

Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter

July 2014
Edited by Carl Ledendecker

First Sunday Meeting

July 6 Sunday 10:30 - 12:30

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex

As usual, there will be no first Sunday RET meeting in July so people can attend the Lake Hypatia gathering sponsored by the Freedom from Religion Foundation.

Lunch Bunch, Taste of Thai

July 9 Wednesday 11:15

Peter's Road near Lowe's Home Improvement.

If you haven't signed up or if you have signed up and need to cancel, please contact Pauline, 437-9966 or hpauline0719@yahoo.com so tables will be ready.

Trash Pickup

July 12 Saturday 5:30 pm

Evening pickup Saturday

Meet at Lovell Road Burger King
Should easily finish before sunset.

The RET Skeptic Book Club

July 13 Sunday 4:00 – 6:00 pm

“The Story of the Human Body: Evolution, Health, and Disease“ by Daniel Lieberman.

Barnes and Noble Booksellers, 8029 Kingston Pike.

In this landmark book of popular science, Daniel E. Lieberman—chair of the department of human evolutionary biology at Harvard University and a leader in the field—gives us a lucid and engaging account of how the human body evolved over millions of years, even as it shows how the increasing disparity between the jumble of adaptations in our Stone Age bodies and advancements in the modern world is occasioning this paradox: greater longevity but increased chronic disease.

The Story of the Human Body brilliantly illuminates as never before the major transformations that contributed key adaptations to the body: the rise of bipedalism; the shift to a non-fruit-based diet; the advent of hunting and gathering, leading to our superlative endurance athleticism; the development of a very large brain; and the incipience of cultural proficiencies. Lieberman also elucidates how cultural evolution differs from biological evolution, and how our bodies were further transformed during the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions.

While these ongoing changes have brought about many benefits, they have also created conditions to which our bodies are not entirely adapted, Lieberman argues, resulting in the growing incidence of obesity and new but avoidable diseases, such as type 2 diabetes. Lieberman proposes that many of these chronic illnesses persist and in some cases are intensifying because of “dysevolution,” a pernicious dynamic whereby only the symptoms rather than the causes of these maladies are treated. And finally—provocatively—he advocates the use of evolutionary information to help nudge, push, and sometimes even compel us to create a more salubrious environment.

Scopes Reenactment Road Trip

July 19 Saturday 2:30 pm

107 Main Street Dayton , TN

<https://tickets.ccplayhouse.com/public/>

Cost \$24 adult \$17 Senior_

There are not many tickets left.

RET Third Sunday Meeting

July 20 Sunday 10:30 p.m. – 12:30 pm

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex

Higgs Boson

Video featuring Caltech physicist and acclaimed writer Sean Carroll

The historic discovery of the Higgs boson is on a par with the splitting of the atom. The key to understanding why mass exists has been found. In this lecture, Caltech physicist and acclaimed writer Sean Carroll takes you behind the scenes of the Large Hadron Collider at CERN to meet the scientists and explain this landmark event. What is so special about the Higgs boson? We didn't really know for sure if anything at the subatomic level had any mass at all until we found it. The fact is, while we have now essentially solved the mass puzzle, there are things we didn't predict and possibilities we haven't yet dreamed. A doorway is opening into the mind boggling, somewhat frightening world of dark matter. We only discovered the electron just over a hundred years ago and considering where that took us—from nuclear energy to quantum computing—the inventions that will result from the Higgs discovery will be world-changing.

Game Day

July 20 Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 pm

Community Room, EarthFare Grocery, Turkey Creek

Purchase snacks, meal, desert, drink. (No outside food allowed.)

Movie Night

July 25 Friday 6:00 pm

"Tuck Everlasting"

Rated on Amazon 4 1/2 stars out of 5, "The point of the movie is, what it would be like to live forever? Would it be worth it? Or would it be better to "just live"? This movie will make you taste life more and see things differently."

Please bring snacks or finger foods to eat during the movie. 1109 Venice Road, 865-690-7687.

RET Reflections Meeting

July 27 Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 pm

Potluck Lunch
Topic to be announced
26th.

Book Club

Time for new suggestions

Joan has passed the Book Club baton to me, Bob Morris, and I am filling some tough shoes! Many thanks to her for her leadership and the training wheels she has offered to get me going.

My first official duty is to collect a book list to select the next batch. So, I would appreciate if the members of RET would send me a selection of books so I can prepare the ballot for the usual voting. Please send me the list by July 20, 2014. Send to rmorris126@comcast.net

Thank You Joan for all the years of successful book club activities!

Camp Quest Seeks Your Support

We have a website that will take you less than a minute to make your donation. Please be one of the RETers who helps us meet our goal.

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/camp-quest-smoky-mountains-campership-fund>

Dave Buck, PhD

President, Board of Directors, Camp Quest Smoky Mountains <http://www.cqsmokymountains.org/>

A 19th Century Poet Questions the Deity

IF GOD IS INFINITELY GOOD ...

Percy Bysshe Shelley

(Excerpted from "The Necessity of Atheism".) via "Pique" July 2014

If [God] is infinitely good, what reason should we have to fear him? If he is infinitely wise, why should we have doubts concerning our future? If he knows all, why warn him of our needs and fatigue him with our prayers? If he is everywhere, why erect temples to him? If he is just, why fear that he will punish the creatures that he has filled with weaknesses? If grace does everything for them, what reason would he have for recompensing them? If he is all-powerful, how offend him, how resist him? If he is reasonable, how can he be angry at the blind, to whom he has given the liberty of being unreasonable? If he is immovable, by what right do we pretend to make him change his decrees? If he is inconceivable why occupy ourselves with him? If he has spoken, why is the universe not convinced?

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.

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