

Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter

January 2015
Edited by Carl Ledendecker

First Sunday Meeting

Happy New Year 2015 C.E.

January 4 Sunday 10:30 - 12:30

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex

**"The American Dream: Its Promises and Problems"
Presentation by Homer Wilkins**

The phenomenon of the "American Dream" was evidently not given a name until 1931, when James Truslow Adams used the term many times in his book entitled "The Epic of America". However, it has been a driving force in the development of this country ever since the first settlements were established by Europeans in what became the USA. The talk will focus on some of the positive and negative implications of the "Dream," its effect on my own life, and my my concern over some of the adverse consequences of the "Dream."

The RET Skeptic Book Club

January 11 Sunday 2:00 – 4:00 pm Note: This is a new time.

Location: Barnes and Noble Booksellers on Kingston Pike.

**"How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee"
by Bart D. Ehrman**

New York Times bestselling author and Bible expert Bart Ehrman reveals how Jesus's divinity became dogma in the first few centuries of the early church.

The claim at the heart of the Christian faith is that Jesus of Nazareth was, and is, God. But this is not what the original disciples believed during Jesus's lifetime—and it is not what Jesus claimed about himself. *How Jesus Became God* tells the story of an idea that shaped Christianity, and of the evolution of a belief that looked very different in the fourth century than it did in the first.

A master explainer of Christian history, texts, and traditions, Ehrman reveals how an apocalyptic prophet from the backwaters of rural Galilee crucified for crimes against the state came to be thought of as equal with the one God Almighty, Creator of all things. But how did he move from being a Jewish prophet to being God? In a book that took eight years to research and write, Ehrman sketches Jesus's transformation from a human prophet to the Son of God exalted to divine status at his resurrection. Only when some of Jesus's followers had visions of him after his death—alive again—did anyone come to think that he, the prophet from Galilee, had become God. And what they meant by that was not at all what people mean today.

Written for secular historians of religion and believers alike, *How Jesus Became God* will engage anyone interested in the historical developments that led to the affirmation at the heart of Christianity: Jesus was, and is, God. (Amazon Review)

RET Highway Clean-up

January 17 Saturday 1:00 p.m.

Lovell Road Burger King off Pellissippi Parkway

Everyone should wear sturdy shoes, a hat/visor for shade, sunglasses and sunscreen. Bring gloves if you can. We should finish by 3:00 or 3:30.

Rain/snow date 01-31-2015

RET Third Sunday Meeting

January 18 Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Auditorium

Professor John Nolt of the University of Tennessee Philosophy Department

Professor Nolt will present a talk based on his recent book "Environmental Ethics for the Long Term". This presentation on environmental ethics will consider both contemporary issues and the extent of humanity's responsibility for life in the distant future. Professor Nolt, is a logician and environmental ethicist. He applies contemporary science, logical analysis, and ethical theory to considerations of ethics beyond the human species and into the far future. Informed by contemporary environmental science, he formulates concrete policy recommendations from carefully justified ethical principles and from speculations concerning the deepest problems of environmental ethics.

RET Reflections Meeting

January 25 Sunday 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Schera Chadwick & Ted Lollis

9219 George Williams Road, 37922;

Topic: TBA

Potluck meeting - call 865.690.8742 for directions.

During this meeting we will discuss the frequency of meetings for 2015, ask for volunteer hosts/hostesses, consider slightly modifying the time of the meetings, and welcome topic suggestions of all kinds.

Our Topic for this first meeting will be announced during the month of January and email reminders will be sent also. If you have questions or would like to volunteer in any way, please contact Schera Chadwick at 865.690.8742.

Rationalists of East Tennessee Annual Meeting

February 1 Sunday 10:30 - 12:30

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex

The annual RET business meeting will be held on February 1, 2015 at 10:30 AM in the Cafeteria Annex of the Goins Administration Building at Pellissippi State Community College. At this meeting board members and officers will be elected for the coming year. There will be some reports on the past year and discussion about member suggestions for next year.

Please contact Aleta Ledendecker (aledendecker@me.com or 865-982-8687) if you are interested in being on the board. Officer nominees must have served on the board for at least one year (at any time in the past).

Nominations can also be made at the meeting.

Remember you have to be a paid member to vote or serve on the Board, so pay your dues before or (at the meeting) the meeting if you haven't done so for 2014.

We will elect officers and board members at this annual meeting.

At the time of this newsletter publication we have no candidate for President.

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

Book Club List

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

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

In Knoxville: Comcast Channel 12 Charter Channel 6
Surrounding areas: 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 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 or Joe Barnhart at tempolark@hotmail.com

Scalia!

Our Supreme Court Justice justifies the death penalty by quoting Romans 13:1-3. In case you don’t recall the details here it is: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.”

I wish serious damnation would occur to those who resisteth the fundamental concepts of the Constitution.

Source: The American Rationalist Nov./Dec. 2014 p. 5

New Book by Victor Stenger (deceased 2014)

God and the Multiverse: Humanity's Expanding View of the Cosmos. It is primarily about the a thorough history of the history of Cosmology.

Mr. Hobby Lobby

Perhaps “he” is not your favorite “person” but Mr. Hobby Lobby wants to build a Bible Museum near the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Wonder how accurate the content will be?

A UFO Religion Does Good

The Association of Raëlian Scientists has done a DNA test comparing consecrated and unconsecrated wafers. The surprising results were that there was no difference. No human DNA was found after the transubstantiation occurred.

The founder of the Raëlian Movement was abducted and educated by aliens in 1973. He is now known as Raëlian. Originally he was an auto-racing journalist.

The basic tenets of the religion are ET based intelligent design, sexual liberation, and science. Editor's note: Interestingly some form of “sexual liberation” is often a part of new male generated religions.

Source: The Secular Humanist Bulletin, Winter 2014/15 p. 2

Other Events of Note

Sunday Assembly Knoxville, Jan. 25 (Date subject to change because of remodeling of location), Charles Towne Landing HOA Club House 11:00 am.

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

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@att.net. The decision to include the submission is at the discretion of the current editor (me), but I am not all that picky.