

Rationalists Of East Tennessee Newsletter

September 2007

(Due to recent time constraints this issue of the newsletter is provided in a text only format.)

RET Roundtable

Sunday, September 2, 4:00 p.m.

Pellissippi State Technical Community College

"Paths to Rationalism" - Carl Westman leads discussion

Book Club

Sunday, September 9, 4:00 PM

"The World is Flat," by Thomas Friedman

Barnes and Nobel Booksellers, Kingston Pike, a couple of blocks west of the West Town Mall

Volunteer to Lead Book Discussion

If you recommended one of the books (below) for our Skeptic Book Club, please contact John McCaffrey (865-414-6998 or jkmccaffreytn@yahoo.com) and inform him of the dates you would be available to lead the discussion of your book.

The next round of books for our RET Skeptic Book Club has been determined.

The six books selected by members for the upcoming September - February period are as listed below. These have not yet been assigned to a date (except the first one) however we will be assigning dates shortly.

1. September's book will be "The World is Flat" by Thomas Friedman

Also selected (20 people voted):

2. Economics as religion, by Robert Nelson
3. God is not great, Christopher Hitchens
4. Stumbling on Happiness, Daniel Gilbert
5. Atheist Universe, David Mills
6. Wisdom of Crowds, James Surowiecki

For those of you who suggested a "winning" book, please respond with your availability.

Dates:

09 SEPT

14 OCTOBER

11 NOVEMBER *** - THIS NOVEMBER DATE MAY BE VOIDED FOR A SPECIAL EVENT ***
PENDING ***

09 DECEMBER

13 JANUARY

10 FEBRUARY

09 MARCH (if needed)

Third Sunday Lecture

September **23**, 4:00 PM ← Note change in date
Pellissippi State

PETER VAN DEN DUNGEN will present a talk on why our culture celebrates war and not peace. Below are his credentials:

TITLES:

Lecturer in Peace Studies, the Department of Peace Studies
(<http://www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/peace>) University of Bradford, Bradford England
-- world's largest peace studies program.

Founder and General Coordinator, International Network of Museums for Peace
(INMP) (<http://www.museumsforpeace.org>)

Associate Editor, International Encyclopedia of Peace (4 volumes), Oxford
University Press

DEGREES: Lic (Econ) Antwerp, MA Johns Hopkins, PhD London (King's).

MAIN RESEARCH INTERESTS:

History of peace/ pacifism/ internationalism
United Nations and other international organizations
Peace education/ culture/ museums.

STAFF PROFILE: "Peter van den Dungen's main preoccupation in the past year was the promotion and development of peace museums as prime centres for popular peace education, and as concrete expressions of the growth of a culture of peace. This involved participation in several preparatory meetings for the Fourth International Conference of Peace Museums, which was held in Ostend

(Flanders) in May 2003 under his chairmanship. The conference, entitled 'From war remembrance to peace education', also involved various field trips to some of the many war and peace memorials and museums concerning particularly the First World War in which the region is so rich. He read a paper entitled 'Peace Education Through Peace (and Anti-War) Remembrance'. In autumn 2002, he visited the recently expanded and renovated Gernika Peace Museum as well as the Vall d'Òix- Peace Museum (near Castell-n, Spain). Peter continues to edit the newsletter of the International Network of Peace Museums. For the annual meeting of the German Working Group on Historical Peace Research (Arbeitskreis Historische Friedensforschung) in autumn 2003 which has chosen as its theme "'Peace is not an empty idea': Images and representations of peace 1800/1900", he is addressing the topic of the representation of peace in museums. For a colloquium in Leipzig in October 2003 on European national monuments in the 21st century, which explores the theme 'National memory and national identity', he is investigating the existence of, and need for, 'universal' European monuments. Together with Lawrence Wittner, Peter was guest editor of a special issue of the Journal of Peace Research on peace history and largely wrote the introductory article (July 2003). He also wrote an article on the occasion of the centenary of Die Friedens-Warte, a journal that can be regarded as its precursor: 'The Centenary of Die Friedens-Warte: A Noteworthy Anniversary in Peace Publishing' Peace & Change, October 2002. He also contributed to another centenary, viz. that of the award of the 1902 Nobel peace prize to Elie Ducommun, the first and widely admired secretary-general of the International Peace Bureau. Peter was a member of a small ad hoc committee of Geneva citizens who obtained the support of municipal, cantonal and federal authorities for several events, including the unveiling of a bust in a central city park, and the publication of a volume of biographical essays, Elie Ducommun 1833-1906 (Geneva, 2002), to which he contributed a chapter, Le Laureat du Prix Nobel de la Paix."

Freedom of expression in Asheville

In case anyone missed it. On Aug. 29 the Knoxville News Sentinel published an article by Bill Maxwell of the St. Petersburg Times titled, "Abuse of citizen's rights not what forefathers intended."

It was about a flagrant abuse of police power and the lack of response by the the "powers that be." On July 25 an Asheville, NC couple was attacked by an out of jurisdiction police officer because they had a US flag displayed upside down and had pinned several comments against the Iraq war along with a picture of Bush. Basically the office responded to a compliant of flag desecration (there is an old NC law of 1917 against it). The couple, Deborah and Mark Kuhn, took down the flag after being confronted but refused to show identification since the officer would not say whether he was arresting them. They then went inside and locked the door. The officer, Scarborough, kicked in the door and broke a window and began chasing Mr. Kunh around the house with a billy club while Mrs.

Kuhn called the police. Another officer arrived and threatened to Taser Kuhn. Neighbors arrived and asked what their neighbors were being charged with and were told that it was none of their business.

They were taken to the county jail and accused of assaulting an officer, resisting arrest and flag desecration. Later the Sheriff asked that charges be dropped because "it does seem to be the intention of the Supreme Court .. to allow that. ... On the other side of that, if it weren't for young men like Deputy Scarbroough, we wouldn't have those rights." It seems that Scarborough served in Iraq just before becoming a Deputy.

I guess that is the way the law works for Americans in Iraq. Scarborough kept his job and an undisclosed "corrective action" was taken.

It makes one wonder what the response would have been to a sign like, "You don't need a god to be good." But then we have young men like Scarborough without whom "we wouldn't have those rights"?

When televangelists accidentally get it right

Another article in the News Sentinel tells of the televangelist in Florida, Bill Keller, who had his late night program pulled because of various anti-Muslim statements. Interestingly enough one of the statements was that the Qur'an was "a book of fables and a book of lies." That is a very interesting statement in light of Christopher Hitchen's statement that "...Islam when examined is not much more than a rather obvious and ill-arranged set of plagerisms, helping itself from earlier books and traditions as occasion appeared to require" including much of Jewish and Christian works.

In addition, Keller said that the Mormon church was cult. Hitchens also points out in God is Not Great that Joseph Smith included in his revealed Book of Mormon huge chunks of the Bible. And a cult is?

Humanism

A progressive lifestance that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

From the back of American Humanist membership cards.

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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