



RELIGIOUS NATURALIST ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

created by religious naturalists for religious naturalists

August 2024

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Feature Article - August 2024

Can Religious Naturalists proselytize? Should we?
by JD Stillwater

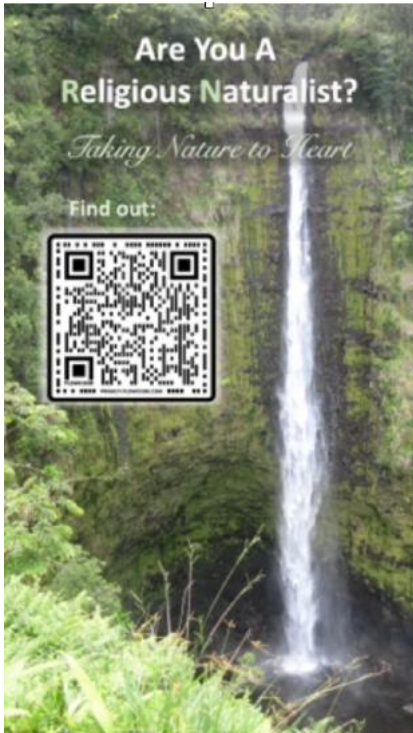
RNA is now a global community of 1250 members from every U.S. state and 52 countries, with about five new members each week, and more than 20 volunteer workers keeping it all going. Many new members say something like, "I've thought this way for a while but didn't know there was a name for it!" They find us through friends, teachers, colleagues, book clubs, YouTube, and churches, but it's slow.

Proselytize: the attempt to convert someone from one belief to another.

I don't think we have to proselytize; our fellow RNs are already out there looking for us. If RN is an orientation whose time has come (says me), how can we be more *conspicuous*? One idea: go to liberal religious spaces and be conspicuous. For me, this meant curating the Science Tent at the [Wild Goose Festival](#), and speaking at [Chautauqua Institution](#) this summer. Wild Goose Festival is a camp meeting/conference/music festival for liberal Christians in NC; Chautauqua is the historic interfaith institution in upstate NY.

I found SO MANY people who resonate with science as a source of religious sensibility! Some are RNs who didn't know it, some are "RN-adjacent," and some hold more

traditional religious beliefs, but I didn't meet anyone who wasn't enthusiastic about science/nature as a source of inspiration and religiosity. I was encouraged; it is safe and effective for us to be conspicuous.



The Chautauqua talk turned into an *ad hoc* RNA gathering (see item and photos). Speaking of being more conspicuous, RNA now has FOUR contributing writers, endowing our website with color, freshness, and brilliance. Watch for them at the website and on social media! They are: Elle Harrigan, Laura Emerson, J.X. Mason, and Cari Taylor. Huge gratitude to them for sharing their work.

An experiment: I've been leaving business-card-sized invitations in random places. So far, only one new member has come from this, partly because I'm so sporadic in my card-leaving. Stay tuned; the experiment continues.

What ideas do you have for making RNA conspicuous in the world? [Share them here](#).

JD Stillwater, RNA Secretary



News and Events

New podcast on the RNA YouTube channel: "Reverence for Reality".



Discussions with people who identify as religious naturalist or otherwise derive their spiritual inspiration from the natural world.

Second Episode: Second Episode: Andrew talks with Ursula Goodenough, president of RNA and author of *The Sacred Depths of Nature* (www.sacreddepthsofnature.com) _<https://youtu.be/H9CejiHHcWs>

RN Discussion at All Souls Unitarian Church

Ursula Goodenough is leading a discussion of RN at the All Souls Unitarian Church (<https://allsoulsnyc.org>), 1157 Lexington Ave. NYC at 10am on September 20.

Regular Events:

Deep Transformation Network Monthly Meeting

Attend the live monthly network meeting on the **first Tuesday of every month at 1:00 pm Pacific** (check your time zones carefully!) <https://deeptransformation.network/spaces/10286307/feed>

Sacred Depths of Nature Presentations and Podcasts






Follow this link for the latest presentations and podcasts on *The Sacred Depths of Nature* with Ursula Goodenough. <http://sacreddepthsofnature.com/conferences/>

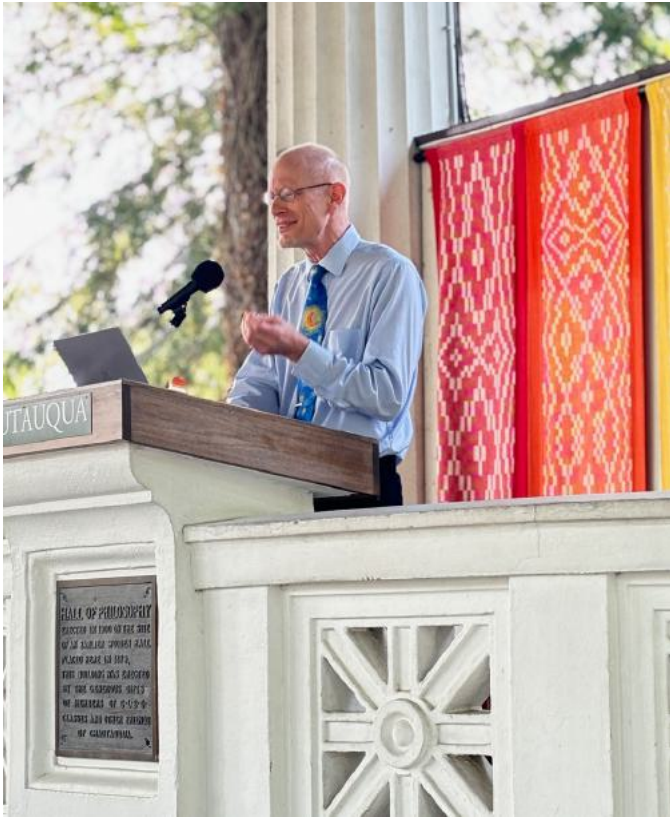


RNA Shop

RNA "Swag" Now Available!

We are now offering RNA branded merchandise on our website. Get yours here: <https://religious-naturalist-association.org/shop/>

 Adult Low-Profile Cotton Twill Dad Cap Yupoong 6245CM \$17.47	 Classic Tote Bag \$24.36	 Flexi case \$10.09
 Heavyweight Unisex Crewneck T-shirt \$12.64 - \$17.68	 White 11oz Ceramic Mug \$7.00 - \$8.91	



John Hooper, Chairman of the Humanism Initiative at Chautauqua who arranged the talk, JD Stillwater, and Elle Harrigan.

JD Stillwater Speaks at Chautauqua Institute: RNA Secretary JD Stillwater was thrilled by an invitation to speak at Chautauqua Institution as part of the UU Ethics Lectures series during Week 5 of the CHQ season. It turned out to be a mini-gathering of RNA members (pictured): John Hooper (Hub), JD, and Elle Harrigan (Contributing Writer). JD's talk was titled "Nature's Scripture: Spiritually Grounding, Inclusively Affirming," asserting that nature (as science reveals it) offers inspiration for all faiths. JD argued for interfaith study and dialogue on science as a form of ongoing scripture. A video of his talk is here: <https://youtu.be/Ap0QYrLPEE0>



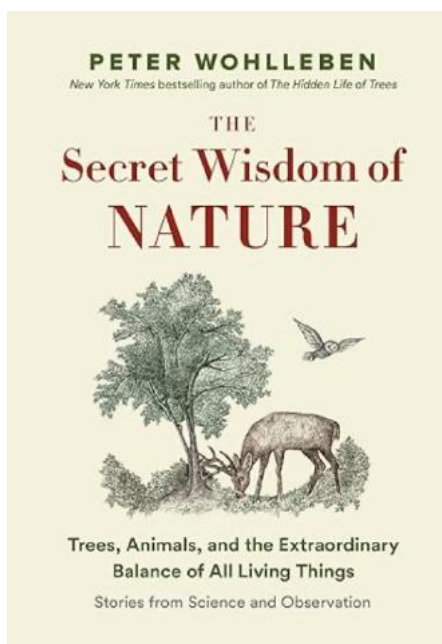
RNA YouTube Channel Video of the Month Kevin Carson (2023) - "The Case for Religious Naturalism"



Unitarian Reverend Kevin Carson describes the religious naturalist viewpoint, its history, and its growing appeal today.

[Watch on YouTube](#)

[Visit Our YouTube Channel](#)



Book of the Month

The Secret Wisdom of Nature by [Peter Wohlleben](#)

"As you read these pages you will understand why I so admire [Peter Wohlleben] and am so in love with his work." —JANE GOODALL

Nature is full of surprises: deciduous trees affect the rotation of the Earth, cranes sabotage the production of Iberian ham, and coniferous forests can make it rain. But what are the processes that drive these incredible phenomena? And why do they matter?

[View on Amazon](#)

Help Wanted! RNA is looking for volunteers with abilities in Accounting, Volunteer Coordinating, Spotify, Google Workspace, TikTok, LinkedIn, and Grant-Writing. Do any of those sound like fun to you? [Say so here](#) and we'll get you started!



Music of the Monthy

Lately The Church of What Is by Greg Greenwa



View on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IuZrN9mOfSs>

Suggest Music

Help Build Our RNA Songbook

Do you know of a song or poem that we could add to our songbook? Click this link to nominate your item.

[Song Nomination Form](#)

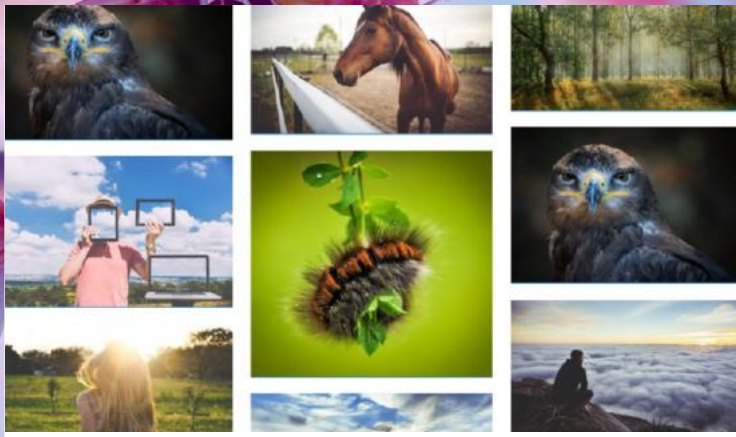
[View Songbook](#)

Natural Wonder of the Month

Immortal Jellyfish



The immortal jellyfish is a species of jellyfish that is biologically immortal. A mature jellyfish can revert to its immature form—called a polyp—through a process called transdifferentiation. It's a rare process in which the mature, specialized cells that make up the jellyfish can revert to an entirely different structure. Aging, physical damage from predators, and adverse environmental conditions can all serve as catalysts to start the process. In the wild, though, this tiny jellyfish (mature individuals are about the size of a human fingernail) still usually succumbs to predators or disease.



RNA Photo Gallery
add your photos

[Visit the Gallery](#)

Visit us on Social Media



Facebook



YouTube



Reddit



Mastodon

Letters to the Editor:

Please send your comments, suggestions, questions, and submissions to newsletter@religious-naturalist-association.org.

If your letter has content that we would like to publish in a future newsletter we will contact you for permission.

Website of the Month



Grateful Living

We are a global nonprofit organization that empowers people to live meaningful lives through the transformative practice of grateful living.

We do this because we know today is not an ordinary day. Today is extraordinary. It's the one day you have been given.

<https://grateful.org>

RNA Links

Members Contributions: Our members contribute sermons, articles, videos, music and other material related to the Religious Naturalist orientation. Go to <https://religious-naturalist-association.org/members-contributions/> to check them out. Please consider contributing your own material. There is a link on the page for submitting items.

Members' Projects:

The RNA website has a section called [Members' Projects](#). This page provides links to projects of RNA members. If you have a project related to RN that you would like included on this webpage please email a description to projects@religious-naturalist-association.org.

Recent RNA Blog Post - Lead With Love

Our being our truth isn't being an opinion, its being our heart and soul, and that unique perspective of being allows us to bring forward the living of our hearts yearning and our souls purpose – thats unique, that for very being it is all that is asked of us – to be our unique gift of love..

[Go to Post](#)





New Member Books and Member Poems Sections

Two new sections have been added to the page that was previously called RNA Book Reviews. The new page is called Member Books, Poems, and Book Reviews and it's now a place to showcase Books and Poems written by RNA members.

The page is now called Member Books, Poems, & Book Reviews.

If you would like to submit a book, poem, or book review please let us know by sending email to newsletter@religious-naturalist-association.org.

Expansion of Religious Naturalist Voices

Our website includes a link called RN Voices <https://religiousnaturalism.org/rn-voices/> that I compiled a few years ago and describe thusly: The writers highlighted in these Religious Naturalist Voices postings may or may not self-identify as religious naturalists. They're included because their writings speak in various ways to the religious naturalist orientation as I understand it.

It would be wonderful to expand this site by including profiles of additional writers who have spoken to you. Please send me your suggestions goodenough@wustl.edu

Contribute to the RNA website: Help us keep our RNA website fresh and member friendly.

[Submit your photos](#)

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Visit the [RNA Website](#)