

The EUDAIMONIST

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The official newsletter of
Fellowship of Reason, Inc.

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Individual Highlights

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"What is the beautiful thing to do?"



FOR's 200th Celebration

By Martin L. Cowen III

The Fellowship of Reason® enjoyed our first Celebration of Human Achievement on Sunday, November 1, 1998. On Sunday, June 7, 2015, at 11 a.m. we will Celebrate Human Achievement for the 200th consecutive time.

In this essay will examine the question of who we are now, after nearly 17 years of existence.

The essential characteristic of the Fellowship of Reason® is our profound humanism. The Wikipedia entry on Humanism opens as follows: "Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively, and generally prefers critical thinking and evidence (rationalism, empiricism) over established doctrine or faith (fideism)."

FOR recognizes that the individual is the ethical center of the universe. Protagoras (c. 490-c. 420 BCE) famously said, "Man is the measure of all things." While Protagoras' meaning is disputed (Plato interpreted the phrase to mean that there is no absolute knowledge), FOR chooses to assign the meaning, "Ethical actions are measured by the rational self-interest as a human being of the individual actor."

A metaphor we have frequently used compares an adult human being to a fountain.



As the images of the fountains displayed here, all fountains are different in size, shape, material, purpose, location, durability, etc. Each one is beautiful in its own way. Each produces a spray, a fall or a fountain of water. Each is independent, self-contained, self-justifying.

FOR's 200th Celebration (continued from page 1)



Just as millions of fountains decorate the world, some 7.3 billion sacred human beings today people the earth.

Each adult individual (other than a completely disabled person like my own son) is a producer, not usually of a glorious water spray or waterfall, but rather an endless mélange of other values.

Each adult individual is and ought to be autonomous and self-responsible. Most adult individuals have other sacred beings under their aegis, wholly or partially, for example, infant children, elderly parents, and other beneficiaries of their magnificence.



Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), the Scottish-American steel titan whose philanthropic activities included the building of 7,000 church organs, Carnegie Hall in New York City, and 2,509 public libraries, was a magnificent fountain!

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**

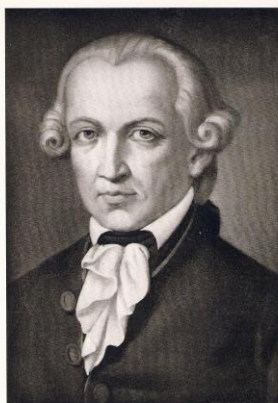
The Fellowship of Reason® is dedicated to the personal flourishing of our members through reason.

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

Fellowship of Reason

P.O. Box 28891
Atlanta, Georgia 30358
(770) 471-9800

E-mail
info@fellowshipofreason.com



IMMANUEL KANT
Painted by J. J. O. J. J.

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FOR's 200th Celebration

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The following 17th century painting by Salvator Rosa shows Protagoras on the right and the pre-Socratic philosopher Democritus (c. 460 – c. c. 370 B.C.) in the center. The painting illustrates the first meeting of Protagoras and Democritus in ancient Athens, Greece. Democritus notices the precision with which Protagoras has tied a bundle of sticks, concluding that Protagoras must be a mathematical prodigy.



Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) famous Categorical Imperative, the Third Formulation, expresses Kant's reverence for human beings (like FOR's) as follows: "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means."

FOR's 200th Celebration

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The Fellowship of Reason® holds that every person is an end in himself or herself.

FOR recognizes that human beings are the primary sources of value. Individual human beings create marvelous products. Products can be valuable as means of survival and as sources of meaning. The two categories of human activity are survival and meaning.

The Celebration of Human Achievement is the Fellowship of Reason's primary activity. Human beings create the values that enable survival and meaning, certainly two things to Celebrate, perhaps the only things.

These are our activities. Currently, we have ten activities, all listed on Meetup.com

1. FORum: A Celebration of Human Achievement

FORum is our premier activity. Our President is the master of ceremonies. She welcomes the audience and introduces the Fellowship of Reason®. Our first member-created performance is entitled Celebration of Freedom. The Fellowship of Reason® recognizes that human beings are the ethical center of the moral universe and a primary source of all value. The individual must be free in thought and action in order to create his or her values. The individual is and ought to be self-sovereign, that is he or she is and ought to be free. Freedom is the political condition in which the rule of law protects private property, including the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Next, we welcome our visitors and provide all audience members the opportunity to share a Celebratory Announcement. This announcement is a quotidian event of small or large import. Good grades, weight loss, a promotion at work are all Celebratory Announcements—individual human achievements.

We have musicians in among our membership, including many of our children. We thrill to the performances of our young pianists during Celebration of Talent—individual human achievements.

The core of our monthly FORum is oratory. Oratory is a 20-minute member created and presented speech on an ethical topic. We do not prescreen our member presentation. We find that members are often euphoric following their euphonic presentations. Preparing and performing on a subject near and dear to the speaker's heart enhance the performer's enthusiasm for the Fellowship of Reason®. (A happy performer will sometimes increase his or her membership level in celebration of his or her success.) Witnessing the performer's "peak experience" (in Abraham Maslow's (1908-1970) terms) likewise inspires the audience. We experience eudaimonia. The performance of Oratory is an individual human achievement.

We conclude the meeting with an actual forum during which audience has the opportunity to comment upon what they have heard.

Freedom is the political condition in which the rule of law protects private property, including the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

FOR's 200th Celebration

(continued from page 4)

Regular membership:
\$35 per year

Contributing membership:
\$70 per Year

Lifetime membership:
\$700

After closing quotations and a reminder of upcoming events, our President adjourns the group to a local restaurant for further fellowship over lunch.

The participation by our membership in the creation and performance of FORum is a distinguishing feature of the Fellowship of Reason®. Not only do we celebrate human achievement, we encourage, nay insist, upon individual human achievement.

Once a visitor once asked, "Is (non-participating) audience allowed?" The answer is, "Yes." However, the existence of the Fellowship of Reason® depends upon the active participation of our members and friends. FOR believes that active participation, individual human achievement, enhance personal growth and flourishing.

2. FOR Sunday school

FOR Sunday school is a member created event—an individual human achievement. Anyone can volunteer to perform FOR Sunday School. In the past, we have enjoyed months-long lecture sequences on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, on Plato's *Republic*, and on Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. These classical works are monumental individual human achievements by these great philosophers. The study of these works is an individual human achievement by the students! The introduction to an understanding of these great works leaves the teacher and students with powerful tools to evaluate the world in which we live and to flourish in that world. Currently, we are looking at beautiful artwork, such as paintings from the Hudson River School—each one a magnificent individual human achievement.

3. Taped Lecture and Discussion Group

Taped Lecture and Discussion Group is hosted by one of FOR's lifetime charter members, now for over a decade. We have listened to great lectures from various sources, most recently Open Yale Online Courses.



We particularly enjoyed a course given by Tamar Gendler, Ph.D. Dr. Gendler is the Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Yale University.

Our current course offering is *Introduction to Ancient Greek History with Donald Kagan*.

Contact Information

To talk to somebody about Fellowship of Reason call:

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

FOR's 200th Celebration

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Professor Kagan retired from Yale University in 2013. He is a historian known for his four-volume work *The Peloponnesian War*.

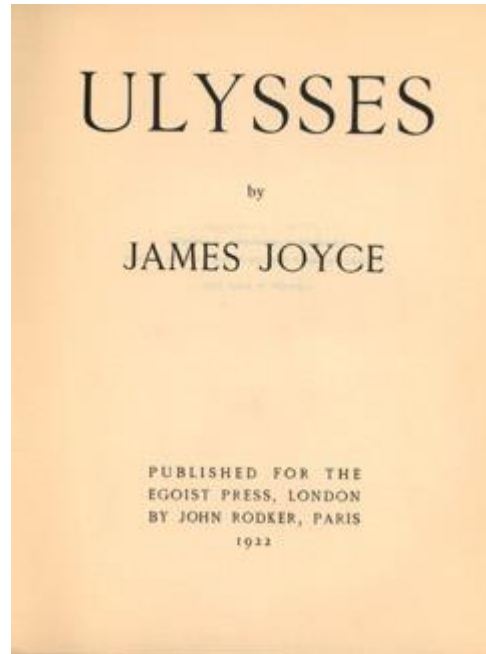
Both Professor Gendler and Professor Kagan are living giants of learning.

4. Ulysses Book Club

This year in September, we will complete an almost 4-year study of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The Board of the Modern Library regards *Ulysses* as the best novel of the 20th century. We have many "readers" among the members of the Fellowship of Reason® who wonder what makes this novel "the best," a peak individual human achievement. We are not quite finished with our reading. Three chapters (of 18) remain. We shall report after we finish the book in September. One fact is certain; James Joyce is more erudite than any person living is. Modern people are just not educated as they used to be in the 19th and early 20th centuries, though we members of the Fellowship of Reason® do our best to overcome that shortcoming.

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

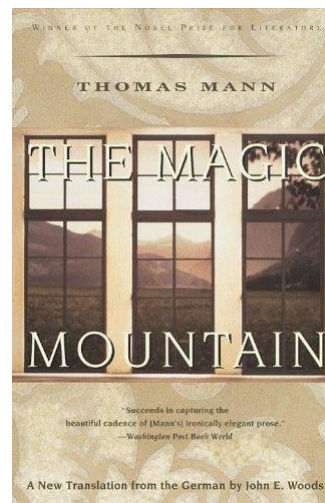
FOR's 200th Celebration (continued from page 6)



5. Fiction Book Club

There are many great works of fiction. This intimate group votes on the great works that they will study each year. They meet once a month to discuss.

One great discovery is Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, as translated by John E. Woods.



Other works by Thomas Mann:

Joseph and His Brothers: The Stories of Jacob, Young Joseph, Joseph in Egypt, Joseph the Provider, Death in Venice, Doctor Faustus: The Life of German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as told by a Friend, and Buddenbrooks: The Decline of a Family

As a consequence of this discovery, some of us have read Thomas Mann's other great books: *Joseph and His Brothers: The Stories of Jacob, Young Joseph, Joseph in Egypt, Joseph the Provider, Death in Venice, Doctor Faustus: The Life of German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as told by a Friend, and Buddenbrooks: The Decline of a Family*.

The voice of Thomas Mann is unequalled in fiction.

FOR's 200th Celebration

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6. Poetry Group

A friend of the Fellowship of Reason® leads this monthly group. They explore the beauties of poetry, individual human achievements all.

7. FOR Runners

Lest one conclude that we are all about High Culture (we are), we also enjoy a weekly walk on Sunday morning followed by breakfast near Little Five Points in Atlanta.

8. FOR Rocks Stone Mountain

From time to time, we try new things. Our newest outdoor activity is a monthly hike upon Stone Mountain on the Saturday before FORum

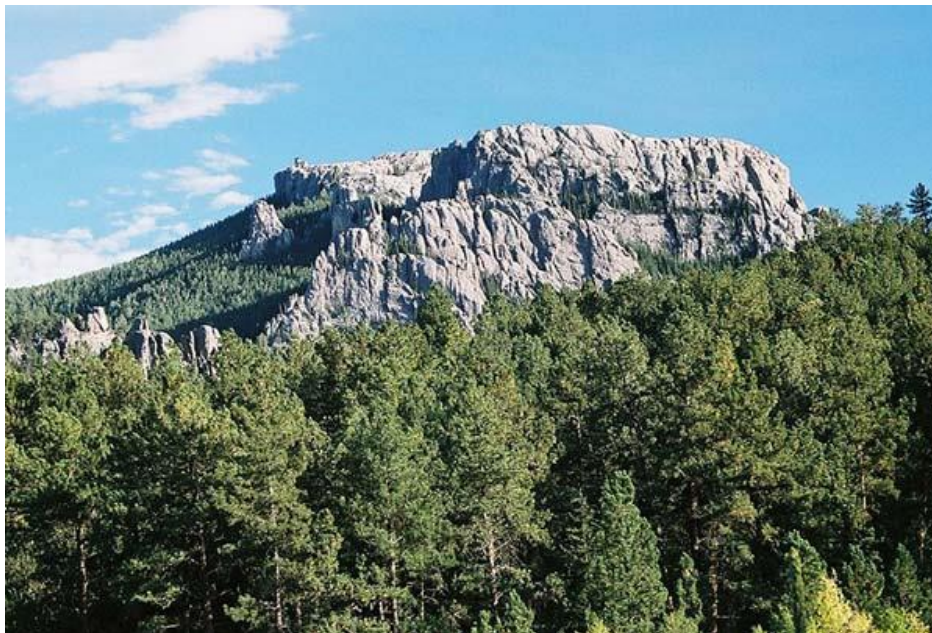
9. FOR Pub night

An easy way to get to meet us is at Manuel's Tavern once a month over beer and Buffalo wings.

10. FOR Epicures

Occasionally, about every 3 months, we enjoy fine dining at an Atlanta restaurant. Think, "Food as Art."

Thank you for your interest in the Fellowship of Reason® as we enjoy our 200th FORum: A Celebration of Human Achievement. Think of us as continuing education for adults. Think of us as a philosophy group. Think of us as people who value individual human achievement above all else. Think of us as people who believe that the sacred individual human being is the moral center of the Universe.



The Sioux Indians regard Harney Peak in the Black Hills of South Dakota as the Sacred Center of the Universe. See *Black Elk Speaks* by John Neihardt.

The sacred individual human being is the moral center of the Universe.

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

FOR Pub: last Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.

Members and friends of FOR like to meet at Manuel's Tavern, 602 N. Highland Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, on the last Wednesday, at 7 p.m. to adult beverages and fun.

Martin Cowen coordinator: 678-641-9321

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: last Tuesday of every other month at 7:30 p.m. Potluck

Members and friends of FOR are invited to attend a 4-years-long study group of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. We meet at Sally's house in May, July, September 2015. When done we will have spent 3 years and 10 months in this study.

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

Martin Cowen coordinator: 678-641-9321

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

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

**June 7, 2015
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

May 2	Frank Vickers
May 21	Dan Barber

June 22	Chris Snider
June 29	Allison Byrd

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®

Fellowship of Reason

P.O. Box 28891
Atlanta, Georgia 30358

E-mail

info@fellowshipofreason.com

A Reason-Based Moral
Community

We are on the Web!

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P.O. Box 28891
Atlanta, Georgia 30358

