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**To:** Carl Ledendecker ledendecker@att.net

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RET News June 2016 CE



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Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter

June 2016

Reason Rally Yea!

### First Sunday Meeting

**June 5 Sunday 10:30 - 12:30**

**Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex**

“How did our Pre-Human Ancestors Manage to Become Fully Human and What are the Implications for Current Humans and their Future?”

RET member Homer Wilkins

This talk is based on a 2013 book by Ajit Varki and Danny Brower, entitled "Denial: Self-Deception, False Beliefs, and the Origins of the Human Mind". The central thesis of the book is that denial of death was a necessary step for our almost-human ancestors to become fully human. The authors present the argument that to be able to deny death, these ancestors had to become adept at some kinds of behavior usually considered to be undesirable in human society. Examples are lying, deceit, and denial of any unpleasant reality.

About 100,000 years ago a small group of these ancestors in Africa (perhaps no more than 15,000) accomplished this transition, and their descendants (modern humans) have in the meantime taken over the entire earth.

The presentation will also address other aspects of this transition, including current human problems that go back to that transition. Some of these problems are killing us individually and some may even drive our species into extinction. On the other hand, that transition provided the basis for optimism, which has been a driving force for the development of what we call human civilization.

[Get Directions](#)

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### The RET Skeptic Book Club

**June 12 Sunday 2:00 – 4:00 pm**

**Location: Books-A-Million at 8513 Kingston Pike, Knoxville.**

### “Unfinished business : women, men, work, family by Anne-Marie Slaughter”

When Anne-Marie Slaughter accepted her dream job as the first female director of policy planning at the U.S. State Department in 2009, she was confident she could juggle the demands of her position in Washington, D.C., with the responsibilities of her family life in suburban New Jersey. Her husband and two

young sons encouraged her to pursue the job; she had a tremendously supportive boss, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton; and she had been moving up on a high-profile career track since law school. But then life intervened. Parenting needs caused her to make a decision to leave the State Department and return to an academic career that gave her more time for her family. The reactions to her choice to leave Washington because of her kids led her to question the feminist narrative she grew up with. Her subsequent article for The Atlantic, "Why Women Still Can't Have It All," created a firestorm, sparked intense national debate, and became one of the most-read pieces in the magazine's history. Since that time, Anne-Marie Slaughter has pushed forward, breaking free of her long-standing assumptions about work, life, and family. Though many solutions have been proposed for how women can continue to break the glass ceiling or rise above the "motherhood penalty," women at the top and the bottom of the income scale are further and further apart.

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### **RET Third Sunday Meeting**

**June 19 Sunday 10:30 a.m.**

**Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Auditorium**

### **Professor Stewart Harris of the Appalachian School of Law will present a talk titled "James Madison's Views on Religious Freedom."**

Professor Harris is the host of Your Weekly Constitutional podcast. He teaches Constitutional Law at ASL. Before coming to ASL, he taught at the University of Florida's College of Law. For the past several years, he has also taught Constitutional Law during the summer semester at the University of Tennessee College of Law.

[Get Directions](#)

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### **RET Reflections Meeting**

**June 26 Sunday 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

At Steven and Carol Tokay's 8905 Garrison Drive, Knoxville, TN 37931-2416.

You may contact Carol at [caroltokay@comcast.net](mailto:caroltokay@comcast.net), or call 865.691.6816 for directions.

Topic: Raising Children in the Bible Belt

The Rationalists of East Tennessee's Reflections meetings have been held for the past six years at Schera & Ted's home in West Knoxville. For those of you unfamiliar with Reflections, it is the sole RET meeting where the individual attendees are the primary speakers each meeting, drawing upon our own experiences and inspirations. Our topics are varied and member's suggestions are always welcome for the next meeting.

Carol and Stephen Tokay have volunteered to host these meetings each month on the fourth Sunday at their home:

We hope you'll grab a dish, box, or bag and join us for some of our meetings.

The fourth Sunday of June, July, August, September, October, and November. We'll skip December because of the holidays and start up again in January, 2017.

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**SPECIAL EVENT**

# Summer Solstice Party!

June 11, 2016 5:00 - 9:00 PM (or dark-thirty)

The Solstice will arrive early this year, at least the party will be.

**Where:** Ledendecker's Home  
[aledendecker@me.com](mailto:aledendecker@me.com) or 865-724-5273 to RSVP and get the address

Bring a covered dish and BYOB and a swim suit if you want to enjoy the pool. If you play an instrument, bring it, too!

Pool, Badminton and Bocce - Kid friendly event!! Water Balloons too.

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## Free Thought Radio Hour

Sunday Evenings from 6:00 pm Till 7:00 pm (Only available in the immediate Knoxville area.)

Hosted by Larry Rhodes Call in: 865-333-5937 FM 103.9

Co-hosts would be appreciated. Contact Larry Rhodes.

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## Other Activities in the area

### RET/ASK Freethought Forum TV

**Tuesdays 5:00 – 6:00 pm**

Freethought Forum TV is looking for people to be on the show. Contact Larry Rhodes or Lee Erickson if you are interested.

Knoxville: Comcast Channel 12 Charter Channel 6 Free streaming on [ctvknox.org](http://ctvknox.org).

Right after the show a co-host of the program holds The Atheist Society of Knoxville Meet-up at Barley's on Jackson Avenue in Knoxville's Old City. Volunteer hosts and suggestions for topics would be welcome for all of these programs. Contact Larry Rhodes at [larryr@usit.net](mailto:larryr@usit.net) or Lee Erickson at [forresterickson@comcast.net](mailto:forresterickson@comcast.net).

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### Sunday Assembly Knoxville Live Better, Help Often, Wonder More

#### June Topic - Personalities

Location: The International at 940 Blackstock Ave., Knoxville, TN

Time: 10:30 AM

For other SA activities go to <http://knoxville-tn.sundayassembly.com> and click on "Calendar."

Email: [saknoxville@gmail.com](mailto:saknoxville@gmail.com)

Website: <http://knoxville-tn.sundayassembly.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sunday-Assembly-Knoxville/595906073848559>

Meetup: <http://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly-Knoxville/>

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## Future Activities

**Reason Rally 2 Washington DC June 4, 2016**

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**Please add your name to the RET Directory so friends can contact you.**

### **RET's New Web Site and Wild Apricot**

How to set up your new password and log in. Don't forget to enter your information into the RET Directory (viewable by members only and customizable by you so people see only what you want them to).

### **TO LOG IN**

Go to Rationalists.org. There, just above The Thinkers head, you will see a "Login" button. That's right, click on it. Use the email address that is already associated with RET contacts and mailings and click on "Forgot Password". There you will enter the email address and Captcha code. From there follow the directions.

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## **A Message to Heritage High School Seniors**

Excerpts from: The Daily Times May 18, 2016

Statements made by Barnes to the graduating class at Blount County's Heritage High School's baccalaureate service at East Maryville Baptist Church.

"Lead a radical life." "Be different."

"Your number one goal should be (to be) the most God-centered, God-exalting, God saturated, loving, humble, advanced justice feeling, serving more people than you can imagine."

The paper states that, "He encouraged the teens to be a light that shines before others, to live a happy and comfortable life so that others recognize something is different about them, and that will give them an opportunity to share their faith."

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## **Trump's Religion Advisor is ... well you decide**

From: <http://ladyfreethinker.org/donald-trumps-christian-advisor-prophet-stopped-a-tsunami/>

"Frank Amedia, a televangelist and self-proclaimed prophet and apostle, says that he stopped a tsunami from hitting an island in Hawaii and has healed cancer through prayer. In addition to [Amedia's](#) self-idolizing beliefs, he has stated that AIDS is the result of "unnatural sex."

"[Amedia](#) said, "We know that many of the diseases today are avoidable if only we practiced a wholesome life. AIDS is a disease that comes because of unnatural sex."

"Amedia is able to gather support from the Christian right, despite there being no clear understanding of Trump's stance on religion. Currently, Amedia runs the Ohio-Based Touch Heaven Ministries, is affiliated with churches in Africa and Asia, and regularly makes appearances on Christian television networks.

Amedia was accused of bribing a prosecutor in 2001 to drop a case involving a good friend in Ohio who had allegedly been rolling back car odometers. The plan failed, and the dealer was convicted. Amedia received immunity for his testimony.

"In 2010, he traveled to Haiti to help earthquake survivors; however, because of his feuds with the Haitian practitioners of voodoo, he stated that he would consider cutting off the food supply. "We wouldn't want to perpetuate that practice. We equate it with witchcraft, which is contrary to the Gospel."

Details on his tsunami statement from: <http://christiantimes.com/article/donald-trump-appoints-televangelist-frank-amedia-as-his-liaison-for->

[christian-policy/56023.htm](http://christian-policy/56023.htm)

"In 2011, a tsunami hit Japan and Amedia claimed in 2012 that he prevented the disaster from reaching Hawaii as his daughter was there at the time. He [narrated](#) that he stood at the edge of his bed and said, "In the name of Jesus, I declare that tsunami to stop now" and "I declare those waters to recede." He had apparently taken credit for having stopped -- or having convinced God to stop -- the raging water from reaching the island, which brought devastation to the next one instead."

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Edited by Carl Ledendecker

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