be able to play sports in heaven, Graham replies that the Bible doesn’t tell us anything about heaven except that it is really great. He follows by noting that it won’t be boring either. The reason being that we will be “before the throne of God and serve him day and night.” (Revelation 7:15)

So God’s plan is eternal indentured servitude. Are you ready?

Lake Hypatia - Freedom From Religion July 4th annul meeting

Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-presidents of the Freedom From Religion Foundation will be there this year. It is always a great event.

See Alabama Freethought web site: <http://www.ffrf.org/lakehypatia/>. The event takes place Saturday, June 30 - Monday, July 2, 2007.

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. Carl Ledendecker at: (ledendecker@earthlink.net) 2123 Stonybrook Rd., Louisville, TN 3777 982-8687 evenings

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.