

**Rationalists of East Tennessee Newsletter**  
**March 2011 – written by Ralph Isler**

**NOTICES:**

Many of you may notice events and news and would like to pass them along to other members. Please feel free to submit your summery and/or opinion of an event or news article to be published in future RET newsletters. Send your short submissions before the last week of the month to [risler1@comcast.net](mailto:risler1@comcast.net).

As most of you know, Margaret Klein will be moving from Knoxville in the very near future (see notice of going away party below). Margaret has played an important role in RET through organizing our third-Sunday meetings and in overseeing our publicity announcements in the local media. She will be greatly missed. We need volunteers to take over all, or some, of her duties. Please contact me at the above email address or by phone (865-482-4680) if you are willing to donate some time to these efforts. RET can only continue if the work load is shared.

If you enjoy and participate in the Reflections meetings on the fourth Sunday of each month, please volunteer to host one of these meetings at your home. All fourth Sundays from April 24 through the rest of the year are open at this time.

**RET March 2011 calendar:**

**Freethought Forum**

**Every Tuesday 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

Community Channel of Knoxville – Channel 12

The freestreaming live broadcast can be seen at <http://ctvknox.org/> for those who do not live in Knoxville.

**Friday, March 4th – Going away party for Margaret Klein**

Please reserve Friday, March 4th, 2011, 7:00 p.m. for a farewell party for Margaret Klein at Phil and Sharron King's home (1109 Venice Road, Knoxville, TN). Margaret, our fine Scottish lady, has served for several years on the RET Board of Directors, but she is now planning to move to Chapel Hill, North Carolina. We will miss her greatly and we encourage all of our members to drop by to see her off. If you want to bring anything in the way of food or drink, you are welcome to do so, but we plan to have heavy Hors d'oeuvres.

**Sunday, March 6 – Roundtable**

Topic: "The Four Horsemen"

Time/location: 10:30 - 12:30, Pellissippi State, Goins Bldg., Cafeteria Annex

Organizer: Donna Maxwell

A DVD presentation of the first part of an informal discussion between Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and Daniel Dennett will be shown. It includes such topics as: religion's immunity to criticism, can science and religion co-exist, what are atheists trying to accomplish, and should atheists criticize all religions equally. A roundtable discussion of these points will follow the showing.

**Sunday, March 13 - Skeptic Book Club**

Book: "Not for Profit: Why Democracy needs the Humanities" by Martha C. Nussbaum

Time and location: 4:00 to 6:00pm, Barnes and Noble Booksellers, 8029 Kingston Pike.

Worries about the economy and the need to advance technology are threatening liberal arts education in the U.S. to the ultimate detriment of our democracy, laments philosopher Nussbaum. She explores the long history of emphasis on humanities in education in the U.S., exploring the influences of Horace Mann, Bronson Alcott, John Dewey, and others, including India's Rabindranath Tagore. She devotes a separate chapter to Socrates and his teachings that have figured prominently in developing a sense of citizenship in democracy; the connectedness of individuals; and the importance of the ability to question, analyze, and argue points of view. Nussbaum offers examples and case studies from the U.S. and India of the shift from the "human-development paradigm" to the "growth-oriented paradigm" and what nations are at risk of losing. She analyzes the role of the arts and humanities in developing language skills and encouraging curiosity about other cultures and sympathy for other individuals. This is a passionate call to action at a time when the nation is becoming more culturally diverse and universities are cutting back on humanities programs. --Vanessa Bush

### **Sunday, March 20th - Roundtable**

Topic: "Martin Buber's 'I-Thou' and 'I-It' Philosophy and Sport"

Time/location: 10:30 - 12:30, Pellissippi State, Goins Bldg., Cafeteria Annex

Speaker: Dr. Joy DeSensi, Associate Dean of the Graduate School at UTK.

Dr. DeSensi is a professor in the Department of Exercise, Sport, and Leisure Studies. Her primary scholarly interest focuses on sociocultural issues of sport, including all aspects of diversity and ethics in sport management. She is co-author of *Ethics and Morality in Sport Management* (3rd ed.), as well as numerous articles in the field.

### **Sunday, March 27 – Reflections Group (potluck lunch)**

Topic: Communicating with Civility

Location: home of Schera Chadwick & Ted Lollis, 9219 George Williams Road, Knoxville 37922

Call 865.690.8742 for detailed directions

Time: 1:00-3:30 pm

### **Non-RET Events:**

The second annual Orange County Freethought Alliance Conference is scheduled for May 15th at the John Wayne Airport Hilton in Orange County, CA from 10am – 9:45pm. The theme for this year's conference will be "The Hazards of Living in a Religious World". All non-believers, philosophers, agnostics, humanists, rationalists and naturalists are invited. This is a rare event to see secular leaders from the country gather and discuss the current issues of how we, as secularists, can positively affect our world.

Speakers confirmed so far are Mr Deity, (as himself), author Victor Stenger, Brian Dunning from the Skeptoid.com Podcast, Eugenie Scott, director National Science Education, Jim Underdown from CFI West, Tim Callahan, editor of Skeptics Magazine, Sean Faircloth, director of the Secular Coalition for America, Rebecca Watson from the Skeptics Guide to the Universe podcast, and James Corbett, educator and the focus of a church-state separation lawsuit in San Juan Capistrano