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Subject: RET News December 2016
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RET News December 2016 CE



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Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter

December 2016

First Sunday Meeting

December 4 Sunday 10:30 - 12:30

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex

Homelessness a Short Presentation of Work in Progress

There will be a short presentation by John D. Webster on his ongoing documentary, "**I Am Facing Homelessness.**" This documentary is about the homeless in the Knoxville area.

"Post-Truth Nation" - Let Us Ponder on the Power of Lies

Following that there will be a Roundtable discussion on "**Post-Truth Nation.**"

It has been proposed that we are now in an era where facts are no longer relevant to much of America.

The current election is a prime example. Bring your examples or send them to ledendecker@att.net. Links to pertinent sources can also be used. Send what you find or bring it to the meeting.

Be ready for some fine discussion.

The RET Skeptic Book Club

December 11 Sunday 2:00 – 4:00 pm

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

“Don’t Sleep, There are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle” by Daniel L. Everett.

A riveting account of the astonishing experiences and discoveries made by linguist Daniel Everett while he lived with the Pirahã, a small tribe of Amazonian Indians in central Brazil. Daniel Everett arrived among the Pirahã with his wife and three young children hoping to convert the tribe to Christianity. Everett quickly became obsessed with their language and its cultural and linguistic implications. The Pirahã have no counting system, no fixed terms for color, no concept of war, and no personal property. Everett was so impressed with their peaceful way of life that he eventually lost faith in the God he'd hope

to introduce to them, and instead devoted his life to the science of linguistics. Part passionate memoir, part scientific exploration, Everett's life-changing tale is riveting look into the nature of language, thought, and life itself.

Winter Solstice Party

December 17 Saturday 4:00 PM to 12:00 PM

At Steve and Carol Tokay's 8905 Garrison Drive, Knoxville TN 37913-2416 (865) 691-6816

Pot Luck - Join our annual celebration of the light (also food, friends and conversation).

RET Third Sunday Meeting

December 18 Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Auditorium

The RET third Sunday meeting in December will feature a DVD presentation from the Skeptics Society Distinguished Lecture Series by philosopher and novelist Rebecca Goldstein titled "Plato at the Googleplex: Why Philosophy Won't Go Away"

Stephen Hawking said philosophy is dead. Plato would disagree, says the acclaimed philosopher and novelist Rebecca Goldstein, who provides a dazzlingly original plunge into the drama of philosophy, revealing its hidden role in today's debates on religion, morality, politics, and science. Philosophy is not obsolete, and the ancient questions that Plato asked are still relevant in the age of cosmology and neuroscience, crowd-sourcing and cable news. Imagine that Plato came to life in the 21st century and embarked on a multicity speaking tour. How would he handle the host of a cable news program who denies there can be morality without religion? How would he mediate a debate between a Freudian psychoanalyst and a tiger mom on how to raise the perfect child? How would he answer a neuroscientist who, about to scan Plato's brain, argues that science has definitively answered the questions of free will and moral agency? What would Plato make of Google, and of the idea that knowledge can be crowd-sourced rather than reasoned out by experts? With a philosopher's depth and a novelist's imagination and wit, Goldstein probes the deepest issues confronting us by allowing us to eavesdrop on Plato as he takes on the modern world.

[Get Directions](#)

RET Reflections Meeting NO MEETING

~~**December 25 Sunday 2:00 p.m.**~~

~~**At Steve and Carol Tokay's** 8905 Garrison Drive, Knoxville TN 37913-2416 (865) 691-6816~~

~~Discussion and Potluck NO MEETING~~

RET Skeptics Book Club - Books List

- **December 11, 2016: Don't Sleep, There are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle**
- **January 8, 2017: Islam and the Future of Tolerance: A Dialogue**
- **February 12, 2017: The Utility Of Force: The Art Of War In The Modern World** by Rupert Smith.
- **March 12, 2017: White Trash: the 400 year Untold History of Class in America** by Nancy Isenberg.
- **April 9, 2017: BEING MORTAL: Medicine and What Matters in the End** by Atul Gawande.
- **May 14, 2017: The Serengeti Rules: The Quest to Discover How Life Works and Why It Matters** by Sean B. Carroll.
- **June 11, 2017: All the Single Ladies: Unmarried Women and the Rise of an Independent Nation** by Rebecca Traister.
- **July 9, 2017: Makers and Takers: The Rise of Finance and the Fall of American Business** by Rana Forooha

Other Activities in the area

East Tennessee Freedom From Religion Foundation Chapter

Meets on the 3rd Wednesdays of each month NO Meeting This Month Earth Fare Turkey Cre

RET/ASK Freethought Forum TV

Tuesdays 5:00 – 6:00 pm

Note change: Due to Knoxville Beer Board Meeting changes there will be no FFTV on varying Tuesday once a month.

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.

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 or other published locations). Volunteer hosts and suggestions for topics would be welcome for all of these programs. Contact Larry Rhodes at larryr@usit.net or Lee Erickson at forresterickson@comcast.net.

Sunday Assembly Knoxville Live Better, Help Often, Wonder More

December 25 - No Meeting This Month

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."

Website: <http://knoxville-tn.sundayassembly.com/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sunday-Assembly-Knoxville/595906073848559>

Meetup: <http://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly-Knoxville/> Email: saknoxville@gmail.co

Future Activities

American Humanist Association 76th Annual Conference

Charleston, South Carolina June 8-11, 2017

conference.americanhumanist.org

Help Needed:

Please contact us at info@rationalists.org.

Willing to serve on the board? Please join in keeping RET active and relevant.

From the Nomination Committee Chair

Per the bylaws of The Rationalists Of East Tennessee (RET) , we have annual elections for our Board of Directors and Officers.

This election will be on Feb. 5, 2017.

The nominations committee encourages all RET members who would like to strengthen the RET organization perhaps, too, their own personal growth, seriously to consider becoming a member of the Board of Directors even an Officer.

Any individual or life member can be elected to the board. Further, our bylaws provide for four officers, "President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary." And officers have to meet these additional qualifications: An Officer shall be at least 18 years old and shall have been a member for at least one year.

A few excerpts from our by laws will help understand the rolls of the Board and Officers.

The Board shall consist of no less than five Directors, including the Officers. Directors shall hold office for a term of one year or until their successors are elected.

.....

Meetings of the Board may be called by the President and shall be called upon written request of three members of the Board.

The board shall hold its annual meeting before the Organization's annual meeting.

Board members shall serve without compensation,

These Officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the Organization.

In part, these duties are:

The President shall be the chief executive Officer, coordinating the work of Officers and committees, and signing contracts.....

The Vice-President becomes President if the President's office becomes vacant, and assumes the office temporarily if the vacancy is temporary. The Vice-President shall assist the President as requested.

The Secretary shall (1) record the minutes of the Organization and Board meetings, (2) handle the Organization and Board correspondence, (3) maintain a permanent file of the Organization and Board bylaws and other documents, including Officers and committee chairpersons' reports, publications, and correspondence, (4) keep the official membership roll, (5) send out to the membership a notice of each meeting, and (6) compile the order of business for meetings.

The Treasurer shall (1) keep records of money received and spent, (2) safeguard the Organization's funds, (3) compile and submit an annual financial statement as required, (4) Provide record of dues payments to the Secretary as requested, and (5) invest funds if so directed by the Board, and following the Board's guidelines.

This information is partial. The full information can be found in our bylaws available at rationalists.org.

If you are able and willing to help the Rationalist of East Tennessee meet the purposes of our organization, please contact any member of the nominations committee. We would like your commitment soon.

Nominations committee

Shawnee Casteel 423-736-5529 or by shawneecasteel@aol.com

Lee Erickson 865-805-2437 or by forresterickson@comcast.net

Jonas Holderman 865-966-6478 or by j.t.holdeman@gmail.com

Member News:

Long time RET member and never failing provider of coffee for meetings, Andree Miller died on November 21st.

We will miss her.

(Please contact me at ledendecker@att.net if you have any relevant news about RET members that they agree to share.)

Wise Words from Others

"It is a truism that almost any sect, cult, or religion will legislate its creed into law if it acquires the political power to do so."

Robert A. Heinlein

" I think that everyone should treat one another in a Christian manner. I will not, however, be responsible for the consequences."

George Carlin

A FOUNDING FATHER DEMOLISHES "STRICT CONSTRUCTIONISM"

Thomas Jefferson

"Some men look at constitutions with sanctimonious reverence, and deem them like the arc of the covenant, too sacred to be touched. They ascribe to the men of the preceding age a wisdom more than human, and suppose what they did to be beyond amendment. I knew that age well; I belonged to it, and labored with it. It deserved well of its country. It was very like the present, but without experience of the present; and forty years of experience in government is worth a century of book-reading; and this they would themselves, were they to rise from the dead. I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions. I think moderate imperfections had better be borne with; because, when once known, we accommodate ourselves to them, and find practical means of correcting their ill effects. But I know also, that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times. We might require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors."

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