

# Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter

December 2014  
Edited by Carl Ledendecker

## First Sunday Meeting

**December 7 Sunday 10:30 - 12:30**

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

We will finish the Council for Secular Humanism video about American Freethought.

This part will include:

The rise of Catholicism, Challenges to Sunday laws, Haymarket tragedy, McKinley, the barring the Truth Seeker publication, Palmer raids, Emma Goldman, Scopes trial, DeMille (Godless Girl), Mencken, radio evangelism (including plagiarism of Ingersoll), and the decline of freethought between the World Wars.

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## The RET Skeptic Book Club

**December 14 Sunday**

**There will be no Book Club meeting this December**

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## The RET Solstice Party

**December 20 Saturday 4:00 PM to Midnight**

**Location:** Carol and Steve Tokay's house, 8905 Garrison Drive, Knoxville, TN 37931

Come and enjoy an evening of food (Pot Luck) good company.

## RET Third Sunday Meeting

**December 21 Sunday**

**There will be no third Sunday Roundtable this December**

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## RET Reflections Meeting

**December 30 4th Sunday**

**There will be no Reflections this December**

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### Future Event Mark your calendar

**RET Trash Pick-up**

**January 17th Saturday 1:00 to 3:30 Rain date Jan 31**

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## New Book Club List

December	Break, no book club meeting
January	“How Jesus became God” by Bart Ehrman
February	“Astronaut’s Guide to Life on Earth” by Chris Hadfield
March	“Hope after Faith” by Jerry DeWitt
April	“A Troublesome Inheritance” by Nicholas Wade
May	“Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead” by Sheryl Sandberg
June	“Stuff Matters: Exploring the Marvelous Materials That Shape Our Man-Made World” by Mark Miodownik
July	“House of Debt: How They (and You) Caused the Great Recession, and How We Can Prevent It from Happening Again” by Atif Mian

## 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](http://ctvknox.org).

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 Joe Barnhart at [tempolark@hotmail.com](mailto:tempolark@hotmail.com)

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### **“What Americans Really Want for Christmas”**

**Jonathan Engel**

(excerpts)

Evidently “what people really want is the secular side of Christmas, and hold the religion, please. If people wanted movies about Mary, Joseph, Jesus and the Wise Men, that’s what ... networks would be showing, but they’re not.”

“(T)his seems to discomfort greatly those who implore their fellow Americans to ‘put Christ back in Christmas.’”

“Too late; that horse has already left the manger.”

From “Pique” Newsletter of the Secular Humanist Society of New York, Dec. 2014

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### **A Problematic “Helping Hand”**

**Carl Ledendecker**

In a pre-operation area bathroom at Blount Memorial Hospital in Blount County, TN is a framed painting of an operating room complete with surgeon, nurses, patient and (wait for it)..... Jesus!

Jesus is standing over the doctor with his hand outstretched as if guiding the doctor’s hand. Oddly I found this very disturbing.

Jesus was not wearing scrubs, a hair net, a mask or even latex gloves! Is it possible that he is not aware of basic modern medical practices?

I also wondered why he just didn’t say, “Wait, I have an easier way.” Like maybe - Zap - “He is now healed.” I mean, it has to be very confusing for an ancient fellow who doesn’t know anything about basic hygiene to give good advise to a modern doctor. In this case it seems to make much more sense to go straight to the magic.

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## Navy - Military's First Atheist Lay Leader

(excerpts)

Chief Petty Officer Martin Healey has been approved after completing lay leader training and an endorsement from American Atheists. This is not equivalent to being a chaplain but does allow Healey “to organize and facilitate group meetings.”

In related news, a lawsuit has been filed against the Navy by a group called The Humanist Society to allow a Humanist Celebrant to become an official “chaplain.”

From AU Bulletin, Church and State, Dec. 2014

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## Other Events of Note

The Atheist Society of Knoxville Meet Up is held weekly at Barley's in Knoxville's Old Town.

For additional ASK activities see: <http://www.meetup.com/KnoxvilleAtheists/>

Sunday Assemblies Knoxville, Dec. 21, Charles Towne Landing HOA Club House 11:00 am

For additional Sunday Assembly activities see: [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sunday-Assembly-Knoxville/595906073848559?ref=br\\_tf](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sunday-Assembly-Knoxville/595906073848559?ref=br_tf)

American Atheists National convention in Memphis, TN at the Peabody Hotel, April 2-5

American Humanist Association Annual Conference Denver, CO May 7-10 at Grand Hyatt Hotel

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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](http://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@bellsouth.net](mailto:ledendecker@bellsouth.net). The decision to include the submission is at the discretion of the current editor (me), but I am not all that picky.