

# Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter

July 2015  
Edited by Carl Ledendecker

## **Smoky Mountain Freethought Advance! (not “Retreat”)**

**July 3rd and 4th Friday & Saturday (Also a Sunday morning hike)**

**Tremont Lodge and Resort, 7726 E Lamar Alexander Parkway, Townsend, TN**

The Rationalists of East Tennessee is holding a Freethought event in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, in Townsend, TN, July 3 and 4th. The cost is \$120/person (children under 18 are free). Lodging and Advance are at **Tremont Lodge and Resort**, 7726 E Lamar Alexander Parkway, Townsend, TN 37882-4039 (865) 448-3200 or (844) 448-3200 with a 10% discount if RET is mentioned as the Group.

There is a stunning list of speakers including [Shulem Deen](#) as the Keynote on Saturday, plus there will be the traditional "Freethought Jeopardy" and even fireworks.

**Sixty dollar (\$60) one day registration is now available!**

**You can still sign up for the entire event during registration July 3, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. (Meals sign-up at the lodge are now closed but lunch will be available during registration and there are many places to find food in Townsend.)**

For details and registration form, [click here](#).

For more information contact Aleta Ledendecker at [aledendecker@me.com](mailto:aledendecker@me.com).

Sunday morning hike: 9:00 AM Contact Aleta for details.

## **First Sunday Meeting**

**July 5 Sunday As usual, there will be no first Sunday meeting July 4th weekend**

## Adopt-a-Highway

**July 11 Saturday 5:30 PM**

**NOTE the evening time change!**

The next RET Adopt a Highway trash pickup will meet at the Burger King restaurant on the northeast corner of Lovell Road and Pellissippi parkway.

The late hour is intended to avoid the midday heat. Meet at the Burger King at the intersection of Lovell Road and the Pellissippi Parkway.

Gloves, insect repellent, hat, and a picker-upper device are recommended.

Should finish by 8 or 8:30

Remember gloves, sunscreen, hat, and a picker-upper.

## The RET Skeptic Book Club

**July 12 Sunday 2:00 – 4:00 pm**

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

**House of Debt: How They (and You) Caused the Great Recession, and How We Can Prevent It from Happening Again**

**By Atif Mian and Amir Sufi.**

Great American Recession resulted in the loss of eight million jobs between 2007 and 2009. More than four million homes were lost to foreclosures. Is it a coincidence that the United States witnessed a dramatic rise in household debt in the years before the recession—that the total amount of debt for American households doubled between 2000 and 2007 to \$14 trillion? Definitely not. Armed with clear and powerful evidence, Atif Mian and Amir Sufi reveal in *House of Debt* how the Great Recession and Great Depression, as well as the current economic malaise in Europe, were caused by a large run-up in household debt followed by a significantly large drop in household spending.

Though the banking crisis captured the public's attention, Mian and Sufi argue strongly with actual data that current policy is too heavily biased toward protecting banks and creditors. Increasing the flow of credit, they show, is disastrously counterproductive when the fundamental problem is too much debt. As their research shows, excessive household

debt leads to foreclosures, causing individuals to spend less and save more. Less spending means less demand for goods, followed by declines in production and huge job losses. How do we end such a cycle? With a direct attack on debt, say Mian and Sufi. More aggressive debt forgiveness after the crash helps, but as they illustrate, we can be rid of painful bubble-and-bust episodes only if the financial system moves away from its reliance on inflexible debt contracts. As an example, they propose new mortgage contracts that are built on the principle of risk-sharing, a concept that would have prevented the housing bubble from emerging in the first place.

Could we have prevented the Great Recession and its consequences? And what actions are needed to prevent such crises going forward?

### **List of new book schedule:**

#### **August**

*Sons of Wichita: How the Koch Brothers Became America's Most Powerful and Private Dynasty* by Daniel Schulman

#### **September**

*Culture Wars: The Threat To Your Family And Your Freedom* by Marie Alena Castle

#### **October**

*Hardwiring Happiness: The New Brain Science of Contentment, Calm, and Confidence* by Rick Hanson

#### **November**

*Consciousness Explained* by Daniel Dennett

#### **December**

*Lawrence in Arabia: War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East* by Scott Anderson

#### **January**

*Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* by Karen Armstrong

#### **February**

*One Nation Under God: How Corporate American Invented Christian America* by Kevin Kruse

#### **March**

*The Second Amendment: A Biography* by Michael Waldman

## RET Third Sunday Meeting

**July 19 Sunday 10:30 a.m.**

**Pellissippi State Community College, Goins Auditorium**

**Professor Marty Carcieri will present**

**"Rawls and the Right to Die"**

Marty is an RET member now residing in California. He is also a Professor of Political Science at San Francisco State University, specializing in Public Law and Political Theory and has given some great talks to our group in the past.

Dr. Carcieri teaches undergraduate courses in Judicial Process, American Political Thought, Legal Issues, Constitutional Law, and Jurisprudence, as well as graduate seminars on the First Amendment, Separation of Powers, Judicial Process, the U.S. Drug War, and John Rawls. He has won four teaching awards, and his work has been cited in amicus curiae briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court in five landmark cases. His second book, "Applying Rawls in the 21st Century: Race, Gender, the Drug War, and the Right to Die," was published in 2015 by Palgrave MacMillan. He has written twenty-five journal articles and book chapters.

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## RET Reflections Meeting

**July 26 Sunday 1:00 p.m.**

**Reflections, July 26th, 2015 "Let's Play Scrabble"**

Not really, but let's discuss, define, defend, and play with our own opinions of some words pertinent to RET: "Antireligion, antitheism, nontheism, atheism, agnosticism, Irreligion, skepticism, free thought, non-belief, naturalism, secularism, humanism, and rationalism." And if that doesn't exhaust our thoughts, we can throw in: "Theology, Philosophy, Morality, and Sociology".

Just come prepared to discuss your concepts and understandings of any/all of the above ideas, and we'll have a fine word-game afternoon. This meeting will be at 9219 George Williams Road; call 865.690.8742 for directions. We'll have a light lunch before the discussion begins, so please bring a bottle, bag, or dish if possible (we always have plenty if that's inconvenient for you). We hope you'll join us for a Sunday afternoon of Rationalists' word-play. Schera

## 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.

In Knoxville: Comcast Channel 12 Charter Channel 6 Free streaming on [ctvknox.org](http://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](mailto:larryr@usit.net) or Lee Erickson at [forresterickson@comcast.net](mailto:forresterickson@comcast.net).

## Solstice Party Pot Luck 2015

This year's party had 59 in attendance! (If we missed you in the count, let us know.)

## Other Events of Note

### Atheist Society of Knoxville

[meetup.com](http://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 Live Better, Help Often, Wonder More

July 26 - This month's theme is "Wonder." Charles Towne Landing HOA Club House 11:00 am.

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

Email: [saknoxville@gmail.com](mailto: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/>

**Lake Hypatia Advance July 4** - See Smoky Mountain Advance above

**Freedom From Religion Foundation** convention in Madison Wisconsin on October 9 - 11

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

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If God was real, religion would not exist.

Faith would be replaced with fact and

God would speak for himself.

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“The less one knows about the universe, the easier it is to explain.”

Leon Brunschvicg

From "Daughter of Time Trilogy"

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“People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.”  
old saying

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“[Slavery] was established by decree of Almighty God...it is sanctioned in the Bible, in both Testaments, from Genesis to Revelation. ...It has existed in all ages, has been found among the people of the highest civilization, and in nations of the highest proficiency in the arts.”

Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America,  
"Inaugural Address as Provisional President of the Confederacy"

P. 170 Trusting Doubt, Tarico

Editor's Note:

The Confederate States of America was set up as a religious nation organized around state's rights (not human rights), property and slavery.

It was about privilege, religion, slavery and decentralized government. It was about an antiquated system of ethics and government.

That is the heritage of the Rebel flag. It really represents this past not American history and heroes.