



The official newsletter of
Fellowship of Reason, Inc.

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Vermeer

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Saving the World: One Child at a Time

By Martin Cowen

Oratory delivered at FORum 1-7-18

Happy New Year! It is 2018. The Fellowship of Reason had our first meeting on Sunday, November 1, 1998. This year, 2018, is our 20th year of existence. We celebrate our 20th birthday in November of this year. Hurray!

My personal assessment of the Fellowship of Reason is that our Fellowship of Reason has been a great success. On Wednesday, January 17, 2018, we will peak by beginning our Ancient Greek language class. Learning Ancient Greek has been a personal goal of mine for many years. For college students, learning Ancient Greek is the beginning of a Classical Education. For me it will be the crowning glory of my own Classical Education, sure to be continued even thereafter. I am already anticipating teaching Xenophon's *Anabasis* as soon as we are able, perhaps next year at this time if we are good students.

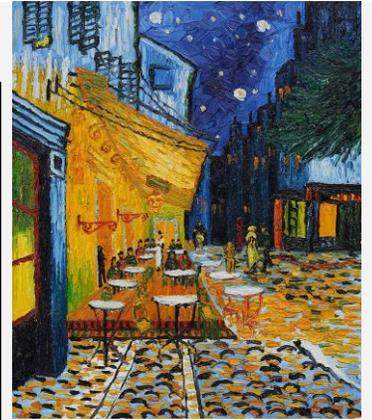
Looking back on our 20 years, I recall these greatest hits:

- Lifetime member Toni Brookner led a FOR Women's trip to Chicago, a decade ago. More recently, Toni, last year in 2017, guided the FOR Women to Toni's home country, The Netherlands.
- For me, our FOR trips to the Dolomites in Italy and Machu Picchu in Peru are great memories.
- Closer to home FOR members enjoyed three overnight camping trips to the Okefenokee Swamp over the past two decades.
- Two weeks ago, Ron, Ira, Mike Brady, John, Belinda, Alexander and I enjoyed our annual Christmas retreat

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to the Hike Inn near Amicalola Falls. We are eight years enjoying this activity. Alexander and I were the only FOR members present on the first night. I was lamenting to my new friend at dinner that until the present year, there was always someone we knew at the Hike Inn during our pre-Christmas stay. As I was speaking, my friend Dawn sat down across from us, thus preserving our streak.

- By the way, I learned that Amicalola Falls and Okefenokee Swamp are two of Georgia's seven natural wonders. The other five are Providence Canyon, Stone Mountain, Tallulah Gorge, Radium Springs, and Warm Springs. Members of FOR have many times visited Stone Mountain as a group.
- One year, members of FOR rented a house by a river and rafted down the Ocoee River in North Carolina.
- We have enjoyed numerous hiking trips in the North Georgia Mountains. One year we ventured to Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina near the Virginia boarder. Sadly, we are not enjoying as many outdoor activities as we used to, but I expect to do the Hike Inn at least two more years before Alexander graduates from high school.
- Our intellectual pursuits are many. I am particularly happy to have been allowed to teach Aristotle's *Ethics*, Plato's *Republic*, Plutarch's *Lives of Greeks and Romans*, and a variety of great painters and musicians.
- One of my favorite book club books was Thomas Mann's four-volume novel *Joseph and His Brothers*. Thomas Mann considered this book his greatest. I also enjoyed reading Mann's *The Magic Mountain*.
- Never to be forgotten is our almost four year study of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.



Vincent Van Gogh

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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Hypatia



Voltaire

Saving the World: One Child at a Time

- These days, thanks to Frank Vickers, we are working our way through the Poets Laureate of the United States. Later this month, Frank will present on James Dickey, born in Atlanta on February 2, 1923, died January 19, 1997, aged 73 in Columbia, SC. James Dickey wrote *Deliverance* (1970) that became the eponymous 1972 movie starring Burt Reynolds.
- In addition to FOR Poetry and our upcoming Ancient Greek language course, FOR Runners, FOR Tapes, FOR Fiction Book Club, FOR Sunday School, and our present activity FORum: A Celebration of Human Achievement are still going strong. I, personally, participate in six of these seven activities. Because of our special family circumstances, Linda attends FOR Fiction Book Club.

So much for our past and present.

François-Marie Arouet, a/k/a Voltaire, born Paris, November 21, 1694, died May 30, 1778, aged 83, once said:

“If there were only one religion in England there would be danger of despotism, if there were two, they would cut each other’s throats, but there are thirty religions, and they live in peace and happiness.”

This saying pertains to American politics for the past three years. There are only two religions in America today, Democrats and Republicans, and they are cutting each other’s throats.

We, like many individuals and groups, have been affected by the present American cultural war.

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A dear friend, who has lived in a small Georgia town for about 40 years, has left her home church for political reasons. Recently, she told me that she and her husband, who was born in that town, are selling their house and moving to Atlanta near their new Atlanta church, again for political reasons. You can certainly imagine that the politics of small town Georgia and midtown Atlanta politics are very different.

The abandonment of friends of decades is not a beautiful thing. As with many groups, this abandonment of friends has happened in the Fellowship of Reason.

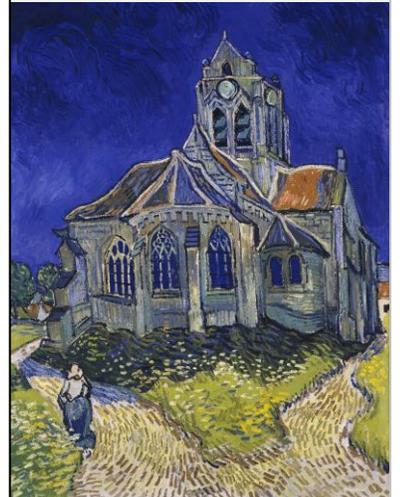
One of my favorite podcasters recently claimed that “we” ought to start acting like “our” intellectual opponents and shun them in return. Certainly, you will have noticed that people all over the country are retreating into their “safe spaces” and cutting themselves off from all contrary opinion, by unfriending and unfollowing and even, in the case of my small town friend, leaving her church and hometown.

Such behavior is inimical to the values of the Fellowship of Reason.

Let me repeat that:

Such behavior is inimical to the values of the Fellowship of Reason.

We of the Fellowship of Reason are all about intellectual engagement in the domain of ideas with facts, evidence, and rational argument. To retreat without argument from the field of ideas is the sign of incredible weakness and lack of virtue. For a person claiming to be an intellectual retreat is shameful.



Vincent Van Gogh



Hans Gude

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Regular membership:
\$35 per year

Contributing membership:
\$70 per Year

Lifetime membership:
\$700



Ludwig von Mises



George Washington

Contact Information

To talk to somebody about
Fellowship of Reason call:

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

Therefore, I, personally, disagree with my podcaster: I do not think we should shun our intellectual opponents. I think that we should fully engage with them in civil and rational discussion.

Because of the cultural wars presently raging, I decided to get involved in my own small way. Last year I taught economics at Alexander's high school. This year during the winter and spring quarters, I will teach civics.

In preparation for teaching economics I read Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Ludwig von Mises's *Human Action*, Ludwig von Mises's *Socialism*, Thomas Sowell's *Basic Economics*, Henry Hazlitt's *Economics in One Lesson*, F. A. Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, and Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. I have just finished rereading Piketty's book for the third time.

In preparation for teaching civics, I am reading the *Federalist Papers*, 85 newspaper articles that present an argument against the anti-federalist for the ratification of the *United States Constitution* (created September 17, 1787, ratified June 21, 1788, and effective March 4, 1789). Note that 1789 is the year of the French Revolution, July 14, 1789.

I am also reading a biography of George Washington: *The Real George Washington* by Jay A. Parry and Andrew M. Allison. There is an anecdote in the book about Washington. He visited Alexandria, Virginia after a particularly heated local election contest and got into an argument. His opponent knocked him down with a stick. The next day Washington, who was very tall and robust, sought the man out and *Washington* apologized to the man who knocked him down for Washington's inappropriate behavior during the argument.

I tell that story for two reasons: first, to illustrate that heated political debate, even resulting in bodily assault, is not new

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in 2018; second, to illustrate the power of a great man who is willing to admit he is wrong.

Tolerance is a virtue. For a person like me whose political views have never been shared by a meaningful minority (just 3.2% in the 2016 Presidential race), tolerance comes easily. I have no choice. Nobody agrees with me anyway! In philosophy, Aristotle famously said that “it is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”

We in the Fellowship of Reason work on achieving and improving our educated minds.

So what are we in the Fellowship of Reason to do as a group?

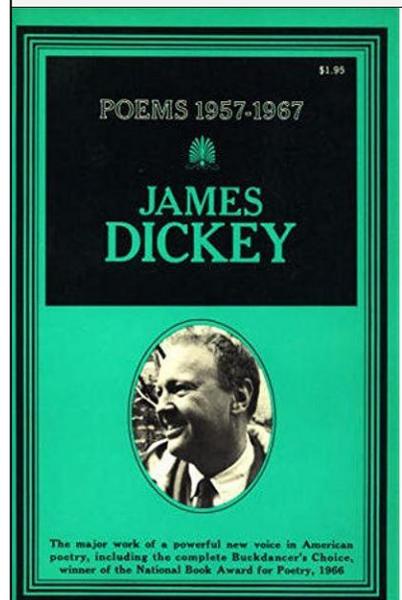
We have the learning part down. We are doing fellowship well. It would be nice to have a few more good members to help us with content at FORum.

I remember when I first created the Fellowship of Reason I thought that our concept would take the world by storm. That thought it now appears was silly. It is now obvious why it is silly. How many people in America are interested in the Poets Laureate of the United States? I can tell you. There are six: Frank, Susan, Ron, Martin, Sally, and Kelly. In the whole wide world beyond FOR there are none of whom I know. How many people in America are interested in studying James Joyce’s *Ulysses* for four years? I can tell you. There were about eight. Now in all honesty James Joyce probably enjoys a little more public interest than Poet James Dickey, author of *Deliverance*.

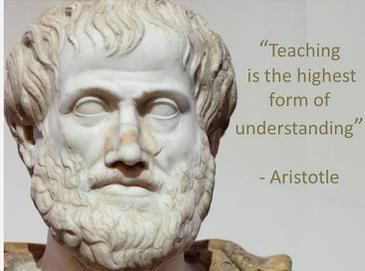
When we were setting up our Ancient Greek language class I timidly told the professor, we might have “only” five students. He said many colleges would be thrilled to have five students to take Ancient Greek. The professor said that he once had a class with one student.



Vera Norman



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Therefore, continuing Classical Education for adults is not a big selling point.

Who cares? I am seeking a Classical Education for its own sake, for the pleasure it brings to me personally.

The Fellowship of Reason is not for everyone. However, that does not mean that we should be complacent about membership growth or at least membership replacement.

I would like for the members of FOR to start thinking about how we might help one or more children develop an appreciation for a Classical Education. You will recall that we sponsored an essay contest some years ago, but got no essays. I would like to try that again. As a teacher now in Alexander's high school I can give the essay contest as a course requirement and guarantee submissions.

While the audience might be small, my axiom for positive change is to act locally.



Subzero sleeping bag

I saw a great Twitter post recently. The poster said that rather than giving money to some national or international group to fight global warming, go buy some subzero sleeping bags and hand them out to Atlanta street people to really do something by saving lives.

I am all about saving the world. Nevertheless, I am willing to save the world one child at a time. I had only 13 students in my economics class. I guarantee you that not one of them will become a murderous Stalinist and participate in the creation of a new Gulag Archipelago.

I hope that my 13 civics students will come away from the class with an appreciation of what it means to be a good American citizen and that being a good citizen does not

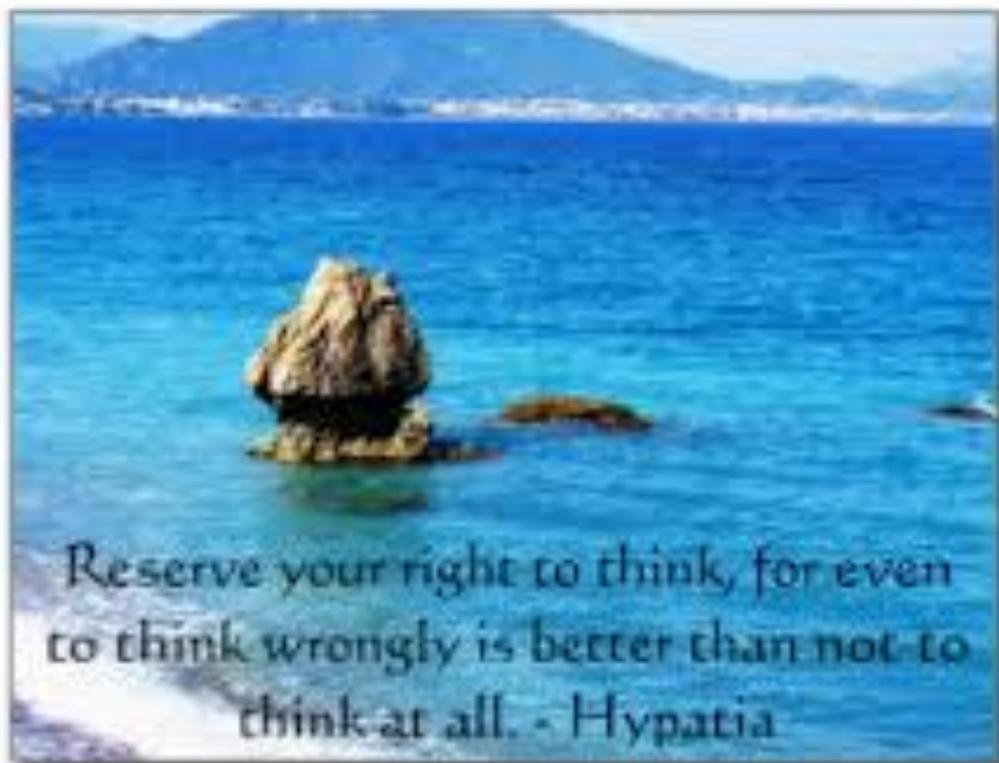
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include throwing bricks through the windows at Starbucks in Berkley, California.

Reviving the high school essay contest is not our only option. I am sure that we can think of other FOR corporate projects that will contribute to saving the world, one child at a time.

Note that I am saying “one child at a time”. I do not think that we can convert adults to virtue if they have not by this time achieved it. We can behave beautifully before them, one and all. We can provide good role models.

In conclusion, we celebrate the 20th year of the Fellowship of Reason. We have enjoyed many great activities together. Our future is bright and we have many new adventures just ahead. I would like to see FOR spend a little more time trying save the world, **one child at a time**.



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.

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. Potluck supper precedes the lecture.

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. Potluck supper precedes the event.

Sally Hull coordinator: 404-257-0454

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

Members and friends of FOR like to meet on the 4th Saturday of every month at San Francisco Coffee, 676 N. Highland Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30307, to share their love of poetry.

Frank Vickers, coordinator

It is Greek to Me: Every Wednesday 7:30 p.m. starting January 17, 2018. Call for the location. Signup on Meetup.com.

A real Classics Professor will lead an elite group of members and friends of FOR on a yearlong journey to learn the ancient Greek language. The activity will be open to everyone including interested adults, college students, and high school students. Language learning is difficult and learning ancient Greek is very difficult. Weekly lessons and daily practice will be required for success. The course will be free, but participants will have to purchase their own textbooks.

Martin Cowen, Coordinator: 678-641-9321

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

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

**February 4,
2018**

Sunday 11 a.m.

(Meet, Greet at 10:30 a.m.)

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

Birthdays

January 30
January 31

Mark Sulkowski
Sally Hull

February 2
February 23

Wendell Bettis
Ellen Lewit

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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info@fellowshipofreason.com

A Reason-Based Moral
Community



FELLOWSHIP OF REASON, INC.

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We are on the Web!

See us at:

fellowshipofreason.com