



FELLOWSHIP OF REASON®

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The official newsletter of
Fellowship of Reason, Inc.

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Where are we now?

(Oratory from Sunday, June 1, 2014)

By Martin L. Cowen III

Our first FORum took place on Sunday, November 1, 1998. Today is Sunday, June 1, 2014. This FORum is our 188th consecutive FORum. We have been at this for 15 years and 8 months. Wow!

Ellen and I are the only members here today who attended that first FORum.

We have a number of charter members present who joined during the first year of the Fellowship of Reason. I see: Sally and Frank.

What I would like to do today in this brief talk is to look at where we have been and talk about where we might be going in the future.

Place

Let us remember where we have been, in terms of physical place. Our first FORum took place in a gymnasium in Marietta. We immediately moved to the Northwest Unitarian Universalist Congregation where we stayed until we got flooded out. Then we moved here to Freethought Hall. Of all our homes, I love this one the best.

Other Groups

Let us remember who shares our path. Georgia Humanists are gone. Sunday Assembly is here. Atlanta Freethought Society continues to thrive. There is a group called Black Nonbelievers in Atlanta. There are number of humanist and atheist Meetup groups meeting in the Atlanta area these days. There is something called Atlanta Coalition of Reason. Atlanta CoR has a startup event on

Where are we now?

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Sunday, June 22, 2014, at 7 p.m. right here in Atlanta Freethought Hall.

Activities

Let us remember what we do. Today—for the 188th time—we meet to celebrate human achievement. Our format has always been to invite members to present matters sacred to the presenter for enjoyment of the audience. As a consequence of the presenters' enthusiasm, the presentations are always appreciated by the audience.

We have up to 6 performers per show. A Master of Ceremonies, a Celebration of Freedom, a Celebration of Talent, a poet, an Orator, and our membership director presents her report of upcoming events. Because our Celebrations enjoy so much member participation, we have a need for many enthusiastic members. Our group has never had a guru. We have always depended upon our members for inspiration and programming.

In addition to FORum, our premier event, we currently enjoy the following twenty (20) activities:

1. FOR Sunday School on FORum Sunday before FORum
2. FOR kids program on FORum Sunday during our entire Sunday morning program
3. Lecture tapes and discussion group on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of every month
4. Saturday Nonfiction Book Club at Susan Menich's house once per month on the 3rd Saturday
5. Tuesday Fiction Book Club at Telli's house once per month on the 2nd Tuesday
6. James Joyce's *Ulysses* discussion group on the 5th Tuesday of months with 5th Tuesdays. We have been at this for years and have at least 2 years to go.
7. Poetry Club on the 4th Saturday
8. Movie night on the 4th Tuesday of every month
9. FOR Runners every Sunday, except FORum Sunday, at 8 a.m.
10. One of our members, Steve Whiteman, runs a movie club twice per month
11. During the season a number of us attend the live in HD Met

About the name "The Eudaimonist"

A eudaimonist (pronounced "yoo-DIE-mon-ist") is one who believes that the highest ethical goal is individual happiness and personal well-being. The term derives from the ancient Greek word eudaimonia, which means, roughly, "well-being."



Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the columns appearing in this newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the organization. The Fellowship of Reason, Inc speaks only through its Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, and the actions taken by the Board of Trustees as a board and recorded in the minutes of the corporation.

Fellowship of Reason, Inc.**Mission Statement**

The Fellowship of Reason® is dedicated to the personal flourishing of our members through reason.

Fellowship of Reason, Inc. is a Georgia nonprofit corporation and a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation

Fellowship of Reason

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info@fellowshipofreason.com

Where are we now?*(continued from page 2)*

- Opera broadcasts at the I-85 North Regal 24. There are 10 live broadcasts in the 2014-2015 season
12. FOR Pub on the 4th Wednesday of every month
 13. FOR Potluck when we have a volunteer. We have volunteers this summer in June and August at Ron and Susan Menich's home
 14. We have an occasional newsletter called *The Eudaimonist*
 15. We have an active Meetup site
 16. We have a weekly e-mail newsletter called the FORcast
 17. We have a website at fellowshipofreason.com
 18. We have enjoyed FOR weddings
 19. We have celebrated the lives to two FOR friends
 20. We have performed a welcoming ceremony for a new born friend of FOR

[Note: Larry Woods reminded me after the speech of the last three items.]

Every Christmas for the last four years, hearty members of the Fellowship of Reason have taken the 5-mile hike from the top of Amicalola Falls to the Hike Inn (accessible only by hiking) for a pre-Christmas Day adventure to the North Georgia mountains for either one or two nights. On two night stays, we hike to and from the start of the Appalachian Trail at Springer Mountain, Georgia.

We arrange, from time to time, family friendly excursions to places like Kennesaw Mountain State Park, the Tellus Museum in Cartersville, Amicalola Falls, and Sweetwater Creek State Park in Douglas County.

In addition to our regular activities, our members—in intimate groups—have enjoyed trips to the Dolomite Mountains in Italy, Machu Picchu in Peru, Chicago, Napa Valley in California, Bloody Mountain in North Georgia and Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina.

The Future

When we created the Fellowship of Reason we anticipated that FOR would be for everyone. Now, after over 15 years of existence, I realize that this is not so. Our interests tend to the highbrow. We have three book clubs and a poetry group. We enjoy, two nights

Where are we now?

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per month, a philosophy lecture tape and discussion group. That tells us something about who we are.

What were we thinking? Of course, a fellowship of reason will necessarily be interested in philosophy and literature. After all reason is of the mind, and philosophy and literature are the premier activities of the active mind.

We are excited about our exploration of The Beautiful. I wish you all could have seen FOR Sunday school presentation this morning. Creation of that presentation involved the search for audio-visual instances of The Beautiful. Now that is a rewarding endeavor!

Our interest in The Beautiful derives from our one-year study of Aristotle's Ethics using Joe Sachs translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Professor Joe Sachs taught us that, according to Aristotle, the goal of ethics is The Beautiful. Our study of the subject led us to Kant (who was, of course, a student of Aristotle). Kant, it seems, is in agreement with this idea of the relationship between ethics and aesthetics.

Why, though, should we be interested in The Beautiful? Well, the answer is that identifying The Beautiful is sometimes easier than identifying the Good or the Moral. As members of the Fellowship of Reason, we strive to be Good, to be Moral. If we can see The Beautiful, which we claim is sometimes easier than seeing the Good, then perhaps we can enhance our ability to be Good by recognizing The Beautiful.

Our philosophy is called Eudaimonism. Our current Tuesday philosophy tape is by a Yale philosophy professor, Tamar Szabo Gendler. The current lecture is specifically about Eudaimonism. What thrill for us! Eudaimonism means well-being-ism. The goal of morality is, according to this philosophy, well-being. Given our new interest in The Beautiful, might we have to modify that to this: the goal of morality is the Beautiful? What, then, might be the relationship between well-being and The Beautiful? We shall see.

Where are we now?

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Regular membership:
\$35 per year

Contributing membership:
\$70 per Year

Lifetime membership:
\$700

Growing the Membership

For the future, we are going to have to concern ourselves with growing the membership.

One idea suggested by member Larry Woods is that the Fellowship of Reason offer an annual scholarship of \$500 to Atlanta area high school students. The scholarship would be awarded as a prize for a 2,000-word essay on a topic of our choosing. The winning candidate would have to present his essay at FORum and allow us to publish her essay in our monthly newsletter.

The virtue of such a contest would be to introduce our group to high functioning high school students, their teachers, and their parents. It is from such a group, that our organization might grow.

Again, the point of members is to provide us with fellowship and programming. We want great people as members who have something to teach us.

General advertising will not work for us because our target audience—intellectuals—is a small percentage of the population.

Room at the Top

For those who would like for the Fellowship of Reason to take other paths, that is great! We have always encouraged members to start new activities and to invite others to participate and attend. Our James Joyce class was entirely one individual's passion and we are thankful that ten FOR friends have joined us in a close reading of the most important English language novel of the 20th Century.

If you have a passion, enact it. As a member of FOR, we will publish it to our Meetup group for you. You can promote it in our FORcast and the newsletter. You can promote it here at FORum. You can promote it in all of FOR activities in which you participate.

Contact Information

To talk to somebody about Fellowship of Reason call:

Martin at 770-471-9800
Susan at 678-358-8415

Where are we now?

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Our friend Kristy Gonzales enthusiastically directed FOR kids programs until her interest turned to running Atlanta Sunday Assembly. We miss her energy!

Our friend Scott Carper created an event call FOR Epicures. We went to dinner at great Atlanta restaurants, like Kyma, a high-end Greek restaurant.

Our friend Chris Snider created an annual event call the Bozart Festival. Members brought artistic creations to an annual potluck party.

We used to have an annual FOR Christmas party with live performers until dear Vera died. We are restarting that tradition this December.

Any of these great ideas might be revived. Surely, there are many new things we might do and enjoy together.

I have been a member of a number of volunteer organizations. The one thing that I have learned about volunteer organizations is that there is always room at the top. You can be a leader of this organization simply by stepping up and creating product for us. We need you. We want you.

Conclusion

We created the Fellowship of Reason in order to enjoy the fellowship of likeminded people and to create opportunities for continuing adult education. Judging by my own pleasure, the Fellowship of Reason has been a great success. We look forward to our next 15 years and 8 months.

FOR's mission is to promote the personal flourishing of our members through reason.

Events

For detailed info on all upcoming events, visit
<http://www.meetup.com/fellowshipofreason>

Adult Sunday school at FORum: 1st Sunday 10 a.m.

Members and friends of FOR are invited to attend Adult Sunday School before FORum on the first Sunday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Atlanta Freethought Hall, located at 4775 N. Church Lane, Smyrna, GA 30080.

Martin Cowen coordinator: 678-641-9321

FORum: A Celebration of Human Achievement: First Sunday 11 a.m.

FOR's premier event. Meet and greet at 10:30 a.m. The program starts at 11 a.m. Presided over by FOR's President, members give presentations such as Celebration of Freedom and Celebration of Talent. A 15 to 20 minute Oratory on an ethical subject highlights the program. A short conversation called FORum during which audience members share their thoughts concludes the program at 12 noon sharp. We enjoy post-program conversation at local restaurant for further fellowship. Children's Program babysitter from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Martin Cowen director: 678-641-9321.

FOR Runners: Sunday 8 a.m.

We meet every Sunday morning at 8 a.m., except FORum Sundays, near Candler Park at the Flying Biscuit, 1655 McLendon Avenue Northeast, Atlanta. Breakfast at the Flying Biscuit follows at 9:15 a.m. Breakfast lovers, walkers, and joggers welcome! Martin Cowen: 678-641-9321

Taped Lectures/Discussion Group: 1st / 3rd Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.

A small group of friends listens to taped lectures in a private home on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. Free.

Sally Hull coordinator: 404-257-0454

Fiction Book Club: 2nd Tuesday 7:30 p.m.

Fifteen members and friends of FOR meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at an undisclosed location.

Sally Hull coordinator: 404-257-0454

Fiction Book Club—Saturday Edition: 2nd Saturday of even numbered months 11 a.m.

Members and friends of FOR meet at 11 a.m. on the 2nd Saturday of every EVEN month at Susan Menich's house to discuss a Literary Classic.

Remember it is potluck so bring some breakfast food or drink to share.

Susan Menich, coordinator, 770-396-0483

Poetry Club: 4th Saturday, 3:00 p.m.

Members and friends of FOR like to meet on the 4th Saturday of every month at a local coffee shop to share their enjoyment of poetry.

Trent Watkins, coordinator

Ulysses Study Group: 5th Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Potluck

Members and friends of FOR are invited to attend a years-long study group of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. We meet at Sally's house on the 5th Tuesdays of months with a 5th Tuesday.

Remember it is potluck so bring some breakfast food or drink to share. Martin Cowen: 678-641-9321

**Join us for our
next monthly
FORum:**

**4775 N. Church
Lane, S.E., Smyrna,
GA 30080**

**July 6, 2014
Sunday 11 a.m.**
(Meet, Greet at 10:30 a.m.)

**FOR Children's
Babysitter**

from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Organized Educational
Program from 10:30 a.m. to 11
a.m.

Adult Sunday school
10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Birthdays

- June 22 Chris Snider
- June 29 Allison Byrd

- July 25 David Van Mersbergen (Lifetime member)
- July 26 Steve Whiteman
- July 29 Ben Bradley
- July 31 Linda Cowen (Lifetime member)

Celebratory Announcements

Do yourself a favor and remember a good thing that happened to you this month:

Please, write it down: _____

Now do the membership of FOR, Inc. a favor by relating this fact during FORum next month!



Fellowship of Reason

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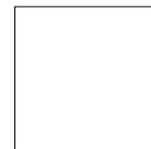
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A Reason-Based Moral
Community

FELLOWSHIP OF REASON, INC.

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We are on the Web!

See us at:

fellowshipofreason.com