

Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter

January 2016

Happy change in the last digit of the year!

First Sunday Meeting

January 3 Sunday 10:30 - 12:30

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex

To start the New Year we will be discussing two very interesting articles from "Free Inquiry" (Dec. 2015/Jan. 2016).

One is "Humanism: Creating Hope" by Ronald Lindsay

This article addresses the the religious claim to a monopoly on hope and the lack of hope for Atheists.

The other is: Anti-Muslim Bigotry vs. Genuine Criticism of Islam by Faisal Saeed Al Mutar

We can decide which to do first at the meeting. We may consider extending the Islam discussion by discussing Christian parallels.

Discussion points and some supplemental material will be provided.

[Get Directions](#)

The RET Skeptic Book Club

January 10 Sunday 2:00 – 4:00 pm

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

The book for our January 10th meeting is “Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence” by Christian Apologist Karen Armstrong.

While many historians have looked at violence in connection with particular religious manifestations (jihad in Islam or Christianity's Crusades), Armstrong looks at each faith —not only Christianity and Islam, but also Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Judaism—in its totality over time. As she describes, each arose in an agrarian society with plenty powerful landowners brutalizing peasants while also warring among themselves over land, then the only real source of wealth. In this world, religion was not the discrete and personal matter it would become for us but rather something that permeated all aspects of society. And so it was that agrarian aggression, and the warrior ethos it begot, became bound up with observances of the sacred.

In each tradition, however, a counterbalance to the warrior code also developed. Around sages, prophets, and mystics there grew up communities protesting the injustice and bloodshed endemic to agrarian society, the violence to which religion had become heir. And so by the time the great confessional faiths came of age, all understood themselves as ultimately devoted to peace, equality, and reconciliation, whatever the acts of violence perpetrated in their name.

RET Third Sunday Meeting

January 17 Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Auditorium

Dr. Bronson Messer will discuss the needs for numerical computing to advance science in the context of the Titan facility at Oak Ridge National Laboratory

[Get Directions](#)

RET Reflections Meeting

January 24 Sunday 1:00 p.m.

At Ted and Schera's 9219 George Williams Road, Knoxville 37922

To be announced later.

Directions: 865 690-8742

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Highway clean-up

January 16 Saturday 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Location: Start at Lovell Road Burger King Pellissippi Parkway

Come help beautify or at least improve the view.

We will meet at the Lovell Road Burger King off of Pellissippi Parkway.

Dress appropriately: gloves, hats, good shoes and (if you have one) a picker-upper of some kind.

Orange or green vests and bags will be provided.

The rain date will be the 23rd.

RET Annual Meeting

February 7th 2016

Be sure your dues are paid!

It will be here before you know it. We are looking for board members and officers. Please let a board member know if you would like to help RET move forward by joining the board.

This is also when any bylaws changes are voted on and the future of RET is discussed by the membership. (Bylaws changes require a thirty days advanced notice to the membership.)

Copies of the proposed changes will be sent out separately by Jan 7.

RET/ASK Freethought Forum TV

Tuesdays 5:00 – 6:00 pm

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. 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

January - This month's theme is to be announced

New location: The International at 940 Blackstock Ave., Knoxville, TN

New Time: 10:30 AM

For other SA activities go top <http://knoxville-tn.sundayassembly.com> and click on "Calendar."

Email: saknoxville@gmail.com

Website: <http://knoxville-tn.sundayassembly.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sunday-Assembly-Knoxville/595906073848559>

Meetup: <http://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly-Knoxville/>

American Humanist 75th Anniversary Conference

May 26-29, 2016 Chicago conference.americanhumanist.org

Reason Rally 2 Washington DC June 4, 2016

RET's New Web Site and Wild Apricot

How to set up you new password and log in. Don't forget to enter you information into the RET Directory (viewable by members only and customizable by you so people see only what you want them to.

TO LOG IN

Go to Rationalists.org. There , just above The Thinkers head, you will see a "Login" button. That's right, click on it. Use the email address that is already associated with RET contacts and mailings and click on "Forgot Password". There you will enter the email address and Captcha code. From there follow the directions.

A bit late but still worth reading (Text from an old Calvin & Hobbs comic strip.)

Calvin to Hobbs: This whole Santa Claus thing just doesn't make sense.

Why all the secrecy? Why all the mystery? If the guy exists, why doesn't he ever show himself and prove it?

And if he **doesn't** exist, what is the meaning of all this?

Hobbs: I dunno... Isn't this a religious holiday?

Calvin: Yeah, but I've got the same questions about God.

The wrath of God?

"A woman in Phoenix is under arrest after telling police she shot and killed an atheist for not believing in God.

Later Braxton told police detectives the victim on the sofa was 'a shrine from God,' and that her victim had been shot in the eye for 'not believing in her God.'"

See more at: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/progressivesecularhumanist/2015/12/arizona-woman-shoots-and-kills-atheist-for-not-believing-in-god/#sthash.VD94qDL4.dpuf>

The Power of God?

"Sabrina Lowe, of Rowlett, Texas claims her Christian faith gave her the power to turn a tornado away from her home. Lowe explained to [NPR](#) what she and other family members did when they heard the tornado approaching Saturday:

We actually went outside and started commanding the winds, because God had given us authority over the winds, the airways. And we just began to command this storm not to hit our area. We spoke to the storm and said, 'Go to unpopulated places.' It did exactly what we said to do, because God gave us the authority to do that.

Note: The tornado went on to kill and destroy others. Apparently God did not hear the "unpopulated" part."

See more at: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/progressivesecularhumanist/2015/12/christian-claims-she-diverted-texas-tornado-because-god/#sthash.cXwsDt0K.dpuf>

Here is a link to Neil deGrasse Tyson reading his version of the Gettysburg Address.

<https://www.gatesnotes.com/About-Bill-Gates/Neil-deGrasse-Tyson-Gettysburg>

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