

Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter

April 2014
Edited by Carl Ledendecker

Game Day Men and Women's Game Day

Sunday, March 30

1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Cancelled because of scheduling problems.

Pizza, Home Movie, and Follow up Discussion Movie Evening

Friday, April 4 at 7:00 P. M.

"Inequality for All"

A documentary by former Secretary of Labor Reich that uses humor and a wide array of facts to explain how income inequality and the shrinking middle class affect everyone and have implications for the future of democracy, the economy, and the nation.

Kindly hosted by Sharron and Phil King

- 1) Please bring cookies for desert
- 2) RSVP at sharronpking@gmail.com
- 3) Mark your calendars now

RET First Sunday Meeting

April 6, 10:00 AM (Before regular meeting)

Special Membership Meeting

This is a notification for a special meeting for the purpose of amending the bylaws of the Rationalists Of East Tennessee.

Meeting will be as brief as discussion will allow and just prior to the regular program of April 6th. This Special Meeting is called in accordance with Article X of the bylaws. This meeting is to begin promptly at 10:00 AM April 6th in the cafeteria annex of the Goins building at the PSTCC, our regular Sunday morning meeting room.

The principle purpose of this meeting to request the membership approve a change to the bylaws allowing the treasurer greater flexibility in the timing of billing membership dues. This request is motivated by the flexibility of modern membership management software and past member resistance to payment per the current rigid wording of the bylaws.

Additionally a second amendment is offered clarifying the requirements for our operation to always be in compliance with documents we have filed with the state of Tennessee.

First change

In Article III Section 5, change from:

"Individual dues are payable annually on January 1st, without notification"

To:

"Individual dues are payable every 12 months following initial payment, without notification."

Second change

In Article I, the name is expanded and once sentence is added

Changing from:

Article I: Name

The name of this Organization is Rationalists of East Tennessee.

To:

Article I: Name and Creation.

The name of this Organization is Rationalists of East Tennessee. The Organization has been created by Charter filed with the state of Tennessee, and every provision of the Charter shall be a provision of these Bylaws as if recited verbatim herein.

Upon a two-thirds vote in favor of change on each amendment they will be incorporated in to the bylaws. Because there must be notification to all members of proposed changes to the bylaws, there can be no modifications to the proposed changes at the meeting. They must be voted up or down.

Regular First Sunday Meeting

April 6, 2014

10:30 - 12:30

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex

**Lectures on "Biology and Human Behavior: the Neurobiological Origins of Human Behavior."
Presented by Professor Robert Sapolsky of Stanford University.**

As a result of popular demand we will continue viewing these taped lecture series.

The RET Skeptic Book Club

"The Fact of Evolution" by Cameron M. Smith.

April 13 , 2014

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Barnes and Noble Booksellers, 8029 Kingston Pike.

Evolution is often described as a "theory." While this is certainly technically true, it is misleading to dismiss evolution as "just a theory" (an unfounded idea), as opponents of evolution like to do. In this illuminating work of popular science, anthropologist Cameron M. Smith amply demonstrates that there are few more well-established facts in the scientific canon than that life evolved on earth.

Walking the reader through the steps in the evolutionary process, Cameron uses plenty of real-world examples to show that not only does evolution happen, it must happen. Cameron analyzes evolution as the unintended consequence of three independent facts of the natural world that we can observe every day: (1) the fact of the replication of life forms (producing offspring); (2) the fact that offspring are not identical (variation); and (3) the fact that not all offspring survive (selection). Viewed in terms of this analysis, evolution is no longer debatable; in fact it has to occur. It is simply the inevitable consequence of three obvious, observable, factual natural phenomena.

The Fact of Evolution also covers new discoveries in evolution, many of which have occurred in the last twenty years of the "genomic revolution" and have strengthened Darwin's basic idea. In addition, the author discusses complex theoretical issues such as speciation, phyletic gradualism vs. punctuated equilibrium, the "Evo-Devo" paradigm, and the concept of bauplane, as well as the facts of primate and hominid evolution. Well-organized, clearly written, and accessible, The Fact of Evolution is ideal for students or any interested lay readers. (Amazon Review).

RET Trash Pick-up Pellissippi

Saturday April 19 - 9:00 am

**Meet up at the Lovell/Pelli Burger King.
Usually done at noon.**

Rain date Saturday April 26

Remember to dress appropriately. Gloves and pick-up device highly recommended.

RET Third Sunday Meeting

April 20 , 2014

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex

Professor Andrew Kramer of the University of Tennessee Department of Anthropology will discuss scientific research on Neanderthal DNA. Dr. Kramer spook to RET many years ago and was an informative and engaging speaker.

RET Reflections Meeting

April 27, 2014

Potluck Lunch

Remember Reflections will be every other month so no meeting in April.

RET/ASK Freethought Forum

Tuesdays 5:00 – 6:00 pm

In Knoxville: Comcast Channel 12

Charter Channel 6

Surrounding areas: free streaming on ctvknox.org.

Show topics are subject to change.

Right after the show a co-host of the program holds The Atheist Society of Knoxville meet up at Barley's in Knoxville's Old Town. Volunteer hosts and suggestions for topics would be welcome for all of these programs. Contact Larry Rhodes at larryr@usit.net.

Excerpts from:

American Rationalist - Nov. - Dec. 2013

“The God Hypothesis” William Harwood

“The hypothesis that gods exist is not objectively falsifiable. The hypothesis that “God” exists is falsifiable as the phrenology hypothesis, the phlogiston hypothesis, the luminiferous ether hypothesis and the flat-Earth hypothesis.”

“The Arrogance of Atheism?” Derek Beres

from bigthink.com, 12-19-13 via Pique Feb. 2014

“Next time you hear someone making the claim of arrogant atheism, present these statements and see which actually sounds more arrogant. You could say the second world view is more agnostic than atheistic, but in terms of the arrogance argument, the result is the same.

Worldview 1: I know God created the entire universe just for the benefit of humans. He watches me constantly and cares about everything I say and do. I know how He wants me and everyone else to behave and believe. He is perfect and just, which is why we face an eternity of either bliss or torture, depending on whether or not we believe in him.

Worldview 2: We're the product of millions of years of evolution. Most species are extinct, as humans will eventually be. I hope to make a positive difference because it's the right thing to do, not because of future rewards or punishments in an afterlife. When I don't know something, which is often, I say, "I don't know."

For a Laugh

Try: <http://www.gocomics.com/nonsequitur/2014/03/13>

Pavlov is enjoying a pint in the pub. the phone rings. He jumps up and shouts: “Oh hell, I forgot to feed the dog!”

When I heard that oxygen and magnesium hooked up I was like OMg.

RET Forum (A Benefit for Paid Members)

Don't forget the new RET Forum discussion and more site: <http://rationalists.org/forum/index.php>
There are many uses for this new forum including continued discussions about recent meetings.

Dues

Dues are \$35 for most individuals but students & low-income persons may join at a reduced rate of \$15.

Dues and donations can be sent to “RET, P.O. Box 51634, Knoxville, TN 37950”, or via Pay Pal through the link at www.rationalists.org. Direct payment can also be made to RET treasurer, Eliot Specht

Reimbursement

Remember that you can ask for reimbursement for food, supplies, etc. that you provide for RET.

FEEL FREE to Send me information or articles by you.

Anyone who has something to submit for publication in the RET Newsletter please e-mail it to ledendecker@earthlink.net. The decision to include the submission is at the discretion of the current editor (me) but I am not all that picky.