

Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter

April 2015
Edited by Carl Ledendecker

First Sunday Meeting

April 5 Sunday 10:30 - 12:30

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex

RET member Alan England will present a talk titled "Observations and Reflections on Living in Korea from 1999-2011. Alan will provide a brief survey of Korean culture, education, religion, life style, language, politics, technology, and other aspects of Korean society experienced during his 13 years of residence. Mention will be made of some updates in the last three years since he returned to the US.

Adopt-a-Highway

April 11 Saturday 1:00 PM

The next RET Adopt a Highway trash pickup will take place on Saturday, April 11 at 1:00 pm. Meet at the Burger King restaurant on the northeast corner of Lovell Road and Pellissippi parkway.

Remember gloves, sunscreen, hat and a picker-upper. Rain date: April 18

The RET Skeptic Book Club

April 12 Sunday 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Note: This is a new time AND LOCATION.

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

“A Troublesome Inheritance: Genes, Race and Human History” by Nicholas Wade

Fewer ideas have been more toxic or harmful than the idea of the biological reality of race, and with it the idea that humans of different races are biologically different from one another. For this understandable reason, the idea has been banished from polite

academic conversation. Arguing that race is more than just a social construct can get a scholar run out of town, or at least off campus, on a rail. Human evolution, the consensus view insists, ended in prehistory.

Inconveniently, as Nicholas Wade argues in *A Troublesome Inheritance*, the consensus view cannot be right. And in fact, we know that populations have changed in the past few thousand years—to be lactose tolerant, for example, and to survive at high altitudes. Race is not a bright-line distinction; by definition it means that the more human populations are kept apart, the more they evolve their own distinct traits under the selective pressure known as Darwinian evolution. For many thousands of years, most human populations stayed where they were and grew distinct, not just in outward appearance but in deeper senses as well.

Wade, the longtime journalist covering genetic advances for *The New York Times*, draws widely on the work of scientists who have made crucial breakthroughs in establishing the reality of recent human evolution. (Amazon Review)

RET Third Sunday Meeting

April 19 Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Auditorium

Professor Bruce MacLennan of the University of Tennessee will present a talk based on his recent book titled "The Wisdom of Hypatia". Hypatia was one of the most famous philosophers of the ancient world. The mix of classical philosophies she taught to Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the fourth century forms the very foundation of Western spirituality as we know it today. *The Wisdom of Hypatia* is a hands-on guide to using the principles of philosophy to bring purpose, tranquility, and spiritual depth to your life. To the ancients, philosophy was a spiritual practice meant to help the seeker achieve a good life and maintain mental tranquility. Bruce J. MacLennan, PhD, provides a concise history of philosophy up to Hypatia's time and a progressive program of spiritual practice based on her teachings. Explore the three most important philosophical schools of the Hellenistic Age. Discover the techniques described in the historical sources, and put into practice the profound insights of the world's greatest minds.

RET Reflections Meeting

May 24 Sunday 1:00 a.m. Note this is MAY - No meeting in April

Schera Chadwick & Ted Lollis

9219 George Williams Road, 37922;

Topic: Education

Reflections will be every other month.

May 24 July 26th Sept. 27th Nov. 22nd

If anyone wants to have a Reflections meeting at their home, on the “off month” please contact Schera Chadwick at 865.690.8742 and Carl Ledendecker at 982-8687.

Book Club List

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 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 Joe Barnhart at tempolark@hotmail.com



We may finally actually have a billboard!
Watch for it April 6 on Kingston Pike - Bearden

After a decade of attempts our new President Larry Rhodes made an end run around the local Lamar billboard office and success. Donations to expand this effort would be great. How about Lenoir City?

First RET Secular Invocation

RET has begun testing the willingness of local government bodies to allow the Supreme Court ruling requiring invocations of any type. On April 23 Aleta Ledendecker delivered a brief invocation with no religious references. She thanked the Lenoir City Council members for their service and asked them to respect all in an increasingly diverse population. The reaction to this radical proposal was the immediate delivery of two very Christian prayers. (The God version of the Pledge was sandwiched in-between them.)

As I stated in my letter to the Knoxville News Sentinel, “That night, the officials of Lenoir City demonstrated that non-Christians could not have even one minute of respect by that governing body. The message was very clear: "If you are not a Christian you are not an equal citizen. The Lenoir City government will not allow you even one meeting that is solely about governing for all.” Carl

Freedom From Religion Foundation action in TN

“An evangelist known as ‘Bible Man’ will no longer be permitted to lead religious classes at Coalmont Elementary School in Altamont, Tenn., after the Freedom From Religion Foundation lodged a complaint with the Grundy County Department of Education.”

Note, some quotes are from works of fiction so the ideas many not reflect the author's views.

Quote 1

Anonymous

“Blind faith is an ironic gift to return to the creator of human intelligence.”

Quote 2

Samuel Butler

“If God wants us to do a thing he should make his wishes sufficiently clear. Sensible people will wait till he has done this before paying much attention to him”

Quote 3

Christopher Marlowe

“Religion hides many mischiefs from suspicion .”

Quote 4

Peter O'Toole

“Question: How do you know you're God?”
Answer: Simple. When I pray to him, I find I'm talking to myself.”

Quote 5

Ferdinand Magellan

“The church says the earth is flat, but I know that it is round, for I have seen the shadow on the moon, and I have more faith in a shadow than in the church.”

This is bad according to Christian News

<http://christiannews.net/2015/03/16/humanists-seek-to-honor-scopes-monkey-trial-evolutionist-with-statue-in-courthouse-lawn/>

Excerpts: (Referencing American Humanist Association actions)

“Now, the humanist organization is supporting an effort to erect a statue of Clarence Darrow on the grounds of the Rhea County Courthouse in Dayton, Tennessee. The courthouse is where Darrow famously defended the teaching of evolution in the Scopes ‘Monkey’ Trial of 1925.”

“Sculptors Zeno and Rosalie Frudakis first proposed the statue idea, and the AHA is now raising funds for the project.”

“Over the course of the trial, Darrow repeatedly attacked the Bible’s reliability.”

“ ‘Much of Darrow’s effort at the trial amounted to a caustic diatribe against the Bible and Christianity,’ wrote Ken Ham and Dr. David Menton in an article on the Answers in Genesis website. ‘His anti-Christian hostility was so intense that there was fear on the part of liberal theologians and organizations that supported his evolutionary views that he might turn popular opinion against them. Darrow even turned his anger and hostility against Judge John T. Raulston by repeatedly interrupting and insulting him, for which he was cited for contempt of court.’ ” (*Fact check anyone?*)

“If the AHA’s fundraising efforts are successful, then Darrow will be memorialized with a statue on the very courthouse lawn where the Scopes trial took place 90 years ago. Proponents of the project argue that placing a statue of Darrow on the courthouse lawn would be fair, as there is already a statue of Bryan on the lawn. However, many Christians argue that Darrow’s legacy is not one of civil liberties or scientific progress, but rather secular immorality and evolutionary indoctrination.”

Other Events of Note

Atheist Society of Knoxville

meetup.com Then Click “Find a Meetup group” and type in ASK or Atheist Society of Knoxville

Regular activity: Brews at Barley’s every Tuesday around 5:30 PM

Sunday Assembly Knoxville

April 26 - This month’s theme is “Spring.” Charles Towne Landing HOA Club House 11:00 am.

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

Live Better, Help Often, Wonder More

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

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

Center for Inquiry Conference, Amherst, NY, June 11-15, at the Marriott Hotel Buffalo Niagara

Richard Dawkins, Rebeca Goldstein and Susan Jacoby will be speakers.

Atheist Alliance of America conference in Atlanta on October 15 -18

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

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.