



Ethical Views

April 2008

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Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia



Platforms

April 6, 2008

Walt Whitman, Democracy and Ethical Culture

Speaker: Robert Berson, Leader of the Ethical Society of Northern Westchester

A hundred and fifty years ago, Whitman articulated a democratic vision in *Leaves of Grass*. At about the same time Ethical Culture was offering its perspective on democracy. In these times when democracy is under threat, what do Whitman and Ethical Culture have to teach us?

April 13, 2008

Humanist Voting

Speaker: Richard L. Kiniry, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

The Pennsylvania Presidential Primary is nine days from now, so this is a good time to ask some questions. Are there specific humanist values that we ought to look for in candidates? Is integrity more important than political positions?

April 20, 2008

The Invention of Race

Speaker: Karen Helm, Sociologist and Board Member of the Baltimore Ethical Society

Americans internalize their race classifications almost as they do their gender identities. But recent race scholarship shows us that the effect of using labels like "Italian-American," "Black" or "Asian" has rarely been benign. Karen Helm will trace the ideology that underlies our use of racial terminology and discuss how it shapes our understanding of history, events and behavior. She will explore the

information we actually convey when we use this terminology and suggest ways to ensure we are saying what we mean.

April 27, 2008

The Media and Presidential Politics in a Memorable Year

Speaker: Dave Davies, Senior Writer for the Philadelphia Daily News and fill-in host for NPR's Fresh Air and WHYY's Radio Times

Dave Davies will examine issues raised by media coverage of the 2008 presidential campaign, with reflections on his own 20 years of covering politics and government. <>

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SCHOOL FOR ETHICS



Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Sunday, April 13 at 1:30 PM

If you are curious about the ideas and approach of the Ethical Humanist Society, this is your chance to have your questions answered. In a casual atmosphere, Society members and leaders explain our history and philosophy. Although we are part of the 132-year-old Ethical Culture Movement, our approach continues to evolve and each member finds their own personal take on the tradition.

Interested visitors, newcomers and members are invited to examine our basic ideas and decide for themselves whether they make sense. Can Ethical Culture make your life better? We will look at our core principles – the intrinsic worth of every human being, naturalism, nontheism, and ethics as a way of life. Led by **Richard Kiniry**.

ETHICS FOR CHILDREN

Our Sunday School has a new teacher, **Eliza Villanueva**. **Lily Locke** and **Monica Peer** will remain Sunday School Assistants.

Our children's program continues to grow. We strive to challenge the child's understanding of right and wrong. If you know of any parents who might be interested, we can send them our "Ethics for Children" brochure. Call the office with your contact information, 215-735-3456.

Each Sunday, 10:45 AM



Left to Right: Sunday School Student, **Isabella Rizzo**, and her new teacher, **Eliza Villanueva**.

Non-violent Communication Workshop

Would you like to learn how to deal compassionately with people who are acting in ways you find difficult? Would you like to communicate your feelings and needs in ways that make life more wonderful for you? What do you do when you want to change the behavior of someone who is acting in ways you don't like? The last thing to do is to criticize that person – and that's usually our first impulse. Criticism is guaranteed to cause resistance, no matter how "right" we are. At our Nonviolent Communication (NVC) workshop, held on February 16, we began to explore the underlying principles of this simple but not easy means of communication.




Led by **Keith Pacheko**, peacemaker and avid proponent of NVC, we discussed and questioned in an effort to acquaint ourselves with this unfamiliar language. How do we communicate without criticism and still get our needs met? How do we help ourselves, our children and those we care about to learn to

communicate in a way that promotes peace in an ever more violent world? Can we be respectful and compassionate and still be honest? NVC is about answering these questions. The language is quite different from the one we've learned. We've been taught to compete and win, while NVC is a non-zero sum game in which all sides come out winners.

We can actually be heard and get our needs met while bringing out the best in others. NVC appeals to the essential good that resides in all of us – even those who appear most difficult. As Marshall Rosenberg, psychologist and founder of the method, implores, "See me beautiful." It's Ethical Humanism at work. Empathically making connections is at the heart of NVC, which teaches that people are always communicating their feelings and needs, no matter what they appear to be doing. We need to be listened to, although not necessarily agreed with. As Keith advised on the importance of listening, "Don't just do something; stand there."

If you are interested in exploring NVC with a group of members and friends, contact **Chuck Ward** at: **4_wards@verizon.net** or call the Society at **215-735-3456**. We need to practice using the language of NVC to develop the skill. I recommend reading Marshall Rosenberg's book, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language for Life*, and visiting **www.NVC.org** for background information and specific techniques. — *Temma Fishman* <



Blockheads Wanted!


Want a little piece of immortality while you do something wonderful for the community who visits the Ethical Society building? You can write your name in stone (actually concrete) along with a message that will last as close to forever as we can get, for \$500. Twenty blocks of concrete from the sidewalk at the back of our building are for sale.

Each block purchase will bring us closer to realizing our dream (and yours) of making our building accessible to everyone. Your name and message will be engraved on a brass plaque that will become part of our soon to be constructed **ramp**. Passersby will know you were here and made your statement for a most ethical cause. Send your check for \$500 to the Ethical Humanist Society along with the name and message you want engraved on the plaque. For more information, contact the Society office at: **office@phillyethics.org** or at **215-735-3456**.

Mark this date!
April 26, 2008
Humanist Seder

Celebrate freedom the Ethical Culture way. On **Saturday, April 26 at 4:00 p.m.**, members and friends of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia will observe our Humanist Seder. Remembering those who struggled for freedom in the past and honoring those who suffer in oppression today, we blend old and new traditions that unite us with the global community and with each other. Join us in sharing delicious food, joyful song and eloquent readings. Bring your own special dish to add to the feast. \$5 if you bring a dish, \$10 if you don't. RSVP by April 19 by calling 215-735-3456.

Children are welcome.



2008 AEU ASSEMBLY -- ETHICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

Thursday, April 17 - Sunday, April 20

A Event Join members from across the country in Austin, Texas to socialize, learn, teach, and celebrate our history and our ethical values.

Here are some of the workshops that will be offered:

"Biocentric Ethics" with Curt Collier ... An Ethical Humanist Religious Approach to Living with Richard Kiniry ... Religious Education ... Growing & Sustaining Society Membership and Society Financial Management; Ethics in Pop Culture: The Ethics of Harry Potter ... Communication Skills in Ethical Society Life with Jone Johnson Lewis ... Out of the Box: Brainstorming to Reinvigorate Ethical Culture, with Hugh Taft-Morales ... and Ethical Decision-making Throughout a Lifetime, with FES member Max Romano and friends

Plans also include:

Keynote speaker and Opening Reception
 The National Service Conference Luncheon and speaker
 The Elliott-Black Award and Banquet
 Sunday Platform; A Liberation Festival -- A Humanist Seder Entertainment

Watch for the brochure in January, and count on having an experience you will long remember. Extend your visit for a delightful Austin vacation. Austin was selected as the No. 2 Best Big City in "Best Places to Live" by Money Magazine in 2006, and the "Greenest City in America" by MSN.

KIVA *Progress Report*

You may remember that around Thanksgiving of last year, the Ethical Society held a special collection for Kiva, an organization that makes loans to small businesses in developing countries (www.kiva.org). Over \$1,000 was donated then for Kiva by Society members and others.

One distinctive feature of Kiva is that it allows lenders like the Ethical Society to select from descriptions of the qualified small businesses the ones they would like to receive their donations.

At Thanksgiving, we announced that a Ugandan woman with many children and a clothing business was the one the Society had selected. However, by mid January when we completed arrangements with Kiva, that Ugandan woman had already received enough to satisfy her request. Furthermore, because of Oprah Winfrey's promotion, Kiva was deluged with more donations than it could handle with its current recipient qualification procedure. Just as we were ready to send our loan money, Kiva placed a \$25-per-recipient limit on lenders' selections. So, the Ethical Society was forced for about a month to select a number of Kiva loan seekers within that \$25 limit. Now that limit has been lifted and we have increased several loans and made additional loans of \$350 and \$425 to two recipients.



The smaller loans are for food market, clothing, manufacturing and electronics sales businesses in Togo, Uganda, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan. The two larger loans are to Victoria Marca, a woman who is buying more merchandise to sell in her general store in Guayaquil, Ecuador and to Rosemary Ebowe, a woman who is buying more food to sell in her food market in Benin City, Nigeria.

Although the Ethical Society has just begun making the loans – with the two large ones going out only in mid February – as of March 6, we already had \$22 in repayments to our Kiva account, to use for others seeking Kiva loans. We have also received copies of thank you e-mails from recipients to

Kiva. Please notify **Temma Fishman** or **Nick Sanders**, if you would like to help in monitoring the Society's progress in Kiva. (Persons with experience in developing countries would be good Kiva monitors for the Society.)

— **Nick Sanders** <>

Darwin Day Report



On Friday night, February 15, the Society had a wonderful party to celebrate Darwin Day. In honor of Darwin, some of us wore yellow.

Ruth Ann Flynn donned not only a yellow outfit but also a yellow wig, arriving as a drop-dead gorgeous blonde. We ate great food. **Ken Greiff** produced "Primordial Soup," a.k.a. egg-drop soup.

The highlight of the evening was the entertainment. **Ray** and **Andi Smith** and **Janice Moore** sang George Gershwin's



"It Ain't Necessarily So." Ray also led us in a song that he composed to commemorate Darwin. It was sung to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." **Temma Fishman** read a poem on Darwin she had written. **Scott Pleune** performed an interpretative dance on the theme of Evolution. And **Bob Moore** organized excerpts of the *Kitzmiller v. Dover Board of Education* trial into a play, with various members of the Society reading the parts. (In *Kitzmiller*, Intelligent Design was repudiated as a valid alternate to the Theory of Evolution for public schools to teach.)



Ken Greiff

Everyone had a great time at this very successful, very creative party!

— **Ken Greiff** <>

ARTICLE VIII - ELECTIONS (Cont'd. from page 3)

experience as a Trustee. No person who is not a member of the Society shall be privileged to make or second a nomination.

Section 4. At the Annual Meeting, election of Officers shall be conducted first, then election of full-time Trustees, then election of candidates for unexpired terms. A member may be a candidate for more than one position.

Section 5. Absentee voting may be permitted at the discretion of the Board. If so, a list shall be maintained of all ballots mailed to members requesting them, and of all which have been returned. Appropriately coded envelopes shall be used to ensure privacy. Observers shall be appointed by the Chairperson to witness opening of the absentee envelopes and to tally the votes. The Chairperson shall announce the results of the election and give the Secretary a written statement of the results.

Section 6. If more than two candidates run for any of the offices of President; Vice-President; Secretary; or Treasurer, and no candidate receives a clear majority, a run-off shall be held between the two polling the highest number of votes.

Section 7. In voting for full-term Trustees-at-Large, each member may vote for not more than three candidates. The three candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be the winners, and any ties for third place shall be resolved by an appropriate run-off. Candidates for unexpired terms shall be voted upon separately from the rest of the slate.

Section 8. All offices and positions elected at the Annual Meeting shall become official on the first day of July of that year. <>

Platforms at 11:00AM,
Sundays
Coffee Hour and
Discussion
follow the Platforms.

Musical interludes
performed by Pianist
**Katarzyna Marzec-
Salwinski**

Childcare provided
at no charge.

All are welcome!

