

Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter

May 2015
Edited by Carl Ledendecker

Annual Public Lecture

May 2 Saturday 1:00 - 2:30

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Building, Cafeteria Annex

Humanist author Dale McGowan will present the RET annual public lecture Saturday, May 2, at 1:00 pm in the Goins Auditorium of Pellissippi State Community College, Hardin Valley Road, Knoxville. His talk is titled "Twenty Things I Learned About Atheism that Most Atheists Don't Even Know".

This will be an entertaining talk based on his book "Atheism for Dummies". He notes "If the sentence 'Atheists Don't Believe in God' captures everything there is to know about the subject, then the Grand Canyon is just a big hole in Arizona. Join us as he reveals twenty surprising things he learned about atheism while researching the book.

Dale is an author and editor of several books including "Parenting Beyond Belief", "Raising Freethinkers", and "Atheism For Dummies". His most recent title, "In Faith and In Doubt", is the first on marriages between religious believers and nonbelievers. Dale is also the founding Executive Director of Foundation Beyond Belief, a humanist charitable and service organization, and content development manager for Patheos, the world's largest website exploring questions from religious and nonreligious perspectives. He was named Harvard Humanist of the Year in 2008. Dale lives with his family near Atlanta.

For further information, visit his web site <http://dalemcgowan.com/>.

Note:

There will be a Pot Luck dinner for Dale McGowan on May 1 at 6:30.

The gathering will take at the home of Phil and Sharon King, 1109 Venice Road, Knoxville, TN 3793-2048. Call 865-690-7687 if you need directions. Please bring your favorite party dish and join us for a night of good food and good conversation with good friends.

First Sunday Meeting Annual lecture instead on Saturday

NO MEETING

May 3 Sunday 10:30 - 12:30

National Day of Reason Picnic

May 7 Thursday 4:00

Tyson Park

2351 Kingston Pike, Knoxville TN.

Meet at the Shelter #1 which is the closest to the street on which we can park.

We had a great time last year. Again RET will provide a bag(s) of charcoal. Bring something to grill and your favorite side dishes / deserts to share.

There are playgrounds near by for kids of all ages but I do not remember exactly what the facilities provide. I hope they will be entertaining for youngsters. (Last years place did not have good playground support.)

If you have them, bring a frisbee or badminton net and rackets.

Start time is 4:00 PM but I (Lee Erickson) will have to balance my availability against my work demands. I plan to bring charcoal, but it would be good if someone else could do so too as a back up.

Is anyone interested in donating blood that day?

We could meet at the Medic Blood Center at 1601 Ailor Avenue Northwest, Knoxville, TN 37921 at say 3:00 PM.

The RET Skeptic Book Club

May 10 Sunday 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Note: This is a new time AND LOCATION.

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

“Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead” by Sheryl Sandberg

Thirty years after women became 50 percent of the college graduates in the United States, men still hold the vast majority of leadership positions in government and industry. This means that women’s voices are still not heard equally in the decisions that most affect our lives. In *Lean In*, Sheryl Sandberg examines why women’s progress in achieving leadership roles has stalled, explains the root causes, and offers compelling, commonsense solutions that can empower women to achieve their full potential.

Sandberg is the chief operating officer of Facebook and is ranked on Fortune’s list of the 50 Most Powerful Women in Business and as one of Time’s 100 Most Influential People in the World. In 2010, she gave an electrifying TEDTalk in which she described how women unintentionally hold themselves back in their careers. Her talk, which became a phenomenon and has been viewed more than two million times, encouraged women to “sit at the table,” seek challenges, take risks, and pursue their goals with gusto.

In *Lean In*, Sandberg digs deeper into these issues, combining personal anecdotes, hard data, and compelling research to cut through the layers of ambiguity and bias surrounding the lives and choices of working women. She recounts her own decisions, mistakes, and daily struggles to make the right choices for herself, her career, and her family. She provides practical advice on negotiation techniques, mentorship, and building a satisfying career, urging women to set boundaries and to abandon the myth of “having it all.” She describes specific steps women can take to combine professional achievement with personal fulfillment and demonstrates how men can benefit by supporting women in the workplace and at home.

Written with both humor and wisdom, Sandberg’s book is an inspiring call to action and a blueprint for individual growth. *Lean In* is destined to change the conversation from what women can’t do to what they can

Amazon Description

Time for new submissions

Please submit suggestion to rmorris126@comcast.com

Books are traditionally nonfiction and not overly technical. If you suggest a book and it is selected please volunteer to lead the discussion (not required but very helpful).

Book Club List

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 Third Sunday Meeting

May 17 Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Auditorium

**Dr. Charles Omarzu of RET will present a talk on
"The Design of Experiments on Living Things"**

The design of experiments on living things has a wide range of applications - from education to psychology and sociology, and to bio-medical research. The core principles of these designs can be explained in a non-technical way so that they are understandable to a broad audience. This should allow interested parties to critically evaluate research findings and claims made for the value of various treatments and equipment. For this presentation, an interactive approach will be used to help the audience reason its way through testing for various threats to the validity of the experiment. An attempt will be made to provide easy and interesting examples as well as some useful background information. The goal will be to reach the "gold standard" of such designs, which is used, for example, by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) as its protocol for testing. Some information may also be presented on claims which have yet to meet this standard.

RET Reflections Meeting

May 24 Sunday 1:00 a.m.

Schera Chadwick & Ted Lollis
Topic: Education

9219 George Williams Road, 37922;

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.

Tokay Second Memorial Day Backyard Olympics

Monday, May 25, 2015 3:00 PM to Dark Thirty

Limited to those 2 to 102 years old

No skill required

Fun loving people of all ages can compete in all events. Past events included: The Nerf Ball Put, The Javelin Straw Throw, The Cross Country Tricycle Race, Sidewalk Art, and The Watermelon Spit!

Just bring your own meat for the grill, and a side dish for six people (single guys bring chips) Buns, condiments, and drinks will be provided. Tokay Olympic Medals will be awarded!

Please RSVP to Steve and Carol Tokay at 691-6816. The location is 8905 Garrison Drive, Knoxville TN 37931.

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



Relocated but still standing Want more?

Contribute to RET and tag money to be for Billboards

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

Second RET Secular Invocation

Lenoir City Council was the first. Next will be May 18 at 5:00 PM at the Clinton City Council.

Ever Wonder About Magick verses Magic?

“For those who are new to esoteric exploration, you may be surprised to know that there are actually two very different applications/understanding of magic. There is magic, which is based off the art of illusion (aka: the rabbit in the hat) or stage performance. Then there is “magick,” popularized by Aleister Crowley’s Thelema, which is centered around the occult practice of using ritual and ceremony to manipulate matter in conjunction with intention. Crowley defined magick specifically as ‘The Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.’ ”

Justification is thus:

“As we are entering the age of information, it seems as though the gap between spirit and science is becoming smaller and smaller. Max Planck, the founding father of quantum theory, once stated: ‘All

matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent Mind. This Mind is the matrix of all matter.’ ”

To clarify:

“Magic is illusion being met with result, and magick is intention being met with matter adjusting to will. While superficially seeming one and the same, intrinsically they are very different.”

Got it?

If not try some magick.

Excerpts from: <http://www.collective-evolution.com/2015/04/27/the-difference-between-magic-magick/>

The Difference Between Magic & Magick April 27, 2015 by Jennifer Sodini.

**Note, some quotes are from works of fiction so the ideas may not reflect the author’s views.
Source: “The Atheist’s Bible” Edited by Joan Konner**

Quote 1

John Adams

“Mystery [the Divinity of Christ] is made a convenient cover for absurdity.”

Quote 2

Benjamin Franklin

“Every other sect suppos[es] itself in possession of all truth, and those who differ are so far in the wrong; like a man traveling in foggy weather, those at some distance before him on the road he sees wrapped up in the fog, as well as those behind him, and also the people in the fields on either side, but near him all appears clear, tho’ in truth his as much in the fog as any of them.”

Quote 3

Fredrick Douglas

“I prayed for my freedom twenty years but received no answer until I prayed with my legs.”

Quote 4

Barry Goldwater

“Frankly I am sick and tired of the political preachers across this country telling me as a citizen that if I want to be a moral person, I must believe in ‘A,’ ‘B,’ ‘C,’ and ‘D.’ Just who do they think they are? And from where do they presume to claim the right to dictate their moral beliefs to me? And I am even more angry as a legislator who must endure the threats of every religion group who thinks it has some God-granted right to control my every roll call in the Senate. I am warning them today: ‘I will fight them every step of the way if they try to dictate their moral convictions to all American in the name of ‘conservatism’.”

Interesting Sounding Books

While searching for the book “Sapiens” using the incorrect search term “species” I discovered several interesting sounding book titles. I have begun reading “Sapiens” and it is long but very interesting.

These are NOT recommendations but interesting sounding possibilities.

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind
by Yuval Noah Harari

One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America
by Kevin M. Kruse

The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism Is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically
Apr 7, 2015
by Peter Singer

The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail--but Some Don't
by Nate Silver

The Moral Arc: How Science and Reason Lead Humanity toward Truth, Justice, and Freedom
by Michael Shermer

Stuffocation: Why We've Had Enough of Stuff and Need Experience More Than Ever
by James Wallman

Toms River: A Story of Science and Salvation by Dan Fagin

Madison's Music: On Reading the First Amendment by Burt Neuborne

Arrival of the Fittest: Solving Evolution's Greatest Puzzle by Andreas Wagner

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

May 24 - This month’s theme is “Imagination.” 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/>

PAST :**American Atheists** National convention in Memphis, TN April 2-5.

Was fun and “inspirational”!

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

Lake Hypatia Advance July 4 - Canceled

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.